



DISCOURSES OF POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY:
INTERSECTIONS AND SEPARATIONS

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Abbreviations used:

ABC - Australian Broadcasting Corporation
 BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

SUMMARY

The thesis establishes a particular concept of discourse in order to analyse populism as a discourse privileging the category 'the people' as a unified essence. This approach is distinguished from other accounts of populism, in a survey of the field.

The thesis then outlines the historical conditions of possibility for populist discourses, tracing the varied deployments of the term 'the people', and challenges populist accounts of its status. The conflation of populism and of dominant notions of democracy is noted. To question the adequacy of centring explanations of politics, or power relations, on the category of 'the people', the historical emergence and implications of a different category, that of 'population', is discussed.

Examples of various forms of populist discourse are considered in an analysis of the twentieth-century phenomenon of opinion polls, and as contributors to the figure of 'the public' in public opinion. An argument is made as to the significance of cultural practices in shaping available political literacies, and a range of print media and televisual texts described and analysed as contributing to current populist forms of understanding and organizing politics.

Finally, and drawing on earlier observations as to the relations between the two political forms, the thesis argues the necessity and the possibility of distinguishing populism and democracy. Recent reconsiderations of the concept of democracy and its dependence on a popular sovereignty are used to exit from a disabling populist framework.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself. I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan.

C.A. Greenfield

Like all work, this was not achieved alone. In particular the efforts of the following teachers and colleagues were central: years ago, David Saunders' relentless and rigorous questionings of various essentialisms, and the suggestion of populism as an area of investigation; Ian Hunter's continuing provision of new theoretical directions and acute analysis; the privilege of teaching with Dugald Williamson, Mick Counihan, Jennifer Craik and Jeffrey Minson; Paul Corcoran's productive course on the history of political thought, and helpful supervision, as well as that of Carol Johnson; and, most particularly, the tireless intellectual work of Peter Williams, with whom I am privileged to teach, write and converse, and whose support, intellectual range and generosity, and own democratic practices form the conditions of possibility for my labours.

PREFACE

This work begins from two points. The first is a concern to say something about what democracy might mean. To do this, democracy will assume the status of a central but relative object for the thesis. It is central because around the concept of democracy there have traditionally been clustered a body of arguments about the organization of social relations and especially practices of decision-making, that have been augmented in recent years by re-evaluations of democracy from the left, and which the thesis works to advance. It is relative because democracy is treated not as an essence or identity waiting to be uncovered, retrieved or clarified, and to which we can directly proceed, but in terms of the field of competing forms of political calculation and practice in which it emerges. Within this field (in which could be located not only the various political 'isms' but also less visible and codified techniques of government) democracy's strongest competitor, because the most intimately related to dominant concepts of democracy, is populism. To describe what democracy currently and usually means and how it might be given different meanings will thus require analysis of populism and its essentialist and romantic foundations. This combined focus is taken in order to deal with what appears to me the pressing intellectual and political question of how to conceptualize democracy in ways that distinguish it from the problematically unlimited formulations of populism.

The second, intersecting impetus is a concern with how to

describe the relation of certain popular cultural practices and ways of thinking to the political forms of populism and democracy. How do we analyse the relations between 'culture' and 'politics', and, more precisely, between the products of particular cultural institutions like those of the mass media and 'politics'? Should we even begin by assuming these domains as separate and seeking for the link 'between' them, or rather investigate their mutual constitution in the 'politics of culture'? While this remains an underworked area for political studies considerable work has already been done on this question in the interdisciplinary field of cultural and media studies. However, the work that has been done has largely subsumed the concept of politics under that of ideology. The task has been to analyse the ideological nature and operation of cultural texts and practices - the way they shape a class (or other) consciousness or recognition of social structures. The best of this analytical work has displaced the disabling legacy of ideology-critique's concept of ideology as false consciousness, and decentred the importance of consciousness for defining ideologies in favour of routinized, institutionally arranged practices. But this revised concept of ideology still, and perhaps these are its necessary limits, occupies a problematic of recognition; that is, cultural studies' dominant paradigms identify cultural activities in terms of the ideologies or social knowledges by which people make sense of the world. To raise the idea of a politics of culture is to indicate another focus alongside that of 'meaning' which needs attention. Cultural practices and

products can be considered not only for what they mean, but also for what they do, or are used to do in the field of power relations.

There are clearly many examples that could be chosen to investigate this politics of culture. To link it to the concern with populism and democracy the instances analysed will be those that operate as particular sites for the production and circulation of a political literacy that helps constitute various forms of populism and democracy as the horizon of political policy and critique.

The structure of the thesis reflects these two starting points, by focussing on accounts of populism and then moving on to consider some related cultural examples. Chapter 1 introduces two central concepts: 'discourse', in the particular sense of the organization of knowledge, and 'politics', its defining characteristics and domains of operation.

Chapter 2 critically considers the available definitions of populism. A detailed analysis of two accounts of populism which emphasize its ideological components establishes a related, but crucially distinct, definition that will serve as the basis of the thesis' analysis and critique of populism.

Chapter 3 takes its points of departure from the previous chapter's rejection of abstract and ahistorical definitions of populism. It thus seeks to outline the historical, rather than philosophical, bases of what is understood today as populism. To do this involves tracing changes in the discursive category 'the people', from Aristotle to Rousseau, and establishing a

genealogical approach that avoids reinvesting 'the people' with philosophical status. Chapter 4 continues this historical mapping of 'the people' as a means of understanding politics, and contrasts it with the use of another discursive category, 'population'. A reading of various texts by Rousseau as exemplary of two quite distinct political rationalities enables the precise limits of the political rationality populism offers to be established.

Chapter 5 moves to a more contemporary instance of the instatement and circulation of a populist political rationality by considering the various commonly available concepts of 'the public' as these are mobilized in and made visible by the presentation of opinion polls. This chapter builds on Chapter 4's specification of the limits of populism to begin the work of developing a concept of democracy clearly demarcated from populism.

In Chapter 6, contemporary print media and televisual examples, chosen for their popular and populist character, are considered as elements of the wider cultural technologies within which people's political literacies are formed. To make this argument, a particular definition of 'culture' and its possible relations to politics are first established. Chapter 7 builds on this notion of the significance of cultural practices and products for the generation and maintenance of political forms by analysing an influential deployment of a post-World War II populist discourse, Yes Minister.

The nature of populist discourses and some of their generative sites having been established, the final chapter,

Chapter 8, capitalizes on this description of populism and its limits in order to outline a concept of democracy not dependent on 'the people' as a political subject. To accomplish this, arguments are canvassed that displace the sovereign subject as the fulcrum of politics, and a recent debate over cultural policy discussed.

In all these chapters, the thesis is constrained by the need to establish a particular path of argument through many well established areas of research and debate. This, as well as concerns of economy, means that opportunities to relate, compare, dispute, and even simply note relevant issues from the literature must repeatedly be foregone. Similarly, the analyses of strategically chosen writings (e.g., those of Rousseau) are by no means exhaustive. Apart from the exigencies of the thesis form, such limitations may well be counterbalanced by the thesis' scope and its nature as interdisciplinary description and analysis in the area of political studies, rather than an essay in philosophy.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Discourse and Politics



This introduction will be used to address the terms in which the thesis is organized. This will not be an exhaustive theoretical exposition but will establish working definitions of discourse and politics intended to direct a reading and make visible the general parameters within which the thesis approaches its concerns.

I: Discourse

I have used the term 'discourse', despite the problematic variety of meanings it has gathered and its current unhelpful ubiquity, to signal a particular way of working¹. To speak of discourses of populism and democracy is to mark a way of selecting materials, of according them a status, and of detailing their use that is different from the pursuit of ideal forms of populism and democracy that we might find in an orthodox history of political thought or the quest for an original cause underpinning social order we might find in a study of a nation's political culture². In other words, discourses are not the expression of thoughts, subordinate to and the clothing of consciousness, nor the immaterial representation of a separate 'real' world of political forces. Discourses do not name, or fail to name, underlying political realities; our scope is not that of positivist political science, nor that which impedes it, ideology. Discourses are part of the political realities we have at our disposal to investigate. The general sense of discourse as speaking and writing is not inappropriate here, and what is often profitably pursued as the history of political thought would be better named the history of things said and written.³ But clearly,

simply altering words is not sufficient. I shall draw on Michel Foucault's work to more precisely define the meaning of 'discourse' I wish to mobilize.

A discourse can be described as a systematic ordering of concepts.⁴ That systematic ordering is not secured or explained by any general theory of discourse, be it conceived as discourse's reference to and representation of a pre-discursive real, or discourse's enactment of invariable and universal rules or linguistic deep structures. Such negations are forced upon me by the commonsense, as well as the more specialized understandings of 'discourse' - the price to be paid for persisting with a contested term. In this vein, another move displacing philosophy or linguistics as the master key to 'discourse' is to note that the ordering of concepts does not form the basis for a grouping of linguistic units, logical units or performative utterances each matched with a stable meaning. Rather, we need to think in terms of statements.

The statement is defined, not "as a unit of a linguistic type (superior to the phenomenon of the word, inferior to the text)" but as

an enunciative function that involve[s] various units (these may sometimes be sentences, sometimes propositions; but they are sometimes made up of fragments of sentences, series or tables of signs, a set of propositions or equivalent formulations); and, instead of giving a 'meaning' to these units, this function relates them to a field of objects; instead of providing them with a subject, it opens up for them a number of possible subjective positions; instead of fixing their limits, it places them in a domain of coordination and coexistence; instead of determining their identity, it places them in a space in which they are used and repeated (Foucault, 1974:106, emp.added).

Discursive concepts and objects emerge in the 'correlative space' of the statements: that is, they are produced in and by

the use and repetition of determinate statements. Describing a discourse as composed of a group of statements can help us gain a sense of its materiality, its 'realness':

...the field of statements is not...a 'translation' of operations or processes that take place elsewhere (in men's thought, in their consciousness or unconscious, in the sphere of transcendental constitutions);...it is accepted, in its empirical modesty, as the locus of particular events, regularities, relationships, modifications and systematic transformations; in short...it is treated not as the result or trace of something else, but as a practical domain that is autonomous (although dependent), and which can be described at its own level (although it must be articulated on something other than itself) (Foucault, 1974:121-122, emp. added).

To speak of a discourse then is to speak of a practical domain which possesses its own historical particularity. Ian Hunter develops this sense of the practical nature of discourse:

to shift the usual meaning of the word 'discourse'... it no longer means a representation of the real but rather refers to deployments of statements, perceptual technologies, regulated activities, institutional relations and so on (Hunter, 1983: 237).

All these ordered ways of organizing actions, utterances, objects, and concepts point to a discourse's status as a particular, material, repeatable organization of knowledge.

A discursive formation (comprised of an ordered group of statements but, in addition, their correlative objects and concepts, their enunciative modalities, and strategies of use of those statements, concepts and objects, taking the form of perceptual technologies etc.) is also determined in its relation to non-discursive formations (e.g., political events, economic practices and processes, institutions). The relation of the discursive to the non-discursive is not that between two discrete and homogeneous levels, as is precisely the case when discourse is understood as a representation of the real. The

non-discursive is not the interior or exterior of a group of statements, to be regarded as the motivating force behind discourse or that which is expressed in it. A discursive formation is always in specific kinds of articulation with the non-discursive formations which provide its horizons, yet these horizons are not the limits of a pre-discursive real, for they are always discursively organized. Perhaps the best account of this difficult point is given by Beverley Brown and Mark Cousins:

[w]hat falls outside a particular discursive formation merely falls outside it. It does not thereby join the ranks of a general form of being, the Non-Discursive...no general relation may exist between 'external events' and discourse. This makes it possible to investigate what in particular external events (which may include other discourses) can be given as an object of particular discourses, of what the connection between a discourse and those events can consist (Brown & Cousins, 1980:254).

To work with this sense of discourse then is to take up what Jacques Donzelot identifies in the Foucauldian project as "erasing the break...between the register of the real and that of theory"(Donzelot, 1979a:74). This is not, as an interest in discourse has sometimes been read from within political studies, ⁵ throwing out 'reality' or lapsing into a philosophical or linguistic idealism (hence the importance of purging 'discourse' of the defining claims of linguistics or philosophy). It is a rethinking of the elusive totalities of 'reality', 'the real' or 'society' into the more historically definite and limited conception of a field of historical, social institutions and the shifting relations between them, coupled with the recognition that institutions are discursively organized. Discourses are a resource of institutions, a mode of their operation, but also part of the means of their

constitution.

To ward off possible objections, I will add that this is not a confusion of the solidity of institutions and the social being they administer with some supposed weightlessness of discourse, but a dispensing with the philosophical designation of different ontological domains. We could say that what has disappeared with the emergence of this particular conception of discourse, and what we need to break the philosophical habit of searching for is the first principle which, depending on our predilection (theory or the real, discourse or institution), will locate us in an idealist or realist mode, or offer us the illusory solution of some phenomenological spiral between the two ontological domains. The discursive and the non-discursive can both be described as material while retaining a sense of their different modalities, and if we let this single term 'material' substitute for the traditional duality of 'ideal' and 'real' I suggest all we will miss is the institution of philosophy's superannuating task of administering the gap between the two.

What we may gain from this erasure of the gap between theory and the real, or discourses and institutions, is a new approach to the analysis of texts, as well as an extended sense of the material, historical determinations of our social realities. Donzelot notes that with the erasure of the philosophical break the "necessary conditions for condemning a text to either speak the truth or hide reality" also disappears (Donzelot, 1979a:74). In other words, the relation of a text to 'reality' is not that of a (more or less accurate) picturing or voicing in a separate place of an always already established order of things. Texts, and the discourses that shape them, can

be analysed for their delimited but definite role in actively making a 'reality' or state of affairs. For example, Donzelot describes the discourses, or "theory-programmes" of

[p]olitical economy, Marxism, Keynesianism...[as]... strategies, formulae of government, theories which explain reality only to the extent that they enable the implementation of a programme, the generation of actions...(Donzelot,1979a:77).

Or again, as Colin Gordon puts it,

[o]ur world does not follow a programme, but we live in a world of programmes, that is to say in a world traversed by the effects of discourses whose object (in both senses of the word) is the rendering rationalisable, transparent and programmable of the real (Gordon,1980:245).

My remarks about philosophical habits come from a wider critique of epistemology which has emerged from the work of Foucault, Wittgenstein, Hindess, Hirst, and Hunter, among others.⁶ This critique consists of recognizing particular historical epistemologies as 'theory-programmes' with real effects, but of rejecting their claims to constitute the singular, universal truth of 'how we know' and to name "universal necessities in human existence" (Foucault quoted in Martin, 1988:11). Thus, the particular historical-transcendental structure of nineteenth-century philosophy⁷ which dominates the epistemological field of modern Western thought is questioned as anything other than an accepted, institutionalized and powerful organization of knowledge, constructing, but not expressing, epistemologies and ontologies.

Briefly, this epistemological field provides for the organization of particular knowledges (e.g., a populist conception of the State) under a theory of knowledge in terms of a relation of consciousness in which the subject of knowledge (or knowledge process) corresponds to, or

assimilates, the object of knowledge. Particular historical knowledges are thus brought under the criterion of the general division of subject and object (or noumenon and phenomenon) in which the concept of knowledge is founded and the necessary knowledge relation in which the two distinct ontological realms ('thought' and 'being') are assimilated. In other words, an epistemological relation forms both the 'basic concepts' from which all others are logically derived and the knowledge relation which all subsequent forms of relation must mirror.

The point to be made is that this epistemology is a particular discursive form holding no necessary dictate over the form of other possible discourses. Other discourses need not be thought of as exemplifying philosophical truths, but as determinate practices with no necessary relation to philosophical discourse. The Foucauldian problematic provides us with a field in which to analyse statements - their relations, meanings, uses, effects - free of the epistemological claims that organize these statements as a mirror of a general conception of knowledge and prescribe the possible forms of 'being'. In the Foucauldian problematic the meanings, relations, uses and effects of discourses cannot be read off from an epistemology. Knowledges can never be recalled to a single, general form of knowledge. An epistemological discourse is a set of statements whose effects do not flow from their 'true representation' of ontological realms of thought and being; rather their particular effects - among them the division of the field of knowledge into the 'logical' and the 'concrete', the 'ideal' and the 'actual', or the 'theoretical' and the 'real' - are produced by the repetition of the particular organization of statements called 'epistemology'.

Thus, when we say 'we know x', this statement cannot be interpreted as expressing, fundamentally, another level of operations which is the assimilation of one ontological realm by a different ontological realm. Saying 'we know x' means we have repeated the specific rules or the regularized set of statements that have as their correlate 'x'. It means we have repeated the set of practical procedures required to produce the knowledge-effect 'x'.

This excursion into what perhaps look like exotic philosophical concepts, but which in fact underpin familiar and commonsense ideas about, for example, experience as a privileged means of knowing our world, will have practical returns for my investigation of populism and democracy. What is at stake is the status of, for example, populist ways of 'knowing politics', or of understanding social relations of power. Is a populist understanding of politics an adequate (or inadequate) assimilation by consciousness of an ontologically authored arrangement of being, or is it the practical operation of reiterating an ordered set of statements within a determinate ensemble of discursive and non-discursive relations?

In the first case, our options can only be that populism is or is not an accurate naming of what actually happens. The problem here is not with the demand for empirical evidence, but the philosophical poverty of conceptualizing the 'what actually happens' as if it were a stable unity to be understood rightly or wrongly by different consciousnesses, and as if it had a self-evidence (but actually given only to 'master' discourses) that would enable a final adjudication between these different understandings.

In the latter case, we must accept the fact of the populist understanding as and when it occurs and treat it not as unearthing (or failing to unearth) the truth of politics, but as enunciating a particular historical rationality which governs the practices of one present form of doing politics. Crucially, as a practical operation helping to constitute 'populism', it can be the site of a useful intervention, unlike the consciousness which has or has not correctly assimilated how things ontologically are. The understanding is part of 'what actually happens', and what actually happens is multiple, shifting, a surface of complex relations, objects, events and practices, yielding to no general description, possessing no original or final transcendental form.

Finally, this use of the concept of discourse and the associated arguments which it registers, marks a continuity with earlier work (Greenfield, 1983, 1984), which dealt with the 'discursive politics of psychoanalytic theories'. While there is clearly little link between the object of that work, psychoanalytic theories, and the objects of this, populism and democracy, the earlier work's concern to replace various essentialisms of 'the subject' with differentiated and historically specific notions of subjectivity has its parallels in what will emerge in Chapters 2 and 3 as the need to question and replace essentialisms of 'the people' as social subject.

Similarly, the notion of discursive politics, as well as usefully limiting the concept of discourse, offers the opportunity to outline the conception of politics with which this thesis will work. To talk of the discursive politics of psychoanalytic theories delimited notions of the political to

discursive practices and the effects in the social domain to which they are linked. These effects are the production of the truths by which people govern themselves and others⁸ within determinate social relations of power.

II: Politics

Discursive politics finds its place within the concept of a 'micropolitics', which in turn shifts the concept of politics from the limited sense of party, parliamentary and bureaucratic politics to the wider deployment of power relations. Power relations are continually negotiated between individuals or different social groups (classes, genders, races, sexualities, ethnic groups, religious and regional affiliations, generations, institutional populations etc.) operating in and between different institutional sites (e.g., the workplace, the household, the family, the media, the school). It is to this ongoing struggle and negotiation, perhaps but not necessarily conscious, in shifting circumstances, and involving particular practices, agents, institutions, calculations and outcomes, that 'political' will refer in the thesis. While this conception excludes politics from no area of social life it should not be thought of as squeezing the sense out of every other category, and eventually itself, as though its essence was the tautology of the slogan 'everything is political'. As though politics had an essence, or universal form. Rather politics - the negotiation of power relations - will always be in a determinate relation to something else; an economic practice, an aesthetic question, the administrative and welfare techniques of the social domain.⁹ Power relations are

coextensive with, not exhaustive of, social relations. Thus politics is limited by the particular forms to which it is articulated; not circumscribed by another essence (human nature, sexuality, the economy) as in some other conceptions.

An historically specific politics

Further distancing us from visions of a universal form or essence, the deployment of power relations on which this broad definition of politics is based is a particular historical deployment, and one which constitutes one of the generative sources of our 'modernity'. This historical deployment of power relations is the seventeenth century emergence of a liberal form of 'government' which, rather than connoting, as it does today, 'the State', refers to technologies of power that provide "a perpetual and detailed attention to the cares and/or political-economic potential of a population". Government thus partakes of a "new productive form of political rationality in which authorities may aspire to shape or reshape those under their rule" (Minson, 1985:105). Foucault has described these technologies of power involved in government as comprised of

...a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method. They were at work in secondary education at a very early date, later in primary schools; they slowly invested the space of the hospital; and, in a few decades, they restructured the military organization. They sometimes circulated very rapidly from one point to another (between the army and the technical schools or secondary schools), sometimes slowly and discreetly (the insidious militarization of the large

workshops) (Foucault, 1977:138).

These processes included, for example, the partitioning that began to order architectural practices away from the earlier principle of the general 'enclosure' of heterogeneous groups, and a prime example of which is found in Bentham's panopticon; or the exhaustive descriptions of the positions, directions and articulations of limbs in relation to each other and to any necessary apparatus into which acts such as marching, rifle-handling, writing were divided and the resulting economy of movement used to form in the soldier on parade and the student at his desk their respective capacities. Such processes constituted an administration of bodies through the detailed regulation of place, time and movement. This administration invests supervised, serialized bodies (i.e., bodies individuated and ordered in a series) with constitutive ¹⁰disciplines. Thus bodies are made useful, both as individuals, but also at the level of groups or classes of individuals because the characterization of the individual is accomplished within the ordering of a given multiplicity. They are useful to the degree that the serialization of successive activities, accomplished by the serialization of space, makes it possible to accumulate time and activity in the form of the individual where it can be re-discovered, "totalized and usable in a final result" (Foucault, 1977:160), that is, as a capacity or competence. This 'docile' or disciplined body is not the body of a slave, to be appropriated, nor the body of the servant, caught in a crudely differentiated and non-analytical relation of general domination more characteristic of the social organization of, for example, a feudal system. Rather, it is a body with technically determined capacities whose subjection

increases not as it is deprived of its power but according to the increase in its skills. The individual produced in this technology of power is also knowable, and has a meaning that is determined in a network of knowledge relations made possible by the operation of a power that relies not on the visibility of the body of authority in ceremony (the king and court), but on the continuous visibility to itself of the governed population in the form of individual bodies subject to a constant surveillance, assessment and correction of their locations, gestures and activities.

This administration of individual bodies (or of 'life') Foucault has called an 'anatomy-politics' at the level of the disciplined individual and a 'bio-power' at the level of the population. These forms of power place certain pressures on political analysis. Analysis is no longer sufficiently well-served by "the common tendency to construe political forms in terms of the language and imagery of law" (Minson, 1985:41) which throws up as the key problems to be addressed "(i) the identity of the dominating forces (who rules?), and (ii) the repressiveness and (lack of) legitimacy of their rule" (Minson, 1985:43). This tendency to privilege the language and imagery of law, that is, to treat the central point of power as the enunciation of the law and the operation of taboos and deduction (the seizure of things, time, bodies and life) through the activation of the binary system of the licit and illicit, the permitted and the forbidden, operates as a 'juridico-discursive' model of power. Power, in this model, operates through the allegedly singular mechanism of the law and the enforcement of its supposedly scarce resources (these being the imposition of lacks and limits), and has as its only

acknowledged effect, obedience.

Now, whether the juridico-discursive model provides an accurate or sufficient account of the law is highly questionable. Both Jeffrey Minson (1985:83-91), Paul Hirst (1986:50-1) and Beverley Brown (1982?) provide solid argument that it does not. The legal regulation of conduct takes forms other than the simply prohibitive, as European sumptuary laws concerned with the minutiae of personal behaviour attest. On the one hand, this does not impede Foucault's critique of the model as a conception of power that has dominated its analysis in Western societies from the Middle Ages to the present day. In fact, it could be said that Hirst's, Minson's and Brown's politically enabling approach to law makes use of the Foucauldian insistence on "an analysis which focuses on the means and conditions of [the] exercise [of forms of power].., productive of a range of intended and unintended effects" (Minson,1985:44) in their treatment of law as a particular and variable form of power.

On the other hand, the demonstration of the limits of the juridico-discursive as an account of practices of law draws attention to a problem in Foucault's work, pertinent to readings or applications of it that stand or fall on the exactitude of its periodization and its tendency towards a certain historicism. This problem is that a "blindness to the significance of shifts within the law" (Minson,1985:89) results in Foucault at times erecting a bipolar logic in which a legal mode of power is pitted against a disciplinary mode of power. These opposing modes can then operate as the informing principles of a suspect periodization of pre-modern and modern societies; suspect, because posing a singular axis of

transition, and because attributing to both pre-modern and modern societies different, but essentially unified natures. In an unintended historicist outcome, modes of power are in danger of becoming the unifying, determining 'base' of societies.

Hindess and Hirst (1975) have cogently argued the problems of generalizing accounts of the transitions between forms of social organization and Hirst has said in criticism of Foucault's project, "there is no opposition between law and discipline". He adds, "as the author of The Birth of the Clinic and I, Pierre Rivière [i.e., Foucault] should know" (Hirst, 1986:50), acknowledging here that this is not a uniformly posited opposition in Foucault's work. Similarly, Minson refers to the "totalising implications of Foucault's work" as "only tendencies", which can be pared away from its "more rewarding dimensions" (Minson, 1985:83).

These more rewarding dimensions, which I am arguing can prove invaluable for political analysis, are found especially in the positive specifications of 'government' and the associated governmental technology of 'police', both of which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. These historical categories, while of prime importance to the organization of social relations in European and Western societies in the last four centuries, have had this general outcome not through any singularity of source or purpose. 'Police', for example, is marked more by a dispersion: as a type of detailed, formative attention to the good order and happiness of the members of the nation state, or territories like the German Lände and municipalities, it has no single institutional origin, but rather issues from a range of

institutions with different interests and targets (e.g., ecclesiastical, medical, municipal, state). Similarly, it operates to no single political effect, but has historically been, on the one hand, conservative of old social orderings, and, on the other, reformatory in constructing the new statistical object and political-economic resource of the population (Minson, 1985:102-106). What is important about this historical and institutional dispersion of 'police', embedded at different times and in different places in different political strategies, and securing different outcomes for different institutions, is that it undermines the image of a form of power unified by a teleological mission, ushering in a modern, essentially homogeneous capitalist era.

To move on from these cautions regarding Foucault's work, and for my purposes in this Introduction, these historical categories of government and police partake of a conceptualization of power as dispersed and productive: not a strength or property of a person, institution or structure from which it is meted out to disobedient subjects as punishment (and which could invest it with a teleology), but the name attributed to the multiplicity of force relations that are not imposed from above, but deployed throughout, immanent to, and constitutive of the formations of a social order. As for the law, legislative power is one point in "the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power ... always local and unstable" (Foucault, 1979:93), and is a power that cannot be overlooked as simply confined to repression in the name of a sovereign but itself requires examination in terms of its heterogeneous means, conditions and effects (e.g., defining

agents in terms of interests and capacities, as well as deducting time, life and wealth for illegalities).

As immanent to the formations of a social order, power relations are immanent to the forms of intelligibility of that order. But we should not think of this immanence in terms of a base of power and a superstructure of knowledge. This would be simply to reverse philosophy's account of knowledge as occupying a separate and more fundamental field from power which, as the routinely absented category in philosophy, is conceived as a corollary of the contingent and ephemeral world of politics that philosophy goes beyond (to ultimate reality) even if, as in Plato's writings, it is in order to establish the foundation of politics. Power is recognized by philosophy only as that which enslaves and incarcerates, silences and binds: truth, the province and object of philosophy, is by nature free. In philosophical discourse, power and knowledge are of different orders, and if they are related, it is only through an intervening agency such as the law conceived as the repository of truths composing a natural order and deviation from which, as error, activates a punitive power.

Foucault's work directs us to two things: the deployment of power relations understood as not only or necessarily punitive or negative but, as foremost and always, productive or constitutive; and to a formulation of knowledge not as the expression of a universal realm of truth but as the effect of certain conditions or differential relations which we can call knowledge-relations. Formulated in this way 'power' and 'knowledge' are not to be imagined as two discrete orders or natures but as the correlated effects of relations between bodies, techniques, architectures, discourses and so on.

Foucault writes:

Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal conditions of these differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play (Foucault, 1979: 94).

This intimate nexus between power and knowledge, where throughout the social domain we encounter knowledge always constituted in relations of power and vice versa, provides us with another way of thinking of 'discourse' and 'politics'. Given this terrain of power-knowledge relations, if politics is the struggle around (and through) power relations then it is already embroiled in effects of knowledge generated by the operations of discourses. These discourses, in turn, operate not in the neutral epistemological space of representation, distanced from the battlefield of social actions, but as a particular (constitutive and administrative) part of this field.

Armed with this broad generic sense of politics (generic, because the Foucauldian analytic¹¹ of power outlined provides some basic directions for analysis; broad, to avoid defining in advance the form a particular political practice will take) and with this sense of the materiality of discourse, as well as alert to their linkages, we can move to a consideration of populism and democracy. Tentatively, we can say that populism and democracy name strategies for organizing the negotiations of power-knowledge relations. It is the objectives, foundations, calculations around and outcomes of these

strategies that will occupy us in attempting to specify and to differentiate them.

Rhetoric and ideology

Before turning to these matters it will be useful to define two further terms: rhetoric and ideology. In this work, rhetoric will be used similarly to discourse, sharing with it a sense of a specific materiality, and dispensing, like discourse, with philosophical and linguistic ideas of a governing subject and a separate, external field of reference. This entails, as for the concept of discourse, claiming a quite particular usage in the thesis for the term 'rhetoric' which, at least since late medieval times and the emergence of various ideologies of individualism, has been used pejoratively from within dominant emphases on authorial intention and/or representational accuracy. The major modern sense of 'the rhetorical' has been equated with a manipulative use of language, ¹² perversely disrespectful of the truth of what is being described, and calculatedly deceitful as to its author's true intentions. It is thus doubly counterposed to notions of 'the truth' and to associated ideas of the spontaneous individual expression of language.

If we remove rhetoric from the field of these preoccupations - as we relocated discourse from the field of philosophy to the terrain of power-knowledge relations - we can define it as practices of composition that are calculated and varied in terms of their effects on particular readerships or audiences. In this sense, rhetoric is associated with persuasive, eloquently instructive and political forms of

writing, speaking, making of images, correlation of image and sound, and so on. Rhetorical analysis is thus concerned not with uncovering lies, but with the conditions and effects of specific signifying practices. Rhetoric examines the conventions that enable the imitation, repetition and variation of textual strategies (e.g., uses of metaphor and allusion in advertising, practices of quotation, the rewriting of commonplace formulations) and to trainings in the competences to activate and use these conventions innovatively.

As intimated in the Preface, the thesis distances itself from the concept of ideology as false consciousness. This has been a dominant inflection of the general Marxist sense of ideology as socially determined thought. As false consciousness, ideology has the function of simply reflecting divisions in reality. That is, the system of ideas appropriate to classes is false because a class, given its position in the social totality, can have only a partial (hence distorted) idea of that social totality.

Structuralist Marxism challenged this function of ideology by redefining it as a set of regularly repeated, material practices, institutionally organized (in the family, school, media, etc.) which actively place people through a mechanism of recognition or interpellation in the positions from which they work in, and make sense of, society. Rather than being the (false) expression of a pre-existing, economically organized location, ideology locates the individual subject in a determinate relation to its real conditions of existence.

This formulation of ideology as relatively autonomous - not simply socially determined but also determining, or as

constitutive rather than repressive - was welcome in the space it made available for considering multiple sites of struggle. However, it continues to oppose ideology to some form of 'true knowledge' (e.g., science, philosophy, authentic existence, true consciousness, human rationality, objective knowledge). In contrast to 'true knowledge', ideology is characterized by its failure to grasp 'the whole picture', the totality of social relations or 'the essence' of human existence.

We can dispute, following the critique of epistemology and the questions it raises about any knowledge claiming to transcend the conditions of its emergence and thereby know a 'social totality', that science and ideology can ever be distinguished in this way. The effects of ideologies are characterized not by their failure to grasp any 'total picture' but by the particular material practices of which they are comprised. So the ideology of individualism, for example, comprises the teaching and reviewing practices, among others, that instil the habit of discerning an individual as the origin of a play, novel or poem.

As socially and practically organized knowledges, ideologies clearly bear a strong equivalence to discourses. In fact, no longer marked out by its (failed) relation to a social totality, knowable in a science, the term ideology, I would argue, names nothing that the term discourse cannot adequately signify. What is more, discourse names these things without the habitual pejorative connotations of ideology, situates them in the field of power-knowledge relations rather than simply knowledge relations or recognition, and can thus attend more usefully to their 'positivity', or material social effects. It is for this reason that the thesis will attend to discourses of

populism, rather than simply treating populism as an
'ideology'.¹⁴

NOTES

1. 'Discourse' is a contested category. Colin MacCabe (1978/79) notes that 'discourse' has been used to replace 'speech' and 'intention' as well as being constructed in opposition to the Saussurian concept of 'parole', while Pecheux, for example, displaces the langue/parole division with 'linguistic base/discursive processes' (Woods, 1977: 57-59).

The use of the term in the Foucauldian problematic is discontinuous with its use in linguistics (or attached to a 'linguistic base'), but corresponds to its use in, for example, the work of Hindess and Hirst. "Throughout this text we refer to theory as theoretical discourse. Why do we use this term? Theoretical discourse we shall define as the construction of problems for analysis and solutions to them by means of concepts. Concepts are deployed in ordered successions to produce these effects. This order is the order created by the practice of theoretical work itself: it is guaranteed by no necessary 'logic' or 'dialectic' nor by any necessary mechanism of correspondence with the real itself. Theoretical work proceeds by constant problematisations and reconstructions. Theories exist only as discourses - as concepts in definite orders of succession producing definite effects (posing, criticising, solving problems) - as a result of that order. Theoretical discourse, like discourse in general, speaking and writing, is an unlimited process. Classically, in epistemologies, theories have an appropriate form of order in which their relation to the real is revealed. They appropriate, correspond to or are falsified by the real. The limits of nature set their limits. Theory ultimately represents and is limited by the order of the real itself. In empiricist epistemologies, for example, theories take the form of categories translatable into definite observation statements. Our conception of discourse cannot be so limited" (Hindess & Hirst, 1977:7-8).

2. On the problems with the concept 'political culture', see Rowse's critique of Berzin's and Irving's essay on the formation of a populist egalitarian rhetoric and hegemony in Australia in 1840-60 as reproducing the idealism of bourgeois political culture theory in formulating yet another 'myth of origin' (Rowse, 1978a:20-22).
3. 'Things said and written' are the discourses, susceptible to their own rules of formation and transformation, that a society produces along with - that is, in determinate relationships to - all else that it may produce (See Foucault, 1978: esp. 14-18).
4. As a systematic ordering, it follows that "not everything which is said, written or broadcast falls into some discourse or another" (Minson, 1985:123).
5. For example, see Geras (1987) and Meiksins Wood (1986).
6. For example, see Hirst on the problem with Althusser's

epistemology in the course of his critique of E.P.Thompson's The Poverty of Theory, especially, "that point (the condition of the knowledge-being relation) at which all epistemologies degenerate into silence, incoherence or dogma" (1985:69), and, "[t]o ask for the 'origin' of knowledge is to pose a problem of infinite regress" (1985:70).

Hunter also argues against epistemological accounts of literature, on the failure of epistemology to account for the diversity of knowledge or forms of writing, differentiated according to the practices or technologies that constitute them. "To carry on with Wittgenstein for a moment, we can say that the problem with epistemological concepts like 'representation' is that they organise accounts of language around a paradigm or essential case... The types of relation that exist between the dissemination of forms of writing (on the one hand) and social organisations, individual actions, bodily feelings and sensitivities, historical events etc. (on the other) may simply be too various to be covered by a term like 'representation'" (1984a: 406-7). And, further on Wittgenstein's contribution to this argument, "[i]n place of the empty gesturing to experience, the subject and to representation Wittgenstein provides a careful and piecemeal description of some of the innumerable 'special methods', the mastery of which determines what we can count as 'experience' or 'representation' under certain circumstances. The important point is that the formation of these procedures into technologies - the deployment of notations, the utilization of biological faculties, the mastery of perceptual routines, the forms of connection to 'things' etc. - is a piecemeal practical achievement of forms of social organisation. It makes no sense to posit a single principle for the organisation of capacities, the subject (whether conceived as an unfettered consciousness or as the surface effect of deep structures) because the forms of social organisation are not governed by any single general (epistemological) relation between 'language' and 'the world'" (1984a:427).

7. This historical-transcendental structure is established with the concept of the constitutive subject of Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy. Kant's philosophy is that knowledge which undertakes, and claims to achieve, the task of becoming transparent to itself. The "eternal and unalterable laws" of reason on which this 'self-reflection' is made possible, are laid down in the primordial category of consciousness, the constitutive subject (Kant,1973:9). While the Cartesian subject is a substance, the Kantian subject is a pure or empty category, a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts.

This independent and free subject is outside time and is the alleged ultimate condition of experience. Kantian philosophy describes how what is given to the senses belongs to our experience (to what we can be aware of, or to the intelligible world) by virtue of the constitutive role of the subject in conceptualizing and shaping the

contents of the sensible world. With the constitutive subject, the figure of 'man' that underpins the human and social sciences is properly established. Man, as metaphysical entity, as a pure form, emerges in advance of and ordering his historical conditions. 'History' is conceptualized as a simple fact-gathering exercise whose limits are supplemented by a sovereign subject and universal method - the key to the transcendence of empirical events. History becomes the narrative of human aspiration which, given in the form of the pure or constitutive subject, remains always the same. The subject strips thought of its historic dimension, which it equates with superstition (i.e., whatever cannot be deduced from the subject), and constructs a history in which it is the sovereign principle, as well as the object. Thus, in a history of philosophy the constitutive subject is found even in its empirical absence, as that which has yet to come into being. The absence of the subject, as the universal form of knowledge, is made unthinkable. Thus we inherit the structural bi-polarity of the historical/empirical and the transcendental, or the phenomenal and the noumenal, which limits analyses to repeating the formal moves of this philosophy.

8. In the case of the discursive politics of psychoanalytic theories these truths help regulate what is to be known and spoken of about our selves, subjectivities, consciousnesses and unconscious, sexualities, other related conducts, and so on. Clearly, the truths (as well as the sites and rules governing their production and consumption and outcomes) that are generated by discourses of populism and democracy will be quite different.
9. See Donzelot on 'the social' as a particular sector of recent emergence (1979 & 1988).
10. These may take the form of, for example, medical or military disciplines, or, as in the following quotation detailing a gymnastics of writing, a pedagogic discipline: "[g]ood handwriting, for example, presupposes ... a whole routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to the tip of the index finger. The pupils must always 'hold their bodies erect, somewhat turned and free on the left side, slightly inclined, so that, with the elbow placed on the table, the chin can be rested upon the hand, unless this were to interfere with the view; the left leg must be somewhat more forward under the table than the right. A distance of two fingers must be left between the body and the table; for not only does one write with more alertness, but nothing is more harmful to the health than to acquire the habit of pressing one's stomach against the table; the part of the left arm from the elbow to the hand must be placed on the table. The right arm must be at a distance from the body of about three fingers and be about five fingers from the table, on which it must rest lightly. The teacher will place the pupils in the posture that they should maintain when writing, and will correct it either by sign or otherwise, when they change this position' (La Salle, Conduite...,63-4). A disciplined body is the

prerequisite of an efficient gesture" (Foucault,1977:152).

11. It is important to stress that Foucault elaborates what he calls an analytic of power and not a theory. By this choice of terms he insists on the historical orientation of his treatment of power, or as Minson puts it, "he [Foucault] has never attempted to develop a general social theory of power. His aim has rather been to describe the origins and development of a particular class of social-cum-historical events [the human sciences, technologies, and associated agencies of investigation, regimentation and advice-giving] in terms of power" (Minson,1985:44).
12. Dick Leith and George Myerson note "the widespread Enlightenment assumption that Rhetoric is a special, and slightly underhand, use (or abuse) of language" (1989: xiv).
13. See Paul Corcoran's sustained examination of rhetoric, in both its historical and contemporary forms, as a technology of political language. "An 'old' rhetoric of oratory contrasts with a powerful 'new' rhetoric which has at its disposal an array of communication techniques and an unlimited range of audio-visual materials to use in affecting an audience. This 'extra-linguistic' rhetorical communication is especially significant as it gradually becomes the standard for rhetorical performance in contemporary electoral politics" (1979:143).

Also see Terry Eagleton on rhetoric's attention to speaking and writing "not merely as textual objects... but as forms of activity inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers, orators and audiences, and as largely unintelligible outside the social purposes and conditions in which they were embedded" (1983:206). And see Colin Mercer on rhetorical analysis' ability to deal with practices of persuasion, incitement, consent, evaluation and conciliation in his discussion of entertainment as a rhetoric (1986:188-90).

14. It may seem perverse to raise the term simply in order to note its effective displacement. However, the volume of work invested in the question of ideology makes it strategically unwise to remain completely silent on the subject.

For an indicative discussion of structuralist Marxism's reworking of ideology, see Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies' On Ideology (1978). For a non-humanist critique of the structural Marxist conception of ideology, see Hirst (1979:40-74).

CHAPTER 2
Strategies of Analysis

Populism, as a variable and powerful form of political discourse and calculation, has received little analysis in comparison to the scrutiny of the generalized political formations of liberalism, socialism, communism and democracy. Still less of this analysis has addressed populism as first and foremost a political question. Repeatedly, the political problems populism throws up are treated as the second-order effects of a phenomenon grounded in areas of the social domain other than 'the political'. Yet populism is an insistent form of political essentialism with real effects on how we pose a range of political questions and devise strategies in the light of the answers they receive. The following pages outline some strategies of analysis of this political form whose effects for political analysis and calculation have yet to be widely and seriously considered.¹

In line with the Introduction's arguments against a philosophical approach whose job it is to formulate the essence or fundamental nature of one's object of interest, analysis starts not with the question 'what is populism?' but rather, 'what currencies has the term "populism" had?' In other words, rather than search for pure, intrinsic meanings called up by the term, I shall briefly trace the major ways this discursive concept has been used, circulated and repeated. It is these deployments that determine the value of the concept and establishing the particular currency or meaning of populism in this thesis will entail an evaluation of the politico-intellectual usefulness or outcome of these deployments. Clearly, such an approach forfeits the claim to producing the definitive sense of an abstract political model or a general theory of populism. But any such essentialist

attempts ignore or reduce the specific forms and differences of various populisms. They treat the politico-discursive relations in which these populisms are secured and which mark their specificities as somehow just given, in advance of their actual organization and production and the particular struggles in which they are negotiated and forged, by a general theory grounded in the apparently unquestionable authority of an epistemology of politics. This may provide us with a seemingly stable base for political interpretation or commentary but what we will find ourselves repeating is a general prediction of 'how struggles go' which may simply fail to provide the conditions of visibility for the forces and tactics involved in actual and possible struggles. And what can never be scrutinized from such a base are the particular struggles in which an imputed epistemological base is negotiated, forged and reproduced or transformed. In other words, according to these disabling conceptions, knowledge can only take the form of enlightenment by the unveiling of what already exists (as opposed to a material production), in relation to which 'politics' can occupy only the space of an exterior mechanics.

To borrow a phrase, in place of this "dismal plenitude" of the general theory (Foucault, 1978:13) comes the benefit of making visible some of the practical ways a relative and mobile discursive formation helps forge political realities.

I: The currencies of populism as analytical concept

The currencies of 'populism' have been multiple and contested. Allcock, writing in 1971, noted,

this word has already had many years of 'pagan'

life in which its users have attributed to it no special precision. Now 'conversion' is being followed by a period of catechism in which 'populism' is being examined rather more systematically to determine its suitability for admission as a technical term of social science (Allcock,1971:371).

In its 'pagan' phase populism has named specific and separate historical movements for social reform, in particular narodnichestvo in Russia in the 1870s, and the movement culminating in the U.S. People's Party in the 1890s. (It has been pointed out that the relation between the two movements owes more to the lexical translation of 'narodnichestvo' than to other criteria (Worsley,1969:248).)

Narodnichestvo was an early utopian socialist attempt to mobilize popular support by Russian intellectuals conversant with the writings of the utopian socialists Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon and Herzen and critical of Russia's autocratic Tsarist state and its brutal effects on the peasants, emancipated from serfdom in 1861 but simultaneously required to pay high redemption fees for farm lands they had historically considered theirs. Genuine reform of the Russian state was thought by these intellectuals, or narodniks (from narod signifying 'people', 'folk' or 'nation'), to be found only by 'going to the people', divining their wishes and working for their 'felt needs' of land and liberty to be won from the state and landowners. This movement 'to the people', advised by writers such as the anarchist Bakunin and at times taking the form of mass pilgrimages of students to the countryside (Canovan,1981:72-3), was to effect a unity with a 'people' conceived as united, natural, spiritual and only awaiting a faithful voice for it to provide a moral and social rebirth for the country:

[t]he people suffer much, their life is burdensome, they harbour deep hatreds, and feel passionately that there will soon be a change ... They are waiting not for ready-made works but for the revelation of what is secretly stirring in their spirits. They are not waiting for books but for apostles - men who combine faith, will, conviction and energy; men who will never divorce themselves from them; men who do not necessarily spring from them, but who act within them and with them, with a dedicated and steady faith. The man who feels himself to be so near the people that he has been virtually freed by them from the atmosphere of artificial civilisation; the man who has achieved the unity and intensity of which we are speaking - he will be able to speak to the people and must do so (Herzen quoted in Venturi, 1960:35).

This focus on the peasantry as the repository of the nation's virtue and wealth has earned narodnichestvo the description of agrarian populism, which it shares with the American movement and People's Party of the 1890s.

In the case of the People's Party, however, populist demands to break the power of the railroads, creditors and banks that controlled rural workers' lives through monopoly freight rates, and crippling mortgages worsened by the financiers' decision to maintain the United States on the gold standard in the 1870s, came from the ranks of the farmers themselves. The movement was based in the southern and western states, characterized by revivalist-style meetings, and a hostility to professional politicians who were seen as under the corrupting influence of the monopolies. By the middle of 1890, such meetings, a National Farmers Alliance and the failures of extra-governmental attempts to break market monopolies had led to the formation of the People's Party. The "great common people" of the United States (Hicks, 1961:160), honest and united (though "[t]he radical alliance between rural and urban producers never came to much" (Canovan, 1981:42)), was invoked as both constituency and orators:

[t]he farmers, the country merchants, the cattle-herders, they of the long chin-whiskers, and they of the broad-brimmed hats and heavy boots, had ... heard the word and could preach the gospel of Populism ... Women with skins tanned to parchment by the hot winds, with bony hands of toil and clad in faded calico, could talk in meeting, and could talk straight to the point (Barr quoted in Hicks, 1961:159).

With some electoral successes at State level but an inflexibility that denied it the avenue of strategic compromise, the People's Party's failure in the 1896 Presidential Election signalled its eventual demise.

While we are noting these historical movements to which the term 'populist' was first applied, it is appropriate to add a related current of influence, if not quite movement, that was having a significant and long-lasting impact in Australia at the same period. Peter Love has documented how "[t]he People's Party in the United States was regarded as something of a model for the emerging Labor Party in Australia" (Love, 1984:9), and traced the circulation of the American populists' analyses and rhetoric in the Australian radical press of the 1880s and 1890s.

Beyond these relatively straightforward descriptions of historical movements, the diagnosis of what exactly it is that is being labelled 'populist' runs into considerable debate. One important strand in this debate understands populism as the name correctly given to the phenomenon caused by the social dislocation and economic variances engendered by shifts in socio-economic formations (Stewart, 1969). This general position provides the conceptual framework for a number of influential analyses. For example, Third World populism has been treated as an effect of imperialism (Worsley, 1969), the United States

Populists as a response to monopoly capital (Hofstadter,1969), and the narodnichestvo to an imminent industrialization (Walicki,1969a). One branch of this form of analysis is the traditional marxist rejection of populism as a 'false consciousness' of socio-economic conditions which, it argues, can only be properly expressed in terms of class struggle. A local example can be found in the work of Humphry McQueen.

Amongst McQueen's interests, like Love's, are the populist influences dominating early labour politics in Australia. These include the popularity and tour of Henry George, an American populist extolling the physiocratic idea of land as the source of all wealth; the associated 'single-tax issue' and call for some version of a rent on land which would either restructure society or, equally, render such restructuring unnecessary; and the longer-running support for land reform. This latter McQueen sees as springing from "peasant faith in land; Utopianism; and an abundance of untilled acres" (1971:147). In the place of "the coherent critique [of capitalism] which only Marxism can offer" (McQueen,1971:198) was a populist campaign to establish a yeomanry, in which "the people were ... ideologically subordinate in as much as they were avoiding the problems presented by capitalism by attempting escape into rural harmony" (McQueen,1971:19). While McQueen notes the influence of Utopian fiction in this - for example, Edward Bellamy's populist Looking Backward from the Year 2000 in which a utopian, technocratic society has been formed peacefully because "[p]ublic opinion had become fully ripe for it, and the whole mass of the people was behind it" (Bellamy quoted in McQueen,1971:196) - such populism is presented as the more or less unmediated outcome of socio-economic phenomena. (In fact,

McQueen remarks in the "Introduction" to A New Britannia that one of "five major weaknesses" in the work is that "education, temperance, fiction and poetry have been made use of; they have not been examined" (1971:13).) The socio-economic formation that was to be 'Australia' - a transplanted capitalism whose ethos of acquisitive competition was bolstered by the discovery of gold, the apparent availability of land, and the social make-up of the "upward striving" emigrants (McQueen, 1971:18) - delivers up, at best, a populist mentality to 'the people', or working classes, as a false reflection of the divided (class) reality they inhabit and which only Marxism can properly grasp.

Something needs to be said about the usefulness of such treatments. While in no sense contesting the relevance of socio-economic questions to political formations such as populism I want to argue that socio-economic conditions cannot be used as the chart or 'base' from which we can read off necessary or 'superstructural' political effects such as the mobilization of general and unified support for political initiatives. When socio-economic conditions are used in this way we are told nothing, or at best given an inadequate account, of how such political effects are materially and specifically secured. Analysis of this type is thereby in danger of producing a disabling disregard for multiple, local (but not necessarily unconnecting) political struggles. Thus the diagnosis that what populism essentially is is the ideological and political registering of the fundamentally determining socio-economic conditions of a nation, community or region is problematic.

However, it is not only socio-economic analyses of populism of which this can be said. Similar indictments can be

made of what is provided in the way of political analysis by other interpretations of populism. If anything, their reductive concepts of 'the political' are less helpful than an understanding of it as an expression of the socio-economic.

From a political sociology perspective, 'populism' has been claimed as more properly describing a broader anthropological configuration inclusive of the narrowly 'socio-economic'. The 'part-whole' theory of peasant communities locates populism as the response of a peasant or rural population within a society undergoing modernization, or with differential rates of development. An early proponent of this approach is J.B.Allcock, who works with Kroeber's description of peasantries:

[t]hey constitute part-societies with part-cultures. They lack the isolation, the political autonomy and the self-sufficiency of tribal populations; but their local units retain much of their old identity, integration, and attachment to soil and cults (Kroeber quoted in Allcock,1971:380).

The tensions inherent in these "contradictory as well as mutually supportive" (Allcock,1971:380) relations between part-societies and the whole (e.g., between, on the one hand, small-town rural America and, on the other, "American society"/ "the 'Great Tradition' of American liberalism" / "American capitalism" (Allcock,1971:381)) generate the radical opposition to metropolitan elites that characterizes populist organizations and ideologies. The 'part-whole' concept of social totality is usually accompanied by the phenomenon of alienated intellectuals who mobilize this 'part' society against the dominant bloc of the 'whole' society. The 'part' society is available to be mobilized because of its structural position, and the agents of mobilization simply express the

reality of their own position: "these [populist] ideologies reflect very clearly the social situation of the men who produce them" (Allcock,1971:383). Thus populism, in such an account, is the political expression of a 'lesser developed' human culture and perhaps also of an 'uprooted' one.²

A fourth and influential currency of the term has been as the designation of a socio-psychological phenomenon. This sense emerged in rewritings of the intellectually and politically influential tradition of populism derived from the United States People's Party. These rewritings (Shils,1956; Kornhauser,1960; Reisman and Glazer,1964; Viereck,1964) occurred in the context of McCarthyism, with its witch-hunts and anti-intellectualism being attributed to the 'innately populist mentality' of the American people. From being perceived as a reservoir of essentially democratic and reforming sentiment, populism came to stand as the expression of the irrationality, anti-liberalism and superstition of 'the masses'. For Kornhauser, for example, "[p]opulism is cause as well as effect in the operation of mass society" (1960:103), and legitimates standards which are both unclear and "may change abruptly and unpredictably as in fads and crazes" (1960:104). These rewritings were made possible by a discipline of political science influenced by psychologizing doctrines of behaviouralism, theories of mass society and of elites, and reproducing the socio-psychological analyses of Nazism and Italian fascism as manifesting a social pathology utterly distinct from the social 'health' represented by liberal individualism.

At odds with and in response to the analyses of populism

in the McCarthy period and as the psychological matrix from which McCarthyism issued, the term has signified a particular political philosophy which has declared populism as the grass-roots discovery of what democracy means. Manifestoes of populism emerged in the context of 1960s and '70s counter-cultural radicalism linking it to radical democratic traditions and calls for a 'participatory politics' to replace the 'politics of power' and hierarchical social structure organized under the institutions of 'elitist democracy' (Pranger, 1968; Tallian, 1977).

II: A political currency

To these definitions of populism can be added another which I propose as at least naming the area to be investigated if we are to treat populism as, among other things, a political problem. That is, a problem not only of economic structure, or of a society's 'stage of development', but also of the negotiation of power-knowledge relations between different groups, although clearly the former conditions will be involved in any conjuncture in which this occurs. Populism can serve as the name for any strategy or discourse which deploys as central the concept 'the people', and in which it takes the form of a unified essence, that is, a given, natural entity. The way in which this essence is presented will vary in particular historical statements, as more or less directly expressive of any, sometimes several, of the phenomena described in the knowledges listed above; a stage of development (sociology), a class position (economics), an evolutionary development (history), a human nature (anthropology), a mentality

(psychology), common sense (philosophy). As well, the category 'the people', being presented as an essence, is characterized in populism by reference to that which it is not. What 'the people' is not, or what it is defined against, can be the entity 'the state', or big business, or any other power elite. Finally, to define populism in terms of a discourse in which an essence is central, has the advantage of encapsulating the recognition that that 'essence' is a social construct. The objects of a discourse do not animate it from the outside, but emerge with the practical techniques of organizing, relating and dispersing the statements that comprise it. The 'essence' is always presented in specific historical statements.

To make the central feature in my definition of populism a particular type of discourse, or ordering of statements, may be to court criticism. For many who have undertaken the study of populist movements this will seem a weak and limited, or perhaps too loose, basis for identification and explanation of actual political groupings and actions. No doubt it will be objected that I am confusing one element of populist movements for their entirety, or one derivative feature of their nature for their generative source, and am choosing in discourse a particularly epiphenomenal feature at that.

In defence of this choice I make two points. First, my interest is not restricted to formally constituted, self-avowed or historically documented populist movements or bodies. I am as much interested in the less visible fortunes of political rhetorics, and will argue that these do not need to be solidified in a movement to be recognizable as populism, capable of effects and worthy of analysis. It seems to me that to argue the contrary, that is, to treat a discourse invoking

'the people' as nothing more than 'mere rhetoric' which in itself is no guarantee of the existence of populism, or more accurately, of a populist movement, is to overlook the specific weight of discourses. As I have said in Chapter 1, discourses are part of the political realities we have at our disposal to investigate.

Second, I would argue that a populist discursive formation is central to any other form that we can recognize as populist. By attending to the set of statements about 'the people' and about the power elite to which it is opposed we may be able to trace, not the 'cause' of populist movements, but part of their conditions of emergence.

As this approach is central to the thesis' discussion of populism, some elaboration on its choice is appropriate. I will do this by comparing it to a related but different approach taken by John Richards, in his considerations of North American and, in particular, Canadian populism.

Like me, Richards finds problems with socio-economic definitions which treat "populism as the political expression in an age of industrial capitalism of marginal classes...caught between the working class and bourgeoisie" (Richards,1981:6). These problems are present in C.B.Macpherson's analysis of populism in Alberta (1962), which Richards critiques. As Richards outlines it, Macpherson describes "prairie populism" (Richards,1981:12) as deriving from the dominance in Alberta of petit-bourgeois farmers and their ideology of independence coupled with their actual dependence on external capital.³ This ideology is said to give rise "to a common outlook better described as the absence of class consciousness and the

presence of a false consciousness of society and of themselves" (Macpherson,1962:225). Populism is thus the upshot of false consciousness of socio-economic conditions. Richards attacks Macpherson's identification of the socio-economic base for populism ("Macpherson seriously overestimates the homogeneity ... in terms of class composition ... within Alberta" (1981: 13-14)) and, allied to this, his neglect of the political work necessary to make the populist organizations of the United Farmers of Alberta and Social Credit viable ("Macpherson's essentially Leninist conception of populism leads him to underestimate the extent to which both the UFA and Social Credit effected interclass and interethnic alliances..." (1981: 14)). In other words, populism cannot be reduced to (the false recognition of) a socio-economic reality. As Richards writes, while "a concern with the petit bourgeois origins of many populist movements is not misplaced" it is insufficient to identify "the constellation of shared characteristics which prompts both political participants and observers to refer to populism" (1981:6).

Similarly, Richards disputes the plausibility and usefulness of Lipset's account of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan in which he presents a traditional/modern dichotomy as the cause of its populism. He is skeptical of accounts which would reduce the political to a necessary register of another instance (the socio-economic, an anthropological stage, the social psyche), and refers to populism as "a set of political phenomena inadequately encompassed by other concepts" (Richards,1981:5). Accordingly, Richards looks to an alternative definition of populism used, as he notes, by, among others, Ernesto Laclau and based on a

particular concept of ideology. As a theorist who works with apparently similar concepts of discourse and ideology to mine, Laclau's analysis of populism and radical democratic politics will receive close attention below. For the moment, it is enough to note that the Laclauian conception of ideology that Richards adopts is quite different from the 'false consciousness' that, in Macpherson's diagnosis, marks out populism as an ideology or a false political form (i.e., the expression of a class structurally incapable of "a fundamental critique of capitalist property relations" (Richards, 1981:12)). For Richards, Laclau's advance is that he "argues in the structuralist tradition that the association of particular ideological content with specific classes is 'reductionist'" (Richards, 1981:21). An ideology is not an expression of a class and the divided reality that spawns it, but, as relatively autonomous from the economic instance which however, in the last instance, defines 'reality', helps shape up political phenomena such as populism. Richards takes up this active or defining sense of ideology and also Laclau's characterization of a populist ideology as one in which a 'people/power bloc' contradiction is central. While this sense of ideology is not identical with the thesis' use of 'discourse', as Chapter 1 indicates and as I shall return to at the end of this chapter, it is sufficiently related to warrant looking at how Richards handles this approach.

In fact, Richards is wary of too great a reliance on this category of ideology and seeks to distinguish himself from Laclau by supplementing the focus on ideology with a definition of populism that includes its organizational form.⁴ Thus, the three necessary ingredients for any movement to be labelled

populist are:

- 1) the movement defines its base of support extremely broadly, implying that a specified collectivity of people can act politically in harmony despite potentially significant internal class, racial or geographic lines of demarcation, and furthermore, voluntary mass support must be a major, as opposed to perfunctory, determinant of the power of the political movement;
- 2) the political dialogue undertaken between leaders and led within the movement must be couched in terms of a subset of the ideas of the indigenous popular culture: elements of formal political ideologies enter the dialogue only to the extent the ideologies have thoroughly mingled with the popular culture; and
- 3) central to the movement's ideology must be the evocation of a network of concentrated political and/or economic institutions allegedly wielding unwarranted power, and as a corollary the movement's goal is wide disbursement of that power to the 'people' (Richards, 1981:5-6).

I shall refer back to these criteria, but first let us consider the rationale for adding 'organization' to 'ideology'. According to Richards, defining populism by ideology,

...encompasses too much. By defining populism solely in terms of ideology...one fails to provide adequate criteria to distinguish populist from other political movements, which, from Jacobins to Burkian parliamentarians, clearly possessed a theory of democracy, a concept of the 'people' and mistrust of certain forms of concentrated power, but which we would never want to call populist. Virtually all modern governments - from the People's Democracies of eastern Europe to military juntas in Latin America, and the opposition to these regimes - seek legitimacy by claiming to represent the will of the majority of the people. Should we then refer to populist elements within all political organizations? To do so trivializes the concept to a generalization about one component of contemporary public political discourse. It is for the observer to determine whether populist ideology and organization is central or marginal to the case at hand; only if central does it become potentially relevant to talk of populism (1981:7, emp.added).

Richards is concerned to avoid defining populism in such a way that it would overlap with "other political movements" and names those possessing a theory of democracy and "virtually all modern governments" as examples of the movements that would be

thus misrepresented. The need for a clear configuration, one which will rule out any such overlap (or carefully administer it, in the notion of a "'hybrid' variant" (Richards,1981:7)), is reiterated in the rejection of the option of recognizing "populist elements within all political organizations". To detach populist ideology (or, in the thesis' terms, discourse) from an identifiable political movement and note its wide dispersal is to trivialize the concept of populism. In other words, 'populism' is not an appropriate description of "one component of contemporary public political discourse". This is despite Richards' opening declaration of interest in populism as "a set of political phenomena" (1981:5,emp.added). These phenomena - among them populist "style", "tradition", "experience" (1981:16) and populist ideology - only earn the adjective 'populist' by their attachment to a populist movement or organization.

What then are the features of the populist organization? Returning to the first of Richards' "necessary ingredients", it is a mass organization, with an extremely broad base of support from a specified collectivity of people who are unified despite class, racial and geographic differences, and, to a major extent, this base is determinative. The second feature emerges in Richards' discussion of two points: the 'pure' and 'hybrid' variants of populism; and the relative tendencies of populist, social democratic and Marxist organizations to throw up and empower charismatic leaders. This feature is the role of a differentiated elite in the mass organization. A hybrid variant of populist organization has just such an elite, distinguished from 'the people' by background, discretionary power and its strategic and conscious use of populist ideology. The pure

variant is characterized by the absence of this defining opposition, by a lack of the differentiation that "transforms leaders into privileged elites" (Richards,1981:15). As for charismatic leaders "yield[ed] excessive power" (1981:15), Richards opines that populist organizations are probably less prone to them than others because of the skepticism and mistrust of differentiation that typifies them. If Richards does not talk of an outright antagonism of 'the people' to an elite within the populist organization, he does note the mistrust and suspicion that is, as it were, a preventative precursor to such an antagonistic relation.

Now, the interest for us in this fine detail is that this description of the hallmarks of populist organizations is made in the same terms outlined for a populist ideology, that is, a 'people'/power bloc opposition. Organizational form, the criterion Richards uses to delimit the dispersed recognition of populism that he is concerned will result from a definition based on ideology alone, is itself structured along the conceptual lines of that ideology. All that would seem to differentiate the two is the connotation of greater 'reality' generated by the term 'organization' as compared to 'ideology', which is to activate again, albeit unintentionally, the more familiar and pejorative sense of ideology. In fact, Richards more or less acknowledges this when he writes "[t]hese characteristics [which prompt reference to populism] refer essentially to certain political movements that emphasize in both ideology and practice the role of the 'people' as opposed to elites" (1981:6,emp.added). This separation of 'ideology' from 'practice' might raise questions about Richards' grasp of the structuralist Marxist tradition's reconceptualization of

ideology in terms of routinized material practices.

For my purposes here - to argue out a rationale for my own definition of and approach to populism - the point is not to recall Richards to a purely ideology-based definition, with the residual implications of 'ideology' as epiphenomenal to (actual) practice. (Even given a more rigorous following of Laclau's use of the term, it would still be problematic in its Althusserian legacy, as we shall see.)

It is, however, to suggest that the concept of a populist discourse as a basis of definition is different from and without the indicated problems of Richards' approach. Discourses entail particular material social practices and relations; they are the means of an institution's or organization's operation, shaping, for example, their rules of procedure, and do not exist as simply the 'language' an altogether more fundamental and larger 'reality', the organization, speaks. Using this definition and referring to Richards' "three necessary ingredients" (quoted p.41) we can see that a populist discourse (centred around the concept of a unified essence of 'the people', presented in variable forms, and characterized by its opposition to an elite, also presented in variable forms) could be argued to inform the areas covered in the three points. As Richards' first point states, in an organization shaped by a populist discourse, 'the people' is central to the organization and presented as unified (over and above any individual or social differences). The concern with the incorporation of indigenous popular cultures in Richards' second point, while not specified in my description of a populist discourse, is certainly accommodated by it in the notion of the variable ways in which 'the people' and the elite

are constructed. Lastly, the correlation of this description of a populist discourse to Richards' third point outlining a populist ideology is quite clear.

In other words, this proposed reworking is not intended to displace Richards' concerns with how populist organizations historically function, or even to dispute the scale he proposes for the identification of a populist movement:

[i]t is for the observer to determine whether populist ideology and organization is central or marginal to the case at hand; only if central does it become potentially relevant to talk of populism [as a movement] (1981:7).

But it is, nevertheless, more than an idiosyncratic preference for terms, populist discourse at once indicating the central and productive status of the concept 'the people' in populist rhetorics and organizations, and its provenance as a discursive concept (constructed but none the less 'real' for that). That is, 'the people' is neither relegated to the fiction of an ideological element, nor implicitly provided some more natural status as the functioning, but unanalysed basis of populist organizations. (Unanalysed because, if, as in Richards' argument, attention to populist ideology on its own can be dismissed as "trivializ[ing] the concept to a generalization about one component of contemporary public political discourse" (1981:7), then the category 'the people' is unlikely to be analysed in terms of its constitutive ideological conditions.)

There is something else that makes the differentiation of my approach from Richards' more than a rehearsing of the arguments for displacing 'ideology' with the thesis' conception of discourse. What are we to make of Richards' rationale for his manoeuvre of adopting but then needing to supplement ideology with organization as the basis of his definition of

populism? This is done, remember, to avoid judging populist movements "we would never want to call populist" (Richards, 1981:7). As much as Richards' article is intended as a qualified defence of populism in the face of the negative re-evaluations it received in the post World War II period, and as a qualified argument for its "significance for the organizational and intellectual development of the left within industrial society" (1981:22), Richards seems intent, in stating this rationale, on separating movements possessed of a theory of democracy, among others, from connotations of populism. It is just this demarcation, the clear separation of populism and democracy, that I would like to question, or at least question its status. A definition that will establish the discrete natures of populism and liberal or social democracy may be a convenient means for theoretically organizing the field of objects for disciplinary study. It may not be particularly useful if it renders invisible elements of modern political rationality that movements categorized as belonging to different parts of the political spectrum might share. I would suggest that an historically formed conception of 'the people' is one such element. Clearly, the centrality of such a conception and entity needs some documenting and argument, and this will follow in the next chapter. For the moment, its importance is indicated in choosing populist discourse as the basis of definition for populism.

The overlap of populism and democracy that this choice opens up, in their common appeal to and invocation of 'the people', is a feature of the political map that needs attention, not clearing up (and away). To cite some examples of disparate movements and governments that have been repeatedly

described as populist, the regimes headed by Mussolini and Hitler require analysis not as governments utterly distinct from those of the rest of Europe, but as possibilities thrown up in the same general field in which liberal democracies emerge. The same could be said of the Bjelke-Petersen state government of Queensland in relation to other Australian state and federal governments. The populist regimes are differentiated from liberal-democratic ones by the particular decisions, calculations and techniques that comprise them, and the particular social, economic and political conditions within which those are shaped up, but not by their occupation of different ontological domains of the political field.

One discussion of populism that usefully indicates the overlap and struggle between forms of populism and forms of democracy is Margaret Canovan's Populism (1981). Canovan's work of detailing populism as "a family of related ideas and movements, some of them contradictory to others" (1981:5) makes visible an overlap between theories of populism and theories of democracy in that they both locate sovereignty in 'the people', though the sense of this category may differ. Canovan's sense of this contestation for 'the people' between currencies of the term 'populism' and of the term 'democracy' is clear in the introduction to her description of 'Populist Democracy in Theory and Practice':

'[p]opulist democracy' sounds like a pleonasm. Since 'democracy' is widely supposed to mean 'government by the people', how could a genuine democracy be other than populist? But this minor linguistic oddity conceals an important point: for the ideals and devices of populist democracy arise precisely in political contexts where 'democracy' in some sense is officially accepted as a norm, but where dissidents feel that democratic practice does not live up to the promise of the name. Populist democracy consists of attempts to realize that

promise and to make 'government by the people' a reality (1981:173-174).

This contestation is of central interest in an intellectual-political consideration of populism, but Canovan is unable to pursue it because of the underworked nature of the category of 'the people' in her study. This category lies at the base of her approach, which is a rejection of attempts to formulate a general theory of populism. So far so good. But Canovan rejects the possibility of any of the theories of populism that she details (variations of an 'agrarian sociological' focus and a political science focus (1981:9)) functioning as a general theory not because she argues the inconsistency of providing a general theory or epistemological base for any politics; neither does she address the undeclared politicality of epistemology or the proclamation of general theories. She rejects it because she finds the theories of populism lacking in relation to the real-empirical populist forms against which she measures them. For Canovan, theories of populism are simply descriptive or explanatory, rather than constitutive, and political forms are expressive of pre-discursive 'real' entities which in the case of populism is 'the people', a slippery and questionable object she admits, but one which is amorphously centralized in Canovan's discourse as a force to be more or less well expressed in different populist political forms. This prevents Canovan from grasping fully both the politicality of theories of populism (that in many ways they produce the populisms she would measure them against), and 'the political' as producing effects in the social domain rather than as an effect of 'the real' (understood as distinct from historically produced realities, and functioning instead with the final authority and autonomy of the 'base' in base/

superstructure models of social totality).

Grounded in a phenomenological epistemology which operates in the text as a continual shifting between the political 'real' and political analyses in a search for a correspondence of the two, Canovan's work, while useful in the attention it pays to changing analyses, remains at the level of commentary. That is, while different forms of and competing accounts of populism are described, Canovan's expressive concept of the political and her own reliance on an unproblematized category of 'the people' puts a limit on the analysis she can offer of political rhetoric, organization and calculation.

What is not worked through satisfactorily by Canovan is that the rhetorical figure of 'the people' is not an existential guarantee of a political form but a category constructed and unified by the active material work of political discourses and strategies. Like 'the national', 'the popular', and 'common sense', such a category involves a work of unification which is specific in the way it outlaws or relegates differences, complexities and struggles between, for instance, classes, genders, races, forms of sexuality, ethnicities, religious affiliations, regions, generations. It is not enough to regard, as Canovan does, the invocation of 'the people' as a legitimation strategy for an administration if it is not recognized that this invocation is more than a 'merely rhetorical' flourish but the extension of, and made possible by, a political work of construction at multiple, networked sites throughout the social domain. It is these limitations that allow Canovan to treat populism, as a political form, as expressive of 'the people' and, thus guaranteed or 'explained' by its grounding in 'the real', to

make democracy a natural subset (rather than, perhaps, an historical relation) of populism. Thus populism is presented as covering the range from populist dictatorship (Nazism) to populist democracy (Switzerland), where 'democracy' is emptied of any other possible meanings than that of a specification of a particular populism. It is not the range accorded to populism here that is problematic - I have argued something similar - but its status. When populism is identified as an expression of an already assumed entity 'the people', then the senses of 'democracy' and 'dictatorship' are naturalized as particular manifestations of this entity.

Turning to another approach to the category of 'the people' as definitive of populist strategies and discourses we can usefully consider the work of Laclau, and later, of Laclau and Mouffe.

III: A competing currency

Ernesto Laclau, in Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory (1977), presents a theory of populism which is the most theoretically rigorous work done in the area. As Richards recognized, what makes his theory more useful than other theories of populism is that he deals with populism as a political and ideological question and does not simply reduce it to socio-economic, anthropological or socio-psychological causes of which it is taken to be the superstructural political expression or reflection. To do this, Laclau labours against repeating the class reductionism that weakens much Marxist theory. As a consequence, Laclau provides possibly the most plausible and complex accounts of Fascism and Peronism as

different populist forms.

He tackles the problem of class reductionism by arguing that a class has no pre-determined political or ideological content and by introducing what he calls a second objective contradiction of the concrete social formation to the fundamental class contradiction; this is the contradiction between 'the people' and the power bloc, or state. He specifies the category 'the people' further, in terms of 'popular-democratic interpellations' (how individual subjects are addressed and placed in non-class modes in the ideological positions from which they work in and make sense of the world). In other words, he addresses the process by which 'the people' is shaped up as a political subject.

With this system of dual contradictions determining the social formation and an extended and sophisticated concept of hegemony derived largely from a particular reading of Gramsci,⁵ Laclau describes a "double articulation of political discourse" (1977:167) which enables him to account for left, as well as right, populisms. Laclau argues that if individual ideological elements have no necessary class belongingness then, for example, 'the people' does not exist in 'the real' - an economic real - as antagonistic to a dominant ideology. That is, 'the people' does not exist as already and essentially tied to the interests of dominated classes because, having no necessary class belongingness, this category may equally be articulated by the dominant ideology. Class is specified not by any particular content, but as an activating principle.

Within this framework Laclau establishes the categories of democratic, popular and populist interpellations. Thus a democratic interpellation is constructed when the division

between the dominant and dominated, or the state and 'the people', is discursively organized as a set of differences and not as an antagonism. This ensures that the dominated classes are integrated into the power bloc and their own interests and resistances neutralized.

A popular interpellation is constructed when a discourse divides society between 'the people' and the state and this operates as a fundamental antagonism structuring the society. A populist interpellation is constructed out of the precondition of a popular interpellation when 'the people'/state opposition is presented as a dynamic point of confrontation. This is historically linked to a crisis of transformism, that is, a failure of neutralization of the dominated sectors.

It is somewhat difficult to separate the popular from the democratic in this argument and to see how the popular interpellation or ideology ever exists in its own right. However, its function is to provide a common basis for both populism of the dominant and of the dominated classes - left and right populisms. Thus, says Laclau, Hitler, Mao and Peron all headed populist regimes,

[n]ot because the social bases of their movements were similar; not because their ideologies expressed the same class interests but because popular interpellations appear in the ideological discourses of all of them, presented in the form of antagonism and not just of difference (1977:174).

What popular interpellations presented in the form of difference characterize are liberal-democratic parliamentary regimes with the discourses and practices of trade unionism neutralizing the revolutionary potential of popular interpellations. Laclau thus is prescriptive, insisting "there is no socialism without populism" (1977:196), and that,

[i]n this sense a 'socialist populism' is not the

most backward form of working class ideology but the most advanced - the moment when the working class has succeeded in condensing the ensemble of democratic ideology in a determinate social formation within its own ideology (1977:174).

Laclau's interest is therefore in populism as the breaking up of a prevailing class hegemony and the assertion of a different hegemony, where hegemony consists of articulating "different visions of the world in such a way that their potential antagonism is neutralised" (1977:161). Breaking through such an articulation of differences will consist of reversing this neutralization of antagonism in order to orchestrate and construct out of antagonistic ideologies a new articulation, governed by a new class principle. It is within this framework that Laclau analyses and accounts for the specific ensemble of ideological elements of German fascism and Peronism in a convincing and allegedly non-reductive way.

However, while I would concur with the plausibility of this account and agree that his theory of populism is more useful and less reductive than others, Laclau's theory is better taken as a good account of how populist calculations arise and are carried out in political strategies than as a general theory of populism (and which carries within it a general theory of democracy).

Firstly, his differentiation of populist socialism (which is where he locates a fully potentialized democracy) from authoritarian populism ultimately rests on taking a class framework as an objective determination of the social formation and therefore ultimately directive of political forms. As an 'objective' determination, a residue of Althusserianism scientism, class contradiction makes a problematic starting point for political analysis. This, let me hasten to add, is

said while firmly recognizing that 'class' remains one important way in which social struggles are made intelligible and negotiated in forms that challenge their habitual presentation in metaphysical terms and with their fundamental reference point 'the individual'⁶.

Secondly, 'the people', while not given an essentialist and static nature, is problematic in Laclau (a) because it is an abstract category before it is historically specified and constructed, and (b) because it can therefore be part of an abstract, universal and objective contradiction of 'the people' versus the state.

I will argue that there are different and more useful directions to be taken up around the category 'the people'. But it is appropriate to do this after considering Laclau's later work in association with Chantal Mouffe. The complexity of the arguments found there necessitates a somewhat lengthy exposition and analysis, and given that populism appears to be only tangentially an object in this work, this could at first seem an unnecessary detour. However, the conceptualization of politics, and especially the attention to the formation of political subjects that Laclau and Mouffe offer shares considerable common ground with the concerns and orientations informing this thesis: it is thus crucial to determine whether or not it provides the means needed to critically analyse populism.

In Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) the focus has shifted to 'hegemony' as the central concept. The emphasis on left-wing populism as a positive and integral component of

socialism and radical democracy has faded and the term populism makes an appearance only in relation to right-wing variants (1985:170).

Nevertheless, in Hegemony & Socialist Strategy we find a retracing of Laclau's earlier concerns. As indicated above, Laclau's interest in populism was as a configuration synonymous with the breaking up of a prevailing class hegemony and the assertion of a different hegemony, and both terms - populism and hegemony - serve as a means of raising and handling questions of the formation of political subjects and alliances amongst them. For example, how can 'the people' be made to function as a basis for an hegemony?

Does the conceptual shift entailed in this move - but a move that has not taken us so far from the earlier theorization of populism that we can simply ignore it - make good my critique of Laclau's ultimate reliance on the ontological status of a class framework? And does it thus provide us with a useful and non-reductive account of populism?

The answer is yes, and no. An examination of the way Laclau and Mouffe address problems with classical Marxism's epistemology and yet do not provide a workable materialist account of politics, bears not only on the conception of populism we might want to adopt, but also will serve as a further specification of the sense in which I will use the category 'politics' in later chapters.

As noted above, Laclau's retention of class as an objective determination of the social formation, and therefore the ultimate guarantor of the nature of political forms, becomes visible at the point in his theory where he attempts to

account for the difference between a populist socialism and an authoritarian populism. The problem with this retention is that it ends by vitiating his argument for political forms as an important site of struggle not finally reducible to another, ontologically secured and privileged site of determination. This is a not unfamiliar problem: it has been well documented as the eventual impasse set up by Althusser's otherwise productive concept of the relative autonomy of Institutional State Apparatuses from the relations of production.⁷

What we find in Hegemony & Socialist Strategy is a serious attempt to push beyond this problem, and thus establish a fully articulated theory of politics. Laclau and Mouffe propose a "new conception of politics" (1985:3) and generate it by focussing "on certain discursive categories" (1985:2). This allegedly allows them to break with Marxist theory's "monist aspiration to capture with its categories the essence or underlying meaning of History" and locate their theory of politics in a "post-Marxist terrain" (1985:4) - but one which, as they take pains to point out, is also post-Marxist, that is, a position reached through and in sympathy with Marxism.

One of the discursive categories that Laclau and Mouffe select for attention is the concept of 'society'. They argue that "[p]eopled with 'universal' subjects and conceptually built around History in the singular, [the classic discourse of the left] has postulated 'society' as an intelligible structure" and one based on the "ontological centrality of the working class" (1985:2). Working from the historical lessons of the "proliferation of struggles" (1985:1) which face political analysis in the 1980s (generated by the demands of feminists, ethnic, national and sexual minorities, ecological groups, the

anti-nuclear movement), and which can be read as an extension of the "autonomization of spheres" (1985:18) that led to the coining in 1898 of the expression the 'crisis of Marxism', Laclau and Mouffe argue the disaggregation of the concept of 'society' as a knowable unity or totality. Next, in contrast to Eurocommunist Marxism's historical response to this plurality of struggles via the concept of 'hegemony' as a means of managing and ultimately unifying this plurality under the authority of the party and Marxist science, Laclau and Mouffe set themselves the task of reworking the concept in such a way that it will enable them to account for the linking and intensification of struggles and the simultaneous formation of new political subjects and agendas, but without reaggregating or reunifying society.

This involves a rejection of the Leninist tradition of conceiving of a hegemonic relationship - that is, the relation "between the working class and the alien tasks it had to assume at a given moment" (1985:50) - as external to the class identity of its agents. Such a conception presumes class to be already given, in the relations of production, distribution and exchange, before any political work (i.e., the articulations, or expressions and linkages, of hegemony) is done. Thus, implicit in this Leninist view of hegemony is the 'logic of historical necessity', manifested in the leadership and unity of the working class, that provides the theoretical basis for a knowable, unified society; knowable in its present character and its position within the teleological 'stages' of history described in dialectical materialism. While the 'crisis of Marxism' saw this 'logic of necessity' progressively challenged and undermined by, respectively, a 'logic of spontaneity'

(outlined by Rosa Luxemburg), an emphasis on the autonomy of the political (as in Bernstein's revisionism), or the 'logic of contingency' (as Sorel's efforts to think the construction of revolutionary subjectivity are said to entail), the logic of necessity is never, argue Laclau and Mouffe, finally dislodged from Marxism. This displacing forms the task Laclau and Mouffe set themselves. Success here will also displace the problems entailed in the essentialist identity of social agents, and the knowability and unity of society, in short the range of discursive categories which render politics reducible to and the superstructural management of pre-given entities and conditions, rather than productive of these elements. As Laclau and Mouffe might say, politics in this view is confined to exist in relations of exteriority to elements secured elsewhere.

A break with such a reductive conception of politics is a project deserving of sympathy. But what becomes decisive is how Laclau and Mouffe shift the terrain of politics from that circumscribed by the interdependent concepts of the logic of necessity and essentialist identities. They do so by deploying the psychoanalytic concept of suture (1985:88). 'Suture' is used to modify previous conceptions of hegemony (hence "the hegemonic suture" (1985:47)): it will take them "in a direction that goes far beyond Gramsci" by allowing Laclau and Mouffe to develop "the social logic implicit in the concept of 'hegemony'" (1985:3).

What is this concept of suture? As well as meaning a 'stitching together', which fits with hegemony's task of articulating subjects, 'suture' names a 'structure of lack', and implies at the same time a 'filling-in'. It thus captures

the double movement allegedly found in the constitution of the subject in language, and it is this double movement that will now, for Laclau and Mouffe, characterize hegemony. The original province of this double movement is language, and language, in the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory Laclau and Mouffe draw on for this account of the subject and identity, is conceptualized as a chain of signifiers (essentially non-meaningful material sounds or marks) whose structure or nature is nothing, other than that they "should be articulated" (Lacan, 1977:152)⁸. Out of these articulations or relations, regulated only by the internal principles of language, certain 'anchoring points' form, and these are signifieds, meanings or identities. We commonly (mis)take these to be stable and the origin of the sounds or marks which we say re-present the original concept, giving us a picture of language governed by a pre-existing identity (the subject) to express its thoughts. What the Lacanian view of language and the subject works to demonstrate and claims to show is how these meanings and identities are constituted in the material flux of language, not constitutive of it. Further, their relation to that chain of signifiers (or 'discourse' in Laclau and Mouffe's usage of the term) is one of 'lack'. That is, the signified is not formed as a whole and irreversible presence, but, through the internal principles of language (metaphor and the more fundamental metonymy), is nothing but a moment in the signifying chain when one signifier 'occults' or masks another. The signified is thus like a real illusion and an apparent institution of sense (the 'filling-in' movement of suture), that can always be returned to the non-sense of the signifier (because of an original constitutive movement of the signifier that has installed a lack or wound at

the heart of the signified).

While meanings and identities therefore exist and are real, as a result of the conditions of their formation they exist as provisional, or, more precisely, as a structural-phenomenological dialectic of presence and absence. Translating this to the privileged meaning and identity we call 'the subject', Lacan writes, "[t]here is no subject without, somewhere, aphanisis [disappearance] of the subject, and it is in this alienation, in this fundamental division, that the dialectic of the subject is established" (1979:221).

This excursion into the complexities of Lacan's influential theory is made to indicate what kind of operations and assumptions Laclau and Mouffe install at the centre of their argument. While their elaboration of suture is made in a footnote, the centrality of the psychoanalytic conception of language as constitutive and primary in the constitution of the social is clear:

[s]ynonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations; instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:110).

It is from this view of language, or of linguistically defined 'discourse', as unceasing process, inexhaustible, that Laclau and Mouffe make their description of 'society' and of 'hegemony'. Society, or more precisely in their account, the social, is comparable to language: "[t]he social is articulation insofar as 'society' [as a fixed and self-defined totality] is impossible" (1985:114). The social is structured like a language. Similarly, hegemony is comparable to the articulating principles interior to language:

[h]egemonic practices are suturing insofar as their

field of operation is determined by the openness of the social, by the ultimately unfixed character of every signifier. This original lack is precisely what the hegemonic practices try to fill in (1985:88).

Like the interior principles of language, they are governed by no proper meaning, no proper content (i.e., no logic of necessity) which bears on their trajectory:

[i]f hegemony is a type of political relation and not a topographical concept, it is clear that it cannot either be conceived as an irradiation of effects from a privileged point. In this sense, we could say that hegemony is basically metonymical: its effects always emerge from a surplus of meaning which results from an operation of displacement. (For example, a trade union or a religious organization may take on organizational functions in a community, which go beyond the traditional practices ascribed to them, and which are combated and resisted by opposing forces.) ...our conclusion is that no social identity is ever totally acquired - a fact which gives the articulatory-hegemonic moment the full measure of its centrality...The openness of the social is, thus, the precondition of every hegemonic practice (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 141-142).

Equivalent to the 'unfixity' of the signifier (which is defined as being only where it is not), the notion of openness, surplus or excess of the social operates as a founding assumption in Laclau and Mouffe's argument. It provides the plurality and constitutive ground of 'difference' that enables the logic of necessity to be finally displaced. Simultaneously dislodged is the knowable totality of 'society'. Another extended passage best demonstrates this:

we must begin by renouncing the conception of 'society' as founding totality of its partial processes. We must, therefore, consider the openness of the social as the constitutive ground or 'negative essence' of the existing, and the diverse 'social orders' as precarious and ultimately failed attempts to domesticate the field of differences. Accordingly, the multiformity of the social cannot be apprehended through a system of mediations, nor the 'social order' understood as an underlying principle. There is no sutured space peculiar to 'society', since the social itself has no essence...in criticizing the conception of

society as an ensemble united by necessary laws, we cannot simply bring out the non-necessary character of the relations among elements, for we would then retain the necessary character of the identity of the elements themselves. A conception which denies any essentialist approach to social relations, must also state the precarious character of every identity and the impossibility of fixing the sense of the 'elements' in any ultimate literality (1985: 95-96).

Thus, as "the social is an infinitude" (1985:139), "[p]lurality is not the phenomenon to be explained, but the starting point of the analysis" (1985:140).

It is this starting point - a concept of plurality based, not on the historical (as well as structural) variations of social agents, relations and institutions, but on a general conception of language as articulation governed by its own internal principles - that is, for me, the problem. It is what, for example, defeats Laclau and Mouffe's claim to have erased the possibility of establishing a general theory of politics, which is a source of their discontent with Marxism. While this possibility disappears on the basis of topographic categories ("that is to say, of categories which fix in a permanent manner the meaning of certain contents as differences which can be located within a relational complex" (1985:180)), it resurfaces on the basis of the slipping field of signifiers, that is, the concept of articulation. An essentialism of contents has disappeared, but is replaced by an essentialism of process. Although in the latter any 'essence' has dwindled to a minimal point, in both cases what is operating is a philosophical or general habit of conceptualizing politics, social forms, problems, etc.

This becomes clear from the way Laclau and Mouffe characterize social orders or formations. Their particularity is marked out against the backdrop of the imputed generality

which they are not: "the diverse 'social orders' [are to be considered] as precarious and ultimately failed attempts to domesticate the field of differences" (1985:96); "every language and every society are constituted as a repression of the consciousness of the impossibility that penetrates them (1985:125); and,

[t]he limit of the social must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence. Society never manages fully to be society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality" (1985:127).

It is the ahistorical dialectic of presence and absence, the logic of the signifier which is never at rest, that provides the basis for any thoroughgoing understanding of the limits of a particular social formation.

To be quite clear, it is not the statement of the limited and non-essential nature of a society and its institutions that is problematic. The problem lies in the recognition protocols for arriving at this statement. The limited and non-essential nature of a society, its institutions, agents and relations is recognized because they are not that excess, or "surplus of meaning of 'the social'" (1985:96), or the shifting field of differences, out of which they have allegedly been moulded by a temporary stopping or fixing or suturing of the signifying or articulating process.

This constitutes a sociologism in Laclau and Mouffe's argument not unrelated to that which marks Althusser's essay on the Ideological State Apparatuses, an essay to which Laclau and Mouffe refer to indicate their advance on structuralist Marxism's allocation of relative autonomy to the political, and their distance from Hindess' and Hirst's critique⁹ of the

Althusserian position. In Althusser's argument this sociology - that is, a positivist 'scientific' treatment of social relations as totalities, and society as a whole governed by a single determinative principle - is introduced by the question he poses for theoretical solution: how does capitalist society reproduce itself ("what...is the reproduction of the conditions of production?" (Althusser, 1971:123))? The answer given is that capitalist society perpetuates itself through the operation of the plurality of the Ideological State Apparatuses and their interpellation of subjects in the forms that make of them good subjects which "work all by themselves" (1971:169). Moreover, the subjectivity-effects of the plurality of Ideological State Apparatuses are harnessed to the singular task of the reproduction of the conditions of production by their hegemonic unification beneath the ruling ideology. "To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (1971:139).

A hegemonic articulation is the mechanism for 'capitalist society' to reproduce itself. Hegemony is the answer entailed in posing the question in the form 'how does a totality reproduce itself?' What the question imports into Althusser's argument is the traditional and conservative sociological concern with social order, with its implication that what has to be explained is the overcoming of a natural tendency to disorder. This assumption aligns with orthodox Sociology's conception of individuals as in excess of the social institutions which 'constrain' them. There is, in this view, a natural or founding excess, located in the individual and which must therefore be constrained or positioned to be a 'good'

subject, and which provides a natural, potential resistance to the social order.

It is this same concept of a founding excess which we find in Laclau and Mouffe. Here, however, excess, or founding diversity, is located not in the individual - a being whose autonomy and primacy is displaced by their critique of the constitutive subject - but in what they take as the fundamentally social processes of language. Thus, "[b]eing inherent in every discursive situation, this 'surplus [of meaning]' is the necessary terrain for the constitution of every social practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:111).

In the place of a knowable and unified 'society' is revealed an inexhaustible reservoir of possibility, the social. However, 'society' does not simply disappear. It is retained in Laclau and Mouffe's argument as an 'impossible object':

[i]f the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of a society, the social only exists, however, as an effort to construct that impossible object" (1985:112).

A totalized and fixed 'society', of the type that would provide a logic of necessity governing, for instance, hegemonic tasks, is kept as a goal ("[the social's] ambition to constitute a full presence" (1985:127)). Never historically manifest, because of the excess of the social, this totality cannot be accused of imposing any necessity or closure on social and hegemonic practices. But as the utopian horizon to which the fluidity of the social is linked this absent totality gives the sense of an organizing point which alone provides a rationale for the maintenance of a society-wide (as opposed to a limited institutional) concept of hegemony, and with it, the possibility of a society-wide counter-hegemony. Thus,

if there is no doubt that one of the dangers which

threatens democracy is the totalitarian attempt to pass beyond the constitutive character of antagonism and deny plurality in order to restore unity, there is also a symmetrically opposite danger of a lack of all reference to this unity. For, even though impossible, this remains a horizon which, given the absence of articulation between social relations, is necessary in order to prevent an implosion of the social and an absence of any common point of reference (1985:188, emp.added).

As well as the functioning of this impossible unity in their argument, this quote also indicates the spectre of complete autonomy of social institutions or spaces which Laclau and Mouffe call up to demonstrate the necessity of their concept of hegemony. Hegemony, in their account, works across social spaces, to expand chains of equivalence from a specific democratic struggle (i.e., in one institutional site or social space) to other struggles. The vision of complete autonomy of social spaces which this counters is summoned up by reference to Hindess' and Hirst's critique of Althusser. Hindess' and Hirst's critique of the Althusserian concept of 'relative autonomy' as logically inconsistent is said to tread a path which "accepted the analytical assumptions of rationalism" and thus made "the concept of articulation...strictly unthinkable" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:99).

Hindess and Hirst do indeed occupy Althusser's terrain in order to make their critique of social relations presented as logical or necessary, governed by a foundational structure. But the logical consequence of radically autonomous (as distinct from the alternative of strictly determined) spheres that they show flows from Althusser's model is not proposed by them as better conceptualizing a social formation. Their argument is with conceptualizing social relations in terms of an abstract or general logic, in this case, of structural causality.

This is not the same as saying that there are no relations

between social elements, for example, institutions. It is an argument that these relations cannot be derived from any general principle; they are empirical, historically contingent relations, in the same way that the institutions they happen to link are historically formed. (The spectre of an 'essentialism of the elements' which is the corollary of 'absolute autonomy' is similarly neither a premise nor outcome of the Hindess and Hirst position.)

We can return to Laclau and Mouffe's project to establish a new conception of politics and make these observations. The basis on which Laclau and Mouffe legitimate their central concept of a society-wide hegemony is twofold: 1) the sociologicistic concept of a founding excess, and as its impossible shadow, 'society', and 2) the (mis)reading of Hindess' and Hirst's critique of Althusser's concept of relative autonomy. In their attempt to avoid what they diagnose as the "positivist pragmatism of reformists without a project"¹⁰ (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985:190), which is how they see Hindess and Hirst, and to obey what they take as a founding principle (the surplus of the social), they replace the Althusserian logic of structural causality with a "logic of the social" (1985:3,192). This is what hegemony introduces and answers to. Such a concept has the benefit of delivering up both a logic, or given set of governing laws, and an 'openness', or limitless reservoir of possibilities resistant to laws, at the same time. Now this simultaneous privileging and undercutting of a logic may appear to some as a contradiction in their argument; Laclau and Mouffe claim rather that it is a tension characterizing not their project but its object, hegemonic forms of politics, because "[t]hese two moments [negativity or excess, and the positivity

of the social] are not theoretically articulated" (1985:189).

Taking issue with this last claim would clearly lead to charges from Laclau and Mouffe of having followed Hindess and Hirst down a path which "accepted the analytical assumptions of rationalism" (1985:99). Instead, how I would raise my criticism of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy is to note that Laclau and Mouffe's commitment to a founding principle constitutes their delivery of political analysis to a philosophical framework. (The same thing could be said of their reading of Hindess and Hirst which could be argued as symptomatic of a refusal to finally break with the problematic of representation and with epistemology.)¹¹

It is this which forces questions about the political effectivity of their work as an intellectual-political base from which to contribute to democratic strategies, even while I agree with so many of their points.¹² Take, for example, this statement:

[s]ociety and social agents lack any essence and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:98).

Let us consider the first proposition: society and social agents lack any essence. Yes, this is quite so, in the sense that they have no essence: that is, there is nothing about social agents or the organization of social relations that is laid down in nature and precedes their social constitution. But the statement, in its diagnosis of 'lack', marks out the point as motivated more by a Lacanian impetus than by a concern to practically specify social agents in terms of institutionally acquired, limited, contingent and non-essential, capacities and characteristics. This Lacanian thrust can be described as the

challenge to Cartesian or Kantian epistemology, which ends by displacing to language, but not deconstructing, epistemology's provision of a fulcrum for general theories.

Next, the attached claim: the regularities of society and social agents merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order. Again, in place of an account of regularities as relative but material capacities and forms institutionally organized and historically contingent, Laclau and Mouffe call on the concept of 'fixation' or suture, which gains its sense from the sociological notion of the excess or surplus which is simply presumed as the opposite pole of the essentialist philosophy or rationalist epistemology they aim to disarticulate (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:99). Regularities, or limits, in this view, are a repression of the 'unregulability' or the 'unlimitability' of the social, rather than simply what are made, and the particular outcome of specifiable material techniques in definite institutional sites.

What I am outlining is not an argument about the truth or falsity of Laclau and Mouffe's theory but the nature of the intellectual-political stance they offer, which bears on what their theorization of hegemony can be used to do. In retaining a founding principle and the figure of (an albeit absent) totality that this allows, Laclau and Mouffe locate themselves, despite their overt rejection of generalizing theories, at the dwindling but insistent point of the tradition of the 'universal intellectual', able to erect an overview on 'the social' and 'politics' on the basis of their privileged philosophical purchase on totality. This overview is described here by Foucault as it emanates from the left, though it is by

no means unfamiliar in right-wing forms:

[f]or a long time the 'left' intellectual spoke and was acknowledged to have the right of speaking in the capacity of master of truth and justice. He was heard, or purported to make himself heard, as the representative of the universal. To be an intellectual meant to be, a little, the consciousness/ conscience of everyone...The intellectual is supposed to be the clear individual figure of a universality of which the proletariat is the obscure, collective form (Foucault, 1977a: 12).

No doubt, Laclau and Mouffe would protest at such a description. And, indeed, they are quite clear about the need to dismantle the authority of any vanguard party in their compelling argument that there can be no socialism without full democratization of institutions. Nevertheless, there are important points in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy where, more than anything else, what seems to be operating is a "right of speaking in the capacity of master of truth and justice". One such point is strongly reminiscent of the problem I located in Laclau's earlier work in the differentiation of a populist socialism from an authoritarian populism.

In Hegemony and Socialist Strategy the task confronting the writers is the differentiation of 'hegemony without a centre' - that is, the hallmark of a radical and plural democracy - and the closed and finally centred articulations of totalitarianism. The need for differentiation occurs because both forms are said to be made possible by the "new form of institution of the social" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:186) that heralded the 'democratic revolution' in Western societies of 200 years ago and the coming to dominance of hegemony as the form of politics. Thus they write,

paradoxically...it is the very logic of openness and of the democratic subversion of differences which creates, in the societies of today, the possibility

of a closure far more radical than in the past: to the extent that the resistance of traditional systems of differences is broken, and indeterminacy and ambiguity turn more elements of society into 'floating signifiers', the possibility arises of attempting to institute a centre which radically eliminates the logic of autonomy and reconstitutes around itself the totality of the social body (1985:186).

This time the basis of differentiation is not that of the objective ontological privilege of a class framework - the particular contents of a class ideology - but the mastery of another truth. The guarantee that a left hegemony can work across political spaces to construct a chain of democratic equivalences and yet remain uncentred and therefore distinct from totalitarianism, and distinct from assumptions of itself as "the representative of a unitary people" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:187), is a philosophical and linguistic realization: that of the surplus of the social, the slipping field of signifiers, which means that what may appear as a centre, a fixed identity, is not. The possibility of totalitarianism is theoretically reduced to a lack of awareness of this founding principle of the social. In other words, totalitarianism results from an hegemony not handled properly, from an ignorant or wilful blindness to this truth of an absent totality. Any strategy built on this basis risks installing a commitment to a single general truth as a directive centre to practical calculation, raising all the familiar problems of an elite with this commitment leading those without it.

In summary, my interest in Laclau and Mouffe's attempt to expound a non-essentialist concept of hegemony is as it intersects with and takes further Laclau's earlier work on populism through its attention to the formation of political

subjects and alliances. In the later work, a semiotic and Lacanian psychoanalytic concept of discourse is employed to displace any residual insistence of the economic as a base, determinative of an objective class framework. This is how an understanding of the formation of political subjects is arrived at which is argued to dispense with any last vestige of a 'logic of necessity'. An account of subject formation (for example, though Laclau and Mouffe do not pursue this, of 'the people') is then claimed as an account that does not allow any privileged site, conceived as 'outside' politics, to pre-empt the political work of that formation. The same statement could be made about hegemony: a fully political account of hegemony is now claimed, one in which no pre-discursive logic, issuing from a privileged site, pre-empts the political work of hegemony.

But, as we have seen, if a privileged site such as the naked economic, manifest in society, has been banished from Laclau and Mouffe's conceptual field, it has been replaced by a privileged process and by the privileged site of the absent totality 'society'. Hegemony is, in the end, conceived in terms of a fundamental principle, and anchored by a privileged recognition of an impossible but nonetheless socially effective goal. Similarly, were we to adopt the basis in semiotic, psychoanalytic discourse Laclau and Mouffe offer in order to define populism, we would, in the final instance, be accounting for the identity of 'the people' in terms of a provisional fixation of the ceaseless slippage of signifiers, rather than the specific constitutions of the figure. In other words, Laclau and Mouffe's directions in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, when applied to the question of populism, do not

advance it from Laclau's earlier work - 'the people' remains an abstract category before it is historically specified and constructed, and our recognition protocols for 'populism' thus left essentially philosophical.

We must, however, pause to consider the recurrence of the phrase 'in the final instance' in my diagnosis of Laclau and Mouffe's accounting of hegemony and the account of populism that can be deduced would follow from this. It could be argued that there is no need to call on the phrase 'the last instance'; that in reading Hegemony and Socialist Strategy one can bracket this out. Laclau and Mouffe have indeed pushed a 'logic of necessity' to the far horizon: "[t]he moment of the 'final' suture never arrives" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:86). The extended space they gain in which to consider the specific and contingent work of political construction and negotiation is valuable and provides considerable common ground with my interests. But there are reasons why this maintenance of a 'final instance' as privileged arbiter cannot be simply overlooked. I have already indicated how it may enable and sustain a vanguard position that is incompatible with a fully democratic and equitable project. It is also disabling in what it stands in for, that is, the necessity for the historical work that will make available for democratic calculation the constitution, characteristics and potentials of political subjects and relations. Our knowledge of how 'what is' came to be is what will aid calculation for its remaking, not the utopian 'radical imaginary' Laclau and Mouffe insist upon (1985:190).

It might seem harsh to accuse Laclau and Mouffe of neglecting the historical when their aim is to establish

hegemony as the form of politics specific to the modern era in the West, beginning with the 'democratic revolution' two hundred years ago. And they assiduously rethink the concept of hegemony in terms of its production within the discourses, for example, of the Second International and their precise historical moment. But it is interesting to note what then happens in their argument. At the conclusion of Chapter 2 and their consideration of the emergence of hegemony as a 'new political logic', the logic of their analysis brings them to ask the question "[d]oes this mean that 'hegemony' was merely a transitional concept, a moment in the dissolution of the essentialist discourse, and unable to outlive it (1985:88)? Their answer is 'no' - "the tensions inherent in the concept of hegemony are also inherent in every political practice and, strictly speaking, every social practice" (1985:88) - and in the next chapter the basis of this answer is laid: "[w]e now have to construct theoretically the concept of hegemony (1985:93). The tools used to effect this theoretical construction import, as I have shown, an idealist philosophical inflection to the concept that threatens its previously established historicity.

Perhaps the lesson in this is that an anti-essentialist argument needs to be offset by a thoroughgoing historical dimension if it is not to fall into the very traps of totalizing philosophy and vision it wishes to avoid. It is this historical perspective on shifting conditions and effects that the thesis' definition of populism attempts to install as central. The Foucauldian concept of discourse, unlike that used by Laclau and Mouffe, provides the descriptive and analytical means to consider populism as a political phenomenon and in its

historicity - that is, its traceable, particular and variable forms subordinated to no foundational theory or epistemology. The following chapter begins this genealogical work by considering the historical emergence of shiftingly dominant rhetorical figures of 'the people'.

NOTES

1. However, a body of literature is amassing. Some important or representative examples will be discussed in this chapter but as well, and not discussed separately here, is the work done by; in Australia, Rowse (1978), Rowse & Moran (1984), King & Rowse (1983), Lewis (1978), Connell & Irving (1980), Love (1984), Murphy (1987); in Britain, by Bennett (1983), Hall (1980), Schwarz (1982).
2. Allcock advocates the 'part-whole' approach on the grounds of its advance on essentially unitary models of society and their tendency to treat populism with "assumptions about 'deviance' which have plagued social movement theory in general" (Allcock, 1979:383). Despite Allcock's acknowledgement of these problems, specifically in Kornhauser's work (1960), it is not clear how the 'part-whole' model avoids the problems attendant upon the category 'whole' as an objective description of a society, tradition or institution. One is reminded of the difficulties of the structure of 'relative autonomy', where problems with the absolute condition of 'autonomy' were thought, unsuccessfully, to be attenuated by the proviso of relativity. However, the main problem with the approach is its treatment of the political as expressive of another strata of experience.
3. While not addressed explicitly as 'populism', J.B.Hirst (1978) discusses a similar ideology characteristic of Australian small farmer 'pioneer-settlers'.
4. In this Richards is repeating a move found earlier in Mouzelis (1978), in his criticism of Laclau's theorization of populism. As I go on to argue for Richards, Mouzelis' emphasis on the need to attend to the organizational dimension of populism if one is to identify political parties as populist (as Laclau mistakenly, according to Mouzelis, identifies the Italian Communist Party) is well placed. Mouzelis also makes the point that Laclau's analysis of ideological discourses is disabled by the lack of a sufficiently historical perspective, which connects with my later critique of the work of Laclau and Mouffe.
5. Gramsci's concept of hegemony extends the Leninist sense of it as a simple class alliance (the proletariat leading the peasantry) by introducing the concept of a moral and intellectual leadership as necessary to the formation of any hegemony or counter-hegemony.

At the same time he displaces the reductionist view of hegemony as the domination of one world-view over others and which thus can only be challenged by its total destruction. Rather, Chantal Mouffe argues that for Gramsci, "hegemony involves the creation of a higher synthesis, so that all its elements fuse in a 'collective will' which becomes the new protagonist of political action which will function as the protagonist of political action during that hegemony's entire duration. It is through ideology that this collective will is formed since its very existence depends on the creation of ideological

unity which will serve as 'cement'...the formation of the collective will and the exercise of political leadership depends on the very existence of intellectual and moral leadership" (Mouffe,1979:184).

6. The category of 'class' as not simply a given ordering of social formations is discussed in Hindess (1987a).
7. It is the same problem that, for example, Stuart Hall comes up against in his discussion of Thatcherite populism (1980). This work is briefly discussed in Chapter 8, pp.321-323.
8. For a critical description of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory's transcription of the Freudian unconscious as the prime psychical reality and determinant of subjectivity to this structuralist linguistic conception of language, see Greenfield (1983,1984).
9. I am following Laclau and Mouffe's lead in singling out "the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst" (1985:100) from other references to 'British Marxism' and 'Cutler et al.' as the central perpetrators of what is seen as a dangerous deconstruction of social relations.
10. As their description of Hindess and Hirst as "reformists without a project", marked by a "positivist pragmatism" (1985:190) might indicate, a radical political project is, for Laclau and Mouffe, unthinkable unless it is based on a utopia, such as the 'impossibility of the social'. They write, "without 'utopia'...there is no possibility at all of the constitution of a radical imaginary - whether democratic or of any other type. The presence of this imaginary as a set of symbolic meanings which totalize as negativity a certain social order is absolutely essential for the constitution of all left-wing thought" (1985:190).

But see Hirst's rejection of such a negatively conceived reformism: "one must have a clear view - not a 'vision' - of the attainable radical changes - not a utopia - that lie beyond the tunnel vision of the 'next' election. Without the political preparation for radical change, the series of 'next' elections is infinite" (1986:1). Importantly, such change is conceived as "a development from existing social relations", not the inauguration of an entirely new system (1986:4).

11. While in places Laclau and Mouffe critique the problematic of representation and propose its replacement with a model of articulation (1985:65), they maintain the philosophical terrain of representation through the Lacanian concept of sliding signifiers and its dialectic of presence and absence: "[r]epresentation is...constituted not as a definite type of relation; but as the field of an unstable oscillation" (1985:121). A subject of representation is thus maintained as a unitary locus (Laclau and Mouffe reject "the absolutization of a dispersion of 'subject positions'") though not as a unified transcendental subject (1985:121): "the dispersion of subject positions cannot constitute a solution: given that none of them

manages ultimately to consolidate itself as a separate position, there is a game of overdetermination among them that reintroduces the horizon of impossible totality. It is this game which makes hegemonic articulation possible" (1985:121-122).

For a critique of the epistemological concept of representation, see Hunter (1984a:407,427), already cited in Chapter 1, Note 6.

12. Here, it is necessary to distinguish the thesis' critique of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy from critiques such as Meiksins Wood (1986) and Geras (1987,1988). These, respectively, find Laclau and Mouffe guilty of an 'essentially rootless politics' in their rejection of class as an objective criterion, and 'an intellectual vacuum' in their diagnosed idealism. While both writers nevertheless make some pertinent points (Meiksins Wood's query as to the overrated role of intellectuals; Geras' point about the problems of philosophical argument or 'style'), their trenchant criticisms are geared towards defending a Marxism centred on economic class relations to the dominant mode of production. Another and interesting marker of the distance between these critiques and the thesis' is the absence, in these detailed reviews, of any reference to the explicit, structuring distinction in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy between Laclau and Mouffe's and Hindess' and Hirst's positions: it is on the differences entailed in this distinction that the thesis' critique focusses and it is to these differences that Meiksins Wood and Geras are, apparently, blind.

It needs also to be said that in disagreeing with the tack that Meiksins Wood and Geras take, the thesis is not advocating the dismissal of class analysis, only that it is not necessarily primary in understanding all social situations, and that analysis cannot be based on a notion of class as a given. See Hindess (1987a).

For differently pitched and generally sympathetic reviews of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, see Davidson (1987) and Forgacs (1985). And for a longer review which criticizes the work for its displacement of institutional analysis, yet acknowledges Laclau and Mouffe's argument against economism and then, against them, asserts that a non-reductionist Marxist theory of the polity is possible, see Mouzelis (1988).

CHAPTER 3

The Historical Conditions of Populism

My aim in Chapter 2 was to establish a strategy of analysis that would make visible some of the practical ways a discursive, material formation like populism helps forge political realities. In considering competing approaches I differentiated my definition of populism as a discourse centrally deploying the concept of 'the people' as a unified essence and constituting a means for organizing the negotiations of power-knowledge relations, from a range of other accounts of populism. These, I argued, were disabled either by their neglect of the political as differentiated and conflictual or by their eventual recourse to a privileged philosophical or, more particularly, epistemological base. In the place of these familiar features the thesis will consider politics as the ongoing and widely dispersed negotiation of power-knowledge relations limited by the particular forms and sites in which this occurs; and attend to the current and historical conditions of emergence of what is classified as populism.

Some current discursive formations that make a populist politics possible are examined in Chapters 5 and 6. This present chapter will document the historical conditions of emergence of populism by, firstly, considering an account of the rise to modern prominence of an ascending or populist thesis of government and sovereignty; and secondly, by suggesting a differently orientated genealogy of 'the people'. In Chapter 4 I will continue this work by discussing a correlative concept, that of population.

I: The history of 'the people'

Walter Ullmann's Medieval Political Thought (1979) provides a history of the struggles in which major elements of the dominant currency of 'the people' and what Ullmann identifies as a populist theory of government were produced. It is an account that is useful in its detailing of the various, intertwined strands of medieval political thought, and in its careful treatment of the concept of the state and, indeed, of politics as a distinct domain and activity, insisting on their absence, in Christendom at least, prior to the thirteenth century and thus guiding the reader away from anachronistic frameworks. The account, while perhaps more commonly recognized as liberal-democratic, is also undertaken from an intellectual approach (not at all atypical) that itself merits the description populist, starting as it does from 'the people' as an existential fact. It thus provides us with an indicative history of the category 'the people'.

Ullmann describes at length the struggles that ensued throughout the medieval period over the organization of regimes of government and the law. These were ecclesiastical and royal arguments between the papacy accredited priesthood and the regional kingship as well as imperial forces, and the stake was sovereignty, or ultimate authority, within Christendom. As Ullmann makes clear, these arguments could have no easy or final resolution as a simple, political demarcation dispute because, lacking the modern concept of the state, medieval rhetoricians had no means of effectively demarcating autonomous domains of activity and interest within the 'totalitarian' christocentric framework that prevailed from the fifth to the

fifteenth century (Ullmann,1979:16-17). These ongoing arguments, then, served to refine and solidify, but not finally establish an exclusive nature for, what is named a descending or theocratic thesis of government. This is an hierarchical conception in which all power flowed down or descended from (via certain mediations) a single supreme being. Whether the sovereign was understood as pope, king, or emperor, this title and office was understood as the result of a beneficium, a gift of God. As such, sovereignty could owe nothing to those over whom authority was exercised, except in the name of their guardianship and benefit, and the sovereign could not be lawfully touched or resisted by these. In the case of the pope, claiming power over the Church, kings and emperor, the office was conceived as an estate outside the Church, the incumbent receiving his title and powers from Christ through Peter via the Donation of Constantine. This Church (comprising both clergy and laity) was thus entirely dependent on the pope as its governor and, in Peter's footsteps, its 'builder'. As Ullmann puts it, "the Church as the body of the faithful was considered devoid of indigenous powers: what it possessed, what functions its individual officers had, were seen as 'derived' from the pope" (1979:28). The office of the emperor, in the system of government called Caesaropapism, claimed a similar but secular and therefore subordinate God-given power over the Christian Roman Empire.

As 'devoid of indigenous powers', the Church assumed the status of a minor, utterly subject and inferior, to the superioritas (sovereignty) of the pope and, in 'external' lawmaking matters, that of the Holy Roman Emperor. Strict hierarchical relations of subordination obtained, which Ullmann

describes as forming "a kind of a pyramid in which the apex embodied the sum-total of power" (1979:31). The royal theocratic form of government was characterized by the same relation between sovereign and subject, here the king and 'the people'. That 'the people' was beneath, below and subject to the king as part of a great chain of being was made clear in the coronation service (where the anointing established the king's powers as derived from God through the agency of the bishops), and in the throne "which by virtue of the elevated position was to show the 'higher' seat of the king, as well as in the emerging idea of committing treason against the king, appropriately enough called 'high' treason" (Ullmann,1979:87). This designation of 'the people' as subject and thus devoid of any rights is central to the descending thesis of government that predominated in the medieval period in argument and as a programme for organizing power-knowledge relations within and between institutions. What Ullmann proceeds to outline is the story of a gathering intellectual and political resistance to this dominance.

The challenge is presented in the form of a counter, ascending or populist thesis of government. As can be deduced from the implied reversal, in this conception original power is located in 'the people'. Elected leaders or kings possessed only that power given to them by 'the people', and as its representative ruling in its name, remained accountable to it and dependent upon its consent. Law, rather than being given to 'the people' from above, is what is made by it (as a community of male, property-owning citizens) itself. This organization of government and of law is said to precede theocratic forms, providing the practical basis on which the Germanic tribes,

that first invaded and fractured the old imperial structure and later provided a European alliance with the Roman pope against the emperor in Constantinople, were governed.

By the eighth century this populist theory of government was largely displaced by theocratic forms and frameworks. The Frankish kings, brought within Christendom and the sway of Christian dogma in no mean measure by the Latinized bible, benefited from the notion of superioritas that the Pauline doctrine 'kingship by grace of God' bestowed. While some form of populist election continued to co-exist with the theocratic method, the role of the coronation became increasingly emphasized, severing the contractual relation with 'the people' and placing in its stead the constitutive act of the Church in anointing the king and thus initiating his reign. Thus the king, while gaining power over 'the people', also placed himself within the scope of Church authority. In addition to the king having no sovereign rights as regards the Church (e.g., over the ordination of priests and consecration of bishops), he was bound to abide by divine and canon law which could only be enunciated by the episcopacy. If the king's autonomy from 'the people' is thus not without its drawbacks, it is 'the people' who lost most, being made subject and losing an earlier right to resist and depose a tyrannical leader.

Given this defeat and effective dismantling of 'the people' from something akin to an aggregate of autonomous citizens¹ to a subject recipient of laws, how does the ascending form of government reassert itself? Ullmann's account is of interest in the way it establishes the agency of this resistance.

In the first instance it is the revival of Aristotelian

thought in the second half of the thirteenth century which is credited with what "amounts to a conceptual revolution" (Ullmann,1979:159). In contention with Christian neo-platonism, Aristotelian concepts enable the emergence of a notion of the state as an "independent, self-sufficient, autonomous body of citizens which lived, so to speak, on its own substance and on its own laws" (Ullmann,1979:17), and it is this idea of the state as a natural body and a community with indigenous powers that enables the community and its leaders (via the work of Aquinas, Marsiglio, et al.) to extricate themselves from the claimed, all-encompassing jurisdiction of the episcopacy or a royal theocracy.

However, Ullmann proposes that Christian Aristotelian argument could only achieve its currency and be effectively employed by, for example, the conciliarist movement in the fourteenth century because it was preceded and underwritten by a "practical medieval populism" (1979:159). Here Ullmann stresses what is evident elsewhere in the book - a clear distinction between the theory of government of a society, devised and propagated by a literate elite (be this administrators and governors or, as was later the case, scholars and philosophers) and the practical daily existence of that society involving its ordinary members. Thus,

[h]owever much the theocratic-descending theory of government was loudly, officially and unofficially, proclaimed as the only form of government compatible with Christian beliefs, the lower regions of society in many respects acted in a manner which did little to implement any of the basic principles of descending governments (Ullmann,1979:159).

This division in a pre-literate society, and one where the hold of Christian beliefs was never as deep as the title of Christendom would give one to believe, is not contentious. What

is notable is the respective valuation of the practical and the theoretical. Ullmann consistently associates the former with a natural state of affairs and as having some privileged link to an ontology of the social world. Elaborating the proposition already cited, he writes:

even the few records we have about the activities of the people far below the vision of those sitting on elevated thrones show that they carried on what can only be termed as a natural way of conducting affairs (1979:159,emp.added).

This 'natural way' is further established as equating with the ascending principles of government. These are said to be "more germane, if also not more natural" to the "unsophisticated" (Ullmann,1969:160). But an indication of the wider, and by implication proper, purchase of these principles is given as Ullmann follows his discussion of the 'practical manifestations' of populist theory of government with discussion of 'incipient humanism' as the further context in which Aristotelian thought flourished. The emphasis on natural man and on the individual which occurred in the thirteenth century as, Ullmann says, a restoration of pre-Christian knowledge, provides the grounds on which the concept of the citizen (as autonomous, independent man) can spread and displace that of subject, and the idea of a citizenry as opposed to a subjected populace is synonymous in the argument with the functioning of populist or ascending principles of government. A connection to natural man, no longer overshadowed by the figure of the faithful Christian, and to "the discovery of man's real nature", is thus installed at the heart of the ascending theory of government (Ullmann,1979:167). There is no danger then that these ascending principles can be rightfully localized to and perhaps, as society becomes more saturated

with 'sophisticated' modern technologies, left behind with the unsophisticated or 'ordinary people'. The unsophisticated, it seems, are not to be judged relative to their historical moment as lacking particular constitutive and powerful knowledges, but from the "universal-historical standpoint" that Ullmann assumes (1979:160). From this perspective their 'unsophistication' can be seen only as an enabling lack of theoretical and 'unnatural' dogma that reveals man in true alignment with a natural state of social and political organization. The universal generalizations that this perspective enables Ullmann to enunciate are exemplified in what this lack of sophistication or 'naturalness' is argued to make prevail and prove, that is, "the ever active urge to self-government" (1979:161). This urge is manifested in the popular association that Ullmann notes as organizing day-to-day activity, below the threshold of theocratic government and providing a shelter for the individual: "these numberless associations, unions, fraternities, communities, colleges, and so on, appeared as the answer to a natural urge of men to combine themselves into larger units" (1979:160). For Ullmann, such an urge and its outcomes stand testimony to the practical existence, in some measure, of ascending government - that is, the active self-determination of 'the people'. Christian Aristotelian thought will clothe the practice in theory and enable the infiltration of this 'natural' way of doing things into the sophisticated echelons of society as well.

The answer to our question is thus that the prime agent in this story of resistance and reassertion of the ascending theory of government is 'the people' itself, along with its composite element of 'natural man', or the autonomous

individual and his natural urges. It could be noted that Ullmann, elsewhere careful to avoid relying on anachronisms, here falls into a universalization of the humanist figure of man. However, this is simply of a piece with a wider positing of timeless essences: 'the people', too, in this history is offered as a natural force waiting to properly or fully animate politics and social life. The teleology Ullmann offers is of 'the people', recognized in antiquity, actively exercising its indigenous powers in tribal life, repressed and largely subdued in the medieval period, and manifest again in our present Western institutions through its successful resistance of the descending pyramid of power in the Dark Ages. Ullmann's aim "[t]o understand how current institutions and political ideas have become what they are" (1979:11) is thus achieved by following the return of the repressed through the lifting of what come to seem 'inappropriate' theories. For the corollary of the 'natural' status given to populist practice is that medieval political theory, or at least that which bolsters the descending principles of government, takes on the status of mistake or aberration, a dogmatic imposition of doctrine. Ullmann operates a political realism - that is, a system of valuation of political forms according to an unarticulated concept of a pre-discursive and essential 'real' - the implications of which are hard to resist, if never made explicit. Thus Thomism is described as a "realistic approach" (Ullmann,1979:177) because Thomas Aquinas restores that grasp of man's true nature and of the self-governing political community understood by Aristotle. Correspondingly, medieval Christian thought takes on the aura of an overly stylized mantle of edict and exposition through which the touchstones of

this political 'real' - the 'citizen' of classical times and the individual subject who is free to commune directly with God - respectively hibernate (Ullmann,1979:176) and require emancipation (1979:129). Theocratic theory is presented as an enemy of 'the human':

[h]owever logically, flawlessly, and symmetrically constructed the theocratic theory was, it was a thesis that took little account of the human elements which necessarily entered into actual government. It was as if government moved entirely within the precincts of concepts and abstractions, and not within the realm of human society with all its earthly concreteness and multifarious diversities of man's own all-too-human ambitions, volitions, and prejudices. The theocratic-descending theory was the attempt to subject reality to a mere concept (Ullmann,1979:146).

More specifically, the centrepiece of this political realism is 'the people'. Where its existence and rightful role are recognized, first in ancient Greece, later and to differing degrees in modern Western political institutions, we gain the sense of a rightful order unfolding. This can be clearly seen in Ullmann's prescriptive assertion that "the test of any theory on government is whether it is capable of leading to a development which is reflected in a constitution" (1979:145), and his differentiation of the fortunes of the ascending thesis of government in England and France.

While the ascending thesis is finally triumphant in both national political systems, the path to modern representative democracy, or constitutionalism, as the contemporary manifestation of the populist theory of government, is different in France than in England. Where a slow, steady and comparatively bloodless progress is made in England, France's road to displacing theocratic government is notably violent and beset with reversals. The variable factor is identified as the

relative influence of feudalism, deep-rooted in England, much less so in France. Feudalism, or more precisely the king's function as a feudal overlord, was the "medieval corrective to royal theocracy" (Ullmann,1979:146). Where the latter was "speculation" and weighted under "First Principles, Dogmas and Authority", feudal government is described as "of native growth, man-made and adaptable to the needs of the time, always ready to take account of the reality of a given situation" (1979:148). Feudal government entailed the king in contractual relations with his vassals, that is, relations of mutual agreement or consent from the ruled as active members of a feudal community, of which the king was also a member, not outside and above. For Ullmann, this means that

the practice of feudal government proved itself an important harbinger and incubator of ideas which later could be developed on the basis of a theocratically conceived populist or ascending theory of government (1979:148).

In rudimentary but recognizable form 'the people' as a rightful and active force in government, endowed with the power of resistance to a tyrant, is present in feudalism, and, clearly, the source of its realism and its humanism.

From the early thirteenth century in England the feudal function dominated the theocratic function of kingship, while in France (and in Germany too) the opposite was the case. The price of the importance the French king enjoyed within the Holy Roman Empire was his vulnerability, as the most Christian king of Europe, to papal interventions. The narrative Ullmann pursues is that when kings 'freed' themselves from the consent of 'the people' by embracing theocracy, they tethered themselves inextricably to a tyrannical and dogmatic Church from which there was no natural avenue of escape. Delivery

could only come via the violent defeat of exponents of the descending theory by upholders of the ascending theory. Hence, the history of political development in France. But where kings remained in touch with and largely constituted by 'the people', as in England, "[t]he road to constitutionalism...was characterized by debates, compromise - by evolution" (Ullmann, 1979:148-149).

This quite commonplace, almost Whig, claim of English political development as more natural and more civilized than that of other political systems lays bare the assumptions that organize Ullmann's argument. The 'universal-historical standpoint' he claims to occupy is, as is always the case, a more particular and interested writing position. Ullmann's is a rendition of a familiar apologia for Western, and, pre-eminently, English, liberal democracy by reference to the "authority centre" (Condren, 1980:108) of ancient Greece and its legendary city-state democracy. Ullmann's contribution to this method of legitimation by resort to the authority of a past state of affairs, or origin of Western civilization, is to make his focus the medieval period and only fleetingly summon up Aristotle's Greece as the source of a self-governing 'people' which practically resists and, in the modern period, triumphs over the descending principles animating medieval governments. Medieval Political Thought instructs us as to how democracy, or its essence, 'the people', survives the Dark Ages. 'The people' is presented as a natural actor on the political landscape, and one whose fortunes are central to the proper development of political practice and the theories that should correctly flow out of that practice.

The problem for me is the assumption of 'the people' as already in existence, and as the natural essence from which a populist theory of government or a populist discourse springs. Where Ullmann identifies adherence to 'First Principles' as a limiting and problematic feature of ecclesiastical thought, 'the people' operates as just such a principle in his own discourse. This does not make his work unusable or false: unlike Ullmann, we need not operate a prescriptive realism. However, it does call for a sharper specification of the usefulness for the thesis of such an account. Ullmann's history demonstrates (rather than analyses) the centrality of the category 'the people' in the ideological securing of representative democratic individualism as the historically assured, 'civilized' and desirable political form. We can also note that Ullmann exemplifies the confluence of a populist discourse and dominant discourses of democracy. Populism, the assumption of a naturally occurring 'people', is at the heart of the dominant modern sense of democracy.

What Ullmann's account does not do is elucidate the historical conditions of emergence of populism. 'The people' in this narrative history features as the fundamental condition for other properly historical phenomena but is itself resistant to analysis. Consider what is provided by way of evidence of the existence of 'the people'.

This is encountered at the point where Ullmann is discussing the practical manifestations of the ascending thesis. The organization of towns, of guilds and fraternities, unions, village communities, colleges and so on are offered as examples of 'the people' governing itself. There may be no question that in these various popular associations members

managed their own self-defined affairs. The question that does arise is by what criteria the memberships of each of these differentiated institutions, pursuing "partly, aims of self-preservation, partly, what would nowadays be called mutual insurances, partly, sectional interests" are confidently grouped together into the unified figure of 'the people' (Ullmann, 1979:160)?

There is no answer to this; the modern common sense of the term is expected to provide its own alibi. But what can be noted is that the figure of 'the people', as a rhetorical device, empowers Ullmann's argument and its 'universal-historical standpoint' by furnishing a trans-institutional, trans-historical, trans-geographical reference point - in other words, allowing a comparative field to be established across which the continuities that comprise the teleological development of democracy can be traced.

We are left with the question, how is this common sense that organizes Ullmann's discourse formed? Is the concept of 'the people' susceptible to analysis, or must we too embrace its self-evidence? Arguing for the possibility of analysis and against the self-evidence of the unified and collective category of 'the people', the method I shall use to advance this position is genealogical - a rethinking of the historical task. While Ullmann's account appears to make it impossible to think of 'the people' as simply an epistemological category, always available as a basis of government, and places it instead firmly within the reversals of history, the discursive construction of history he employs ends by cheating him of this achievement. I shall attempt to secure what Ullmann's work promises with a genealogy of 'the people': "a genealogy ought

to be able to set up the possibility of constructing intelligible trains of events and transformations which are conceived as expressions neither of their past nor or their future" (Minson,1985:108).

II: The genealogy of 'the people'

The purpose of a genealogy of 'the people' is to dismantle the self-evidence of 'the people' as an existential fact with which a study of populism may otherwise start. As we have already seen, it is not only populist forms that are predicated on this 'self-evidence', but also much analysis of populism, which is to say that analyses of populism often take 'the people' as a given and as having an essence, in whatever way this is constructed, whose expressions they then proceed to trace and comment on, or even to problematize and explain.

Instead, 'the people' can be considered as a discursive object that has been produced and made meaningful within a range of specifiable discourses or organizations of statements. A genealogy differs from a narrative history of 'the people' which instates its appearance as the manifestation of an ideal form which was always destined to appear: that is, 'the people' as an essence, outside and in a sense authoring the discourses in which it is simply 'recognized'. This vision of ideal forms, which teleologizes history, is the legacy of Kant's installation of the constitutive subject at the heart of the practice of history. It marks the construction of a particular philosophy of history, or, to put it provocatively, the conception of history as philosophy. It is against this that genealogy can be defined as:

a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history (Foucault, 1980:117).

Giovanna Procacci's account of genealogy is also worth quoting:

this is the essential contribution of genealogical analysis: to have encouraged us to see in every 'object' presented as irreducible, in every 'truth' which is proffered as irrefutable, the result of a series of traceable operations, and so to have led us to seek out the dynamic of their constitution (1978:55).

What is important about a genealogical analysis is that, unlike a history which institutes between events a prescribed set of relations (causality, influence, development) that are the legacy of a search for origins or a positing of ends, and whose essential lesson is thus a general continuity against which specific changes are able to be recognized and assimilated into an evolutionary pattern (e.g., the emergence of 'the people' as an eternal historical force), genealogy searches out the heterogeneous relations between statements, discourses, domains of objects, non-discursive formations, that cannot be deduced from any general theory of history and cannot be used to affirm any but the local truths made possible by those relations.

So, to undertake a genealogy of 'the people' is to stress from the outset that in 'the people' there is no nub of truth that we are slowly drawing closer to, and that the notion of eternity and naturalness investing the modern 'common sense' understanding of 'the people' is an object for analysis and not its impeccable attribute. The truth of 'the people' varies and shifts, is relative to a demonstrable set of discursive and non-discursive techniques, and has not always existed.

Nevertheless, the purpose of a genealogy is not to reveal

a false history or establish 'the people' as a fiction, but to determine the conditions of possibility of a relative and effective truth repeated in a statement such as this:

he was quick to sense the basic problems arising from popular rule: he knew that the multitude of voices claiming to speak for the people might prevent the people themselves from being heard (Gallup & Rae, 1968:17).

The certainty that 'the people' is there, ready to utter its mind and available for representation, and that it should be heard marks a particular truth: 'the people' as a rightful and preferred sovereign, the foundation of its own existence, brooking no intermediaries. Such a conception of 'the people' is not an existential reality waiting to be expressed in some political discourses, suppressed in others, but always there, a silent touchstone of how democratic or populist various political forms are in their recognition of democracy's or populism's essence. It is, rather, constituted within particular discourses, or 'theory-programmes'. This can be evidenced by considering some different discourses and the specific relations within which 'the people' emerges.

Cicero's writings, in the first century B.C., provide us with an early example of the concept appearing in the discourse of Roman public law. A lawyer and administrator, his The Republic and The Laws codified Roman law and established the tradition of natural law.

The Republic (De re publica) establishes clearly the importance of the category 'the people' in considerations of government. "[A] commonwealth is the property of a people" (Cicero in Ebenstein, 1969:132). This is so because res publica (public thing or property) is the same as res populi (thing or

property of a people) (Ebenstein,1969:132).

However, this apparent primary status of 'the people' and its existence is immediately qualified:

[b]ut a people is not any collection of human beings brought together in any sort of way, but an assemblage of people in large numbers associated in an agreement with respect to justice and a partnership for the common good (Cicero in Ebenstein,1969:132).

'The people', as a discursive object, emerges in relation to justice or law, and to a particular end ('the common good'), conceived, in the Aristotelian tradition, as the distinguishing criterion of government. In particular, it is the law and how this is conceptualized that allows us to further define 'the people', as in any case it is the implementation of the law which will secure the common good.

As indicated above, Cicero's writings establish the tradition of natural law, that is, law based on the philosophical concept of an intrinsic rationality that provides for what the law ought to be. In The Laws we find:

[t]rue law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting...there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge (Cicero in Ebenstein,1969:136).

True, unchanging law - natural law - is vested in 'the people' in the sense that men have reason, and thus law, in common with the gods. Thus "we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it [true law]" (Cicero in Ebenstein,1969:136). However, Cicero leaves us in no doubt that the law is based on something distinct from and supravening human action and institutions: "right is based, not upon men's opinions, but upon Nature" (1969:137); "the most foolish notion of all is the belief that everything is just which is found in

the customs or laws of nations" (1969:137); and

if the principles of Justice were founded on the decrees of peoples, the edicts of princes, or the decisions of judges, then Justice would sanction robbery and adultery and forgery of wills, in case these acts were approved by the votes or decrees of the populace (1969:138).

For Cicero, while democracy ("when all the power is in the hands of the people") can be envisioned as an option for stable government (though of "the least commendable type" (1969:132)), it is clear 'the people' is governed from above:

[f]or as the laws govern the magistrate, so the magistrate governs the people, and it can truly be said that the magistrate is a speaking law, and the law a silent magistrate (1969:138).

The function of the magistrate or governing body is to make heard the law that pre-exists human government and requires it only for its enunciation. 'The people' to whom this government belongs is 'the people' only in so far as it is constituted by law ('in an agreement which respect to justice'). This is what governs it; and law originates from outside it, in the all-authoring divinity that grants men timeless reason.

So this first concept of 'the people' is one at odds with our modern currency; and it will be argued below that earlier Greek conceptions of government can be read as organized around no such figure. Cicero's formulation of 'the people' and its relation to natural law provides a basis for the influential descending thesis of government and power that Ullmann describes. If 'the people' have any power it is what is bestowed upon it from above; it is unthought as a source of government but is rather an object of government, whose 'best interests' government and law embody and safeguard. However, what is common to Roman and modern concepts is the sense of a unified body of persons. The benefits of the idea of a unified

'people', bound in agreement by law of universal application, for the Roman Empire with its hegemonic sense of all men living in 'one world', are clear. The same unifying move can be traced in the legal domain, where the Roman legal system and its acknowledgement of local and customary practice in the law of territories and regions becomes increasingly underpinned by the Roman philosophical idea of natural law. Natural law provided the law of territories and regions with an essential, universal core, thus working to homogenize what otherwise would be heterogeneous.

The Roman formulation of 'the people' as unified and governed from above is conserved and repeated through Europe into the medieval period and beyond, superseding the challenge of the Germanic tribes' different arrangement of government and law and effectively organizing the problem of sovereignty and its central questions: where is original power located, and who had the right to enunciate the law? It is not until the late Middle Ages that this descending thesis of government is effectively met by a competing discourse that provides a counter, ascending thesis of government and power. As Ullmann, too, argues its clearest form in the medieval period is found in the work of Marsiglio of Padua, as he constructs an argument for the government of the Italian city-states and addresses their relation to the Church.

But we need first to trace the emergence of a major component which, repeated and developed by Marsiglio, will constitute the ascending thesis of government. It is in the writings of St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) that we find the crucial definition of a good government as one in which, whatever form it takes, the interests of the ruled are served.

Such a premise identifies Thomism as the reactivation of Aristotelian concepts. The carefully argued introduction of such concepts as, for example, Aristotle's view that government derived from man's social nature, allows Thomism to open up within Christian thought a space for a positive sense of government. Pre-Thomistic medieval theory of government had conceived of it as a necessity generated by the fall and the evil in human nature. Seen in this light it was not possible to find what is required for the human community to govern itself, that is, the rules of government and its ends, within the human community. By contrast, Christian Aristotelianism takes the community as an ultimate reference point and a source of spiritual values and virtue (Ebenstein, 1969:219). Aquinas cannot swallow whole what amounts to a displacement of the theological domain but, consistent with his systematic synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology, accommodates this perspective on government, and its valorization of the possible values forthcoming from the community to be governed, by appending to human government's end of the common good the further and ultimate end of attainment of God. Thus divine law, enunciated by priests through revelation, is needed as well as the human law that orders government. Secular government, its spheres of reference altered and legitimated, remains ultimately subject to the Church in Thomism. It is in Marsiglio's formulations that this accommodation of philosophy and theology is reordered into something different.

Let us consider what I have described so far. Greek political thought and the foundations it provides for an

ascending theory of power, issuing from human practice and decision rather than from natural law (or constituting a different conception of 'nature' and its laws), is reactivated in medieval thought. This is, however, in no sense an original recognition of the rights of 'the people' being lost and then recovered. For in Aristotelian (and Platonic) thought, while there is an affirmation of the ruled as a source of legitimacy for good government, we find no concept of 'the people' in the sense of a unified community. The unity in this system of thought is the polis (the city-state and its territory). The polis does not borrow its unity from another deeper unity³, rather,

[1]like any other whole that is made up of parts the state must be analysed into those parts; and we must first consider the citizen, for a state is the sum total of its citizens. So we must ask Who is a citizen? and What makes it right to call him one? Here too there is no unanimity, no agreement as to what constitutes a citizen; it often happens that one who is a citizen in a democracy is not a citizen in an oligarchy (Aristotle, 1980:102).

The citizenry is the operative concept here, but the citizen is defined by the institution of government rather than evincing an essence and sovereignty that would lend the citizenry a natural unity: "as soon as a man becomes entitled to participate in authority, deliberative or judicial, we deem him to be a citizen of that state" (Aristotle, 1980:103-104, emp. added).

Further, while the Greek demokratia translates as 'rule of the people', Aristotle makes clear that democracy is the rule of the poor, dangerous and to be avoided for that reason. We are faced with the problems of translation and the lure of anachronisms, but it is clear that Aristotelian discourse insists on differentiating and disaggregating the population of

the city-state into its components - citizens, middle classes, the poor, women, slaves, barbarians. It is the poor, the labouring classes or the "general run of people" (Aristotle, 1980:159) that Aristotle calls the demos, more often translated as 'the people'. As a concept in Aristotelian discourse 'the people' refers to a specific portion of a population, and not to the whole. And as the 'general run of people' and not "the notables" (Aristotle, 1980:159), 'the people' is (or may be, depending on the particular constitution of the citizenry) a section within the possible body of citizens.

But in Thomism we find recourse to a different concept of 'the people':

[n]ow to order anything to the common good, belongs either to the whole people, or to someone who is the vice-gerent [sic] of the whole people. And therefore the making of a law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people: since in all other matters the directing of anything to the end concerns him to whom the end belongs (Aquinas in Ebenstein, 1969: 235).

This is a borrowing of the term as it operates in the discourse of Roman public law and feeds through into Christian discourse. 'The people', in essence whole and undivided, serves the same unifying purpose in Christian scholastic discourse, enabling the totalizing ambitions of the Holy Roman Empire, as it does in the Roman Empire of Cicero's concern. The extensive and differentiated territories of both empires, quite unlike the limited city-state that was the Greek philosophers' reference point, required a discursive concept like 'the people', unified by ideas of natural law or faith or both, which could lend these territories unity.

However, in Christian scholastic discourse we see 'the people' disarticulated from the conception of omnipotent Roman

natural law, and instead related to human law, for which a legitimate space had now been cleared. Thus 'the people' as the location of sovereignty, a possibility that emerges in the medieval period, can be understood as a piecemeal construction in these discursive formations, and not as an object gradually revealing itself.

To return to my charting of the appearance of the concept of 'the people', we find it further solidified in Marsiglio's developed form of a medieval discourse of government. First, in The Defender of the Peace (1324) Marsiglio repeats the Aristotelian and Thomistic argument that good government serves the interests of the ruled. But in Marsiglio, and unlike Aquinas, each of the 'well-tempered' species of government presupposes as well the consent of the ruled:

[a] kingly monarchy...is a temperate government wherein there is a single ruler who aims at the common benefit, and in accordance with the will or consent of the subjects...Aristocracy is a temperate government in which the honorable class ...alone rules in accordance with the will or consent of the subjects and for the common benefit ...A polity, although in one sense it is something common to every genus or species of regime or government, means in another sense a certain species of temperate government, in which every citizen participates in some way in the government, or in the deliberative function in turn according to his rank and ability or condition, for the common benefit and with the will or consent of the citizens (Marsiglio in Ebenstein, 1969:272).

Second, Marsiglio adopts and takes further Thomism's identification of human law as the necessary means of government by divesting it of the shackles of divine and canon law as the higher, ultimate authorities. This is done by a thoroughgoing rejection of the right or possibility of divine and canon law to be enforced or have any jurisdiction in this

life. Faith could be maintained, but it could have no temporal outcome whatsoever, effectively stripping the Church of any earthly powers save those which a secular government bestowed on it. The law and government that can direct and be enforced is thus only that which is made by the 'human legislator':

the legislator, or the primary and proper efficient cause of the law, is the people or the whole body of citizens, or the weightier part thereof, through its election or will expressed by words in the general assembly of the citizens, commanding or determining that something be done or omitted with regard to civil human acts under threat of temporal punishment (Marsiglio in Ebenstein, 1969:274).

'The people', here equivalent to 'the whole body of citizens', inheriting the Roman and Christian senses of the concept, is fully constitutive of law and government.

Third, in a defence of this role, Marsiglio provides a form of substantive valuation of 'the people':

[o]bjections will be made...that those who are vicious and undiscerning in most cases should not make the law...[and that] the people or the whole body of citizens have these sins; for men in most cases seem to be vicious and stupid: 'The number of the stupid is infinite,' as is said in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes...this must be denied. For most of the citizens are neither vicious nor undiscerning most of the time; all or most of them are of sound mind and reason and have a right desire for the polity and for the things necessary for it to endure, like laws and other statutes or customs (Marsiglio in Ebenstein, 1969:276-277).

Here Marsiglio rewrites a scripturally derived Christian characterization of 'the people' to something recognizable as an assertion of 'the people's' 'common sense' and goodness, and as made up of secular citizens rather than theocratic subjects.

The point in tracing the different discursive materials that Marsiglio draws on is to demonstrate the provenance of the fully formed populist thesis of government that The Defender of the Peace provides as other than 'the people' as a

pre-discursive existential figure. This is the sort of origin that, lodged within his wider argument, Ullmann's use of Marsiglio suggests. Rather, we can think of Marsiglio's provision of a basis for populism as made possible by a discursive labour of iterating previously circulating concepts and a reorganization of these into a new and distinctive discursive formation. Thus, a discourse in which a unified people, sharing virtue and a common sense, is made the expressive centre of government becomes available as a tool to renegotiate power relations. This occurs most notably within the Church through the Conciliar movement, with its refutation of the pope's claim to alone know the will of God and its attempted dismantling of the hierarchical relations of subordination, descending from the pope through the clergy to the laity, that characterized the institution. The Conciliar movement failed to transform the Church, but presaged the later and more successful Reformist arguments and tactics.

To consider discourses as constitutive of the kinds of struggle possible over the organization of power relations, and to note the concept of 'the people' as a definite historical construction opens up a different avenue of approach to those texts that stand central to a populist tradition as outlined by Ullmann. For a start, it raises questions about the status of this tradition. Does what we understand as populism in the modern world stretch back to the 'authority centre' of Greece, or is it the result of a more recent set of circumstances? For the thesis, the tracing of the term 'the people' in its various inscriptions demonstrates a break with the idea of its continuity as a figure. From this point, that is a rejection of

the common sense of 'the people's' continuity throughout Western civilization, we can pursue and delineate the different understandings of populism that are integral to both knowing our object and challenging its hegemony over the concept 'democracy'.

These understandings of populism I will name, on the one hand, a kind of 'political epistemology' and, on the other, a political 'regime of truth'. In the first, populism lays claim to a basis in 'the people' as an epistemological category, a fundamental means of knowing the activity of politics. In the second, populism is an historically effective organization of discursively produced and institutionally secured truths governing the conduct of politics. Populism as a political regime of truth is not equivalent to a scientific falsification or a philosophical disproving of populism as a political epistemology, carrying with it the dangerous illusion that 'the people' as a political category requiring attention can therefore be made to evaporate. Such dreams of falsification remain within the ambit of an epistemological enterprise. The notion of a political regime of truth decentres this enterprise as appropriate to the study of politics, but, and this cannot be stressed enough, it recognizes that such an epistemological enterprise, and the figures that accompany it ('the people' as true, or false, object; the universal intellectual able to speak of this truth or falsity) remain players in the battlefield of politics and discourse and thus unavoidable objects of analysis and targets for intervention. For the moment, I will attempt to demonstrate these different understandings of populism via two different readings of Rousseau.

III: Readings of Rousseau

The first reading is the most familiar one and requires only a brief sketching. It presents Rousseau as the individual author, attributed the capacities of expressive originality, veracity and moral authority,⁴ whose concept of popular sovereignty is an original recognition of and expression of 'the people'. This is Rousseau as exponent of the General Will, that expression of 'the people' as a unified and corporate body, formed by the social compact, which in a legitimate state must be sovereign:

'[e]ach of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.'
(Rousseau, SC, 1973:175).⁵

More poetically, 'the people' as sovereign is recognized by Rousseau as moral and just: "the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God" (PE, 1973:122).

By its stressing the authority of 'the people' (that is, of a body of free and equal individuals), and its assertion of the basic goodness of human nature, Rousseau's work is routinely seen as theorizing the fundament of modern democracy, that is, its insistence on the whole 'people' as legitimating source of authority. For example, in his reader Communism, Fascism and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations, Cohen introduces extracts from The Social Contract with these words:

[a]dherents of conflicting political theories have claimed to find support in Rousseau's work; but the ideal of an intense brotherhood of free and equal men was surely fundamental for him and remains fundamental in democratic thought (1972:425).

Ebenstein, with characteristically broad strokes, describes the General Will as receiving "its ultimate valid definition in

the lives of free men rather than in philosophical distinctions", and connects Rousseau to the most generally understood practical achievements of 'democracy':

Rousseau was first vindicated historically by the success of the American Revolution, and the opening words of the Constitution of the United States, 'We the people....,' were of the spirit of Jean Jacques Rousseau. In the French Revolution, only a few years later, the French nation discovered its communal solidarity in a new birth of individual freedom and popular government. Since then, the message of Rousseau has been carried to all corners of the world, and its vitality and persistent timeliness continue to inspire free men everywhere (1969:449).

This champion of 'the people' is literally he who has helped 'the people' find its voice: while at the beginning of Ebenstein's introduction to The Social Contract we learn that in the first half of the eighteenth century in France "[t]he people were still inarticulate" (1969:438), by the final paragraph Rousseau's spirit has enabled 'the people' to speak - "we the people...".

Another evaluation, more concerned with the specific nature of the General Will, can be found in Lindsay's The Essentials of Democracy, where he argues the centrality of the contribution, not assent, of each member of the body politic, and refers to Rousseau to make his point:

[w]hat [Rousseau] was insisting on was the power of the ordinary man to judge of fair play, of honesty, of conformance with the spirit of the community. It is this sense which the ordinary man can contribute and to which the expert, absorbed as he naturally is in his own solution and in his special contribution, often fails to contribute (Lindsay, 1935:44).

This quotation, as well as contributing to the perhaps mundane but nevertheless significant point that Rousseau's populism is installed firmly within a substantial body of work theorising and describing democracy and lending it its common meaning,

also serves to table the concept of the 'ordinary man' as the inseparable partner of 'the people'. This figure of the ordinary man, or of what in the modern period can also be designated by 'the individual',⁶ is one to which we will have occasion to return.

Finally, this first reading of Rousseau can be located as it would fall within the logic of Ullmann's account. While Ullmann does not specifically mention Rousseau in Medieval Political Thought, it seems clear that Rousseau would be, for him, one of those proponents of the ascending thesis of government whose ideas, surfacing in a nation lacking the customs of feudal practice which make possible the transition to popular government, could only come to fruition through violent overthrow of monarchical absolutism. For his part, Rousseau describes feudalism with contempt, as "that iniquitous and absurd system which degrades humanity and dishonours the name of man" (SC,1973:240). What Rousseau finds so repugnant in feudalism is precisely the idea of representation that Ullmann welcomes as the precursor of proper democratic practice in modern government. The evaluation we can extrapolate from Ullmann's stance thus represents the more cautious acknowledgement of Rousseau's importance to the democratic tradition that sits alongside the celebratory statements. From this point of view Rousseau articulates democracy's essence - 'the people' as sovereign - but is unhelpful and perhaps even dangerously impractical⁷ in laying out its mechanisms in a radically direct and idealistic form. That is, dominant Western ideas of liberal democracy can agree with the demand for government to be based on popular sovereignty, while rejecting Rousseau's strictures as to how this might be manifested.

Enthusiastic or wary, this reading of Rousseau as champion of 'the people', as giving its downtrodden virtue and common sense expression, conventionally explains his wayward ideas as deriving from his own life experiences and lowly origins⁸, and from his revival of Greek thought. But a simple continuity from Ancient Greece is, I have argued, an anachronism, and the well established critique of the author as expressive origin of the text undermines the biographical rationale⁹ for this sudden passionate appearance of 'the people'. It is possible, however, to identify different conditions of emergence for the Rousseauian notion of 'the people' and thus construct a second, different reading.

This reading starts with Rousseau as a writer, that is, as a bearer of socially acquired and available materials and techniques of composition and argument, distinct from the socially attributed status of author as an independent creator able thus to express fundamental human truths. As a writer, the important relation is not that which stretches between Rousseau and the continuous verities of human existence but that which links him to the eighteenth-century cultural formation¹⁰ of intellectuals named Romanticism. When Rousseau is situated in this way, the features identified by, for example, Sabine and Thorson - "[e]ssentially he was interested in homely things, was terrified of science and art, distrusted polished manners, sentimentalized commonplace virtues, and enthroned sense above intelligence" - cannot be conveniently diagnosed as the "projected..contradictions and maladjustments of his own nature" (1981:530). Rather they are the routine markers of a Romantic discourse and more particularly of romantic primitivism and its

celebration of the natural, the naive and the spontaneous. This is not an original observation, but an important point to establish in order to demonstrate a rather different relation of Rousseau to 'the people' than that outlined in the first reading. A few quotations will suffice.

Rousseau is a Romantic, not only because of his often remarked outbursts against human reason - "I venture to say that a state of reflection is one contrary to nature and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal" (Rousseau, 01, 1973: 51) - but more centrally because of his emphasis on the need for both of the human faculties, reason and feeling, to be developed together: "[w]hatever moralists may hold, the human understanding is greatly indebted to the passions, which, it is universally allowed, are also much indebted to the understanding" (01, 1973:55). It is this idea of a dialectic between the two sides of a human nature that was developed by German Romantics like Schiller into the form of an influential aesthetic. In turn, Romantic criticism found its object, as Hunter outlines, in reconciling "the antagonism of intellect and senses and thereby shap[ing] the special ethical sensibility in which the right kind of knowledge would be formed" (1988:191). Emile, a programme of education in harmony with the natural tendencies of a growing human individual, is defended by Rousseau in the same terms of this ethical dialectic of complete development:

[m]an is not a simple being: he is composed of two substances...the intelligent being and the sensitive being...It is only through the intelligence that he comes to know of order, and it is only when he knows it that his conscience brings him to love it (Rousseau in Roche, 1974:40).

Rousseau's romanticism has been convincingly presented as reworking certain Stoic themes (Roche, 1974) and following this

direction we might say, in the manner of the Stoic distinction, that for Rousseau it is not reason which is the enemy, but societies in which 'right reason' has been replaced by 'reason of a sort', or, in other words, dominant forms of rationalism. 'Right reason' is perfectly compatible (in fact, for the Stoics, synonymous) with that 'nature' which Rousseau champions in the face of Enlightenment invention, abstract thought and arts. For Rousseau,

[a] universalization of 'right' or 'perfect' reason is the maximum desideratum, but it can come (if ever it could) not by means of a series of principles imposed by abstract thought, but as the flower of a growth as natural as that of a plant" (Roche, 1974:xv).

Indeed, such metaphors of vegetable growth as Roche here alludes to abound in Rousseau's work and place him clearly within an organicist philosophy which had gradually developed, through the concept of an anima mundi in elements of Plato's and Aristotle's writings, in the Stoics, in Giordano Bruno and other thinkers of the Italian Renaissance, to become a "commonplace of physico-theology in eighteenth-century prose and verse" and the cornerstone of theories of 'vegetable genius' in the German and English Romantics (Abrams, 1953:185).

Now the point in establishing the coincidence of Rousseau's writings with a Romantic, organicist discursive formation is to recognize his 'expression' of 'the people' as a contingent part of a wider work of 'discovery' or invention of this entity by Romantic intellectuals. In Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (1979) Peter Burke gives an account of this process as he examines the transformations of the organization of cultures in early modern Europe. "In 1500...popular culture was everyone's culture; a second culture for the educated and the only culture for everyone else..." (Burke, 1979:270). Burke

argues that as the gap between the two cultures (the second restricted to the literate) increased for a complex of reasons, the 'common people' was able to be constituted as something separated from an 'elite'. It could then be said to be 'discovered' by European intellectuals¹³ as part of a project of Romantic critique of classicism and in, for example, the work of Herder and the brothers Grimm on poetry, folksongs and folktales; Chateaubriand and Arnim on popular religion; the accounts of travellers such as the Italian priest Fortis, and Boswell and Johnson; the historians Geijer, Palacky, Michelet. 'The people' was presented as spontaneous, untutored, natural, undifferentiated, unified, simple, mysterious, instinctive, and rooted in the tradition and soil of its region: we have already encountered such a figure in Herzen's call to the narodniks (see Chapter 2, p.30). Real problems exist with the evidence for this figure, which Burke enumerates as primitivism (the idea that 'the people' is unchanging and thus its cultural artefacts unchanged for hundreds of years), purism (equating 'the people' with peasants, and the assumption that all peasants shared the same qualities, such as illiteracy), communalism (the idea of 'the people' as an organic, unified personality that creates and acts collectively), and, lastly, what I will coin as authenticism (the idea of 'the people' as quite distinct and separate from other social groups) (Burke, 1981b:217-218). In each case, empirical evidence from the period contradicts the assumptions involved. It is because of this that Burke suggests it is more appropriate to think of the discovery of popular culture and of 'the people' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as an invention.

But why invent such a creature? Or rather, what practical

purpose did such an object of knowledge serve in the Romantic discourse? Again, Burke is useful. His study demonstrates the way in which the invention of 'the people' and its culture was bound up with the Romantic reaction against the Enlightenment (its elitism, its rejection of tradition, its exclusive focus on the power of reason). What is important for us here is that while the Enlightenment was dominated by the French, the Romantic reaction emanated predominantly from Germany and Spain. The fashion for popular culture in late eighteenth-century Germany and Spain, but also in Sweden, was often a way of mobilizing opposition to France. As Burke points out:

[t]o a considerable extent the discovery of popular culture was a series of 'nativistic' movements in the sense of organised attempts by societies which were under foreign domination to revive their traditional culture. Folksongs could evoke a sense of solidarity in a dispersed population which lacked traditional national institutions (1979:12).

Where does Rousseau fit in this picture? Consider his advice in Considérations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne:

[b]y what means, then, move the hearts of men and make the fatherland and its laws loved? Shall I dare to say? By children's games, by institutions that seem idle to the eyes of superficial men, but which form cherished habitudes and invincible attachments...If you fashion yourselves so that a Pole can never become a Russian, I tell you that Russia shall never subjugate Poland (Rousseau in Roche, 1974:138-139).

No ambitious scheme of military defence or constitutional reform but practices akin to the folksongs of Burke's reckoning are what Rousseau offers as supremely valuable in the maintenance or forging of national sovereignty. Indeed, Burke cites Rousseau's taste for folksongs, identifying him as "the great spokesman for cultural primitivism in his generation" (1979:10). What is politically important is how this movement of cultural primitivism, in which the ancient, the distant and

the popular are equated, provides a foundation for the modern idea of the nation where, while "nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past" (Anderson, 1983:19). In other words, cultural primitivism plays a part in the formation of national cultures and their indispensable role in establishing the new type of 'imagined community' that was the nation.¹⁴ Despite residence in France, and regardless of whether his passionate calls for patriotism were at the time unattached to actual nationalist struggles, Rousseau can be located within this wider push against the imperialism of French Enlightenment and its focus on the entity of Europe; a general push or tide no doubt also linked to (though not simply determined by) such pressures as the economic calculations of emerging regional entrepreneurs and industrialists. His dislike of the cosmopolitanism caused by, what was for a Romantic, the sterile intellectualism of an Enlightenment education is clear:

[t]here are today no longer Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, even English, whatever one may say: there are only Europeans. All have the same tastes, the same passions, the same manners, because none has received a national form by means of a distinctive institution (Rousseau in Roche, 1974: 137).

To sum up, the Rousseauian concept of 'the people' emerges in the Romantic discourse that enables this invented agent to be effectively deployed in the political struggles out of which the form of the modern nation state emerged. 'The people' for which Rousseau claimed to speak was part of the practical discursive means by which Romantic intellectuals could build support for the reorganization of power relations and the

institution of new forms of sovereignty, as well as catalyse a recognition process in which actual national peoples were forged.¹⁵ Rousseau's particular importance as a precursor to nationalism is the way 'the people' in his writings is constituted romantically - as eternal, undifferentiated, synonymous with the peasantry, bearing the qualities of simplicity or common sense, spontaneity, authenticity, and the moral virtue of honest rural toil, and counterpointed to an elite of some sort - but also draws on the already circulating currency of the concept in treatises on government and law, where it refers to the whole population, not a primitive and virtuous pocket within it. Thus in Rousseau's writings we can see put into play an unstable, ambivalent concept of 'the people' that at once carries all the Romantic connotations of a natural, organic and archaic essence, and stretches to cover the totality of a population; at once divides 'the people' off from the centre of power or the state, and makes its name inclusive of all; at once erects a qualitative definition, and establishes the basis of a quantitative, majoritarian definition. Loosed from its narrow Romantic sense of the unschooled peasantry and grafted onto a wider, national base, this concept of 'the people' - which I shall still call Romantic because of its insistent sense of an organic essence - provides the dominant modern currency of the term with which we still today grapple, but, more frequently, confidently employ. Just as the Aristotelian concept of 'the people' differs from Cicero's usage of the term, so does the modern Romantic concept mark out a limited and relative truth, produced at a certain historical conjuncture and having a particular use (for example, for the Romantic intellectual and the nationalist

politician). It is this sense that we saw at work in Ullmann (see above pp.85-86 for how the 'unsophisticated', from a universal-historical viewpoint, transmogrifies into humanity at large, just as the 'common people' merges with 'the people') and perhaps it is this sense which is operative in most nineteenth- and twentieth-century readings of pre-modern usages of the term. My necessarily limited efforts to produce different readings have been an attempt to clear the ground of such an anachronistic practice, and bring 'the people' as an organic essence clearly into view as an historical and discursive construction.

NOTES

1. Strictly speaking, in Ullmann's narrative, 'the citizen' is a development yet to come. But the germ of the future is held within the earlier form.
2. The idea of the individual animated wholly from within, whether this interior motor be called soul, mind, consciousness or the unconscious, rather than governed by constitutive relations to social institutions is recent. See Mauss (1985) and Hirst & Woolley (1982:118-130).
3. Though Plato's idea of the polis differs by being conceived as an imperfect reflection of universal harmonies.
4. On the modern concept of the author as the expressive origin of a text see Foucault, 'What Is an Author?' (1980a) and Williamson (1989).
5. References to Rousseau include designation of the particular writings: for The Social Contract, SC; for A Discourse On Political Economy, PE; for A Discourse On The Origin Of Inequality, OI.
6. The status of 'individual' is attributed to each and everyone - to the 'ordinary' person - only when the procedures of an 'ascending' individualization, common to, for example, feudal regimes, are replaced by what Foucault calls a 'descending' individualization: "[f]or a long time ordinary individuality - the everyday individuality of everybody - remained below the threshold of description. To be looked at, observed, described in detail, followed from day to day by an uninterrupted writing was a privilege. The chronicle of a man, the account of his life, his historiography, written as he lived out his life formed part of the rituals of his power. The disciplinary methods reversed this relation, lowered the threshold of describable individuality and made of this description a means of control and a method of domination. It is no longer a monument for future memory [of a king, or privileged member of his court], but a document for possible use [e.g., the carefully collated life of mental patients or delinquents]" (1977:191). This is what Foucault terms the reversal of the political axis of individualization.

On the figure of the 'ordinary person' or 'common man', see Rowse's critical analysis of its emergence in twentieth-century Australian history and its rhetorical deployment in a variety of institutional sites (1978 & 1985a).

7. A similar approach to Rousseau is found in the influential work of Talmon (1952) which regards him as responsible for a messianic, totalitarian democracy.

Althusser's identification of the theoretical discrepancies constitutive of Rousseau's theory, that is, the sliding between 'the people' and 'the individual'

(referred to below in Chapter 4), provides a rationale for the possibility of a number of interpretations of The Social Contract (Althusser, 1977:115,132-133).

8. For example, "all that Rousseau wrote on philosophy and politics, drew in some devious way from his complex and unhappy personality" (Sabine & Thorson, 1981:529).
9. As well as Foucault (1980a) and Williamson (1989), see Saunders (1981) and Bourdieu (1986) on biographic representations.
10. For an elaboration of the concept of a cultural formation and of protocols for the recognition of relations between cultural producers, see R.Williams (1981:57-86).
11. Some have cautioned against an excessively 'Romantic' interpretation of Rousseau's work (Grimsley, 1983). But 'Romanticism' in this warning is understood, following perhaps the later sense of the word as a descriptor of the English literary movement, as a stressing of "the affective to the exclusion of the rational" (1983:180). However, as Hunter (1988) has cogently argued, the philosophical basis of Romanticism is to be found in the idea of a synthesis of the sensuous, or affective, and intelligent senses, with its emphasis on the achievement of a 'wholeness'.
12. On this point of the confluence of Stoicism and Romanticism, see Hunter (1988) on Romanticism as an ethical technique for the complete development of the individual. For a complementary and detailed description of Stoic techniques see Foucault (1986 & 1986a).
13. Gramsci's definition of Romanticism stresses a related, though not identically conceived, role of the intellectual: "[a]mong its other meanings romanticism has assumed that of a special relationship or bond between intellectuals and the people, the nation" (1985:205).

This bond is central to Gramsci's own concept of the 'national-popular': "the intellectual can[not] be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) if distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in the particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated - i.e. knowledge" (Gramsci, 1973:418).
14. This argument as to the new form of the nation is set out in Anderson (1983) and is discussed in more detail below, in Chapter 6.
15. It is important to recognize that intellectuals, as producers of books of folksongs, etc, did not just propagate an 'ideology' of nationalism. They were part and parcel of cultural technologies (resulting in, for example, the aesthetic forms of and reading practices

associated with the eighteenth-century novel and the newspaper) that constructed the cultural identifications, the particular apprehensions of time and place that constituted nation-ness. Again, see Anderson (1983) and discussion of his argument below, in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4

The Government of Populations

In the previous chapter I have worked to dismantle 'the people' as a single, stable concept able to be separated from the varied political knowledges in which it is apprehended and, thus, assumed able to arbitrate between them. Treating it instead as an object constituted within particular historical discourses, 'the people' was presented as a variable and limited truth, marked by certain discontinuities. Broadly speaking, in a theocratic tradition 'the people' features as subject, having no right of power and, because ignorant, possibly savage, ruled from above for its own good. In a democratic tradition, by contrast, 'the people' is transformed into the proper origin of power, a social body possessed of a naturally ordained, intrinsic right to the power of law-making and government, to sovereignty. This democratic tradition, which reaches its apogee, so the narrative runs, in Western liberal-democratic societies, characterized by representative democracy, the political entity of the nation-state and the existence of a national 'people' with a particular territory and characteristics and identity, gains for us its particular potency through the Romantic account of 'the people' as it is said to be 'discovered' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by European intellectuals rising to the defence of custom in the face of its denigration by Enlightenment reason, and finding it in a peasantry endangered by increasing industrialization, urbanization, and the perceived demise of 'organic' community bound by a common language and hierarchical social relations.

This 'discovery', or more properly, constitution of the organic, authentic, eternal essence, 'the people', was indispensable to a cultural technology that enabled territories

peripheral to established nations such as France to be shaped up as independent entities and to escape their hegemony. In other words, the establishment of the political, social and legal entity of a 'people', for which the practical concept had first to be forged in writings such as Rousseau's, provided a central plank in the claims of these territories to sovereignty, to their 'natural' right to self-government - for did not the immemorial existence of 'the people' prove this particular 'self' already existed to be governed and, grown in the 'right reason' or common sense¹ of nature, possess the virtues to liberate itself from its 'Dark Ages' repression and govern itself?

Beyond its presence at such nascent nation-states a Romantic discourse and the populist regime of truth it initiated has had a wide purchase in those nations already constitutionally established by the eighteenth century. In Britain, for example (and so spreading through to Australia²), the Arnoldian account of culture, which has provided a rubric for educationalists, organized perceptions of class and regions, guided and policed the policies of a host of cultural institutions, and shaped the rhetoric of the English-speaking 'universal intellectual', has carried along with it the modern populist figure of 'the people'. This account of culture is probably most familiar in its opposition to 'mass' culture, appealing to the 'timeless' national cultural traditions of 'the people' and 'the folk' in contradistinction to the industrialized and urbanized 'masses'. 'The people' and 'culture' are the correlative concepts of a Romantic discourse installing totalizing categories as the horizon of thought and constitutive, as surely as a territorial boundary and a

political constitution, of the nation-state that has continued, since the breakdown of feudal social relations and systems of laws and, despite all predictions³, to operate as a pre-eminent ordering of power relations and modern forms of government.

This means that in the late twentieth century our notions of what democracy can mean and the actualities of democratic practice have been historically set by, and remain overwhelmingly intertwined with, this Romantic or populist notion of 'the people', in part because the Romantic figure of the spontaneous, somehow undifferentiated 'people' consolidates what is set out in earlier versions of the ascending or democratic thesis of government as 'the people's' natural right to power. Romanticism enabled a logic of essences, of a pre-ordained world familiar from Platonic and then Christian discourses, to infiltrate the otherwise rigorous secularization or humanization of the social and political world that is progressively pursued by Marsiglio, Machiavelli, Rousseau⁴ and many others. To extricate, or more precisely, to refashion the outline of a democratic politics from its populist body is the project of this thesis and there remain two steps to complete a mapping of how this might be undertaken. They are closely linked and can both be identified in connection with the phrase 'the people's natural right to power' and, for economy's sake, addressed again through the writings of Rousseau. The first step concerns the idea of a 'natural' right to power; the second, the notion of power in terms of 'right'. My remarks on the first can be brief, being a consolidation of the line of argument in the final section of Chapter 3. The second, or at least where it leads us, will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

I: Popular sovereignty

'The people' have a natural right to power: or we can say, 'the people's' right to power is given in its nature. The problem of 'the people' having a nature, a general form or an essence, provided our focus in Chapter 3 and consists of the imposition of a dead-end on analysis of the means by which power relations are socially organized. Further, I attempted to dislodge the self-evidence of this nature by noting some of the material, discursive conditions under which it was produced 'out of the hat', so to speak. Some instances of the prestidigitation by which this figure appears in Rousseau follow.

The problem Rousseau sets himself in The Social Contract is to explain what will make the rule of government legitimate or just. The answer is given as a government's relation to the sovereign body, 'the people', which alone can provide its right of rule. To understand why this is so, he argues, we must examine the act by which a 'people' has become a 'people', because "this act...is the true foundation of society" (Rousseau, SC, 1973:173). This act is presented as the social contract:

Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole (Rousseau, SC, 1973:175).

But, following Althusser, we can note that the act thus described does not meet the form of a contract (that is, an exchange agreement between two recipient parties):

the paradox of the Social Contract is to bring together two RPs [recipient parties], one of which [the individual] exists both prior to and

externally to the contract, while the other does not, since it is the product of the contract itself, or better: its object, its end (Althusser, 1977:129).

To preserve the form of the contract in the face of this paradox two different formulations occur within the Rousseauian discourse. At times the individual contracts with himself:

the act of association comprises a mutual undertaking between the public and the individuals, and...each individual, in making a contract, as we may say, with himself, is bound in a double relation; as a member of the Sovereign he is bound to the individuals, and as a member of the State to the Sovereign (Rousseau, SC, 1973:175-176).

At other places in the text it is 'the people' which takes the place of the pre-existing, foundational agent: "[t]he nature of the social pact is private and peculiar to itself, in that the people only contracts with itself" (Rousseau in Althusser, 1977: 130).⁵

Althusser's aim in his investigation of Rousseau is to identify the error of the theoretical means by which Rousseau makes it impossible to think, or rules illegitimate, the actually existing reality of social groups with particular interests (that is, the structural inability and, more, refusal of his discourse to conceptualize classes as legitimate social actors). While this is of interest because of the clarity with which it demonstrates the indissolubility of 'the people' from the concept of the autonomous individual, my aim is not to find where Rousseau has failed to achieve some more fundamental truth (in the manner of, say, McQueen's claim that populism cannot provide the proper diagnosis of society that Marxism can), but simply to record how an essence, 'the people', is discursively put into play, and made operational as a way of thinking. This is achieved in the following manner. 'The

people' is the result of a contract; that is, a juridical account is provided of its coming into being and 'the people' can thus be announced as a legally constituted body. In this way Rousseau, as Althusser notes (1977:132), articulates his argument with existing law and juridical ideology by the intermediary of one of its concepts, the contract. But, at the same time, 'the people' is not the result of a contract, because the form of a contract presumes its prior existence. Here, we are returned to the pre-existing foundational agent, through the assertion of the interchangeable form of 'the people' or 'the individual', which precedes the contract or the founding legal act and is thus the foundation of a law-governed or just society, its only possible natural source.⁶

Taken altogether, 'the people' is both legally formed, and the origin of the law: a constitutive nature is installed within social practice. Thus, contingent social practice can always be returned to the absolute form of a natural essence that cannot err, to the moral totality that is 'the people':

[t]he Sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it should be (Rousseau, SC, 1973:177); the general will...is always constant, unalterable, and pure (SC, 1973:248); the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad (SC, 1973:184-185, emp. added).

By referring to what is essentially and inalienably natural and moral, that is, 'the people' (or, mutatis mutandis, the autonomous, natural individual), Rousseau establishes his central prescription for society - popular sovereignty.

II: Government

My second point analyses the same argument concerning 'the

people's' 'natural' right to power from another perspective. The conceptualization of power in terms of right is what is at stake in the concept of popular sovereignty: sovereignty, or absolute power, is made right, just and lawful, when it is located in 'the people'. (In a competing formula, sovereignty is made just by the notion of 'divine right'.) Or to put it again, popular sovereignty is the absolute power possessed by a moral totality. It is absolute power made legitimate by the General Will, because law is simply the declaration of the General Will (Rousseau,SC,1973:266).

That power is conceived in terms of law or right in the Rousseauian discourse is not surprising. As Foucault points out, "[i]n Western societies since the Middle Ages, the exercise of power has always been formulated in terms of law". According to him, this is because the monarchy and the state and its apparatuses, as the institutions of power developed in the Middle Ages, devised particular strategies for dealing with and usurping a "multiplicity of prior powers":

[f]aced with a myriad of clashing forces, these great forms of power functioned as a principle of right that transcended all the heterogeneous claims, manifesting the triple distinction of forming a unitary regime, of identifying its will with the law, and of acting through mechanisms of interdiction and sanction (1979:87).

The accompanying theories of sovereignty organize power relations as a system of legitimate rights possessed by the sovereign and a corresponding legal obligation of its subjects to obey it. The domination of political thought and analysis by such theories (when, demonstrably, there is much more going on in the negotiation of power relations than this legal coding allows) is what Foucault means when he writes that "we still have not cut off the head of the king" (1979:88-89). If

sovereignty in Rousseau's schema is personified in a collective being and not an individual, the problems of right and violence, law and illegality, freedom and will that surrounded discussions of monarchy still prevail in, to give it its full title, The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right. (This is the case even if we may have cause to hesitate over Foucault's treatment of 'law' and its translation to questions of sovereignty, as I have discussed in Chapter 1, pp.14-16.) It is within these preoccupations that the modern populist figure of 'the people' takes its place and is indeed taken up as the equalitarian and democratic solution to establishing moral principles for the exercise of power, understood as the limitation of freedoms and the extraction of obedience and other forms of obligation through both law and legitimated forms of coercion.

But the question that I want to raise, and the question that Rousseau's writings seem to demand be asked, is whether the figure of 'the people' as a natural foundation of society is the only important figure in the Rousseauian discourse, or, to put it differently, whether the problem of sovereignty is the only way power is conceived of and calculated there? Translating this into our earlier rubric, is the populist regime of truth the only one which Rousseau's writings help constitute and consolidate? My answer will be no, for the following reasons.

While the constant in Rousseau's arguments is the justness of popular sovereignty, the indivisibility of 'the general will' and the proper means of its coming into being, maintenance and operation, there are other themes that compete

for attention with the concept of 'the people' as an essence whose will must simply be declared to set in train the proper political functioning of society. These are the related themes of education, administration and the character of populations. Together, these combine to form a focus on government, in the sense of the regulation of conduct and the attribution of social capacities, that sits alongside the more heralded focus on sovereignty: "I must here ask my readers to distinguish also between public economy, which is my subject and which I call government, and the supreme authority, which I call Sovereignty" (Rousseau, PE, 1973:120).

A certain tension exists between these twin concerns, which Rousseau most visibly deals with in terms of the difference between the general and the particular: that is, the general and therefore singular interest of the sovereign 'people' ("the most important of [whose] cares is the care for its own preservation" (SC, 1973:186)), and the particular and therefore plural interests of the body of individuals whose business it is for government, as the executive arm of the state, to regulate and discipline.

But this tension can be more clearly presented as that between the description of the Sovereign, an entity that "merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it should be" (Rousseau, SC, 1973:177), that is, a singular essence which is always already in existence; and a concern with the object of government that is precisely not an accomplished fact. The object of government figures as more than the aggregate of obedient subjects - the other half of the Sovereign in the Sovereign-subject relation - on which the government executes the laws declared by the Sovereign. It is, rather, a body that

needs to be made. A lengthy but exemplary passage from A Discourse On Political Economy outlines this facet of 'the people' as governed:

that government which confines itself to mere obedience will find difficulty in getting itself obeyed. If it is good to know how to deal with men as they are, it is much better to make them what there is need that they should be. The most absolute authority is that which penetrates into a man's inmost being, and concerns itself no less with his will than with his actions. It is certain that all peoples become in the long run what the government makes them: warriors, citizens, men, when it so pleases; or merely populace and rabble, when it chooses to make them so. Hence every prince who despises his subjects, dishonours himself, in confessing that he does not know how to make them worthy of respect. Make men, therefore, if you would command men: if you would have them obedient to the laws, make them love the laws, and then they will need only to know what is their duty to do it. This was the great art of ancient governments, in those distant times when philosophers gave laws to men, and made use of their authority only to render them wise and happy. Thence arose the numerous sumptuary laws, the many regulations of morals, and all the public rules of conduct which were admitted or rejected with the greatest care (Rousseau, PE, 1973:127).

In this passage the constitutive powers that an efficient government will be expected to wield are manifest. Penetrating 'into a man's inmost being', they do not simply forbid or sanction actions, but shape up the characteristics, the attributes, the moral capacities from which actions proceed. Also, a certain knowledge of men, located here in the prince or ensemble of governors (Rousseau, SC, 1973:209), is made necessary to the operation of these constitutive powers: knowledge of God's laws, or of the previously dominant philosophical ideal of 'the good life', is insufficient. While it is true that the limit of a certain prior destination is put on these constitutive powers (as is indicated by the first sentence, where the reason for government extending its interests beyond

the law is given as the need to secure the law, in the form of obedience), they nevertheless mark out an exercise of power distinct from that encoded as law and its execution. In this sense the reference to sumptuary laws (providing codes of dress, salutations, feasting, and regularizing a myriad of other personal habits in accord with the moral or religious conscience of a community) points more in the direction of an exercise of power whose effect is to train up individuals, to constitute their capacities, than that encoded in the form of law as right, whose effects are the negative ones of setting a limit on freedom, taking life or extracting a fine or obligation. Thus in Rousseau's analogy, philosophers exercised their power to render men 'wise and happy', not simply obedient.

To return to the relation of these two types of power that we can begin to discern - the one issuing from the sovereign 'people' in the form of laws dealing with existent behaviours, and the other wielded in the name of government and constituting as well as managing its object of individuals and their capacities - we can note that the two are brought together by Rousseau in a kind of phenomenology of 'the people'. 'The people' is something which must be made, and given its particular historical form; yet at another level, this form is already known because of 'the people's' status as an essence, having a nature that pre-exists any means for its constitution. On the one hand, 'the people' is the end result of a certain constitutive use of power; on the other, the origin of a magisterial power.

No doubt it is this spiralling couplet of the constituted 'people' and the all constitutive 'people' that forms a link

between Rousseau's and Kant's achievements in establishing the noble figure of 'man'. But if we refuse the humanistic⁷ teleology that this entails, we can profitably lay out for examination the features and methods of government as it makes 'the people', before this process is, so to speak, swallowed up by the logic of 'the people's' prior, constitutive existence.

Some sense of government's constitutive role can be gathered from Rousseau's repeated emphasis on education, as "certainly the most important business of the State" (PE,1973:136). This view is formulated in relation to the formation of patriots:

[t]his is the important article: It is education which ought to give to the souls of men the national form and so direct their opinions and their tastes that they become patriots by inclination, by passion, by necessity (Rousseau in Roche,1974:140-141).

But its importance as a public task is even more strongly stated in A Discourse On Political Economy where Rousseau argues that the education of children is of greater importance to the state than to their fathers:

[p]ublic education, therefore, under regulations prescribed by the government, and under magistrates established by the Sovereign, is one of the fundamental rules of popular or legitimate government (PE,1973:136).

It is clear that the purpose of this public education is to form citizens, to train individuals and equip them with the moral and intellectual capacities that will benefit the state; capacities identified, presumably, by the mysterious adjudicator of the General Will. However, while we stay with Rousseau's theme of education it remains hard to clearly discern the constitutive dimension of government. It is continually overshadowed by presenting the instruction of 'the

people', about the need for which Rousseau is adamant, in the Platonic and Romantic terms of 'enlightenment', that is, the bringing to fruition and wholeness of innate capacities. Thus:

[o]f itself the people will always the good, but of itself it by no means always sees it. The general will is always upright, but the judgement which guides it is not always enlightened. It must be got to see objects as they are, and sometimes as they ought to appear to it; it must be shown the good road it is in search of...[P]ublic enlightenment leads to the union of understanding and will in the social body: the parts are made to work exactly together, and the whole is raised to its highest power. This makes a legislator necessary (Rousseau, SC,1973:193).

In the figure of the legislator we are returned to the paradox of 'the people' as already made, and not yet made: as, analogously, unable to be lead, and yet needing leadership. That is, 'the people', as moral totality, can no more be represented or led than it can err: this would run counter to its nature as a unified essence. And yet a singular voice, "a superior intelligence beholding all the passions of men without experiencing any of them (Rousseau,SC,1973:194), is needed for the task of proposing laws for 'the people' to pass. A magical, god-like figure is needed to form 'the people', but leave not a mark on it.

If we leave, then, the overt theme of education, another preoccupation can be observed. This is Rousseau's repeated concern to describe the populations of countries, in terms of their size, habits, capacities to produce and reproduce, and their relation to a territory; to link the principles of their administration to their particular character; and to use knowledge of their mathematical number as the basis for equations determining, for example, the necessary size of the

government's repressive forces or other administrative arms. We may note the following lines of enquiry.

The "fitness of the people" (Rousseau, SC, 1973:197) becomes a necessary knowledge for the legislator. Care is taken to lay out the optimum size of a state for its good administration: "for the constitution of a State to be at its best, it is possible to fix limits that will make it neither too large for good government, nor too small for self-maintenance" (Rousseau, SC, 1973:199). The best form of government (democracy, aristocracy, monarchy) for a state is indexed to the amount of revenue in excess of its individuals' needs that a 'people' produces, and this in turn can be determined by a detailed and specific knowledge of a particular population:

[t]he amount of this excess is not the same in all countries. In some it is considerable, in others middling, in yet others nil, in some even negative. The relation of product to subsistence depends on the fertility of the climate, on the sort of labour the land demands, on the nature of its products, on the strength of its inhabitants, on the greater or less consumption they find necessary, and on several further considerations of which the whole relation is made up (Rousseau, SC, 1973:226-227).

A few pages later Rousseau adds to this list of considerations details of the styles of dress (in Naples, "gold-embroidered upper garments and nothing else"), of architecture ("in Madrid ...superb salons, but not a window that closes, and you go to bed in a mere hole"), of diet (near the equator, "[m]eat they hardly touch: rice, maize, couscous, millet and cassava are their ordinary food"), of sobriety and health ("the hue of... Armenians, who live after the European fashion, is rough and blotchy, and their bodies are gross and unwieldy") (SC, 1973: 229), as among what must be known by the legislator in order to properly govern a country.

Elsewhere, the resources of a state are conceived not only in terms of the natural environment but as the result of a careful administration of people: "it is better to count on the vigour which comes of good government than on the resources a great territory furnishes" (SC,1973:201). Similarly, "the worst kind of scarcity a nation can suffer from is lack of inhabitants" (PE,1973:151). And, finally, in answer to the question 'how may we know that a given people is well or ill governed' Rousseau writes that there is only one criterion:

[w]hat is the end of political association? The preservation and prosperity of its members. And what is the surest mark of their preservation and prosperity? Their numbers and population. Seek then nowhere else this mark that is in dispute. The rest being equal, the government under which, without external aids, without naturalization or colonies, the citizens increase and multiply most is beyond question the best. The government under which a people wanes and diminishes is the worst. Calculators, it is left for you to count, to measure, to compare (SC,1973:231).

This assessment and its silence about the inherent merits of the various forms of government poses an important question. Where, in the readings of Rousseau as champion of self-government or democracy, does this statement fit, given that it allows any form of government to lay claim to being the best? It is not that this statement of the ends of political association contests what Rousseau elsewhere argues is "the peculiar advantage of democratic government" (SC,1973:244), that is, that it can be established by a simple act of the General Will, and so becomes the only legitimate means of instituting any form of government (legitimate monarchies or aristocracies being adopted by a provisional, instituting democratic government). Nor does it protest democracy as the morally ideal form of government: "[w]ere there a people of

gods, their government would be democratic" (SC,1973:218). What it does is to sidestep the debate over the forms of government most attuned to popular sovereignty, in which democracy has often been read as 'coming up trumps' for Rousseau, even though he says "[i]f we take the term in the strict sense, there never has been a real democracy, and there never will be" (SC,1973:217).

What is sidelined is the idea of an inherent link between, or a common object for, government and popular sovereignty. As Rousseau himself says, "let us rest content with regarding government as a new body within the State, distinct from the people and the Sovereign, and intermediate between them" (SC, 1973:211). This is evidence of a clear divide between Rousseau's insistence on popular sovereignty and his discussion of government, though it is one which is only sometimes apparent. The one is ruled by the Romantic concept of 'the people' (thus its moral superiority is unchallengeable), the other by a discursive concept of quite a different order, that of the 'population'. It is the state of a population that provides the criterion of good government, a population being not only an arithmetical total but also

the distribution of ages, occupations, and various qualitative, physical, and intellectual attributes (such as average or predominant height, weight, blood types, colour, nationality, intelligence, and level of education) (Encyc.Britannica,1985:1038).

While democracy is defined as "the Sovereign...commit[ting] the charge of the government to the whole people or to the majority of the people, so that more citizens are magistrates than are mere private individuals" (Rousseau,SC,1973:215), this can be no guarantee that democracy will furnish, in a given situation, good government. The best form of government for a state can

only be determined by the type and size of the territory and population, or, more precisely, the type and size of population, territory being a feature internal to the concept of population, "the total number of people inhabiting an area at a given time" (Encyc. Britannica, 1985:1038). The population is not, however, a simple determinant of government. It provides, as an object of knowledge, categorized and measured in particular ways, a target for government and is shaped up by the governmental practices brought to bear on it:

[t]he greater or less fecundity of women, the conditions that are more or less favourable in each country to the growth of population, and the influence the legislator can hope to exercise by his institutions, must also be taken into account. The legislator therefore should not go by what he sees, but by what he foresees; he should stop not so much at the state in which he actually finds the population, as at that to which it ought naturally to attain (Rousseau, SC, 1973:202).

Lastly, we can note that Rousseau proposes quite particular methods for deciding the form a government should take; he advocates not only a knowledge of the qualities of the population but also the combination of this kind of knowledge with that furnished by mathematical formulae. Here we see him defending the latter approach from possible objections by emphasizing its supplementation with the former:

[i]f, ridiculing this system, any one were to say that, in order to find the mean proportional and give form to the body of the government, it is only necessary...to find the square root of the number of the people, I should answer that I am here taking this number only as an instance; that the relations of which I am speaking are not measured by the number of men alone, but generally by the amount of action, which is a combination of a multitude of causes; and that, further if...I borrow for a moment the terms of geometry, I am none the less well aware that moral quantities do not allow of geometrical accuracy (SC, 1973:211).

The idea of a statistical approach to political theory is perhaps one of the most striking markers of the role of the concept of population in Rousseau. Let us first extend our understanding of the concept beyond this one writer, and then conclude by stating what the particular political regime of truth in which it figures means for extricating democracy from its prevalent, populist currency.

Rousseau's interest in the size and prosperity of the population of a state⁸ is part of a more general theorization of this domain, which has

its own regularities, its own rate of death, of diseases, its cycles of scarcity, etc...[and] a range of intrinsic, aggregate effects and ... phenomena, such for instance as the great epidemics, endemic levels of mortality, and the spiral of labour and wealth...[and which] lastly... through its displacements, habits, activities, etc ...causes specific economic effects (Foucault, 1979a:17).

Foucault cites the demographic expansion of the eighteenth century, linked to historical mercantile abundance and the growth in agricultural production, as among the conditions for the "emergence of the problem of population" (1979a:16).⁹

Pasquino, in his investigations on police¹⁰ as the instrument of a newly forming and formative technology of power in the seventeenth century, notes that "this power is of administration over this new reality...which began at this period to be called 'population'" (1978:48), and goes on to define this reality:

[i]solated persons, individuals. This is what constitutes a population, that abstract concept which is none other than the object of the administration of police. Population: another relatively recent word, invented by Obrecht in Germany [at the start of the seventeenth century], consecrated - at least, in France - only in the 18th century, thanks to the State of prosperity. Population and individuals, where previously, in

the old social structure, there were only groups, Stände, orders or estates inviolable - at least by right - in their eternal hierarchy (1978:50).

Rousseau's dual commitment to the autonomous individual and to the goal of the state's and the population's prosperity, 'prosperity' being at this time added to "the old slogans of 'justitia et pax' " (Pasquino,1978:50), clearly sit within this new governmental focus.¹¹ Similarly, Rousseau's mathematical formulae, along with his advice that governors not despise but know the men [sic] they are governing, can be understood as part of what Pasquino calls

a set of knowledges and practices which are born and develop in the 17th and 18th centuries, which bear on the social body as a population, and which slowly constitute and fashion it. I am thinking [in part]...of demography and statistics, which as its derivation from the word Staat shows, is nothing else but the science of the State: statistics, born in Germany with Conring and Achenwall and which came to be called, with Petty and Davenant in England, 'Political Arithmetic' (1978:50).

It is the statistical data flowing from the censuses, which became a distinguishing feature of the Enlightenment state,¹² that is at the bottom of Rousseau's advocacy of an algebraic equation for determining the only possible good government for a state (SC,1973:209). This increasing collection of numbers and the categories they entail has been identified as a "fortuitous diamond that is the hallmark of the modern state" (Hacking,1982:288). Why such an accolade? The answer lies in the importance of statistics to the exercise of power: "[t]o be exercised, power needs to know" (Pasquino,1978:51). This knowledge of a population is quite different from the knowledge that had formerly been advised of a Prince, that is, knowledge of divine and human laws, and of justice and equality. The knowledge required for governmental power is not

that required by sovereignty. This is mirrored by a difference in the respective ends of government and of sovereignty, which is exactly the point that Rousseau's remark on the ends of political association brings to light. Foucault conveniently summarizes the difference: for sovereignty, the aim of

'the common good' means essentially obedience to the law, either that of their earthly sovereign or of God the absolute sovereign. In any case, what characterises the end of sovereignty, this common and general good, is in sum nothing other than submission to sovereignty. This means that the end of sovereignty is circular in that it comes down to the exercise of sovereignty itself. The good is obedience to the law, hence the good for sovereignty is that people should obey it (1979a: 12).

But in the exercise of governmental power,

population comes to appear above all else as the ultimate end...that is the welfare of the population since this end consists not in the act of governing as such but in the improvement of the condition of the population, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc.; and the means that the government will use to attain these ends are all in some sense immanent to the population, all of them pertain to the population itself on which government will intervene either directly through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people, the stimulation of birth-rates, the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities etc. The population now appears more as the aim of government than the power of the ruler; the population is the subject of needs, aspirations, but it is also the object in the hands of the government (1979a:17-18).

The emergence of population as an economic and political problem thus signals and is part of innovations in the exercise of power in the eighteenth century. I have already touched on this peculiarly modern deployment of power in Chapter 1, where I indicated mechanisms of power irreducible to the dominant representation of law. Following Foucault I called the administration of individual bodies that this comprises an

'anatamo-politics' at the level of the disciplined individual and a 'bio-power' at the level of the population. While legislative power remains, it is one point in a dispersed exercise of power which is not simply, nor even primarily, repressive, but constitutive and positive. Power is not a strength or property of a person, institution or structure from which it is meted out to disobedient subjects as punishment; it is deployed throughout, immanent to, and productive of the formations of a social order, and may take the form of institutional and social relations of either domination and subordination or equity.

This last point returns me to my interest in the constitutive powers attributed by Rousseau to government. Let me pursue this for a moment by way of an investigation of the role of statistics undertaken by Hacking, and lending a more concrete form to this idea of governmental powers constituting what they govern by particular techniques of organization and surveillance. Hacking rejects a 'big brother' assessment of the census-taker and claims that fears of a repressive control being the outcome of the statistical study of populations misses the point that these "are seldom effective in controlling or altering the populations of study in the ways intended". What he does note is a quite unintended effect:

[e]numeration demands kinds of things or people to count. Counting is hungry for categories. Many of the categories we now use to describe people are byproducts of the needs of enumeration. What could be more inevitable than the class struggle about which Marx hectored us? Yet the social classes are not something into which a society is intrinsically sorted. On the contrary, it is the early nineteenth-century counting-bureaucracies that designed the class structure in terms of which we view society (1982:280).

In other words, the "moral science" of statistics (Hacking,

1982:281), along with the police (understood as constituting "the fifth and last object of public economy" and comprehending "the sciences, education, good order, security and public tranquillity" (Beccaria in Pasquino,1978:45)), and the disciplines (operating in schools, manufactories, armies and so on), is part of "a great labour of formation...of the social body, or rather a labour whose principal result is what today we call society" (Pasquino,1978:47). To this 'modern' organization of society Foucault has given the name 'governmentality':

[b]y this word I mean three things:

(1) the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.¹³

(2) The tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has never ceased to lead towards the pre-eminence over all others (sovereignty, discipline, etc.), of this type of power which may be termed government. Which resulted in the formation of, on the one hand, a whole series of specific state apparatuses pertaining to the government and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of 'savoir'.¹⁴

(3) The process, or rather the result of the process through which the State of Justice of the Middle Ages, which becomes the Administrative State during the 15th and 16th centuries, gradually comes to be 'governmentalised' (1979a:20).

'Governmentality' thus provides a shorthand for the organization of power relations as dispersed and constitutive. As Minson says of the Foucauldian concept of 'government',

[i]ts primary historical connotation is...like police, one of a perpetual and detailed attention to the cares and/or political-economic potential of a population. 'Police' and 'government' herald therefore a new productive form of political rationality in which authorities may aspire to shape or reshape those under their rule (1985:105).¹⁵

It should be noted that government, this 'new productive

form of political rationality', has no sudden birth. If it operates as a principle that often goes unremarked within Rousseauian discourse, it also can be traced two centuries earlier in the writings of Machiavelli. For instance, Machiavelli's concern in The Discourses with the presence (in a republic) or absence (in a principality) of virtu of the citizenry recalls Rousseau's advice to the legislator to know the 'fitness of the people'. Similarly, Machiavelli's advice on using variable tactics, according to the nature of the populace and the times, for the management of the restless and mobile populations emerging from the demise of corrupt aristocracies and religions, presages certain aspects of 'government'. In Machiavelli too, this new political rationality is often overshadowed in readings which focus on the juridical theory of sovereignty, encapsulated in the figure of the Prince as external to and transcendent of 'the people' and intent chiefly on the maintenance of territory. In this way, Foucault notes, "Machiavelli's Prince, or rather the interpretations to which he is subjected" (1979a:8), has figured in a debate stretching from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century which attempted to define an art of government.

But if Machiavelli scandalized because, writing in "a period of the demise of 'Christendom'", he provided an account of government stripped of the "clear criterion of political legitimacy" previously provided by theological discourses (Condren, 1980:100), his concern was also to articulate arts of government bearing on the moral and social constitution of 'the people' as his preferred law-givers. If a ruthless and opportunistic despot, shorn of religious justifications, was to be admired for his capacity to found a state or to reform it

when its citizenry and 'people' were corrupt, a virtuous and self-governing 'people' was to be admired more as the proper agency for the democratic maintenance of a state. In effect, and to use Ullmann's terms, Machiavelli's writings on government mark a confluence of (the differently populist) descending and ascending theories of power: with 'the people' and 'the Prince' no longer fixed in feudal hierarchies, a shifting relation between the two is described where sometimes 'the people' evinces a moral capacity to govern itself, and sometimes a corruption and weakness that necessitates a despot.

Now we have a name for the second regime of truth whose outline is discernible in Rousseau's writings. Alongside a populist regime of truth instating the concepts of sovereignty, 'the people', power in the form of law, and power as a possession to be wrested from particular groups and lodged in the moral totality that is 'the people' and its 'general will', sits the incommensurate regime of truth that is governmentality, with its concepts of population, prosperity, health, security and happiness as the ends of government, power as dispersed and constitutive, knowledge and power as immanent to each other, and the state as institutionally coextensive with the social body. This last needs further comment.

Government, in the sense of the regulation of human conduct and the attribution of capacities, places in a new perspective what is commonly regarded as 'the state', understood as a locus of power and either an instance of repression, violence and coercion or an agency of social cohesion and normality, and which requires, accordingly, either a dismantling and a 'withering away' or an optimalization of

its operations: in either case, requiring a 'capture'. Within a governmental regime of truth the state possesses no such privileged position: "the State is neither the definitive form assumed by government nor its subject, but rather one of its effects or instruments" (Gordon, 1980:255).¹⁶ The state, seen in this light, is part of the formative means of the social body. We can say, therefore, that while the state may be distinct from and set up against 'the people' in the populist regime of truth, and democracy understood as the correction of lines of authority between the two bodies so that the wayward powers of the state are brought into line with the 'general will' or essential morality of 'the people' via mechanisms of political representation, the state is inseparable from the population, the object of government.

This has consequences for the problem of the state that has dogged contemporary political theory. As Pasquino puts it,

[i]f one rids oneself of the idea of the State as an apparatus or instance separate from the social body, the focus of all political struggle, which must be either democratized or destroyed, once its veritable nature has been revealed, or which must be appropriated, in order to take power; if one rids oneself of this old idea, canvassed in the political theatre since Kant at least...[then one could] resituate the analysis of relations of power wholly within the interior of this social body (1978:52).

Such a resituation provides a new domain within which to pursue a differently democratic politics, where democracy could no longer be confused with a liberation (of 'the people' from the state), or the victory of a moral essence (in which the state becomes expressive of 'the people'). Such triumphalist populist rhetoric may have its strategic importance (which is to say it is precisely not an essential importance, the importance of a natural essence asserting itself), but it leaves untouched the

institutional relations of power that constitute the lives of each and all, individual and population. To pull into view the constitutive nature of the governmental power that gives modern societies their forms is the first step to remaking a concept and a political framework of techniques and assumptions, democracy, that until now has only commonly emerged within a doctrine of popular sovereignty. My interest is to see how it can be given another surface of emergence, as an intervention struggled for in the political regime of truth known as governmentality.

To conclude, the work of this chapter has not been fuelled by any inherent fascination with the politically influential figure of Rousseau, but because his writings provide a convenient point around which to, at once, amass evidence of an identifiable political rationality and political technology that shapes our modern societies, and of its historical invisibility or relegation beneath the more portentous questions of sovereignty.¹⁷ Governmentality is important because it provides a means for prising apart the concepts of 'the people' and 'democracy'. As it has been succinctly put, "[g]overnments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a 'people', but with a 'population' " (Foucault, 1979:25). Thus we can state that 'the people' is neither the only nor the most important guiding principle in understanding the shifts in the organization of power that have characterized liberal-democratic and social-democratic societies. If we focus on 'the people' we are limited to studying, in often very moralizing terms, the simple reversals of theories of right, now ascending, now descending, as what is

involved in the achievement of democracy. When the concept of 'the people' defines the horizons of political analysis, or, to put it differently, when analysis only engages with the populist regime of truth, then it is unable to deal with the decentred and unauthored organizations of a multiplicity of heterogeneous, 'micro' power relations, operating within and amongst a range of institutions, and constituting modern societies. (This is why a theory of populism like Laclau's, with its concept of an objective contradiction between 'people'/state or 'people'/power bloc cannot provide an adequate and effective basis for political calculation. Circularly, it is a populist theory of populism, in the primary status it accords 'the people'.) In attempts to formulate strategies and arguments about possible, more extensively democratic forms of political organization, such analyses are inappropriate, and effectively blockages, because of their reductive or under-elaborated conception of power relations and of struggles to transform these in equitable ways. As long as power remains addressed only in terms of sovereignty any viable distinction between populist and possible democratic forms is unable to be constructed, rendering a whole range of possible social and cultural sites of struggle unavailable for - invisible to - political calculation and strategy.

NOTES

1. It would be possible to trace similar paths to those taken by the concept of 'the people' by following the career of the concept 'common sense'. As an enunciation of 'the common good' some kind of concept of common sense can be found in Aristotle. In the medieval period, such a notion disappeared, replaced by the priority of 'God's sense'. The modern idea of a universal common sense emerged in the context of the populist or ascending thesis of power, and of the idea of a 'natural' human reason or understanding of the world common to all individuals. Historically, as part of eighteenth-century individualism, it served a radical function, for example, Paine's Common Sense of 1776 and its engagement with Burke's emphasis on traditional, conventional wisdom and prejudice as the proper foundation of societies. As such, common sense operated as "the language of progressive values against the mystique of feudalism" (Nowell-Smith, 1974:16).
2. Though the lines of filiation spread far beyond the single example of a well-known author, the visit to Australia and subsequent writings about this country by Francis Adams, a disciple of Matthew Arnold's, are indicative of this osmosis. See Adams, Australian Life (1892) and The Australians: A Social Sketch (1893). Adams' contribution is given due weight in Vance Palmer's radical nationalist cultural history (1954:16-19).
3. Anderson (1983:12) makes reference to these and argues the continuing, if not unchallenged, importance of the figure of the nation.
4. See, for example, Rousseau on the need to take religion out of politics (1973:225), on the mutual exclusivity of the two terms "Christian republic" (1973:275), and on the need for "a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles...as social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen or a faithful subject" (1973:276). This idea of what a civil religion can accomplish bears a resemblance to Machiavelli's stress on the socially cohering effects of religion: see The Discourses (1983) 1.9-15. On the particular character of Marsiglio's and Machiavelli's contributions to politics and their related but different connection to 'christianitas', see Condren (1980).
5. I have used the translation from which Althusser works here because of its use of 'the people'. In other translations (for example, Rousseau, 1963:425) 'the nation' is substituted for 'the people', a useful reminder of the intimate connections of these concepts.
6. As Althusser (1977:135-139) notes, this enables Rousseau to neatly avoid the problem of the 'third man', that is, an absolute Prince as a third party, external to the social contract and arbitrating it, which is required by other contractarian theories, such as Hobbes on the absolute sovereign, and Locke on constitutional monarchy.

7. By humanism, I refer to a privileging of 'the human' as an essence. It should not be confused with the historical and institutional practices in which what is recognized, attributed and valued as 'human' is shaped up. For example, Hirst and Woolley, discussing amongst other things the reputation of the Tafurs, the "living devils" whose "monstrous" behaviour in the cause of the Crusades embarrassed the Christian chroniclers, noted that "[v]irtually every social group in the European Middle Ages specifies in accepted public discourses or reveals as accepted and valorized public practice forms of conduct which would be considered as evidence of psychopathology by the public standards pertaining in the West today. We face, and must judge in terms of, a different repertoire of conducts. This is not because we are in some abstract sense 'better'. It is because the prevailing forms of training, social commitment, and organization make us behave differently" (1982:128,emp.added).
8. Anderson (1983:61) identifies the wide influence of Rousseau's (and Herder's) associated concern with climate and ecology on culture and character.
9. Another account of the formation of this concept can be found in Keith Tribe's genealogy of economic discourse (1978).
10. Pasquino is not writing of 'police' as the term is understood today. In the eighteenth century the police was that administrative body which "[saw] to living" (Foucault,1988:157). The eleven chapters of a manual or systematic encyclopedia for the use of civil servants (Traite de la police, 1705) provides the best indication of the scope of the police: "[t]he first one is religion; the second is morals; the third, health; the fourth, supplies; the fifth, roads, highways, and town buildings; the sixth, public safety; the seventh, the liberal arts (roughly speaking, the arts and sciences); the eighth, trade; the ninth, factories; the tenth, manservants and factory workers; and the eleventh, the poor" (Foucault, 1988:156). See also Foucault (1988b:58-85).
11. Malthus' 1798 work, An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and other writers, is also testimony to this new reality and set of concerns.
12. As Hacking (1982:290) puts it, "[t]he idea of counting the people was so well entrenched...that it was written into the American constitution in 1778. Ever after it would be unconstitutional not to count the American people. Was this some trifling bureaucratic aside? Not at all. It is written into Article 1, section 2. If you were simple-minded, as I am, you could say that the second most important feature of the American dream was that the people should be counted."
13. By 'apparatuses of security' Foucault is referring to those bodies of techniques comprising the field of social

administration and welfare, for example, the project of national insurance. See Donzelot (1988) and Foucault (1988b:159-177).

14. In speaking of a complex of 'savoir' here, Foucault refers to the constitution of a corpus of knowledges linked to a certain form of the exercise of power. This disciplinary exercise of power and, to specify one of its elements, the examination, is argued to be intrinsic to the human sciences. For example, the modern form of the discipline of medicine is accounted for not as the result of an advancement of rationality but as follows: "[t]he 'well-disciplined' hospital [that is, one in which patients are subject to continuous surveillance and examination] became the physical counterpart of the medical 'discipline'; this discipline could now abandon its textual character and take its references not so much from the tradition of author-authorities as from a domain of objects perpetually offered for examination" (Foucault, 1977: 186). See also Foucault (1980:107).
15. See also Foucault (1982:221) and Hunter (1990).
16. See also Foucault (1980:72-73,199).
17. This is, then, a different approach to Rousseau than that taken by Derrida (1976), whose interest in the writer is his privileged place in the history of logocentrism. It is not for evidence of the metaphysical motif of presence and for the opportunity to philosophically deconstruct all its attendant problems, or because "Rousseau inscribes textuality in the text" (1976:163) that the thesis examines Rousseau's writings. As distinct from what a textualist reading finds, the thesis focusses on what these writings set forth as 'theory-programmes'.

For a critical discussion of Derrida's reading of Rousseau, see Hart (1990).

CHAPTER 5

The Public in Public Opinion

The investigation undertaken in Chapters 3 and 4 into the status of the category of 'the people' has allowed us to understand the historical coincidence of populism and democracy, and the consideration of the new seventeenth-century reality of the organizing material concept of population has indicated a possible means of differentiating populism and democracy as strategies for organizing the negotiations of power and knowledge relations. In this chapter some of the current discursive formations that make a populist politics possible will be examined, and, with the example of a twentieth-century phenomenon, the gap between a populist regime of truth and what might be made to emerge, within the field of governmentality, as a democratic regime of truth will be pursued.

Such a slow advance, rather than an immediate progression to the focussed discussion of non-populist democracy with which I shall conclude in Chapter 8, is necessary because the coincidence of populism and democracy as commonsense concepts is secured by the routine formation of people's practical political literacies, and these cannot be simply dismissed on philosophical grounds. Instead, what is required is the description and situation of these political literacies as particular literacies, embedded within an historical discourse that cannot be falsified, but can be the site of practical interventions.

One major way that 'the people' has been made manifest is as 'the public' in the highly valued, liberal-democratic category of public opinion. By considering public opinion and, in particular, the twentieth-century phenomenon of opinion polls as a major mechanism of liberal democracy, it is possible

to chart an influential instatement of a notion of the public as a more or less homogeneous entity that inflects political discussion and calculation in populist directions, and to also consider a challenge to this inflection.

I: The populist framework

"Public opinion, the general will, in the last analysis engenders and energises and controls the organs of concrete power." This is how E.T. Brown, writing in Australia in the 1950s, described a properly functioning democracy (1954:8). While his equation of public opinion with 'the general will' misses Rousseau's point that public opinion, as "the form of law which the censor administers", deals only with particular cases (SC, 1973:266), his statement captures the lineage of the predominant sense of the concept as somehow the expression, like 'the general will', of 'the people'¹. In other words, while concepts of the public and of opinion have varied historically² and the cultural forms that public opinion may take are diverse, what remains constant through a range of approaches to public opinion is the assumption of its expressive relation to the public or 'the people'. In this sense, we can note that public opinion is, by and large, conceived of, debated and consumed within a populist discourse or framework. This framework, or set of institutionally organized techniques and assumptions for making sense in culturally and politically productive ways, can accommodate a variety of apparently discrete political positions and a brief survey of some of these indicates the flexibility and widespread hold of populist discourses.

To begin with we can consider Gallup and Rae's liberal-democratic account of public opinion and its representation in The Pulse of Democracy (1968), first published in 1940. This account proceeds with a rehearsal of the views of the noted nineteenth-century American theorist of representative, liberal-democracy, James Bryce, thereby aligning Gallup and Rae's position with a particular tradition of democratic theory. As they repeatedly note of Bryce's observations on the importance of public opinion to democracy, on the difficulty of ascertaining public opinion, and on the problems of interpreting an election vote, "[t]hese general truths still hold good today" (1968:23). Gallup and Rae's particular concern is to enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of the various forms public opinion can be taken to be registered by, such as elections, the press, public associations and pressure groups, in order to construct a rationale for the modern 'scientific' techniques of the opinion poll. They attribute to Bryce the knowledge that "the multitude of voices claiming to speak for the people might prevent the people themselves from being heard" (1968:17), and thus produce their evaluations as an answer to a time-honoured quest for a completely transparent and, supposedly, democratic organ of public opinion. Brown enunciates the same quest in striking terms, though his search does not end in the techniques of the opinion poll:

[p]ublic opinion cannot be itself, cannot be free or natural, unless all sides of the question are adequately presented [in the press]. It is not a question of altering human nature. Human nature has already been radically altered and interfered with. What is necessary now is to eliminate this alteration, to produce equilibrium by balancing all the interferences - in fact, to arrange that human nature, for the first time, shall be left alone (Brown, 1954:4).

The goal of a pure public opinion, reminiscent of 'the people'

as a moral totality that cannot be represented except in the form of unfettered expression, is thus established as the arbiter of the different organs of public opinion. Accordingly, Gallup and Rae argue that, while elections are the fundamental means for discovering the will of 'the people', they muddy that will by being infrequent, confusing issues with the personalities and charisma of politicians or with party machines, and providing a mandate insufficiently differentiated according to issues. The real, current intention of 'the people' concerning particular issues is therefore inadequately registered by elections. Similarly, the press is important in its role as a 'weathercock', reflecting public opinion (for instance, through letters-to-the-editor columns), but this function is combined with those of the press as 'narrator' and as 'advocate', respectively telling 'what's happening' and pleading a case. The ability of the press to express 'the people's' mind is compromised by its action in moulding public opinion. Finally, petitions and public meetings have their place in the development and the demonstration of public opinion, but both entail the danger of "an artificially created and factitious opinion" (Bryce in Gallup & Rae, 1968:25) where 'the people's' voice is usurped by that of experts, elites and minorities. Gallup and Rae caution that such a displacement is increasingly the case in the twentieth century due to the activities of the media.

In the face of these difficulties in knowing the opinions of 'the people', Bryce advocates,

[t]he best way in which the tendencies which are at work in any community may be discovered is by moving freely about among all sorts and conditions of men and noting how they are affected by the news or arguments brought from day to day to their

knowledge...Talk is the best way of reaching the truth, because in talk, one gets directly at the facts, whereas reading gives not so much the facts, as what the writer believes, or wished to have others believe (Bryce in Gallup & Rae,1968:31).

The capacities of this mythical observer, and their possible source, are left unnamed, but the general operation stands as the means to hear the true voice of 'the people', through face-to-face, personal interaction. It is at this point that Gallup and Rae present the new interviewing techniques of opinion polls as the natural descendent of Bryce's 'free movement and talk', and as bringing to the democratic tradition the benefits of twentieth-century social science, replacing intuition with factual reporting and statistics. As they say, parting company with Bryce, "[i]nstead of 'sizing up' the attitudes and proclivities of their fellow citizens, the interviewers who travel about America let the people speak for themselves" (Gallup & Rae,1968:32). The opinion poll is thus installed as the purest expression of 'the people' and indispensable to the operation of democracy, with its access to 'the people's' opinions about specific and changing issues. In their efforts to popularize it, Gallup and Rae also imbue it with considerable heroism:

[i]n thousands of week-to-week conversations with the men and women voters of America...issues are presented to the public by the shock troops of public-opinion research. These interviewers know what it is to drive through a Maine snowstorm to make a farm interview; to trudge across Kansas wheat fields on a blistering day to interview a thresher on the job; to travel through the red-clay mud of Georgia in a drenching rainstorm. Their assignments may take them into a third-floor tenement in New York City's East Side, or require them to argue their way past a uniformed doorman guarding a smart Park Avenue apartment. They talk to the prominent industrialist who runs a huge factory employing thousands of employees, just as they talk to the old lady who silently mops his

office when everyone else has gone home (Gallup & Rae, 1968:4).

As we can see, the opinion poll, thanks to an intrepid and empiricist search for the truth, ensures that all members of 'the people' or, at least, a 'representative' sample of them will have their say. It is also said to operate as the means for eliding or downplaying the legitimate role of those active in political affairs, because their activity is understood as governed by partial interests which mark them out as unrepresentative of those not so involved. It is the 'ordinary person' and his or her common sense that the opinion poll guarantees to make central to the workings of political democracy.

A similar argument, geared to the particular case of British democracy, has been made more recently by Clemens, in his Polls, Politics and Populism (1983)³. Clemens, a pollster, offers a definition of populism cast in the terms of possessive individualism: "[p]opulism means that...Each citizen casts his [sic] vote for the party he believes will provide him with more benefits than any others" (Clemens, 1983:54). This individualism sits easily enough alongside an accompanying description of a populist Government such as Thatcher's:

[w]hat the public wanted was a Government dedicated to serving the direct interests of the people, and to responding to the ebb and flow of public opinion. The public wants democracy and a real voice in Government (Clemens, 1983:56).

Clemens argues, through a detailed narration of the increasing number and importance of opinion polls in the 1979 British election, that such a populist Government and its alleged enhanced 'delivery' of democracy to 'the people' is achieved through the Government listening directly to 'the people' and

what it wants; this direct access to the motor essence of democracy is what polls provide. To some extent, he admits, the press and its reporting of activists played this role,

but it is now possible for the polls to report more accurately public opinion ... No longer does the Government need to pay attention just to activist groups, for it can now listen to public opinion as a whole (Clemens, 1983:96).⁴

The opinion poll restores to public opinion its wholeness, to 'the people' its unity. 'The people' can, as Brown says, be itself. This entails, in the liberal-democratic view, an emphasis on the individuals who make up the population: for Gallup and Rae and for Clemens the public, synonymous with 'the people', is the aggregate of all individuals. While this view of public opinion as a statistical aggregation and distribution of individual opinions marks out Gallup and Rae's approach as produced within the twentieth-century development of the American social science tradition and its particular conception of 'society' as, at least at the end of the day, a harmonious composite of autonomous individuals, it also derives from what I described in Chapter 3 as the unstable, ambivalent concept of 'the people' that such Romantic accounts as Rousseau's put into play. This concept at once carries all the connotations of a natural, organic and archaic essence of 'the people' or folk, and at the same time stretches to cover the totality of a population, composed of 'isolated persons, individuals', in a way that offsets the sense of this isolation as the atomization of the 'mass'.

While the liberal-democratic approach to public opinion works from a concept of 'the people' that emphasizes its constituent individuals, it is the Romantic connotations of an

organic and archaic essence that are more heavily weighted in a conservative view of 'the people' and of public opinion. An exemplary instance of this view can be found in the 1947 Hollywood movie Magic Town⁵. The character Rip Smith (played by James Stewart) is a city-smart, ambitious, number-crunching opinion pollster who discovers a small American town called Grandview whose statistical profile is a mirror image of the national population. Just as Rip Smith will fall in love with Mary Peterman (played by Jane Wyman), the old-style newspaper editor, and so be humanized and have his technocratic, utilitarian approach to his fellow man broken down, so are the modern, scientific, city-based means of representing 'the people', that is, opinion polls, vanquished at the hands of the older institutions of American democracy, the newspaper, but to a greater extent the town hall meeting, the conversations around the pot-belly stove, the community singing of the gathered townspeople, and the 'representative' opinion of community leaders (such as newspaper editors) in touch with the 'real interests and needs' of 'the people'. What organizes the plot is a conservative populist discourse with its foci of 'the people' and the thematic opposition of authentic community versus dehumanized mass society. This discourse is somewhat more theoretically elaborated in Nisbet's "Public opinion versus popular opinion" (1975).

Nisbet's discussion of public opinion is located within a description of the present as a "kind of twilight age of government, one in which the loss of confidence in political institutions is matched by the erosion...of the social fabric" (1975:192). This eroded social fabric, that common theme of mass society critics, has consequences for the way in which the

figure of 'the people' can feature. Deprived of a unifying tradition and the dream of a common culture, 'the people' as "genuine national community" (1975:185), that is, "conceived in terms of the social and moral attachments which precede political organization - which indeed must underlie it if either anarchy or despotism is to be avoided", ceases to be. Lacking a foundational contract, mass society is bereft of that absolute sovereignty that a sovereign ruler, charged to lead, could otherwise represent. In this scenario, 'the people' devolves to a "mere aggregate" of people (1975:170), and is better recognized as the crowd, the mob, or the tyrannical majority. It is the opinion of these irrational entities, which Nisbet distinguishes from public opinion as 'popular opinion', and which is

shallow of root ... rooted in fashion or fad and subject to caprice and whim, easily if tenuously formed around a single issue or personage, and lacking the kind of cement that time, tradition, and convention alone can provide (1975:168),

that he identifies as responsible for the diagnosed decline in confidence in the government of Western democracies. Or rather, it is the role that has been given to popular opinion, by agencies like the media and opinion polls, which is to blame for the "great heresy" of modern democracies, that is:

that opinion - of the kind that can be instantly ascertained by any poll or survey - must somehow govern, must therefore be incessantly studied, courted, flattered, and drawn upon in lieu of the judgment which true leadership alone is qualified to make in the operating details of government (1975:167).

Opposed to popular opinion is public opinion, the opinion of the public or of a genuine national 'people', which is presented as the source of the wisdom that underlies a just government and which, guaranteed by tradition and a consensus

over political ends and means, is equated with constitutional representative government, moral order, true authority and rationality.

Like Gallup and Rae, Nisbet places his argument within a formidable canon of democratic theory (including Bryce, whom, with some manoeuvring, he recruits to support de Tocqueville's concern with the 'tyranny of the majority' and its swamping of genuine individuality). Further, by insisting on the central role of public opinion while decrying popular opinion, Nisbet presents himself as a defender and advocate of democracy while prescribing an effectively elitist and mystical form for democratic government. For Nisbet's concept of public opinion sits side by side with that of 'true leadership' and its link to an organic unity, 'the people'. When the public or 'the people' is a true community those who govern, once elected, need only be responsible to their own judgments to represent 'the people', sharing as they do in the common tradition and national character that binds the community. In other words, beyond infrequent elections, a democratic government needs no other mechanisms of accountability to 'the people'. To put it differently, government, in this view, can dispense with any specified means of knowing 'the people'/ public opinion because its individual representatives necessarily express 'the people's' opinion through their common possession of the intangible, unifying tradition that guarantees community. 'The people's' will is mysteriously made manifest in the "genuine individuality" of its properly chosen representatives (1975:177). This individuality is not the feature of all members of a 'people', as in its liberal-democratic inflection, but, if the way de Tocqueville is approvingly quoted by Nesbit

is any guide, consists of otherwise inflected qualities such as "that manly candor and masculine independence of opinion ... which constitutes the leading feature in distinguished characters wherever they may be found" (1975:178).

If for Gallup and Rae opinion polls are the purest expression of 'the people', for Nisbet this can only come through the provision of the correct "context": "[t]here are ... contexts in which reason and common sense will tend to come to the surface, but there are also contexts in which sheer emotions ... dominate at the expense of rational thought" (1975:173). In the absence of any specification of the social and institutional conditions of this 'correct context' and of what counts as 'rationality', what remains as the guarantor of the true expression of 'the people's' will is the 'distinguished character' of the foundational and absolute sovereign which can provide organic leadership. Thus is the populist concept of 'the people' both embraced and turned to a conservative elitism, still in the name of democracy, and able to at once deplore the 'tyranny of the majority' and speak in the best interests of all.

The conservative populist discourse works by identifying an authentic, organic 'people', in contradistinction to its debased, false forms. The latter are then aligned with such political positions as Rousseauesque direct democracy and East European 'people's governments', with their diagnosed manipulative and authoritarian tendencies, as well as with easily swayed liberal-democratic governments. The elitism of this conservative populist discourse issues from the privileged position from which such judgments about the authenticity of

'the people' are made: about who can speak for 'the people' and on what grounds. A parallel elitism, but inflected to different political ends and, perhaps therefore, better described as vanguardism, is found in the approach to public opinion taken by the Frankfurt School and set out, for example, in Habermas' "The Public Sphere" (1979).

Habermas defines 'the public sphere' as emerging only in the eighteenth century of the European 'Enlightenment' with the rise of an independent bourgeoisie; as mediating between the state and the private realm of society (conceived as the aggregate of separated individuals transacting their private economic affairs in the market); and as the necessary condition for public opinion:

'public opinion' refers to the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally - and, in periodic elections, formally as well - practices vis-à-vis the ruling structure organised in the form of a state (Habermas, 1979:198).

For Habermas, a stipulated form of rationality is central to the existence of public opinion and is presented as synonymous with the 'general interest'. This rationally-based public opinion, in the interests of all, arises from the ideal discursive space that the institutions of the public sphere are held to offer. The coffee houses, the intellectual societies, the press of the eighteenth century functioned, according to Habermas, to foster debate that was at once free of the private interests of the bourgeoisie in the market place, and free from the interference of the state.

But this critical and autonomous rationality cannot generally survive the advent of 'mass society', as described in the work of the Frankfurt School and which concept secures their otherwise puzzling similarities with conservative

theorists. Thus, when newspapers became answerable to private commercial interests, "the transformation from a journalism of conviction to one of commerce beg[inning] in the 1830s at approximately the same time" in England, France and the United States (1979:200), they could no longer be the authentic expression of public opinion because of the necessity to cater to the whims of a 'mass' audience. Moreover, the whole public sphere which gave rise to public opinion became increasingly compromised. Habermas argues that when "the public body expanded beyond the bounds of the bourgeoisie", under such impetuses as the Chartist movement in England, it lost "not only its social exclusivity" but also its "coherence" (1979:200). (Here we encounter the conflict between the Frankfurt School's Marxist credentials and allegiance to the priority of class, and their Kantian philosophical credentials and allegiance to an overarching rationality.) The result of this loss of coherence is today

a kind of 'refeudalization' of the public sphere. Large organizations strive for political compromises with the state and with each other, excluding the public sphere whenever possible. But at the same time the large organizations must assure themselves of at least plebiscitary support from the mass of the population through an apparent display of openness (demonstrative Publizitat) (1979:200).

A sham public opinion is thus increasingly perpetuated, bereft of the unifying common rationality that defined the true or bourgeois public sphere,⁶ which has been replaced by the public sphere of the social welfare state. It is a public opinion unable to "subject persons or affairs to public reason" and which serves, instead, "in the form of 'publicity' [to win] public prestige for people or affairs, thus making them worthy of acclamation in a climate of non-public opinion" (1979:200).

What is commonly held to be a guide to public opinion - newspapers, opinion polls - is criticized as artificial and the mechanical product of the mass industrial system. Thus, Habermas says of the public sphere of today's social welfare state that "[t]he very words 'public relations work'... betray the fact that a public sphere must first be arduously constructed case by case, a public sphere which earlier grew out of the social structure" (1979:200). No longer the organic means by which the general interest could be voiced as part of an historically and culturally progressive criticism of contemporary social conditions, today's public sphere and its institutions are criticized as falling on the wrong side of an authentic-inauthentic divide between earlier societies characterized by a real public and today's societies boasting only 'masses'. This is of a piece with Adorno's assessment of an earlier popular culture as in some way a real expression of 'the people' or of their actual social conditions, and of the 'mass' culture of today as masquerading as an answer to 'the people's' wants (Adorno,1979:244). If 'the people' does not figure so insistently in the Frankfurt School's rhetoric because of its attention to class, the idea of some kind of organic unity (secured by a common human reason, or "the general rules of social intercourse" (Habermas,1979:199)) is present in the concepts of 'a general interest' and 'an authentic public'.

Habermas concludes by noting that

[t]he idea of the public sphere...an idea which calls for a rationalization of power through the medium of public discussion among private individuals, threatens to disintegrate with the structural transformation of the public sphere itself (1979:201).

How it can be saved, or "realized today" is only through a "public body of organized individuals" taking the place of "the now defunct public body of private individuals who relate individually to each other". It is "[o]nly these organized individuals [who] could participate effectively in the process of public communication", and effect "a rational reorganization of social and political power" (1979:201). As much of the left-Frankfurt School informed response to the recent reorganization of tertiary education in Australia attests, such a realization of the idea of the public sphere is understood to be possible only in sites such as the liberal university, where a pure reason can still operate.⁷ Thus, a public opinion serving the general interest can no longer issue from the public at large or from the 'ordinary person' as in the liberal-democratic populist account; what is left is the voice of a few raised in the name of the unity of human potential, the voice of the critical theorist in his or her role as universal intellectual or in contemplation of 'the aesthetic dimension'. It is the philosophical humanism of the Frankfurt School, the assertion of general rules of human communication, or of the universal reason that provides critical theory with its purchase on the totality of society, that gives Habermas and the Frankfurt School more generally the position from which they can sit in judgment on the authentic expression of the general interest; can, in effect, speak for it.

I have indicated that both the conservative and humanist Marxist varieties of populist discourse are marked by the real political problem: 'who speaks for the people'? Their specification of 'true leaders' or a rational 'public body of

organized individuals' (which begs the question 'whose rationality?') as those suited for this job makes explicit the effective elitism of these discourses. This elitism does not elide populism: it is its mutual support, an expressive elite or vanguard necessary for an historically besieged or benighted 'people' to find voice.

We should not, however, imagine that because the liberal-democratic populist discourse is free of a prescribed elite that the question of who speaks for 'the people', or what constitutes 'the people's' voice, does not also need to be asked of it. If this seems to be the case, it is simply that this approach argues for the present authenticity of 'the people' and its self-expression through 'scientific' organs of opinion claimed to be transparent of 'the people'.

Whether proposing that 'the people' can speak for itself (the liberal-democratic position) or that it currently (the Frankfurt School position) or always (the conservative position) requires a specially qualified group or individual to speak for it, what unites all three effectively populist discourses is the notion of some foundational 'people' in the respective guises of the public or public opinion or rational general interest. All assume an expressive relation between their various concepts of 'the people'/ public/ public opinion and their preferred organs or agents of expression or representation of that opinion. In other words, all three posit an essence, presenting 'the people' (or what stands for it in the Frankfurt School discourse) and its opinion as a natural origin pre-existing the way in which it is known, voiced or measured. This is what legitimates the opinion poll, or the true leader, or the public body of organized individuals. It

provides them with their social and cultural authority, or right of power. By removing the object 'public opinion' to a different framework an altered status and role can be argued for it.

II: A governmental framework

In the three varieties of populist discourse I have considered, what prevails is the sense of a relatively homogeneous 'people' and of public opinion as naturally existing: to the extent any development or 'making' of them is recognized, it is as an organic growth. Indeed, the marker of sham or illegitimate or less than objective forms of public opinion is that they are described in the negative terms of Romantic organicist rhetoric - as 'fabricated', 'artificially created', 'factitious', 'shallow of root', 'arduously constructed'. A mechanical making of the public and public opinion, that is, a making susceptible of analysis into component parts not already recognizably holding within them the germ of the entity they will spawn, is synonymous with a lack of authenticity.

If we shift from this Romantic discourse and choose instead a "level of minimum and irreducible materiality in the description of social arrangements" (Donzelot, 1979a:77), and if, mobilizing the work of previous chapters, we refuse 'the people' as a natural origin, lending its essential authority to the figures of the public and public opinion, then we can examine public opinion as the outcome of an amalgam of institutional operations. This will be done by focussing on the opinion poll, the currently ascendent cultural form of public

opinion, and considering it as the positive tool of governmental practices.

We can begin rethinking the phenomenon of the opinion poll with the words of Murray Goot, cautioning against what he takes to be a predominant "naive realis[t]" belief in the polls because of their record in "second-guessing the outcome of elections":

[b]ut opinion polls cannot be seen as simply registering views whose existence is entirely independent of the method by which they are observed; opinion polls - or referendums, for that matter - construct opinions even as they record them. They put items into people's heads; take the bewildering range of ideas, formed and unformed, that people have, determine which are the interesting or relevant ones, and then squeeze them to fit some very narrow categories; and having done all that, they report them as clear, simple and separate judgments even when they may be obscure, complex and interconnected (Goot, 1985:49-50).

What is useful here is the treatment of opinion polls not as reflections of some already existing public opinion awaiting empirical measurement and the transparency of representation, but as agencies of opinion formation. Because Goot does not approach his object from within an epistemological problematic of representation, which typically entails somehow measuring the opinion poll against that which it is said to represent to check its accuracy, he is able to treat the opinion poll as a social technology for constructing and circulating patterns of thought without any characterization of it as therefore false: the question of 'misrepresentation' and the a priori evaluation it implies does not arise, in the way that it does in the populist discourses when opinion is deemed to be 'manufactured' (that is, when the active work of building opinion is, in some way, acknowledged).

Goot's description pays attention to the specific material practices used to produce, pattern, measure and publicize the meanings that are presented and predominantly received as the opinion of the public. Contrast this with Bryce's notion of that free and spontaneous 'talk'⁸ which will reveal the truth of what is already in the public's mind, and which Gallup and Rae take up as the basis of the modern polling method. Such a valuation of 'talk' over writing is itself the legacy of Romantic discourse and its preference for the oral cultures of pre-literate peoples, due to its attribution to them of a spontaneity, veracity and lack of ambiguity allegedly absent in literate Enlightenment cultures. In fact, far from being a pure conduit for an individual subject's thought, 'talk' or speech routinely takes the form of highly regulated kinds of utterances, differentiated according to institutional sites, and this is particularly so of the interview form central to polling.

If polls enable the public or its 'scientifically' selected representatives to speak, they do so under highly specific conditions. Firstly, they involve the creation of a special speech situation, that of the interview, the formal and informal trainings it implies, and its available speaking positions; the interviewer empowered to ask questions and regulate the exchange, the interviewee constrained to reply in what count as appropriate ways and times. Secondly, and somewhat differently from the first condition, the opinion poll delimits who is able to speak, that is, the speaking position of the interviewee is allowed only to individuals and not to groups. Thirdly, the opinion poll prescribes certain topics, vocabularies and the types of possible statements that can be

made. It is under these conditions and by these techniques that the meanings given to answers and presented as the public opinion on a particular matter are produced. Neither should the fact that polls are commissioned by particular groups for specific purposes (for example, for market surveys, media ratings, and the identification of political constituencies), be overlooked. In addition, there are then the practices of presentation to consider. The most important of these include the language of the headline attached to the poll findings, and the routine distribution of opinions in percentage terms. This last constitutes a crucial means for converting heterogeneous beliefs and prejudices, and different types of knowledge and ignorance, into a common or homogeneous form such that responses can be aggregated to produce a singular result, or a result issuing from a single source, the public.

These conditions and processes that 'enable the public to speak', in fact, constitute public opinion and with it help constitute the public that is said to hold that opinion. They do not simply express or represent these entities. Thus, for example, an Australian public "overwhelming[ly]" supportive of calls for "a slowdown in the rate of Asian immigration to Australia" is helped into being by a Newspann reported on the front page of The Australian, August 9, 1988. The report consists of a very large black and white photograph of the profiles of an aged Asian man, eyes hooded, face impassive, and a young Asian boy, similarly (one imagines the racist reading) 'inscrutable' to Western audiences and connoting respectively a pensioner (that is, welfare dependent) and a student-cum-potential-competitor-in-the-job-market. Over these images is the boxed, block-typed question, "Should Asian immigration be

slowed down?" Over part of the head of the young boy is the even larger, boxed, block-typed answer: "YES 77%, NO 18%", plus a breakdown in lower-case type of these answers by party political preference and school-leaving age. The headline of the article, across the top of the discursive account of the poll findings placed above the much larger graphic, reads "77pc want Asian migration slowed". The reader is faced with the accomplished decision of Australians (that is, an aggregation of 1150 telephone interviews, weighted for population distribution though imprecise about what this means in terms of social differences), a decision given a silent rationale by the visualized 'otherness' provided by the photograph. A public, which knows its mind, is provided for the reader to align him or herself with, or to feel distanced or excluded from. One is invited, as an Australian (and in the quoted interview, by questions formulated in direct address - "do you agree or disagree..?", "would you say..?") to take a position vis-à-vis the public mind here made manifest.

Other notable features about how this 'public mind' is shaped up and brought to the reader's notice include: techniques of aggregation which lump together respondents who "strongly agree" and those who only "partly agree" to the question posed to them in the interview (which, unlike the headlined question, is attributed to the "Leader of the Opposition, Mr.Howard", thus adding a further factor) in order to produce the figure of "77%"; the omission of the statistical group of 5%, composed of those who either "don't know" or select none of the proffered responses (registered as "neither"), from the interpretation of the results; the category of "Age left school" included in the statistical

breakdown of the respondents which suggests demarcation of them in terms of working-class, under-credentialled job seekers, but which, in fact, does not identify how long ago the respondent left school (the point being that in some periods the correlation between school-leaving age and class is much weaker than in others); the organization of statements in the interpretation of the results such that the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Mr.Howard, mentioned first, is aligned with the "77%" and presented as expressing the view of the majority, while the Prime Minister, Mr.Hawke, is presented in what appears an objective fashion as defending current multicultural immigration policy, but in a way which structurally conveys the impression of his 'loss of touch' with 'the Australian people'; the context of the poll, which was commissioned for The Australian in the wake of the Leader of the Federal Opposition's public comments on the need to rethink immigration policy and the extent of multiculturalism, and was thus cued by the electoral strategies of a political party, itself responding to the particular circumstances of Australia's bicentennial year and the revived questions of national identity (for instance, Howard on 'one Australia') this helped place on various media and other institutional agendas. The specificities of the ways the public opinion presented to The Australian's readership is arrived at indicates its highly particular and mediated character.

Returning to my wider argument, and considering this representative example, it can be argued that opinion polls and the way they are deployed need to be seen as means of making future opinion and not as reflecting or expressing some naturally occurring past or present opinion or will of 'the

people'. Pierre Bourdieu makes a similar but more elaborated case in his provocatively titled article "Public Opinion Does Not Exist" (1979).⁹

Bourdieu's interest is in challenging the existence of public opinion in the form it is assumed to take by opinion pollsters and those organizations which commission them. More precisely, the article challenges the assumptions about opinion and the public that characterize opinion polls. Thus, his critique probes deeper than the quite familiar criticism of polls on technical grounds, for example, "challenging the representativity of the samples" (1979:124). In fact, Bourdieu both doubts the validity of such objections, given the state of polling methods, and is actually concerned to develop polling methods for a democratically oriented social science through the production of political literacy.

Rather than a technicist criticism about how adequately polls represent their object, Bourdieu focusses on the particular way polling techniques constitute their object, according to the assumptions which underlie them. These assumptions are that "everyone can have an opinion...or...that the production of an opinion is within everyone's range of possibility"; "that all opinions have the same value"; and that "there is a consensus about the problem, that is, an agreement about which questions are worth asking", implied by "the simple fact of asking everyone the same question" (1979:124). (For example, in the Newspan poll referred to above, consider the interview question "In comparison with the immigration policy of the present Federal Government, would you say the immigration policy of the Liberal-National Coalition would be better for Australia, worse for Australia or make no

difference?": what kind of essential unity and common understanding of the term is assumed of the referent 'Australia'? Similarly, what kind of assumptions are being made concerning respondents' awareness of operative and proposed policies?) Bourdieu contests each of these and works to systematically disaggregate the unities or supposed homogeneities that they install in the opinion poll: the unity of opinion holders, the unity of the value of opinion, and the unity of the problem about which opinions are held. It is because of these unities, that is, because opinion polls operationalize these assumptions, that Bourdieu diagnoses the poll as

at the present time, an instrument of political action; its most important function is perhaps to impose the illusion that a public opinion exists, and that it is simply the sum of a number of individual opinions (1979:125).

Why does Bourdieu consider the figure of a unified public opinion an illusion, although a real artefact responsible for the production of a "consensus effect" (1979:125)? It is because of the particular way in which opinion polls constitute public opinion, as the neutrally measured and presented ideas of equal individuals who naturally make up a consensual public, and because this is incommensurate with another, more differentiated constitution of opinion. Bourdieu describes this competing production of opinion, which is nevertheless bound up with the operation of polls, in some detail.

First, he defines the term opinion: "[b]y opinion I mean propositions which are formulated in a coherent discourse... [which] intends to be heard, imposed, etc" (1979:128). He relates this sense of the term, as how it is understood within the operation of polling, to the usually neglected category of

'no replies'. If we take this category seriously, he argues, we find that it results from the inclinations or dispositions of those people who lack the 'cultural capital', or familiarity with particular dominant codes, to formulate them in such a way that they would attain the status of 'opinion'. Further, Bourdieu notes "one finds that the rate of 'no replies' is generally higher in women than in men" (1979:125), and that the margin between the genders increases as the questions posed become more specifically political, the margin between more-educated and less-educated people increases the more a question concerns problems of knowledge, and so on. In other words, when, as routinely happens, opinion polls eliminate or marginalize as irrelevant, indecisive or apathetic the category of 'no replies' from the presentation of their collected material, because opinion polls do not concern themselves with the social conditions under which opinions are produced, they exclude groups lacking the required cultural capital from the public they claim to simply 'let speak' as so many equal individuals.

What does this cultural capital, necessary to formulate what is counted as an opinion, consist of? Bourdieu argues that people produce answers to questions according to two principles: a political competence, which involves perceiving a question as being political rather than ethical, and then applying a range of political categories to it, and which is differentially distributed throughout a population depending on levels of education and, relatedly, according to gender; and a 'class ethos', which is "a system of implicit values which people have interiorized from childhood and from which they generate answers to very different types of questions", along

with what seem to be arbitrary or individual judgments of taste and preference (1979:126). Opinion polls routinely recognize only the first of these principles as at work in their respondents' answers. This is because the dominant problematic in which questions are posed in opinion polls is a political one. Bourdieu explains this in terms of the organizations which can afford to commission an opinion poll. Such organizations have demands for information "closely linked to the socio-political conjuncture and dominated by a specific kind of social demand", and this results in the imposition of a political problematic: "[i]n other words, the problems posed are political problems" (1979:124).

Given what Bourdieu and others have argued are systematic relations of determination between class, gender, educational levels and thus the degree of mastery and of refinement of a person's 'political competence', and given the dominant political problematic of opinion polls, which requires a political competence, certain social groups are unable either to respond to polls in a way that will be counted, or to respond within the same problematic that the question is put to them and their answer interpreted. (Bourdieu contends that "if the problem is one which [the respondents] do not perceive as being political for them...or if the problem is not yet clearly perceived, they will choose by what is called class instinct" (1979:128), but which is actually their socially organized 'class ethos'.) I have already noted what the first incapacity leads to; the second means that a large number of respondents may "mistakenly answer a different question from that which was asked". In the second case, the interpretation of the poll is only "a record of the misunderstanding" (1979:125), or the

answer to a quite different question, namely, 'what is the distribution of political competence in the sample?' If the meaning of the answer was interpreted in the light of this question, it would explode the assumption of the unity of 'the public', of the unity of the effective political value of opinions, of the unity of the issue about which opinions are held. It is in this way that Bourdieu's competing account of how opinion is constituted disaggregates the population, though not into autonomous individuals, rather than contributing to the figure of an essentially unified public, or, to put it in his terms, rather than contributing to a consensus-effect achieved by the imposition of a "dominant problematic...which essentially interests the people who hold power and who consider themselves to be well informed about the means of organizing their political action" (1979:127).

Bourdieu says this dominant political problematic is exemplified in questions such as "'Are you for the sexual independence of married couples?', 'Are you in favor of a non-repressive education?'" , which elicit favourable responses from respondents high in the social and educational hierarchy but unfavourable replies from those not so placed and relying on the moral lessons of their class ethos. Other questions "which deal with real transformation of the relations of force between classes", such as "'Should teachers act in solidarity with other civil service employees during periods of social conflict?'" receive an inverse pattern of responses (1979:127). The dominant political problematic, geared towards "the symbolic form of social relations" (1979:127), makes the formulation of new opinions difficult. Bourdieu argues for the need

to provide people with the means of being the producers, not of their answers, but of their questions, and in doing so produce their means of defense against questions which are imposed upon them simply because they do not have any others (1979:129).

This will involve "from primary school on...a real political education" (1979:129). Bourdieu's answer to the kind of public opinion forged by the opinion poll and its related form, the electoral system, is thus a practical solution embedded in the recognition of a differentiated population and the generation of social and political literacies relevant to these conditions.

Importantly, this distinguishes Bourdieu's position of public opinion from Stuart Hall's, despite some Althusserian similarities. Hall et al.'s approach to the topic is evident in, for example, the chapter on "The social production of news" in Policing The Crisis (1980), in which the concerted production of public opinion about 'law and order' issues in Britain in the 1970s is examined. This is undertaken in terms of a neo-Gramscian theory of social hegemony, with the focus on the relations between dominant social institutions, for example, the police, courts, parliament and the media, as agencies of opinion formation. Conceived as relatively autonomous apparatuses of the state, the media work to professional rules of objectivity and balance and draw on the definitions, frameworks and personnel of surrounding institutions to make their stories, thus maintaining their own professional distance and neutrality as a simple 'relay' of the news to their audiences. Hall et al. give the name of 'primary definers'¹⁰ to the representatives of dominant social institutions on which the media routinely call, and this has

become a particularly influential and plausible concept in Media Studies. As well as privileging the ideologies of these dominant institutions in a way that overrides any 'equal time' given to 'secondary definers' (for example, the trade union leader who may be given right of reply to an employers' spokesperson), it is argued that the media rework the preferred interpretations of the primary definers in terms of the public idiom which constitutes a given media outlet's distinctive mode of address, and at times take on a 'public voice' (as in editorials asserting 'the public demands...'). Public opinion is thus manufactured in the frameworks of the powerful, long before members of the public are asked their views in an opinion poll. In this lies the suggestion of a 'real' public, not 'manufactured' and hidden behind the false, 'ideological' public and its hegemonic work. Hall et al. note that "where official policy and opinion is concentrated and popular opinion is dispersed, the media play a critical mediating and connecting role in the formation of public opinion" (1980:63): in an inversion of Nisbet's formulation, popular opinion names the real location and orientation of 'the people'.

While Bourdieu's diagnosis of the 'consensus-effect' of polls is similar to this account of the hegemonic work of public opinion, crucially, his argument makes no recourse to the idea of a true public, wrongly subjugated in imaginary relations and which might emerge in its own right when the manipulation of opinion polling is revealed and righted. Unlike Hall et al.'s claim that the public is "bypass[ed]" (1980:63) by primary definers and the work of the media, and thus has had its mind made up for it before it is consulted in polls or elections, Bourdieu sees such a constitution, or 'manufacture' of the

public mind as, in itself, unexceptionable, and, in fact, the only way the public mind, public opinion, or the public can exist. This view is encapsulated in his concept of 'the state of opinion'.

Bourdieu points out that, while opinion polls treat public opinion as the sum of individual opinions, "gathered in an isolated situation where the individual furtively expresses an isolated opinion", opinions are actually "forces", and "relations of opinions are conflicts of forces" (1979:128). The state of opinion at any one time is the product of a field of forces and tensions, which includes those exerted by opinion polls and the ways they are used and presented in the media and by political parties and other groups. When someone 'has an opinion' it is because he or she has situated him or herself in relation to already formulated opinions, that is, propositions formulated in a coherent discourse. Bourdieu emphasizes this, saying

[o]ne commonly speaks of 'taking a position'; the expression must be understood in its strongest sense; the positions are there before us and we take them...not...haphazardly...[but] in function of our position in a certain domain (1979:128).

Bourdieu may agree with Hall that the positions dominantly available to take are, from both their political perspectives, a problem, but there is no sense in which he would see this prior existence of institutionally formulated propositions as usurping the proper activity of 'the public', as if this somehow exists outside social institutions and relations of power and knowledge. Bourdieu's concept of the state of opinion is not characterized by such a purported unity and it is not tied, as is the concept of public opinion, to a singular privileged political subject: no figure of the public or 'the

people' animates the state of opinion, although, as an entity produced by agencies such as the opinion poll, the public or 'the people' will play its role in the field of forces and conflicts of forces that practically and effectively produces what predominantly counts as the state of opinion.

Removing the social product of public opinion and the particular form of the opinion poll from a populist framework enables us to consider them as other than the manifestations (successful or failed) of an always already existing political subject, preceding and authoring the way politics will or, ideally, should proceed. Public opinion, whether summoned up by the opinion poll or the editorializing of the media or read into a topical joke, is not an index of what 'the people' think, but what helps routinely produce the believable figure of 'the people' for populations to variously recognize themselves in or feel excluded from. In particular, it is more appropriate to consider the increasingly ubiquitous opinion poll as a governmental technique for knowing the dispersed population of the nation-state, or of various domains within it, and for forming political actors. As a governmental technique, polling is used by various social organizations, involved with, for example, economic marketing, political constitutencies, and media audiences.

Opinion polls, despite the heroic dimensions attributed them by Gallup and Rae as the hardfought handmaidens of 'the people', find their place within the less exciting but arguably more important lineage of what was called in the seventeenth century 'Political Arithmetic' and the 'moral science' of statistics. Like the statistical study of populations and the

categories it generates, the opinion poll works by extracting and constituting knowledges and subjects. I have discussed before how the specific, complex technology of governmental power entails a network of knowledge relations made possible by the continuous visibility to itself of the governed population in the form of individual bodies subjected to a constant surveillance of their locations, gestures and activities. The opinion poll, together with other assessments of public opinion, operates in contemporary societies as a more or less constant surveillance of the social position of individuals, that is, of their position relative to the variety of social groups enunciating opinions, or coherently formulated propositions, and adopting particular social practices and activities. If, as I have quoted Foucault earlier, "the population is the subject of needs, aspirations" as well as "the object in the hands of the government" (1979a:18), then these aspirations and needs must be determined in some way; a certain extraction of knowledge about its particular state from the subject who, as 'the object' of government, will be the target of specific policies, large-scale campaigns and less obtrusive actions, is necessary.

Like the disciplinary and pastoral techniques¹² that characterize governmentality and are to be found organizing a plethora of institutions, the opinion poll operates across a range of institutions, eliciting knowledge from the household, the workplace, the electoral domain, institutions of leisure and consumption, and so on. Finally, the opinion poll's techniques of aggregation play the same role as that noted by Keith Tribe of a "concentration on a numerical principle for the organisation of an argument" in Petty's Political

Arithmetic, published in 1690: "this...does not represent an early flowering of the 'scientific spirit', but rather is the only means available for conceiving the nation as a whole" (1978:86). The opinion poll is useful to a governmental power in its simultaneous attention to the individual and its delivery of a multiplicity of individuals, or their thoughts and dispositions, in the form of a unified population. This provides materials and targets for the production of future opinion and aspirations, as well as means of assessment of current strategies.

In this light, Bourdieu's suggestion of providing people with the means to produce their questions can be regarded as setting out a path for a non-populist, democratic reorganization of this governmental technique of surveillance. In themselves, the practices and relations of governmentality are neither democratic-populist, democratic nor undemocratic, but in its current usual deployment the opinion poll has operated as a populist device serving to legitimate particular 'possessors' of power by being conceived as a kind of conduit of authority from its location in 'the people' to those interests represented and purportedly validated by the poll result. Bourdieu's suggestion has the potential to effect a democratic reorganization of a technique of power and knowledge relations because it emerges from a grasp of the constitutive character of the technique. It does not, then, waste energy advocating the proper recognition of 'the people' as sovereign in the opinion poll, or the replacement of the opinion poll by a device which does, but directs its attention to securing a more equitable involvement of actors in the constitution of the institutional aims, decisions and outcomes in which they are

implicated, all of which the opinion poll helps to operationalize. This equitable involvement will depend directly on the kinds of rationalities or capacities institutionally acquired by actors,¹³ as Bourdieu's proposal of a political education recognizes: an actor, unlike a member of 'the people', has no romantic, natural and necessary claim to 'participation'.

Bourdieu's recommendation of a 'real political education' may be taken to mean a formal political education equipping actors with capacities for ongoing analysis and the generation of new institutional and wider social scenarios. This would necessarily involve attention to and competition with the effectively very real political education that all currently receive across a range of cultural institutions, and which constitute people's political literacies. It is to this I now turn.

NOTES

1. On this lineage Foucault says: "almost all of the eighteenth-century reformers...credited opinion with considerable potential force. Since opinion could only be good, being the immediate consciousness of the whole social body, they thought people would become virtuous by the simple fact of being observed. For them, opinion was like a spontaneous re-actualisation of the social contract. They overlooked the real conditions of possibility of opinion, the 'media' of opinion, a materiality caught up in the mechanisms of the economy and power in its forms of the press, publishing, and later the cinema and television...They believed opinion would be inherently just, that it would spread of its own accord, that it would be a sort of democratic surveillance" (1980:161-162).

2. For example, in the eighteenth century 'the public' referred to a specific social group, enfranchised, propertied, educated males related in particular institutional ways and producing 'rational' views. As the related description of a social space, 'public' took its sense from its separation from the family as the sphere of intimate social relations. See Sennett (1977). In the twentieth century, 'the public' is more commonly used to refer to all adult individuals in a society, and these are not conceived as related in any particular way, nor necessarily the holders of rational or consistent views. The associated sense of 'public' derives today more from its opposition to 'the private', in a psychological sense, than to another social sphere.

 In the case of 'opinion', while the twentieth century has seen the term limited to those facets of personal reality visible on the surface of social life, and to the cognitive rather than the affective faculties, such precision only followed the rise of social psychology and that discipline's redefinition of 'attitude' (which is today paired with 'opinion' as its hidden, persistent, irrational underside) away from its eighteenth-century sense of a physical (rather than mental) posture expressing a mental state or adapted to a course of action. See Fleming (1967).

3. Clemens' claims as to the recentness of the incorporation of polling into day-to-day politics in Britain may be related to the different development of polling in that nation, in turn traceable to the different profile of the social sciences in Britain and the United States. The first form of opinion polling in Britain was organized by the Mass-Observation unit, set up in the early 1930s by an anthropologist, Harrisson, and a journalist, Madge. The unit's methods were qualitative rather than quantitative, with a large number of participant observers detailing 'mass' phenomena and collective behaviour and reporting in pamphlets for a 'mass' readership. See Harrisson (1940).

4. Clemens' view adds to 1950s theories of democracy as pluralist (e.g., Dahl (1961), Lipset (1960)) by stressing

- the possibility of access to the harmonious whole said, in these theories, to overarch the plural interests presented by various advocates and lobbyists. For a critical analysis of such theories, see Duncan & Lukes (1967), Gitlin (1967), Ono (1967).
5. Directed by William Wellman, and written by Robert Risken, a colleague of Frank Capra, the Hollywood director of a corpus of films, such as Meet John Doe (1941), which offer exemplary instances of an American, mid-twentieth-century populist discourse.
 6. That Habermas' concept of 'the public sphere' is normative or prescriptive is clear. As an editorial footnote to Habermas' advice about the normative importance of the now defunct liberal or bourgeois model of the public sphere insists, "[h]ere it should be understood that Habermas considers the principle behind the bourgeois public sphere as indispensable, but not its historical form" (Habermas, 1979:200, emp.added).
 7. For an example of this, see Sharp (1988), and see Hunter (1989) for a useful critique of the characterization of the university in terms of a 'pure reason' through an examination of the historical role and relation of Australian universities to the state.
 8. This notion is still widely current and, problematically, enjoys a certain following in, amongst other areas, Television Studies: see Fiske & Hartley (1978) and Fiske (1989).
 9. See also Bourdieu (1990:168-174).
 10. Hall et al.'s concept of 'primary definers' is indicative of the problems of structural functionalism associated with the Althusserian framework. The work of primary definers, or accredited representatives of powerful institutions, is, on the one hand, presumably determined by the specific material practices and routines of those institutions, and not by any simple link to a ruling economic or class position that overrides the specificities of institutions. But if this is indeed the case, why, on the other hand, are the statements and definitions provided by primary definers necessarily on the side of "the reproduction of the dominant ideologies" (1980:60) and existing class relations, as they are treated in Hall et al.'s analysis? Another way of putting this is to ask on what basis primary definers can be differentiated from secondary definers (or those spokespersons whose statements and definitions run counter to the dominant ideologies), when both are accredited representatives of their institutions? How is this effect of primacy achieved apart from the temporal ordering of media agendas and accounts of social 'questions' and 'problems'? Hall et al.'s ascription of primacy, however, is not made on these grounds, as the media are presented as "in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers" (1980:59). Given this, the distinction between primary and secondary definers can only be made by

deciding in advance of the particular effects and uses to which spokespersons' statements are put, which institutions are dominant and which subordinate, according to their structured relation to the differentiated social totality that characterizes Althusserianism, for example in the terms of 'dominant ideology' or the neo-Gramscian generalized category of 'cultural hegemony'.

11. The term 'state of opinion' indicates the movement and instability of the field out of which any one state, or reading of opinion, is formed. It is because opinion polls do not attend in this way to the social conditions in which opinion are formed that Bourdieu contends that "opinion surveys, except for certain accidents, have a very high forecast rate regarding elections, but they seem to fail when one compares an early result with a later one, whenever there has been an intervening crisis" (1979:128).
12. See Foucault (1982) for a discussion of pastoral power.
13. The concept of 'actor' draws on Hindess' definition of an actor as a locus of action and decision made possible by the actor's institutionally acquired statuses and rationalities (1986,1988).

CHAPTER 6

The Cultural Production of Political Literacies

I have suggested in Chapter 5 how the predominant production and reading of public opinion polls owes its character to and also helps consolidate a certain political literacy wedded to the Romantic truth of 'the people'. My objects in this chapter and the next are quite particular: to specify something of the cultural spaces where and means by which political literacies and their associated capacities are constituted, to detail one populist form this has routinely taken in English-speaking societies since World War II, and to analyse the features and deployment of its most recent variant. It is because of these historical, institutional arrangements that populism is currently an effective set of truths governing the conduct of politics. However, to address these particular objects, I need first to establish guidelines for how we are to conceive of 'culture' and its relations to politics.

I: The politics of culture

One starting point might be to note the shifting meanings of the term 'culture' - from its early usage as a benign tending of agricultural growth, to the designation of a 'way of life' and the differentiation of ways of life within and across nations in the nineteenth century, to the now common identification of the products of intellectual and artistic creativity (Williams, 1983:87-93) - and that these have been historically related to major social and political changes (including the emergence of the modern nation-state, the extension of the franchise, emancipation of subordinate groups, the introduction of popular education).

However, while this marks out one sense, the politicality

of cultural forms does not simply consist of the linking up of a cultural field to a supposedly separate domain of political change. Instead, we need to be aware that the study of culture has an intrinsic political dimension because cultural activities have active determining effects in the ongoing negotiation of power relations that takes place in shifting circumstances, and involves particular knowledges, practices, agents, institutions, calculations and outcomes.

The importance of the argument that cultural activities and practices can have active determining political effects becomes clearer if we keep in mind an opposing, reductive account of cultural practices as simply reflecting already given relations of power. In this view, these relations of power can be understood through the disciplines of, for example, economics or political philosophy which, at least in some of their dominant guises, would trace political forms back to certain economic 'interests' or to a foundational 'human nature'. We can see how such conceptualizations would then relegate the study of cultural forms to a quite secondary and epiphenomenal role with regard to what they could tell us about politics/power relations and their 'expression' or 'representation'. Contrary to such an approach, cultural forms can be studied as practices which produce a socially determined, polysemic range of meanings that can be organized and used to particular political effect. That is, these culturally produced meanings (which may be informational, pleasurable, painful, emotive, etc.) can be used in ways that secure, maintain or alter relations of power and their institutional organization.

These initial comments about the specific sense of the

term 'politics' in relation to cultural forms are necessary simply because, while 'culture' is very often considered in relation to 'ideology', its relation to politics is not so often discussed. The relations of cultural practices to the institutional sites, the conditions and effects of power relations are frequently overlooked in favour of a consideration of the way cultural practices embody or are shaped by an individual or class consciousness or recognition of social structures. That is, while Cultural Studies' dominant paradigms conceptualize cultural forms within a problematic of recognition (or misrecognition), cultural-political relations go unremarked and unanalysed. As well as identifying cultural activities in terms of ideologies or the social knowledges by which people make sense of the world, cultural activities need also to be thought in terms of how they tie into other institutional practices, not simply as a way of representing or understanding power relations, but in the way these cultural practices and products are part of the means of negotiating and renegotiating power-knowledge relations.

This approach to cultural forms (which shares some filiations with an earlier rhetorical orientation) is nowhere better developed than in Ian Hunter's "After representation: recent discussions of the relation between language and literature" (1984a), and a brief reference from its examples can help shape up the direction of our analysis. Hunter studies "the role that techniques of writing play in different forms of social organisation" (1984a:409). These techniques vary in their location from institutions of social discipline to that of literature, and Hunter focusses on the nineteenth-century novel: Dickens' Our Mutual Friend (1864-65) and the

pseudonymous Walter's My Secret Life (1888), classified as pornography. What Hunter takes issue with is a literary-critical approach that uses Dickens "to exemplify a form of representation in which experience can speak to and through a humane consciousness", and that asserts Walter's writing as a failure of this (1984a:405).

For Hunter, the relation of Dickens' writing to the social sphere is not one of representation, where the experiences garnered in the social sphere and filtered through Dickens' advanced humanity lead him to advocate progressive social reforms. The novel is not 'about' nineteenth-century social life, as if set apart from it in an ideal visionary space of overview and imaginative commentary, but a relay within the practical organization of social life:

Dickens' 'descriptions'...have the primary function of developing new norms of public behaviour and morality, and new forms of character-identification associated with the mass formation of secular conscience. They do not attempt to give information about social life but help to constitute the new 'surfaces' of public morality on which a whole range of formerly tolerated activities (public indecency, drunkenness [sic], profligacy, child labour, dereliction of family duties etc.) would show up as unacceptable (Hunter, 1984a:407).

Similarly, Walter's excitatory descriptions of London low life are not a failure of representation and of the subjectivity that supposedly administers it, but an indication that his writing "is not connected to the new machinery of social discipline, except perhaps as a perverse relay" (Hunter, 1984a: 408). Thus, the cultural form of the novel is not, first and last, the embodiment of an individual or more general human consciousness or of an ideology, but an instrument in the "material installation of new moral technologies" (Hunter, 1984a:409). A set of cultural practices (here, the composition

of exemplary character types, the narrative staging of events, the serialization of novels in newspapers and magazines, techniques of reading aloud in the family home¹, and so on) are part of the government or, in its constitutive sense, of the surveillance and policing of a population and its individuals. It is in this way that I shall consider the populist cultural practices and products that are our object.

To end these introductory remarks it is appropriate to note that this break with defining culture in terms of alleged special expressive or representational abilities is part of a more thoroughgoing rethinking of what we mean by the term. In my initial attempt at describing the relations between culture and politics I indicated the concepts of culture available since the nineteenth century: a 'way of life', and the end-products of a process of intellectual and artistic creativity.² For my purposes, both of these are problematic as both, in their different forms, draw their meaning from the model which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and which described

a general 'cultural process' whereby - either in the dialectic between 'man's' thoughts and feelings, or in the one reconciling his consciousness and his 'social being' - human attributes are formed according to the goal of total development (Hunter, 1988:71).

This Romantic legacy of "an ideal general development of human faculties and social forces" (Hunter, 1988:71) disarms any attempt to describe and assess culturally formed interests and attributes by returning such analysis to a universal human teleology through the phenomenological notion of 'the dialectic'. Again, it is Hunter who cogently demonstrates this point in relation to the available assessments of literary education and its outcomes, in his Culture And Government

(1988). To escape from the Romantic dialectic of the intellect and the senses in which culture has been predominantly conceived, and following Foucault's enabling break from the unities governing historical description, Hunter has redefined culture as "a patchwork of cultural technologies" (1988:x), that is, "'motley' or non-oriented ensembles of norms, practices, techniques, and institutions" (1988a:114). What women and men can be, the attributes they can possess, is dependent on the cultural institutions in which they find themselves, and

[t]he field of cultural institutions...is not rich, organically interrelated, or dialectically open-ended; it is relatively sparse on any given historical occasion, differentiated, and limited in the range of interests, attributes, and forms of assessment that it admits of (Hunter, 1988a:121).

The cultural technology that Hunter focusses on is that of popular, elementary education, emerging in England during the late eighteenth century. The aims and achievements of this technology coincide with the thesis' interest in 'the population' as a primary feature of the new forms of power and knowledge relations gathered under the rubric of governmentality. According to Hunter, it was the apparatus of popular education which was responsible for the policing of "a highly specific profile of cultural attributes...[like] health, literacy, criminal tendencies, private sentiments and public conduct", and which, as "an historically unprecedented machinery of social investigation and administration", had largely succeeded "by the middle of the nineteenth [century] ...in constituting the life of the population as an object of government" (1988:ix). In describing this particular cultural technology, and its development into the twentieth century, where it lends its norms and techniques to literary education

as central to various curricula, Hunter helps detail the formation of the citizenry of liberal-democratic societies, and establish that its extension throughout a population is not the populist resurrection of a long subjugated 'people' but the much more limited and norm-governed, constitutive work of "organising, training, and optimalising" the moral and physical condition of a population (1988:36).

It is clear that in adopting this concept of culture I am, by definition, displacing the idea of separate domains of culture and politics, their boundaries guaranteed by their essential natures, and only linked in relations of externality. This is because the concept of culture as 'a patchwork of cultural technologies' and as a form of human resource management is made in terms that stipulate both the institutions (or social conditions) under which meanings, as well as the capacities involved, are produced, and the role in the negotiation of power relations (or political effects) that these meanings and capacities entail. Hunter, focussing on cultural objects and targetting a readership primarily versed in a literary, Cultural Studies or sociology of culture vocabulary, employs the term 'cultural' to designate phenomena that I, working in a somewhat different academic configuration, would prefer to differentiate as 'social' and 'political': thus it seems appropriate to maintain the rubric of 'social institutions' and 'political effects', rather than let 'cultural' do the work of these as well as designating 'meaning-production'. But this differentiation is not the rendering of essences into terminology: rather the nuanced negotiation of forms of speech for particular audiences and

purposes.

II: Popular cultural conceptions of politics

Within the general topic of the politics of culture I will consider an instance where the relations so far alluded to may be further examined. This instance is that of popular cultural conceptions of politics,³ in particular a certain amalgam of concepts that has circulated widely, especially in the last few years. (By 'popular' I mean 'widespread';⁴ by 'cultural' in this instance I am indicating the sites of television, radio, video, film, print journalism and advertising).

I will consider how these popular cultural conceptions of politics provide a very particular idea of the category 'politics' and, having already established a different account of what I mean by this term, can do this at some critical distance. As well, following the thesis' wider arguments, while not viewing these popular conceptions of politics as 'true', there is no need to dismiss them as false. Instead of these familiar philosophical options, I will address these popular conceptions as having definite historical and social effects - operating precisely as the concept of politics that can be appealed to in a variety of campaigns, and as the basis on which alliances (for example, those of the 'new conservatism') can be formed, strategies assembled, calculations made and decisions taken. In other words, our interrogation of these popular cultural conceptions need not start and finish by treating them as true or false representations. As I have said elsewhere, the thesis' scope is not that of a positivist political science, nor that which is usually regarded as

impeding it, ideology.

Orwellian discourse

Recently, popular cultural conceptions of politics - that is, the way politics is talked about or presented in a range of widely available cultural sites - have been characterized by a particular form which, because of a set of repeated and recognizable features, I can most appropriately refer to as 'Orwellian' discourse. In 1984, especially, it was almost impossible to avoid this discourse deployed, in one form or another, in the various media. A few examples are the television programme Yes Minister, which I will examine in Chapter 7, the spectre of the totalitarian state as a framework for current affairs programmes, and various strategies of print journalism.⁵

This deployment was not, however, a 'flash in the pan'. Orwellian discourse has a longer-range potential to provide the form of a popular critical wisdom. The institutional conditions of this potential are related to the texts of Orwell, in particular Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) and Animal Farm (1945), having had a more or less constant place in secondary school curricula in Britain, Australia and the United States throughout the post-war period.⁶

Orwellian discourse is composed of a number of closely related statements - about language, about common sense, about 'the people', about the state, about democracy and social change - which are not simply Orwell's, or the writer Eric Blair's, but a quite explicit formulation of liberal-humanism that is recognizably populist. All of its various essentialisms

relate to the pivotal figure of 'the people'. Also specific to this discourse is a vocabulary, for example, '1984', 'Big Brother', 'doublespeak'⁷, 'Newspeak', 'rewriting history', 'the memory hole', 'Orwellian'. This set of variable formulae derived from Nineteen Eighty-Four circulates and works as a type of shorthand, or as 'recognizable notations', for these series of associated statements. For example, consider Bill Mitchell's cartoon from The Australian (1985) (see Appendix), and the article headline "Big Brother Bob keeps us happy with silverspeak" from The Weekend Australian (Robinson, 1984). The iconic sign of the telescreen, and the linguistic signs 'Big Brother Bob' and 'silverspeak' each operate like the punk's safety pin (to borrow from another well-known set of cultural practices) as an easily recognizable notation for a cluster of concepts and activating prevalent connotations.⁸ I shall consider the wider political operation of these notations after a description of their associated concepts. These will not be unfamiliar to readers but require itemizing in order to specify the discourse so that we may reconsider the demarcations and oppositions entailed. These are repeatedly presented as both inevitable and exhaustive. Taking my cue from the 'silverspeak' of the headline, I will begin by considering the concept of language central to Orwellian discourse.

This is essentially that language, properly handled, allows, as in Orwell's celebrated phrase, reality and truth to shine through 'prose like a window pane'⁹. Thus, language, ideally, has no material weight of its own but serves simply to express the already existing thoughts of men [sic] and already existing reality. Christopher Norris rightly describes this as the empiricist view that "language in a normal healthy

condition simply hands over the raw stuff of experience" (1984: 254).¹⁰ (Contrast this to the notion, which informs the thesis' concept of culture, of signifying practices producing, rather than passively expressing, meaning.) This view of language sets the standard against which the aberration of 'Newspeak' and all its variants (silverspeak, "Hawkespeak" (Dodd & Forbes, 1985), "boredomspeak" (Stanton, 1984), "Ed-speak" (Harris, 1985)) can be measured. 'Newspeak' is language manipulated to serve definite ends: to, precisely, produce particular meanings rather than reflect already existing ones. 'Newspeak' equals jargon, the neologisms and verbosity of elite groups or intellectuals out of touch with reality, or trying to mechanically change it via exclusive, technical language.

As this indicates, closely related to this expressivist concept of language is that of 'the real' it is held to unproblematically represent. This entails the notion that reality exists independently of the culturally organized capacities which perceive, interpret or shape it. It is the basis of the notion of 'raw experience', a bedrock of facts or sensations that is not socially structured or classified in any way but simply there for us, as individuals, to immediately - without the mediation of any socially imparted habits of thought and perception - knock up against. Another closely related term is 'life', as the domain of everyday experience that is more or less universal, whose rhythms are guaranteed by our 'human nature'¹¹ and which is thus set off from the purely contingent and transient features that characterize the institutional, the political, the socially constructed and the historically specific areas of existence.

It is this concept of an independently existing reality

about which facts can be stated in 'plain language' that is the standard against which the alleged abomination of 'rewriting history' is measured. 'Rewriting history' in the Orwellian discourse has its graphic form in Nineteen Eighty-Four's rewriting from day to day of the history of the perpetual war between the states of Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia where allies were transformed into enemies, and vice versa, overnight. 'Facts' in this scenario were thus debased as so much fodder to disappear down the 'memory hole' according to the bureaucratic dictates of expediency. In a less fictional world, what this concept of an independently existing and knowable reality is to be contrasted with, in the Orwellian discourse, is a culturally relative or plural view of knowledge which eschews any possibility of empiricist access to an independent reality that could function as the final arbiter between differing knowledges and their particular registration of the 'gap' between reality and representation.

These concepts of language and 'the real' that figure in Orwellian discourse may be sounding by now as so much 'common sense'. We should not treat this as either a reason to dismiss or to comfortably accept them: common sense, an historically and culturally variable set of meanings, has its own specific weight or currency that repays analysis,¹² and common sense is itself a pivotal concept in the Orwellian discourse. This chapter is restricted to considering common sense in its latter role. Here, it links with the idea of language as unproblematically reflecting the real and expressing independently existing thoughts, in the sense that plain or ordinary language is that which expresses or represents common sense. Common sense, as practical knowledge and a practical way

of understanding the world, is taken to come from the interaction between a self-evident individual consciousness and an equally self-evident reality. This self-evidence is captured in the way we speak of people as either 'having' or 'not having' common sense, that is, we talk of it as a natural quality individuals possess. As such it is asserted to be a form of knowledge that is self-evident, has no history, no particular cultural or institutional conditions. Common sense is a crucial category in Orwellian discourse as it functions as a touchstone for virtue, and serves to disqualify all other specialized knowledges which, by definition, do not share its privileged relation to the real, to plain language and, importantly, to 'the people'. The 'common' in common sense invites the question, 'common to what?': the answer, within the Orwellian discourse, is 'common to the people'. But before taking up this alleged source of common sense, the category of specialized knowledges that are widely said to function as the enemy of common sense must be addressed.

Intellectuals, politicians, bureaucrats, administrators, experts in any field are, as elites separated from 'the people', characterized by their use of jargon which in turn indicates that, at best, their particular knowledge is out of touch with reality and, at worst, that that knowledge is an attempted distortion of reality - a rewriting of the facts, in other words, a lie. (We should note that this is the only possible sense of 'ideology' in the Orwellian discourse: as lie, not as specific structuring of knowledge.) So, to quote Norris again, "the strengths and virtues of a 'common-sense'" are opposed to, for example, "the abstract machinations of political theory" (1984:250) and, moreover, "intellect can only

corrupt and distort the certitudes of common-sense knowledge" (1984:260).

As stated above, the virtue of common sense is guaranteed by the fact that it is conceived as the practical knowledge issuing directly from and shared by 'the people'. This knowledge expresses 'the people' as the repository of authentic human values; common sense is then an expression of the human. Specialized knowledges, on the other hand, can be characterized in terms of 'the power of ideas over people', summed up in the notation 'thought control'.

The category 'the people' in Orwellian discourse is what earns it description as a populist discourse. In mainstream political theory 'populism' denotes forms of political discourse or rhetoric which aim to produce popular support for a particular political party or movement by claiming that it speaks for 'ordinary people' and represents their interests against the powerful sections of society. The thesis' working definition of populism extends to any discourse that deploys, as central, the concept 'the people' to signify an essence, and the concept of a separation of 'the people' from an 'elite'. In Orwellian discourse 'the people' is the essential source or origin of a morality characterized by the 'ordinary virtues' of, for example, decency, fellowship and community. The content of these virtues may, however, shift with the deployment of the discourse.¹³

In Orwellian discourse, as in other populist discourses, the category 'the people' is in large part characterized by that which it is not, or what it is defined against. This can be the entity 'the state', or 'big business', the military, the police, or any other elite. In the Orwellian discourse the

opposition 'the people'/state is the operative distinction. One result of this is that the state, in turn, is primarily defined as not 'the people'. The state is defined as those groups who do not have the virtues of 'the people', or as those who are not the 'ordinary' decent man and woman (or 'Proles'), but which dominate and repress them, despite their enduring qualities. Thus, the state and politics (because the state in this view names the domain of politics) is presented in characterological terms, as a person or persons removed from common humanity and otherwise known as 'Big Brother'.

Politics emerges as opposed to the human and to common sense. Politics is also epiphenomenal in this discourse. That is, it is conceived as an excrescence on the face of the real which we must see past if we are to stay in touch with the real, with the human and with those other values that are not subordinate to political ends (such as the aesthetic values of truth and beauty and philosophically inflected concepts of justice, harmony and proportion). As Brown notes, "[p]olitical reality is conceived as a superstructure, built on moral and psychological values and reducible to them" (1984:57).

What I am arguing, then, is that a widespread cultural form, Orwellian discourse, produces and circulates a conception of politics as operating in, first, a limited but dominant (and, at least potentially, totalitarian) domain - the state. Second, politics is defined in terms of power thought of as an object to be possessed; the politicians and bureaucrats have power, and 'the people', in a totalitarian state, do not; and, alternatively, both have more equal shares in a liberal-democratic parliamentary regime. This contrasts with the thesis' definition of politics in terms of power relations that

always have to be secured and reproduced by definite means and in specific institutional conditions.

Third, as superstructural, politics is thought of as expressive. Somewhat like language, politics is thought of as a more or less neutral bearer of certain ensembles of already existing values. So, in the conventional notion of a democracy, politics is expressive of 'the people'. In a totalitarian state, politics is expressive of a dehumanizing will. Again, this conception of an expressive politics is to be contrasted with the thesis' definition of politics as a continual negotiation, forging and reforging of power relations that actively produces social realities, such as the form and objectives of institutions, rather than reflecting them.

III: Producing a political literacy

I will return now to consider the wider political operation of the Orwellian discourse and its set of notations. As stressed above, the culturally recognizable notations for this cluster of concepts are signs which we do not have to simply identify in terms of a general social knowledge or ideology. If this were the extent of their potential, the specificity of Orwellian discourse would not be a point worth making. For it could easily be said that as the series of concepts that constitute Orwellian discourse are simply those of a liberal-humanism, albeit heavily inflected in a populist direction, there is nothing much more to be discovered by considering instances of Orwellian discourse than that which we already know of the conceptual framework of liberal-humanist ideology.

However, the many and repeated local instances of Orwellian discourse are worthy of consideration in their own right once we realize that these recognizable notations serve as actual, significant means for presenting what counts as politics and for negotiating and renegotiating power relations. They have been made to operate as the routinely deployed and easily, almost 'intuitively', recognizable concept of politics that can be appealed to in a diversity of campaigns to win support (that is to construct an audience, market or constituency) for or against a range of political strategies, initiatives, policies, institutional reorganizations and struggles.

What we are dealing with when studying this type of widely used set of notations might be described as informal tutelary apparatuses for producing particular forms of political literacy, that is, certain widespread ways of reading the state of the power relations made visible through media attention. These sets of notations can be thought of as a new form of rhetoric, in the sense of practices of language and image use that are calculated as persuasive of particular audiences and varied in terms of their effects, not in its (distinctly Orwellian) sense as manipulative and thus 'false'. Where traditional rhetoric was inculcated in the schoolroom within the trivium, the pedagogic arena of new rhetorical forms has been significantly amplified by the repetitive practices of the 'mass' media and their popular audiences.

These notations in which we are informally schooled by television, radio and print as well as by our formal education systems, are definite parts of the material means for producing particular constituencies. Beyond the scope of this chapter are

the complex of disciplinary techniques and varieties of social organization (namely, technologies for self-reflection and moral instruction found in the classroom, the family, the workplace) that operate as the historically established means for producing individualized personalities and, from them, differentiated constituencies of opinion and decision in the modern Western state. The effectiveness of a particular form of political literacy is predicated on the operation of these wider and less explicitly registered technologies to which Foucault, Hunter, Hirst and Woolley and others have drawn our attention. Stitched into the production of the evaluative and decision-making capacities of individuals, these notations are tools working to organize, to inform, to pleasure and to instruct, in one way or another, groups of people.¹⁴

They are, then, instrumental in forming the groups of people who might, say, write to newspapers and be represented in editorials or other forms of public comment, ring into talkback radio, watch a particular television programme and be represented as ratings; or groups who take other types of action such as withdrawing their children from public schools and struggling financially to send them to private schools, feeling justified in committing minor or major tax fraud, judging tax evasion to be laudable and legitimate social behaviour or condemning it, and so on. What can be offered in evidence are just a few of a very large number of collected, possible examples of the textual components of such audience, consumer or constituency formation.

Examples of Orwellian discourse

Campaigns to construct a constituency need not be orchestrated by an identifiable body. We need not think in terms of a conspiracy or even, necessarily, an intentional strategy. Nevertheless, some of the deployments of the populist and generalizing Orwellian discourse do bear the signature of specific agencies, as the first two of the following four examples show.

I.

In 1983 in Australia the Hawke Labor government came to power federally on a platform which, amongst other things, promised to reinstitute a universal public health system, to be known as Medicare. At the beginning of the year 1984 a particular presentation of the issue of health emerged in the conservative parliamentarian Sir James Killen's newspaper comment, "Big Brother is everywhere": "[a]nd so Big Brother of 1984 gets that little bit more familiar...Consider the Commonwealth's involvement in health and education" (1984).

A little later in January 1984 a newspaper advertisement placed by the Australian Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons and warning against the introduction of Medicare again mobilized the familiar Orwellian notation. In point eight of its thirteen point list of warnings, the commencement date of "[t]he computer for Medicare" ("the biggest in the country"), is presented as "1984 - the year of BIG BROTHER". The image of a mechanized (that is, inhuman) world as an imminent future for the 'ordinary' reader is activated. The idea of 'Big Brother'

then provides the peg on which the next five points hang: "a special police force"; "your doctor may be intimidated"; "IT IS UNREALISTIC"; "YOU WILL BECOME JUST ANOTHER NUMBER IN THE COMPUTER FILE". The thirteenth and final warning links Medicare to a perverted relation of representation between the government and 'the people'. The government's administrative actions do not flow from the public, as in the properly functioning representative relation; rather Medicare is an imposition "by the Government on a trusting, unsuspecting public" (ASOSurgeons,1984).

Over twelve months later the notation was still in use. An article by Margaret Rice, medical writer for The Australian, is entitled "Radical surgery for doctor's Big Brother" and its opening paragraph sets the parameters for the subsequent discussion of the administrative dismantling of the Fraud and Overservicing Detection System by presenting it as "[t]he Federal Government's decision to scrap its Big Brother approach..." (1985). The reactivation of this notation as an appropriate and accepted strategy for presenting the Medicare issue indicates the currency of the populist Orwellian discourse in the Australian mass media, and its familiarity to their audiences.

II.

The next example involves two more media advertisements, one that presents the highlights of the then leader of the Queensland Liberal Party's speech to the Annual Convention of that Party in 1984, and one that calls for a new force of conservatives to join the Liberals in the wake of the 1984

federal election which saw Labor returned to government.

The latter, a full-page advertisement authorized by a Michael McDonnell and published in five major Australian newspapers (and thus available to wide audiences) on Monday, December 31, 1984, is headed "'IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE FUTURE WINSTON, PICTURE A BOOT CRUSHING A HUMAN FACE - FOREVER'. Orwell, 1984, who did not explain why" (1984). What follows this caption is a five thousand word article outlining McDonnell's interpretation of the nation of Australia at the end of 1984 as governed by "a rejection of the real, of what is" and by "the mentality of Hate"¹⁵. Thus interpreted, such different organizations as Amnesty International, the unemployed workers' union, community radio, the World Council of Churches, Friends of the Earth, the Socialist Left and the Australian Democrats are presented as promoting essentially the same policies and ideas.

If this example differs from others in the extent to which it adopts elements of Nineteen Eighty-Four, it nevertheless repeats a familiar strategy. The appeal against an image of the future (or, in the calendar year 1984, a possible present) and an image of politics so well established in our culture provides a guaranteed means of linking up and reducing quite disparate issues and bodies to one popular conception of a politics that expresses anti-human values, is devoid of moral ends, and thus acceptable means, and flouts reality and common sense. So, while the Liberal Party's federal director, Mr. Tony Eggleton, distanced the Party from McDonnell's call,¹⁶ the leader of the Queensland Liberal Party used a strategy equivalent to McDonnell's, if decidedly more low-key. After delivering a litany of society's ills (Medicare, threat of Socialistic

Republic, threat to the Australian flag, the Assets test, legalizing prostitution, decriminalizing marijuana), Knox's speech reveals in its summation what unites these dangers - a destabilization of the community "in as many ways as possible so that we cry out for big brother to come and help us" (Liberal Party, 1984).

III.

The use of the Orwellian notation is not limited to parliamentarians or high-profile lobbyists. Contributions to 'Letters to the Editor' columns over the past several years can be read as markers of the availability of the discourse as a way of formulating a wide variety of issues,¹⁷ as can callers' statements on talkback radio. Among these issues it is worth noting the Australia Card which, by September 1987, could be seen as a victim of a rhetorically inspired backlash as much as of the Opposition's and Democrat's promise to break with long standing parliamentary convention and defeat the bill by disallowing the necessary regulations to set the Card's commencement date. The Opposition's resolution in this regard was secured in connection with this backlash which saw, as 'recorded' by opinion polls, an erosion of popular support of 74% in July 1985 for an Australia Card designed to police and eradicate large-scale tax evasion by industry as well as 'welfare cheating', to only 39% for it one month after the 1987 July federal double dissolution election which was formally called on the issue of the Card.¹⁸

In considering the history of opinion formation on this matter it is notable that, in the print media (but closely

echoed in radio and television), the terms of public debate on the national identification card were routinely set in 1985 in, for example, journalistic comment such as: Wallace Brown's "Taking 'Big' out of Big Brother" (1985) that, organized according to the professional criterion of 'balance', informatively canvassed various parliamentary opinions on the proposed legislation and its implementation; in ex-federal Liberal MP Sir James Killen's rather less balanced but conventionally deemed political wisdom - "I find the identity card system distinctly Orwellian in character. There is a towering repugnancy about the notion that a free man should be accoutred with a piece of plastic as the indicia of honesty" (1985); and in various 'Letters to the Editor', in the following example, from a defender of civil liberties, avowedly politically unaffiliated but, indicatively, strongly supportive of Medicare - "Any kind of national identity card which the Government forces us to carry with us, will be opening Pandora's Box...I hope that many who are totally opposed to such 'Big Brother' tactics will make their objections known..." (Webb,1985).

Through 1986 and 1987 discussion of the proposed identity card continued to be framed in the highly visible notation of the populist Orwellian discourse, whether as warning - "Beware Big Brother! He's got your number" (Brown,1986) and "Orwellian is not too extreme a term to use to describe the proposed national identity numbering system..." (West,1987); as yet to be decided quandary - "What about Big Brother?" (Brown,1986a) and "Is it Big Brother or just another card?" (Dunn,1986); as advocacy of the card - "Big Brother is not the worst threat to privacy" (Harris,1986); or as practical information - "What you

will need to tell 'Big Brother'" (No by-line,1987b).

It is necessary to be careful of ascribing too much to the use of adjectives and popular headlining techniques. Surely the debate continues, in more or less reasoned ways, to address the practicalities, benefits and dangers of the Australia Card, and this is what counts? Yes, but also no. The banal, anonymous tactics of framing and presenting issues for public information, entertainment and possible scrutiny necessarily work by yoking issues to the forms of political literacy that are commonly available in our culture. Professional journalistic frameworks of techniques and assumptions include the routine use of notations like 'Orwellian' and 'big brother' which provide an effortless conduit to a battery of ready-made answers to any questions about the power, policies and possible reorganizations of governments and bureaucracies. These ready-made answers may be articulated from the left or right but, while not dismissing the real political differences that are thereby entailed, the more important point may be the resistance they provide to the useful disaggregation of the multiple practicalities and consequences involved in an issue like the Australia Card from the totalizing figures of an essential and autonomous human nature besieged by an inhuman regime. For example, different perspectives on the proposed card may be generated by the consideration of questions concerning the protocols of its use, associated mechanical and procedural safeguards, systems of accountability, freedom of information provisions, the scope of the personnel with access to the information that would be assembled by the proposed card, the existing availability and regular use of the same information through private commercial computer networks less

amenable to regulation than government ones, the social outcomes entailed in closer policing of tax and welfare fraud, and so on, than arise from the emotive Cold War vision of an Australia Card ushering in a 'Soviet-style' control and crushing of individual liberties.

IV.

My last example does not so much fall into the category of orchestrated campaign to construct a constituency as that of apparently disinterested commentary. Towards the end of 1983, at the beginning of 1984 and throughout that year there appeared an extraordinary cluster of articles (and at least one conference and series of radio discussions)¹⁹ with titles such as "How Orwell Got Nineteen Eighty-Four All Wrong" (Regan, 1983-1984), "Are we heading for Orwell's nightmare?" (Conway, 1983), "'Big Brother' already exists" (No by-line, 1984). These writings, in varying ways, take the form of measurements of present day Australia (or Britain or, in 1987, of North Korea (Loudon, 1987)) in terms of its fulfilment or otherwise of particular readings of the images presented in the novel Nineteen Eighty-Four. Or, they make an account of the future of Australia through similar comparisons. In other words, the Orwellian set of notations provides, again, an economic way of rehearsing certain claims about the realities of the present or future, and then weighing that picture up to interpret local realities and make further claims as to the future. So, for example, Sean Regan writes in The Weekend Australian of the literary defects which mean that

Orwell deflects the reader's attention from the

people who in our society pose the real threat, and whom the O'Brien character should have been used to caricature...The erosion of liberty in a country like ours is not going to come about in one dramatic, revolutionary splurge...but rather in a quiet insidious way...Much of it might seem like mere humbug... - like Senator Susan Ryan's preposterous handbook of anti-sexist language. But what we must not overlook is that they represent an attempt to institutionalise intolerance. What might be only a minor irritant now may easily turn into a major attack on our rights in the future (1983-1984).

The objective tone of many of these commentaries does not alter their capacity to actively shape what counts as opinion according to their particular tactics (tactics that may be of little account in isolation, but in their repetition and recombination across a range of cultural sites contribute to a particularly inflected political literacy). The present, or the future, is not there to be simply and apolitically known and described. Quite the contrary, the futurology these writings engage in could also be called 'the politics of claiming the future': that is, the practice of making statements that intersect with a range of current political issues, reckonings and initiatives by claiming to know the inevitability of the future, by claiming to know the end or outcome of identifiable present trends. The following observation sets out what is at stake in this process:

'political power' is not only a matter of formal authority, overt manipulation, concentrated privilege, military force, media control and rapacious private possession. It is also, quite massively, a matter (literally) of how our time - our time - is controlled, organised, appropriated, constructed, used up, not least by ourselves: the habits and presuppositions which deeply shape our relation to our own location within and activation of complexly overlapping series and conjunctures of temporalities (Sharratt, 1984:10).

What has been presented so far is an inventory of the related statements that make up this populist Orwellian discourse together with some of its recent deployments. These deployments entail repeated positionings of the reader as part of 'the people' up against 'big brother' or other Orwellian (supposed) realities. But, as I have argued in previous chapters, such positionings do not exhaust the ways in which actors enter into the ongoing negotiation of power relations. Moreover, the foundational opposition between 'the people' and the state/power blocs that this populist discourse posits makes the much more differentiated and constitutive power-knowledge relations which have historically shaped our social terrain unavailable for description, analysis and political calculation. As Peter Burke's history of popular culture shows, the modern nation-state and 'the people' were formed together, and we can think of this common constitution occurring within the emerging technologies of governmentality. Thus, despite the political regime of truth that the Orwellian discourse of idealized populist sovereignty helps keep in play, there is no separate kernel of 'the people' that can be mobilized against an elite or the state in a populist political sense. There are only new forms of the organization of populations and of the political struggles which will accompany these.

To put it differently, 'the people' is a category that is always shaped up in particular ways, not simply (organically, structurally) given, and therefore it cannot function as the natural legitimation of a cultural or political practice or theory, however eloquently its virtues and common sense are conjured up against the depredations and dangerous expertise of a 'big brother'. Thus, when we encounter the category we must

approach it in terms of its specific construction and use. Tim Rowse provides an example of this approach when he discusses the way the genre of humanity advertisements on Australian television (for example, 'Life Be In It', 'Aussie Bonds' - "mosaics of simultaneous, similar, but individuated gestures and actions" (Rowse & Moran, 1984:257)) generate "[t]he sense of a real Australia full of ordinary people, outside the artificiality of the media and politics" (1984:259). Rowse identifies in this advertising work a particular construction of 'the Australian people'. We could contrast this with a different construction of the category in the songs of the band Redgum, which draw on a left-wing nationalist tradition of images of 'the Australian people' that does not present it as separate from politics but as the origin or repository of progressive political values. Or, more like the construction Rowse analyses, is Sean Regan's picturing of Australians as (antipodean British) 'ordinary commonsense folk', outside politics but knowing what to do when faced with its humourless mannequins;

[b]ut in Britain - the same holds true of Australia - strutting commissars and self-important apparatchiki can only be regarded by any ordinary person as pathetic figures of fun...Even the language of totalitarianism, with its strained abstractions and grand eloquent rhetoric, is alien to the English tongue (though not, perhaps, to the American) (Regan, 1983/84).

These examples are mentioned to indicate something of the diversity of the sites in which the production of concepts and images of 'the people' and its constituent 'ordinary persons' occurs, and that these concepts and images are not homogeneous. Such a non-populist approach to the category 'the people' is also intended to contrast with and highlight the populist

character of this chapter's central target, Orwellian discourse. This discourse is examined again in Chapter 7 via a televisual example. Preparatory to this, and to avoid a reductive textualism, some characteristics of the institution of television as it is currently routinely organized, and which contribute to a populist political literacy, are first identified.

IV: Television's populist lessons

The cultural technology and social institution of television is one among a number of formative sites of people's political literacies. I have chosen it for particular attention because of its privileged role as the arguably dominant cultural medium of the late twentieth century, superceding the cinema's earlier claim to this status, radio's before it and the press' prior to that. While borrowing from a number of media to produce its own peculiar blend of aesthetic features, television is most directly the inheritor of classic Hollywood's regime of 'universal intelligibility', in which output was calculated and organized to be comprehensible (if not liked) by each and every member of a nation, without any special knowledge. It is this inheritance, amongst other things, that leads John Ellis to write of broadcast television's "centrality in everyday life" (1982:227). Taking a longer historical view, this centrality to social life suggests some commonalities between the workings of television and those of the eighteenth-century cultural technologies central to the formation of the nation-state and of national peoples. These were touched on in Chapter 3 by drawing on Peter Burke's

arguments, but they are more fully treated in Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities (1983).

Anderson argues that the existence of the nation as a cultural phenomenon, that is, as more than just a formal political and legal entity and thereby able to demand the "profound emotional legitimacy" that has guaranteed its survival (1983:14), is the outcome of historically specific cultural practices and institutions which allowed it to be conceived or imagined as a community, as a 'horizontal comradeship' of all the members of a dispersed population. The members of a dispersed population cannot know each other directly, but all are able to know of each other's existence and to carry an image of their communion through the experience of simultaneity that characterizes the cultural technology of the newspaper and of the eighteenth-century novel. The techniques of writing found in the eighteenth-century novel differ from those of earlier literary works in, for example, the structural connections made between characters and between characters and readers, and the namings of objects such as hotels or streets that establish, by the use of the plural form, their nature as representative of all other such objects in a nation. Thus Anderson, illustrating the first technique, quotes from and comments on Noli Me Tangere (1887), a Filipino novel contemporary with the rise of Filipino nationalism:

[a]nd in the phrase 'a house on Anloague Street which may still be recognized...' the recognizers are we-the-Filipino readers. The casual progression of this house from the 'interior' time of the novel to the 'exterior' time of the (Manila) reader's everyday life gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author and readers, moving onward through calendrical time (1983:33).

All consumers of this technology are unified by their existence

in a time conceptualized as homogeneous across a social space and unfolding in an endless narrative chain of cause and effect,²⁰ which connects both living and dead into a common 'people' with selective national cultural traditions, and subordinates any actual differences between its members.

Of course, such an effect generated by these techniques of writing would not help 'imagine the nation' were it not for the standardized form, relative cheapness and ready availability of books guaranteed by the printing press, the widespread capacity to read the new novelistic forms provided by the emerging apparatus of popular education, and the novel's privileged relationship to the formation of national secular and vernacular languages. It is the cultural technologies of print-capitalism that equipped "rapidly growing numbers of people" with the capacities "to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson, 1983: 40). These same conditions underlie what Anderson describes as the "extraordinary mass ceremony" of the newspaper:

[t]he significance of this mass ceremony - Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers - is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically-clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life. As with Noli Me Tangere, fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations (1983:39-40).

Thus, the daily newspaper, among other things, takes its

place alongside the moral science of statistics as a "means... for conceiving the nation as a whole" (Tribe, 1978:86), but by putting this means in the hands of all literate individuals, extends it beyond the expertise of those practising the new 'political arithmetic'. Those being counted and categorized as the resources of the nation in one technology are positioned in another to partake of their constructed unity.

In the late twentieth century, while newspapers are still read, and in them the commentaries on opinion polls that are the descendent of political arithmetic, this cultural technology has been joined and to an extent supplanted by that of television. As daily ceremony, but also by virtue of its distinctive aesthetic practices, broadcast television is today a prime formative condition for that 'community in anonymity' in which people find their, say, 'Australianness', their status as 'ordinary Australians', and their membership of 'the Australian people'.²¹ This confluence of nationalist and populist identifications offered to the television viewer can be considered in more detail.

The nation is a ubiquitous rhetorical figure in television's output. Taking my examples from Australian broadcasting, a computer image of the continent as icon of the nation repeatedly punctuates viewing as the visual of a channel identification and of much advertising, Australian colloquialisms flavour the speech of current affair anchorpersons and secure their networked and peculiarly national characterization, special-event television such as locally produced mini-series routinely focus on the national past and character, and the nation or national community is

activated as a framing device and offered as a point of entry to a variety of stories by the commentary of programme presenters. For example, a feature story for Channel 9's Sunday on 14 September, 1986, concerning the 'Robe River dispute' between the Peko-Wallsend management and the Western Australian Mining Union Association over the company's plan to challenge established work practices, is introduced by the voice-over of journalist Charles Woolley, accompanying a slow pan across a desert and scrub landscape:

[t]here's a far flung place on the other side of the continent from most Australians. It's called the Pilbara, an impossibly remote region of endless horizons, of huge skies, flat land and mountain ranges so old that age has wearied them down to mere hillocks. It's a part of Australia that, until recently, many of us had never heard of and few would ever see.

This is unexceptional stuff. What is important about it is its routine strategies and the effects they secure: the way it addresses viewers, both verbally and visually, as Australians united in a recognition of the special 'Australianness' of an ancient, rolling landscape, and how this establishes the individual viewer's relation to the industrial dispute s/he is to be told about as a function of her or his membership of the nation. That is, a very generalized relation of interest in the dispute is set up, the kind of general interest that a 'private individual' or 'an Australian' might have, as distinct from the kind of specialized and specifically informed interest a worker, a unionist or a manager might have. Moreover, in the slippage from "most Australians" to "many of us", we can detect television's construction of a 'community of address' in which the broadcaster establishes an identification with the viewer, and which can then be used to differentiate and demarcate particular objects of scrutiny for the broadcaster and viewer

as transgressing or falling outside this community and its norms. In our example, unionists and a political entity identified as the New Right are thus positioned as threatening and competing extremes.

John Ellis, in Visible Fictions (1982), proposes a name for this viewing position repeatedly offered to the television audience and secured by a range of techniques, including the ones considered above. It is the position of the 'normal citizen'. This viewing position defines a central, neutral ground from which to consume the flow of genres and their "particular form[s] of attention and...range of emphases and blindnesses" that television provides (Ellis, 1982:16).

The normality of the 'normal' or 'ordinary' citizen derives from the relentless positioning of the viewer as secure and isolated in the 'private' world of relatively harmonious personal and familial identity, separate from the 'public' world of work, conflict and politics that is routinely presented as extraordinary, threatening and abnormal. This is achieved by television's operation of a familiar division of the 'world' it presents into the self-evident domains of 'the public' and 'the private', or, as Ellis puts it, the 'outsides' (of journalistic reportage of public life, of the intrusions of politics and work in the situation comedy or the soap opera, of the dangerous spaces of the city and the street in the police drama) and the 'insides' (of the news desk or the current affairs set, of the family home or similarly organized workspace of the situation comedy and the soap opera, of the safe haven and personal camaraderie of the squad room). It is to these insides, sometimes painted as dull and predictable but always presented as the space in which 'ordinary' individuals

rightly confirm or discover their identity, exercise their power, secure their safety and the real meaning of their lives - or at least legitimately try to do these things - that television's series and serials and scheduling practices unflinchingly return us. The repetitions involved in these distinctive forms of the institution produce "a pattern of the normal or the everyday" against which particular incidents can be presented as "intrusions, upsets or worries" (Ellis, 1982: 158), and also produce a sense of 'us' (inhabiting the normal and everyday) versus 'them' (who fall or place themselves outside this domain). The normal and everyday is tirelessly associated with the private space of the home, the family or its metaphorical equivalent (for example, the 'family' that presents the news).

Finally, that the 'normal citizen' is marked out as an individual 'citizen' derives from television's reliance on the figure of the nation and the consensual and generalized interpretations it demands. To be a citizen, an individual member of a national community, "constitutes the TV viewer as someone powerless to do anything about the events portrayed other than sympathise or become angry" (Ellis, 1982: 170), that is, unable to make other than general moral judgments.

The 'normal' citizen, in actuality a quite specifically inflected subjectivity, appears as the non-partisan, commonsense viewer who, in aggregate, composes the 'ordinary folk' of the nation, its 'people', whose shared familiarity with the verities of domestic life and whose Australianness overcome any possible differences. It is with this humanist constitution and embrace of a neutral and unified 'people' that the broadcaster makes itself complicit, offering itself as

'our' representative and watchdog, viewing events 'with' 'us' ("We'll rage all night" - ABC promotion of the music video programme Rage), and through its criterion of balance in news and current affairs presentations occupying the centre ground of common sense, impartiality, overview and possible compromise. The important point is that, while television personnel understand and proclaim their role as merely providing 'the Australian people' and the 'average viewer' with what they want to see, television, as it is presently routinely disposed, helps actively constitute these social subjects, in concert, of course, with other apparatuses.²⁴

Similar points are made by Noel King and Tim Rowse in their discussion of television's resemblance to a populist party, insofar as they diagnose it as "a medium presenting itself as the people talking to themselves" (1983:40). As in Rowse's previously mentioned work, the focus is on the 'humanity' advertisement and its encapsulation of television's "repertoire of plebiscitary actions", elsewhere evident in the 'vox pop' interview, the telethon, the live variety and chat shows, and sports telecasts, where the public itself is presented as a performer (King & Rowse, 1983:41). These 'plebiscitary actions' inscribe "the people as the source and addressee of [the humanity advertisements' and other programmes'] messages" and constitute a "consistent appeal to endorse the ordinary as authentic and shared". At the same time, they "powerfully imply...a less authentic public world of politics and media hype that is elsewhere, and ultimately unnecessary" (King & Rowse, 1983:39). Similarly, the "official duties and formally-defined institutional life of society" are implied as something from which the 'everyday life' of

'ordinary people' is detached, in "common (but individually differentiated)" ways (King & Rowse, 1983:41).

King and Rowse make two other useful points. The first is that, while it is common to find television presenting 'the people' as co-extensive with 'the nation', it may also be articulated with other, regional communities; the essential unity that characterizes populism can be mapped onto a variety of collective entities. A notable example in recent years has been a Queensland populism which has actively differentiated Queensland and 'Queenslanders' from the nation in product and political advertisements, and in journalistic and other commentary. The second point is that the populism produced and circulated by Australian television in the late 1970s and 1980s is quite different from the "workerist populism" of the post-War reconstruction period and its social democratic themes (King & Rowse, 1983:40). As they note, the later construction of 'the people' conceives it as apolitical and non-partisan (no doubt a legacy of two Cold Wars), no longer racially homogeneous but marked by a 'unity in diversity' (the result of a federal government policy of multiculturalism since the mid-1970s), and as hedonist ("the idea of citizenship has been enlarged to encompass the vast republic of domestically-based consumption" (1983:41)). A similar historical tracing of the institutionally formed figure of 'the Australian people' can be found in Richard White's useful book, Inventing Australia (1981), which attends to the rhetoric of advertising, of historians and cultural critics, of politicians, entrepreneurs and administrators, and of literary works inserted in school curricula, as generative of this invented but nonetheless real figure. White's project thus develops the seminal work done by

Rowse in his Australian Liberalism and National Character (1978), and to which this thesis is heavily indebted. These bodies of work then, remind us of the historical specificity and variability of the figure of 'the people'.

Nor are these various constitutions of 'the people' mutually exclusive; as was noted in Chapter 5, at any one time a number of competing characterizations of 'the people' may be offered to audiences or constituencies of opinion as their self-image, and, depending on the political position those audiences find themselves in, different characterizations will be more or less politically plausible. But, for the task of the thesis, the wider importance is their common iteration of 'the people' as an essence disposing of (or deposed of) power, and the poverty of specific political calculation this imposes.

I will conclude these remarks on the populist lessons of television with another example of Australian television's inscription of 'the Australian people' in its entertainments, and of its positioning of extensive sections of the viewing population as the members of this 'people' and partakers of its central, commonsense ground, above politics and all-enduring.

The Australian historical mini-series

It is the historical mini-series that, in the 1980s, has perhaps most compellingly schooled a dispersed and heterogeneous population in its supposedly timeless identity as 'the Australian people', united by certain core values and traits. As Stuart Cunningham has most ably argued, the television mini-series became in the 1980s the site of an unparalleled upgrading of the cultural construction of the

nation, in part because of the new intensity of viewing that its long-form, short-term serial format and special event status secured; in part because of the skilled personnel and high production values made possible by funding on a scale more familiar in mainstream cinema; and in part because of the presentational strategy adopted by those mini-series with serious documentary-drama aspirations and taken up by commentators, reviewers and television stations in their pre-publicity. This strategy involved addressing the viewer as a concerned citizen and as a generally engaged student of history, that is, as receiving serious history lessons about the nation and not simply an entertainment. This is perhaps most obvious in the opening voice-over and closing titles of The Dismissal (1983), Kennedy-Miller's examination of the gubernatorial sacking of the Whitlam government in 1975. Over the authenticity-effect of black-and-white actuality film the narrator begins:

so many threads that were the fabric of our lives. The war in Vietnam. Days of protest...But I want to tell you about our country and about something that happened then that tore it apart. This isn't going to be easy - it's still there, in our memory. For many Australians, bitterness is never very far away, but maybe now we can understand, and to understand is to forgive.

The community of address and the tone set the viewer, in unison with all other Australians, a task that is more than relaxation and enjoyment; it is nothing less than the reconciliation of the nation through televisual contributions to the construction of a national popular memory. As Cunningham has written of another mini-series, the audience is engaged "in a Socratic dialogue of national self examination" (1987:9).

Audiences were also encouraged in this by media

commentaries and reviews which routinely identified these programmes as 'history lessons'. This review of Vietnam (1987) in a Sunday paper is not atypical:

[t]elevision is essentially for entertainment: yet re-enactments of great events in national life may cause us to ask questions of ourselves and our nation. It cannot provide solutions to deep human problems, or even answers to complex questions, but it can offer the chance of re-examination, the stimulus for fresh insight and new judgements (Palazzo, 1987).

Such prompts to reading play their part in forming, activating and positioning an audience; so too does the inclusion of many of these historical mini-series in the school curriculum, as if in recognition of their pedagogic effect.

What do they teach? A variety of things, of course, depending on their constructed object, but common to those focussing most clearly on national public events (wars, the careers of governments, high-profile sporting contests) is an evocation of 'the people' as a reservoir of correct judgment or common sense, of patriotic virtue, of humanitarian wisdom, of the toil and courage that keeps things going through the ephemerality of political gamesmanship, and as victims of strategies imposed on them. In other words, when the constructed referent is most plainly 'politics' of some kind (the 1932-33 Ashes tour in Bodyline (1984) is presented as sporting war between imperial power and colonial nation) the viewer is offered the character of 'the people' as the way to make sense of this politics. This might be done by having an individual character 'represent' 'the Australian people', as occurs in True Believers (1988) and The Dismissal. In True Believers it is the Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley (1945-49), with his social-democratic dream of 'the light on the hill',

his loyalty to his small-town, working-class origins, his ordinary decency, and his capacity to know (almost intuitively) and communicate the needs and interests of 'ordinary Australian people'. His inability to 'stroke' the public through media publicity and his difference from colleague Evatt's intellectualism and legal expertise are the guarantee of his authenticity and true 'Australianness'. In politics but not of it, he is eventually, tragically, no match for a Machiavellian Menzies who seizes the fortune provided by post-War rationing exigencies and adventurist communists. The privileged moments of direct address to the television audience, when the radio audience of the '40s to which Chifley is speaking is fused with the watching Australians of the '80s,²⁵ cements the representativeness of this figure, if the audience's recognition of elements of 'the national character' in which it is so well schooled from previous cultural texts has not already done so.

In The Dismissal it is the character of Sir John Kerr who plays this role, biographized through sepia flashbacks and vox pop testimonials as an 'ordinary battler' from the inner-city Sydney suburb of Balmain, and also, solely privileged to directly address the television audience, asking "Do I impose a solution? Is that it?". In this narrative constructed as tragedy, the representative of 'the people', stuck out at Yarralumla and goaded by a Lady Macbeth-type wife, has unfortunately lost touch with it and has to ask in his soliloquy, "What do the people want?" and hunt in his own consciousness for the answer. But of all the other players, and despite both Whitlam's and Fraser's proclivity in the mini-series to pronouncing on 'the Australian people's' intentions,

it is Kerr the lawyer, independent and transcending political parties, who alone can express a non-partisan 'people'.

Less obviously but just as importantly, the audience is offered the touchstone of 'the people' as the way to read political events through the mini-series' consistent provision of a centre ground, set apart from the opposing political sides which, largely through its formal technique of balance or providing equal time for both parties to a dispute, is overwhelmingly how television presently conceptualizes politics. Thus, in The Dismissal, the character of Kerr, in the room to which the camera continually returns us, is positioned in the centre of the mise-en-scene; behind his desk, and flanked on either side by the chairs in which various politicians will sit. His is presented as the position of balance, of a transcendent judgment that he only (notably) leaves when, considering Fraser's account of the Liberal Party's view of the constitutional crisis, he shifts to one side to take one of the 'politicians'' chairs. This moment is emphasized by a long-held medium shot on the empty chair behind Kerr's desk, which also captures on either periphery of the screen the partisan positions of the occupied chairs.

This middle ground of judgment is also inscribed at the beginning of the series by a 360 degree pan of the House of Representatives, starting and ending on the Speaker and traversing in between the opposing benches of the government and the opposition. Significantly, the Speaker, whose job it is to impartially preside, is unable to keep order: the narrative is set up of a need to go beyond the House to restore a commonsense balance to the excesses of the politicians. In True Believers, it is the character of Chifley who unwaveringly

occupies the centre of the mise-en-scene. Particularly notable is the narrative sequencing of the scenes of Chifley presenting his calm addresses to the nation: these are variously book-ended by those presenting the extremes of Santamaria's Catholic Action fanaticism, the communists' violent idealism, or Menzies' possessive individualism, a technique which serves again to inscribe Chifley's centrality.

Even more insistently, these mini-series contain a particular presentation of the media, in the figure of journalists, or in the use of a television screen included in the diegesis as an editing device or neutral commentator on the state of the narrative. In The Dismissal, the media are treated as the neutral relayers of 'how things are', with news anchorpersons directly addressing the mini-series' audience from within the diegetic television screen, and newspaper headlines of the period used to frame events.²⁶ In Vietnam the television screen is repeatedly used to edit from scene to scene, producing the effect of connecting up characters and the different sectors of the nation that they represent, and making the television some kind of informing centre. In True Believers the Packer journalist is shown, in scene after scene, as the onlooker to significant moments, set apart from the Labor Party but in sympathy with Chifley's representation of 'everyman', and as revealing the truth in the face of his employer's editorial intrusions. The alignment of the media with the non-partisan nature of 'the people', its role in the narrative as watchdog of 'the people's' interests and, for the television audience, as surrogate of 'the people', watching and judging the political game from the outside (unless forced into unprofessional bias by media owners), is especially pronounced

in Bodyline. Here, the presented populism of the Australian cricketers, forced to 'cop it sweet' and rely on their own battling, pioneer and Gallipoli 'digger' spirit when failed by various powerful elites (the Australian Cricket Board and the federal government), and given full-blown expression in several key speeches, is joined by that of the beer-drinking, larrikin and all-knowing journalist covering the tour.

What is interesting about this pairing of the media and 'the people', apart from its marking of the historical moment in which these histories of the nation were produced,²⁷ is its insistent offer of a particular position from which to make sense of the narrative. The viewer, if s/he accepts this position (and while it can be resisted by viewers equipped from other institutions by different sense-making strategies it has still to be negotiated), watches the narrative as an 'ordinary Australian', that is, from a place of truth, grounded in the verities of 'everyday experience' and 'outside' politics. In this scenario, 'the people' is an entity to be guessed at, spoken for, rightly or wrongly expressed by the politicians and other powerful characters who populate these mini-series, but never actively shaped up by 'politics'. It is the media, not any other institution (for example, parliament) that is shown as able, quite unproblematically, to represent 'the people' and share their common sense and neutrality.

The Australian historical mini-series operates as a particular, important case of the wider tutelary effect of the institution of television as it is presently disposed. This equips an actually disparate population, inserted into a variety of social institutions in different ways, with a common political literacy, able to be inflected to the left or the

right but, more tellingly, making the 'necessary evil' of what is demarcated as politics understandable in terms of its (successful or failed) expressive relation to the pre-existing verities of 'the people'. This is why the debates over whether, for example, The Dismissal manifests a Labor or a Liberal 'bias' miss the point: it is the wider terrain of a consensus based on the possibility of a populist transcendence of politics that is the real winner in these narrative stakes. Given this, we could speculate on the enabling coincidence of these widely broadcast 'history lessons' and the success of the Hawke rhetoric of 'national reconciliation' of 'the Australian people' in the first half of the '80s.²⁸ A remodelled Labor populism has successfully competed in the field of forces and tensions that produce the 'state of opinion' on, amongst other times, election day. It has shaped a distinctive constituency for itself, by building on the populist political literacies in which the population has been culturally schooled.

NOTES

1. See Mercer on 'reading aloud' (1988:62-64, esp.) and for a further use of Hunter's seminal work.
2. A concept of culture found, for example, in Arnold and complicit with a Romantic concept of 'the people'. See Chapter 4, p.121.
3. This apparent doubling up around the concept 'politics' is not intended to exclude other instances (eg, popular cultural conceptions of economics, or of the family) whose political effects could also be argued.
4. This is to take a particular position amongst the competing definitions of 'the popular' by adopting a quantitative definition - a thing is held to be popular if many people listen to/ watch/ read/ buy it.

But as Stuart Hall (1981) writes, this definition is often described as the 'market' or commercial definition of 'popular' and therefore associated with manipulation, and, on these grounds, dismissed.

However, a problem with rejecting this definition as a basis for deciding on objects of study is that to not take account of cultural objects on the basis of their being widely consumed is to implicitly or explicitly accept the notion that people reading the Women's Weekly, listening to pop songs, watching Neighbours on television or reading Harold Robbins' novels are all being duped by the 'culture industries' into thinking they enjoy Neighbours, the Women's Weekly, etc. In other words, a rejection of the quantitative approach to what is popular too easily lines up with a position which treats ideology as false consciousness. This position, with its implied objective truth, typically counterposes to the quantitative definition a generic definition of 'the popular' as that which issues from and expresses 'the people', conceived, usually, as the working or oppressed classes. The problem with this generic definition is that it assumes the category of 'the people' as pure and separate from all the social relations and power relations in which actual people - watching television, listening to radio, reading the newspapers - are clearly caught up. It is only because of this radical separation of 'the people' from the power elite/ the state/ the mass media that it is possible to get a true picture of what is authentically popular (rather than things calculated to be popular by fooling people into thinking they are enjoyable and meaningful). If we do not accept this radically separate and essential category of 'the people' this generic definition becomes impossible to sustain.

Returning to the quantitative definition of 'popular' as 'widespread', another problem with it is that widely consumed cultural products are usually associated with the concept 'mass culture' (hence the idea of manipulation). But 'mass culture' only gains its manipulative and pejorative connotations by being the implied negative of

authentically expressive 'high culture', a problematic measuring stick in its universalist and ahistorical presumptions. Were we to strip the definition of 'popular as widespread' of these negative 'mass culture' connotations, then we could use this definition as a limited rule of thumb as to which cultural products it might be useful to study. (What would be studied would be the effects of certain cultural forms on significant proportions of a population, not on individuals in the aggregate as mass cultural critiques generally proceed). Judgments about value or about the type of effects of these widespread cultural forms could then be made, but according to local criteria rather than whether they did or did not truly express some notion of 'the people' (or of 'the industrial' - the competing and 'actual' origin usually assigned to cultural products in usages of the quantitative definition, where cultural goods are held not to express 'the people's needs' but the dictates of an industrial system, which turns it into a de facto generic definition). We would have to make these judgments by looking at the particular case.

Mercer, in his consideration of the history of entertainment and of 'the popular' as "bound up with particular claims to address formative political entities such as 'the people'" (1986:180), adopts a position on this vexed term compatible with, if not the same as, mine. Mercer, too, is concerned with popular cultural forms or technologies as helping to police or shape populations. 'The people' is constituted by modes of address or rhetorical forms that establish "the relations between the 'persons' which constitute a people as a specific and delimited political entity" (1986:189): such rhetorical forms - compositional techniques like the picaresque of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel and the techniques of 'reading aloud' and of silent scanning which accompanied them - are what warrant the description 'popular', in recognition of the entity they help bring into being. (This argument covers the same ground for 'the people' as Anderson (1983) does for 'the nation'.)

If the thesis' working definition of 'popular' is a broadly quantitative one, it is one stripped of the generalizing associations usually characteristic of such an approach: if Mercer's definition is a generic one, it names a set of historical techniques, and not an essence. Together, they provide alternatives to those approaches to 'the popular' which instate 'the people' as its source, or as that which has been denied and duped.

5. Examples will be drawn from a large, still expanding and far from exhaustive file of examples of Orwellian discourse.
6. See Alan Brown (1984) for how these texts have been used to give generations of students a de facto education in politics, or at least in the Orwellian version of politics. This is accomplished, argues Brown, by including, via Orwell's novels, a series of questions and answers on political issues within the discipline of

English literature which operates as one important site of the formation of the moral character of the pupil. And see Sutherland (1983) on the "[p]rescription in the British and American education syllabus" of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm. Also see the evidence of Cliffs, Monarch, Coles, York and Brodie's Notes on these novels published in, respectively, Nebraska, New York, Canada, Essex, London and Sydney with editions ranging from (at least) the 1960s through the 1980s.

See Webster (1988) on Orwell's contribution to a populist British criticism of Americanization. This book is useful for its consideration of the close historical linkage between America's cultural and political rhetoric, as well as for its discussion of Reaganite and Thatcherite populism.

See Hirst (1989:69) for a use of the concept of "Orwellian newspeak" to identify the terminology of communist and fascist movements.

7. A term not used by Orwell, see Bolton (1984:15). This vocabulary and, indeed, Orwellian discourse, is not bound by the literal parameters of the novel Nineteen Eighty-Four.
8. See Barthes (1973) for his description of the workings of 'myth', in the particular sense he gives this term.
9. See Orwell (1970) for his prescriptions on good English.
10. See Bolton (1984:42-43) on the problems with Orwell's and others' conception of language as an organism. For a similar argument to Norris', see Harris (1984).
11. See Hirst & Woolley (1982) for an account of the biological conditions within which cultural capacities are organized and operate, which does not erect these as foundational and universal conditions.
12. Briefly, we can think of 'common sense' as a reservoir of publicly available meanings that has not always existed as the 'universal birthright' of every individual. However, in its sense of natural birthright, it can be described as emerging at the same time as: a) dispersed populations were being organized and conceptualized as 'the people' of the various newly forming nation-states; and b) their constituent parts were being shaped in the form of the individual subject, seat of a newly theorized universal reason (that is, the subject defined by internal and universally occurring capacities rather than by the recognition awarded the person by specific institutions such as the church, family, law). See Nowell-Smith (1974), and on point b) see Foucault (1977:192-3, esp.) on "the reversal of the political axis of individualization".
13. For instance, the Australian populist political commentator Katharine West's concept of the 'productive poor' (1986).

14. When I mention notations or texts I am talking about one factor amongst others comprising a cultural apparatus. I am awarding them neither a magical effectivity (that they position their readers in one fell swoop of language) nor the status of dismissable epiphenomena of 'more real' activities elsewhere. Again, see Hunter (1983) for a cogent rethinking of the role of texts, made possible by removing them from a problematic of representation.
15. Cf. the hate session in Orwell (1972:13-17).
16. See Phylard (1984).
17. A representative letter to the Editor on the issue of health care is Leggoe (1984): "[a]s an example of Orwellian bureaucracy gone mad, the West Australian Health Department's advertisement in Saturday's morning paper for senior staff for its brave new world....".
18. Figures from pollsters Irving Saulwick and Associates, quoted in Hogarth (1987).
19. "1984 and Social Control" Conference held June 9-11 (1984), Sydney University and published as 1984 and Social Control (1985). 1984 in Australia was broadcast in five separate programmes on ABC Radio National, December 17-21 (1984).
20. Anderson distinguishes this from other apprehensions of time, for example, the medieval Christian sense in which there was no sense of a radical separation between past and present because, under God's omnitemporality, the present is at once something that has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future.

On the relation between narrative and the figure of 'the nation' see Bhabha (1990).

21. This argument runs counter to the influential semiotic populist analyses of television provided by Fiske (1987,1988,1989) and Docker's populist analyses of television based on an ahistorical usage of Bakhtin's notion of 'the carnivalesque' (1982,1988). Docker identifies the "carnival spirit [as] indestructible in human society" (1988:83) and as what we find expressed in game shows, television comedy and soaps. The popularity of such television programmes is thus attributed to their providing the audience with its own values. Unlike the television industry's similar claim (that it gives us what we want), Docker elevates these programmes, via his valuing of their carnivalesque 'playfulness', to the level of a form of political resistance through which the popular audience thumbs its nose at bourgeois values of propriety and the work ethic and keeps alive alternative and oppositional values.

Fiske's populism, drawing on a sophisticated Althusserian concept of subjectivity, allegedly refuses idealized notions of 'the people' and opts instead for "the people as a multiple concept, a huge variety of social groups

accommodating themselves with, or opposing themselves to, the dominant value system in a variety of ways" (1988:57). In Fiske's analysis 'the people' operates to redress the functionalist textualism of much screen studies and is aligned with that 'excess' posited by much semiotics (see Chapter 2 on this move in Laclau & Mouffe) to establish 'the people's' prodigious and unexplained capacity to resist ideological positionings: as Morris succinctly puts it, in Fiske's work "'the people' have no necessary defining characteristic - except an indomitable capacity to 'negotiate' readings, generate new interpretations, and remake the materials of culture" (Morris,1988:17). For another excellent critique of Fiske's populism and of the wider problem of cultural critics "identifying their own critical practice with that of a vast populace at large, with 'the people'", see Rowse (1988:this citation 69).

22. On the media's institutional habit of establishing 'the individual' or 'the nation' as preferred points of reference for audiences, see Connell (1978:76-77) on the media's 'isolation-effects' and its articulation of 'the will to nationhood': "dominant ideological practices contribute to the practical deconstruction of potential social classes into competitive individuals and pressure groups...[then they] reconstruct these 'free' individuals, not into the unity of a class, but into the unity of the nation". While there may be problems with Connell's assumption of the unity of a class, or with its 'potentiality', he identifies an important and routine rhetorical operation.

On a separate point, to describe the viewing positions a text sets up is not to argue that the viewer will necessarily occupy them: reading is never simply a function of the textual ordering of signs, but is determined by the particular discursive competences acquired by readers in specific institutions, and which are activated in the particular locus of reading. (See the related point in note 14 above.)

This view of readers is of readers as actors, following Hindess' definition of an actor as a locus of action and decision made possible by the actor's institutionally acquired statuses and rationalities (1986,1988). This concept, unlike the Althusserian concept of the ideological subject, is able to account for the possibility of resistances in non-voluntaristic ways, as the actor is the real site of meaningful activity rather than the functional conduit of a structure, but not the voluntarist actor of individualism: an actor is equipped, through its complex relation to a range of non-unified institutional trainings, with tools which may be used to resist particular positionings. Thus, the reader, as actor, may have the capacities to read texts and act in relation to them in a variety of socially informed ways, whose description would have to await empirical evidence and which could not be authoritatively predicted according to philosophical first principles.

23. The defining 'situation' of the situation comedy, even

when ostensibly a workplace, has been argued to constitute a metaphorical family, that is, where the relations amongst employees, and between employees and employer are organized as ties of emotion or primarily personal relations (see Eaton, 1981). This establishes a very particular way of conceptualizing 'work' and is indicative of television's routine hierarchization of a universalistically conceived 'private world' as more authentic than 'the public'.

24. One other such cultural apparatus is radio. Its popular talkback form, for example, mobilizes the figure of 'the people' or 'ordinary people' - marked out by their common sense and plain speech as opposed to the expert knowledge and jargon of specialist speakers; by their moral authority derived from the private domain of family and personal life 'outside' politics, as opposed to the amorality of public authorities; by their enduringness, as opposed to the ephemera of political and other public figures - which results in talkback being routinely understood and presented as a democratic cultural form, in the sense of letting 'the people' have their say. Callers, while they may not conceive of themselves in this way, are characterized as part of 'the people' phoning in. Audiences are able to conceptualize the caller in this way, because, as unaccredited, the caller can be seen as 'just one of the people', an 'ordinary person'. The figure of the talkback host as hero is also constructed around this figure of 'the people'. "A common character trait assumed by prominent hosts is that of the social crusader against public wrong-doing...a man of the people, possessed of the people's common sense yet capable of a higher level of judgement which authorises his public opinionating...[T]he villain [whom the hero must fight] takes the form, most often, of bureaucracies, which are regarded as heartless and lacking in common sense...[and the hero's] battle is represented as a losing one..; this powerlessness is meant to reflect that of the average citizens, the 'little people'" (Potts, 1989:129-131). In interviews with public figures, the host is styled as representative of the best interests and 'right to know' of 'the people'.

Two points can be made. The first is that while it calls on the figure of 'the people' as simply out there and the natural basis of society, talkback actually contributes to the constitution of this figure. The sense of 'the people' as a corporate entity (made up of individual 'ordinary people' but nevertheless unified in some way) and as separate from politicians, professionals and experts, is produced for the audience by talkback. Further, this sense of 'the people' is built on when 'the people' or 'the people's mind' or 'public opinion' is specified in certain ways. Far from 'the people' simply ringing in with their opinions, talkback is instrumental in shaping up or constituting their opinions.

The second point is that talkback radio is populist in its presentation of 'the people' as rightfully having a view on everything and which should be heard. The host, outspoken and opinionated, has a viewpoint on, apparently,

every social issue. The 'ordinary people' listening in are hailed as similarly opinionated, and shown, through the host's example, and then through other callers, how to have an opinion on all topics. This is not seen as being a 'loudmouth' (one possible interpretation). It is accorded the status of participating in democracy, of taking part in public life. This is where the undifferentiated nature of the figure of 'the people' comes into play. One is urged to have an opinion simply by virtue of being part of 'the people'. The result is that no specific knowledge of the issue is required to have a (valid) opinion. One has opinions romantically, out of one's partaking of the essence of 'the people'. How these opinions are constituted is thus dependent on how 'the people' are constructed, which provides a very generalized basis for opinions on particular issues.

Beyond the example of talkback, other areas of radio such as the chat show and its techniques of mode of address, its construction of the presenter's personality as 'everyday', and the position adopted by the presenter-cum-chairperson of debates as an interlocutor on behalf of 'the public', can be similarly considered as helping to constitute 'the public' or 'the people' as essentially undifferentiated, and united in common human interests. The historical formation of this kind of audience can be understood as part of radio's strategy to perform its task of serving 'the public' (as more or less homogeneously conceived in the BBC's and ABC's cultural charters), in the face of increasing evidence from audience research techniques (initiated in Britain in 1936) of actually greatly differentiated audiences. The tensions between the actual circumstances of broadcasting and the job assigned it by governments (but also felt by commercial broadcasters working with similar notions of 'the public') were resolved by the production, within radio programmes, of a uniform addressee, 'Everyman' or 'the human'. Defined by their common humanity, an actually diverse audience was appealed to in ways which cut across their specific and varying interests and tastes. See Johnson (1988:145) on how such radio modes of address impacted on audience members' forms of self-identification and thus to the vitiation of an historically operative language of class.

25. This effect of simultaneity echoes Anderson's point about 'a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community...moving onward through calendrical time', made in relation to the Filipino novel Noli Me Tangere (see pp.216-217).
26. See Lawson (1983) on this, and on the problems of neglecting the media as an agent in such political events as The Dismissal portrays.
27. See Connell (1978:80-85) on the realignment of current affairs journalists with 'the public' and away from the state or the government of the day, in the period (in Britain) 1956-66.

28. Another speculation is Ellis' interesting argument that the centre ground that the institution of television constructs for itself in its vision of intra-national (as opposed to international) political events has "made possible the conception of a political party whose self-presentation is that of being 'the party of the centre, the party of moderation'. Hence the recent emergence in British politics of the Social Democratic Party" (1982: 232). The same point could be hazarded about one of the conditions for the emergence of the Democrats in Australia, at least in the characteristics distinguishing the party from the mid to late 1970s.

On the Hawke Government's rhetoric of consensus politics and its trope of 'the whole Australian people', see Johnson (1989).

CHAPTER 7

The Common Sense Politics of "Yes Minister"

My brief discussion of television and certain of its forms and outcomes has set out some of the reasons that this institution needs to be taken seriously by those concerned to analyse how political subjects and capacities are shaped, and not simply, as is too often the case, because as a 'mass' medium it has 'falsified' an earlier 'authentic' organization of the political sphere.¹

It has been said that, within an institution that itself is routinely considered unworthy of serious attention, the situation comedy is seen as its most unworthy object (Attallah, 1984). It is to just such an apparently trivial entertainment that I now turn to continue my examination of the Orwellian populism that, increasingly over the last four decades, has helped form the political literacies of large numbers of the population in English-speaking countries. One of the most recent and influential deployments of Orwellian populism has been in Yes Minister.

This multi-media text² has achieved large, long-running, and international audiences, numerous testimonials from public figures, and an image that now circulates well beyond the actual screening times of the BBC-produced situation comedy. As a popular, cultural text Yes Minister has proved particularly generative; of continuing and repeated series, including the spin-off Yes Prime Minister, no doubt of considerable revenue in overseas sales, and of popular usages. An analysis of Yes Minister may thus be thought by some to be justified by the programme itself; I shall set out below the particular nature of my interest in this situation comedy. For let me be quite clear: my intention to take seriously this fiction, a half-hour incitement to relax and to laugh, is not a plea to suddenly

find the deus ex machina of politics in these quaint cultural examples, to inflate and politicize their value because of some sudden insight of a new breed of universal intellectual into their intrinsic ideological significance. If we can devote serious scrutiny to such humble components of our social routines, and do so appropriately, it is because of a dispensing with the universal intellectual notion of a totality of society and the quest for the identification of a determinative principle adequate to the running of that totality. This productive lowering of our sights to the less spectacular sets of techniques that quietly govern³ our lives, our time, our bodies, social spaces, pleasures and decisions is what can help us think the shifting social and institutional relations in what we call politics. The situation comedy qualifies for attention because of its place amongst these technologies.

I: Usages and realism

Barry Hindess, in his cogent examination of arguments on social policy, discusses what he calls the 'naive political radicalisms' of the political right and left and notes

[t]he naive radicalism of some sections of the left has had little direct impact on the policies of central government. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the naive radicalism of the right. Consider the privatization and deregulation programme of the present [British] government...it is difficult to believe that privatization and deregulation would be pursued across such a wide range of public services (from British Airways to refuse collection) in the absence of some general commitment to the virtues of the market (1987:152).

While in Australia the Hawke Labor government has only since its third term seriously committed itself to the one-off fiscal

benefits of the sale of public assets and to putting selective privatization on the agenda,⁴ the Liberal Party, under the economic rationalist leadership of John Howard, Andrew Peacock and now John Hewson, has routinely called for deregulation and privatization, and various state governments and oppositions have run on similar platforms. As in Britain and the United States, the New Right has led its concerted attack on the public enterprises of the so-called welfare state, though, in Australia, its influence on the Federal government has been less direct. Here, it has been mediated by less aggressive but by no means less influential agents of policy formation (for example, public service and professional economists, and financial journalists).

This general commitment to the virtues of 'the market', its accompanying methodological individualism and suspicion of the welfare state is an available position for governments, oppositions and their constituencies not, as doubtless the New Right would like to claim, because these truths have an absolute epistemological foundation that has recently become demonstrable. Rather, the commitment is an available position because of nothing more nor less than the currency of this version of liberalism, "concerned mainly with limiting the coercive powers of all government" (Hayek in Hindess, 1987: 120). Its currency, or current value, can be formulated, without making the familiar recourse to a metaphysical reservoir of values, as consisting in its place and circulation in the fields of governmental and media discourse. The doctrinal statements which comprise liberalism are caught up in the stock of 'what can be said' in our culture in particular ways: they are repeated, borrowed, exchanged; adapted as

metaphors in one discourse, inscribed as absences in another, and taken as principles of coherence in yet another; in their various mobilizations they may link previously discontinuous knowledges and transform the relations between others. They have, in Foucault's words,

[a] value that is not defined by their truth, that is not gauged by the presence of a secret content; but which characterizes their place, their capacity for circulation and exchange (1974:120).

One particular and influential form the statements that comprise this version of liberalism and representative, parliamentary democracy have taken in the 1980s has been the popular usages generated by Yes Minister. The capacity of these usages for circulation and exchange, for adaptation as metaphors and metonyms, for a mobile and varied linking of a multitude of topics to the flexible and libertarian certainties of liberalism, has constituted one significant, though certainly not singular, means by which the 'naive political radicalism' of the right has secured its popular base⁵, where the radicalisms of the left have, apparently, not.

Of course, this popular base for the Right has been achieved to varying degrees in different political systems.⁶ As well, there are examples of the 'Yes Minister' tag, redolent with connotations of government inefficiency and irresponsibility, being used in union campaign advertisements, and references to Yes Minister's pillorying of 'political jargon' were used to discredit the proposed 1987 Liberal campaign slogan of 'Incentivation' with its connotation of private effort and individual motivation, rather than public planning, as the key to economic prosperity.⁷ The popular usages spawned by Yes Minister are not tied to the Right. The Federal Liberal opposition's 'Wastewatching Committee', intent on

demonstrating the allegedly scandalous waste of taxpayers' money under the Hawke government, may have prompted the ABC's 7.30 Report to graphically evidence and effectively legitimate the Liberals' concerns with a short scene from Yes Minister.⁸ But the influential ABC current affairs programme Four Corners was able to insert another scene from the comedy series to illustrate the illusions of 'democracy-in-action', government organized, public meetings in a sympathetic presentation of a group of Melbourne residents protesting at the possible health risks associated with electro-magnetic radiation from State Electricity Commission power lines: "To these sceptics it's beginning to sound like a scene from Yes Minister".⁹

Yes Minister, the verbal or the visual cliché, has been deployed in the service of ordinary citizens' substantive concerns with public sector practice, concerns which do not spring from the generalized principles of market virtue and 'individual liberty'. The televisual broadcasting of Yes Minister has coincided with some understandable and reasoned dissatisfaction over the often inflexible and unresponsive operations of public service administrative agencies, as well as with the New Right's doctrinal and industrial onslaught. In this respect Chantal Mouffe has noted "multiple democratic resistances to the growing intervention of the state in all aspects of social life" and advised the left to address such anti-bureaucratic feeling seriously in widespread strategies of democratization (1981:186). More to the point of the institutional politics involved, Hindess writes "[i]t may well be that public-service bureaucracies are frequently unresponsive to the needs of their clients, and that many

require drastic reorganization". But, as he continues, "we should not suppose that these problems are an inescapable feature of government provision" (1987:145). It is this understanding that marks the difference between Yes Minister's on-principle and dismissive criticism of government and government agencies as irredeemably 'bureaucratic' and self-perpetuating and the constructive criticism that writers such as Hindess, Hugh Stretton (1987) and Peter Wilenski (1986) have recently brought to bear on the politics of government and administration.

To return to my earlier point, the benefits for 'the smaller-government lobby' of the widespread mobilization of Yes Minister lie within a wider taking up of a 'Yes minister' concept of politics. This more general popularity and usability of Yes Minister as a current picture of 'how politics works', a phenomenon which includes right-wing usages but is not exhausted by them, is not due simply to the care taken in the series to make a consistent identificatory reading at the level of British political parties impossible. Subtending the ambiguity of Hacker's and other characters' party-political affiliations are the populist statements that organize the narratives and characterization of the comedy. Quite clearly, the political party (its manifesto, institutionally organized practices and protocols of candidate preselection and servicing of electorates, of ministerial selection and policy formation, that is, its continuing but delimited and thereby productive negotiations) is disregarded in this presentation of the formation of policies and political positions. What is significant in the 'Yes minister' concept of politics is the relation of expressive representation that, in this normative

populist sense of sovereignty, allegedly should exist between the individual politician and 'the people', but often does not.

Yes Minister, as a media deployment of a populist discourse, can be further specified. Its populism is that of the Orwellian discourse already examined; a recognizable linking up of particular concepts of language, 'ordinary people', experts, common sense, bureaucracy and power by a notion of the correct function of parliamentary and public sector, but also more generally philosophical and cultural, representation. To address the programme as a particular reactivation of Orwellian discourse is to say that it repeats, with variations, discursive moves with which we are already familiar, and calls on reading and interpretative capacities with which we are already equipped from our apprenticeship in the post-World War II Anglo-Australian classroom and media. Yes Minister attaches these interpretative capacities to issues and a notation which gives the Orwellian discourse a new and extended currency. These issues include a cluster of concerns that have been routinely targetted in the libertarian and New Right's attempted evacuation of the neo-Keynesian state: unionism, environmentalism, media power, equal opportunity policies, community arts programmes, deficit financing, commitment to minimal levels of unemployment, provision of a safety net of minimum health, education, housing, transport and sewerage services, and so on. In the English classroom which has functioned as a key formative site of children's moral selves, the activation of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm has practised and continues to practise students in the techniques of evaluating and interpreting the distant though threatening political dangers and postulated extremes of

communism and fascism in terms of a moral framework. This is a framework which posits the moral as a separate metaphysical domain to which the altogether less salubrious and intrusive domain of politics has to answer and from which what counts as 'ideology' has to be detached. Thus, a single general relation is drawn up between the political and the moral in the simplistic and teleological form of 'means' (politics) ideally governed by 'ends' (morals), and established concurrently with the development of the moral conscience of the student through routine pedagogic techniques of interrogation such as those registered in the questions in a study guide of the remade film Nineteen Eighty-Four:

- a) Although you will never have the power of O'Brien in NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR, have you or anyone you know ever been in a situation where you've had control over others? How did you feel?
- b) Have you ever been in a group or a crowd and when 'carried away' by the emotions of the group, acted in a way you normally would not?
- c) Do you think that governments ever scare people to get their policies passed? (Allison, 1984).

The new currency of Yes Minister practises us in similar, entertaining and pleasurable evaluations of public and political issues, but these are now presented as dangers much closer to home than foreign totalitarian regimes.

My interest in Yes Minister is, therefore, in the way its formulae have joined other current popular conceptions of politics and frameworks for the discussion of public issues. That this is so can be marked by the frequency with which the media and public figures use the notation 'Yes Minister' to describe a particular attitude or to characterize a 'public sector mentality', implying a certain way of seeing a set of relations between public power and 'the ordinary individual'. Similarly, the names of major characters are

repeatedly used to summon up connotations of the conduct of established stereotypes. Some representative examples of this practice follow.

First, the individual frustrated:

Macdonald [former member of executive of the Australian Bicentennial Authority] was less coy about specifics in a later interview. "After 2½ years I'm tired of feeling like Jim Hacker dealing with Sir Humphrey..." (Ramsey, 1985).

Next, the exception that proves the rule:

[h]e [former federal Department of Treasury head Mr. John Stone] has also performed a valuable service by reminding us that governments are not always the captives of their departments and that the Sir Humphrey Applebys and the John Stones of this world do not always reply, 'Yes, Minister' (Editorial, 1984).

The faceless manipulators uncovered:

South Australia's 'Yes Ministers'. They control our lives in a thousand ways. The cost of your house, car, cigarettes, beer; the way your children spell and add up... (Ashbourne, 1987).

And a Senator pinpoints the barrier to freedom of information in Australia:

[i]n fact what we have to overcome is the 'Yes Minister' syndrome (Vigor, 1987).

Beyond a simple frequency Peter Hennessy, at the time the Whitehall correspondent of The Times, proposed that

Yes Minister attract[ing] nine million viewers on BBC1 at its peak...changed...the craft... [of] reporting Whitehall for a quality newspaper. It gave journalists...a megaphone...Our kind of journalism could be slotted into big audience radio and television programmes like Today or Nationwide at the drop of a verbal or visual cliché. Sir Humphrey, Jim and his Private Secretary, Bernard, had become household names... (1985:32).

Hennessy attributes this effect to Yes Minister's success in revealing 'the secret operations of government'. He notes that the series takes its lead in this respect from Richard Crossman's Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, providing examples of

the obvious textual similarities and citing the Wilson Government Cabinet member's aim to do "something towards lighting up the secret places of British politics and enabling any intelligent elector to have a picture of what went on behind the scenes" (Crossman in Hennessy, 1985:32).¹¹

Antony Jay and Jonathon Lynn, the co-writers of the series, avow a similar goal for their creation: "We do hope it will give people an insight into the major conflicts in the government of Britain" (Jay in Shmith, 1986). And Australian television critic Michael Shmith makes a related and routine evaluation when he writes, "[w]ith formidable accuracy, the two writers of the series... have, since 1979, brought to light the workings of the labyrinthine service with devastating simplicity and (underneath it all) absolute truth" (1986). Shmith's piece is thus an example of what Mick Eaton diagnosed in 1978/9 as the general failure to treat television situation comedy as a specifically televisual form: "[t]he debates conducted from within the television industry tend to centre around questions of how 'realistic' or 'true to life' the situations and characters in such shows are" (1981:26).

As Eaton points out, this framework of realism is what is at stake in the American television producer Norman Lear's speech at the 1979 Edinburgh International Television Festival, a speech "greeted so enthusiastically by British television practitioners". Lear argued "the need to incorporate the 'issues of the day' into the half-hour comedy slot", a strategy that Lear's programmes (for example, All In The Family and Maude) had already successfully exploited and one compatible with what a 'concerned' member of the 'creative community' might do within the constraints of the television industry

(Eaton, 1981:42).

Premiering in 1980, Yes Minister, as a "vehicle for public enlightenment"¹² (Hennessy, 1985:32), found itself neatly aligned with the institutional developments of the genre. In other words, the much vaunted realism¹³ of Yes Minister is not a revelation of a 'real world elsewhere' in Whitehall, but the well-made outcome of the generic conventions of the social (rather than 'screwball') comedy, geared towards securing, amongst other effects, a particular 'realism', that is, an historically formed and socially organized relation of representation.¹⁴ At the same time, the inclusion of topical issues no doubt satisfied the writers' inclinations as much as it did generic codes - Jay, for one, having a substantial pedigree of 'concern' about social issues, as the title of one of his several books, The Householder's Guide to Community Defence Against Bureaucratic Aggression (1972), attests.

The particularity of Yes Minister's realism, the way it engineers its plausibility with audiences, can be registered by comparison with one of its post-war comic predecessors, the British radio comedy The Men from the Ministry, and its plotlines organized around the mistakes of bumbling bureaucrats. While this might have won the applause of earlier listeners, what gives Yes Minister its "uncanny realism and credibility"¹⁵ (Lynn & Jay, 1982) is plotlines organized around the machinations, not mistakes, of Machiavellian, not bumbling, bureaucrats. What separates these media presentations of the civil service is a shift in the code of causality, conventionally lodged in characters, so that actions once explained in terms of folly and incompetence are now presented as the result of institutionalized, power-hungry manipulation.

There are two ways of diagnosing this shift. The first is to see it as the result of a wakening realization of 'the public' to the underlying realities of the growing public sector after an earlier tolerance of the annoying but harmless (if expensive) inefficiencies of its infancy, a realization mirrored in Yes Minister. In other words, to note that the world (or that a particular sphere of it, the public sector) has changed and to evaluate how well or badly this is registered in a separate cultural domain linked to the social by the single and supposedly normative cultural and media function of representation.

The second is to critically question the realist framework as over-generalized and naive in its assumption of a domain of representation separate from a domain of 'the real' which pre-exists and secures its authenticity. From this philosophical model in which the real determines the discursive, television can only relate to social life as a picture relates to the thing supposedly pictured. Instead, to paraphrase Hunter's work on realist cinema, television representations are not a picturing of events or people's experience of events, but the outcome of an institution in which certain materials and frameworks of techniques and assumptions receive a specific activation. And these same materials, techniques and assumptions (apart from specifically televisual techniques such as editing) are also those found in non-televisual domains, domains we are more accustomed to calling 'reality'. In Yes Minister, the central techniques of characterization are used but

these are also found in many [other] locales...For example, techniques of dialogue and monologue are found in the practice of keeping diaries.

Techniques for the construction of character-types are found in the system of school assessment and report writing and in the case profiles developed by welfare workers, psychological counsellors etc. ...[Similarly] techniques of introspection and confession - used in the training of character actors in the Stanislavskian method - are also widely [used] in the production of moral character in schools and other training and counselling institutions (Hunter, 1984:53-54).

Social domains and the televisual domain are not ontologically ranked, with the latter somehow less real than, following after, or an immaterial rendering of, the former: they are more effectively conceptualized as neighbours on the same block, all composed of specifiable materials and techniques, borrowing and repeating practices one from the other, the televisual just as capable of producing actual effects as the welfare department (though obviously of a different type).

To continue, Yes Minister's central materials are the same discourses that organize business organizations and their calculations, and many governments and their initiatives - areas commonly thought of as irreducibly 'real' domains. In Yes Minister's case this includes the liberal-democratic notion of the role of the state and the individual, and neo-Burnhamite managerial theory in which rational administrative procedures and the streamlining of organizations shift the focus of power from those who 'own' to those experts who 'control' and administer resources and relations within the organization. Yes Minister, and television drama more generally, reactivates these materials and techniques that constitute what we accept as 'the real world', but within their own domain, within a fictional modality. Thus Yes Minister's realism is not due to its picturing or expressing of a population's true or actual experience of government, as if that experience pre-exists discursive techniques and materials. In fact, a capacity to

experience¹⁶ is always socially organized. The truth of the experience (used as a measure of Yes Minister's realism) will only be judged by repeating the particular criteria within which a particular population's capacity to experience has been socially organized. This 'circularity' of realism cannot be escaped, but it is not the circularity of a textual formalism, in the sense of texts hermetically sealed from social realities. Rather, it is a tracing of the social circulation of particular materials and operations across a range of textual and non-textual sites.

If the plausibility of Yes Minister's account of government has displaced, say, the plausibility of The Men from the Ministry's earlier and tamer version, it is because the Machiavellian distinction between calculation and morality (means and ends), the Orwellian account of language use, the managerialism, the populist division of state and 'the people' that Yes Minister deploys are the historically current and perhaps dominant discourses which help, as 'theory-programmes' and in varying ways, to organize the practical activities of a range of institutions (state authorities, political parties, journalism, industry) that populations daily deal with and are dealt with by. Yes Minister's realism is relative to these discourses and their currency in non-textual domains, not to some mythical pre-discursive 'real world'. In this way Yes Minister is caught up in and plays its role in the breakdown and rolling back of the post-World War II 'settlement' to which earlier cultural texts like the immediate post-war Ealing studio comedies plus The Men from the Ministry contributed.¹⁷

The point is that often-voiced recognitions of the realism of Yes Minister ('isn't that just what it's like?') may well be

an effect of our experience with how things happen to be done in a bureaucracy, but this is not a simple measurement of 'the real'. Contrary to the opinions of its producers and of critics, the programme does not 'shine a light' on the public sector, as if uncovering its true nature; it does not reveal politics to be about the failure or success of politicians to express the will of or represent 'the people'. This populist and widespread conception of politics shapes the way in which much politics (that is, the negotiation of institutional power-knowledge relations) is executed, and there is no gainsaying the actuality and material effects of such procedures. But such a conception, which guarantees both knowledge of and (often) disinterest in 'the political process' is, if not an illusion, not 'the truth'. The exhaustive, singular and unshakeable lessons of realism block off an understanding of the contingent, historical and socially produced character of social realities and simultaneously block the possibility of seeing other ways of organizing these, or the production of quite different social situations.

More than a theoretical¹⁸ interest in rehearsing a particular critique of realism, this rethinking of Yes Minister's realism is necessary in order to grasp the situation comedy's relation to other social sites as other than a relation of reflection. Television is an adjunct to a series of apparatuses (education, professional and industrial trainings, households and families) in which the intelligibility of events is produced and in which attitudes and conducts are formed and policed. In this Yes Minister plays a part for certain audiences in the relaying and shaping of particular capacities of political analysis and action. These capacities (not just

ideologies, or mental pictures to be seen through or warned against) are relentlessly populist in character, and it is this disposition I will elaborate in textual analysis of some scenes.

II: The populism of "Yes Minister"

Yes Minister is a BBC television series made according to a classic situation comedy format, though incorporating a deviation to which I shall return later. Two principal figures - Jim Hacker, parliamentary Minister for Administrative Affairs and Sir Humphrey Appleby, his civil service Permanent Secretary - are presented in a continuing adversarial relationship which takes the form of extended comic dialogue. Work already done on Yes Minister by Giles Oakley usefully demonstrates the role of the series "in orchestrating and reinforcing 'common sense' concepts, particularly ideas about 'bureaucracy', 'politics' and 'politicians'" (1982:67). Nevertheless, I want to argue that viewing Yes Minister as a deployment of a particular populist discourse helps us learn more about its peculiar orchestration of common sense concepts than can Oakley's description of the programme in terms of a standoff or balance between the two dominant political discourses he names; "[o]n the one side is the widespread cynicism about 'politics' and 'politicians' and on the other is the historically rooted distrust of the power of Civil Servants" (1982:75).

While Oakley's identification of these two discourses is quite apt, this focus on the either and the or, the one side and the other, misses the more important common terrain on which both discourses are worked out. It ignores the virtuous

site from which this cynicism and distrust issues: that is, in Oakley's description the position made available for the viewer is implicit but not developed. This common terrain is provided by a populist discourse where the opposition is not so much between politicians and civil servants, but civil servants and 'the people', for whom the politician (Hacker) should be standing in. Often he fails this task and other members of 'the people' have to step in to present common sense and virtue. The disagreements between the civil servant and the politician are repeatedly predicated on the wider opposition of state versus 'the people' and their respective relations to these opposing entities, as well as on an implicit model of government and politics at work. In this model government is the 'top down' administration of 'the people' that continues more or less regardless of which political party is in power, while politics is understood in the limited terms of party politics as an arena for personal advancement and which argues that the latter's authority over government comes from its representative function.

The figure of 'the people' is deployed in different ways in the comedy. One of these is as a linguistic figure within the speech of the Hacker and Sir Humphrey characters and several examples are considered below.

The relations between the civil servant and the politician are established by indicating, and at times spelling out, their differing relations to the third entity 'the people', 'the public will' or its equated concept 'democracy'. Thus, in the episode "The Economy Drive" when Sir Humphrey reveals the 'facts of life' to Bernard (Hacker's Principal Private Secretary) as part of the latter's continuing induction into

the intricacies of the civil service, the 'weightiest' points have to do with debunking the source of the Minister's mandate over the civil servant:

[t]he argument that we must do everything a Minister demands because he has been 'democratically chosen' does not stand up to close inspection. MP's are not chosen by 'the people' - they are chosen by their local constituency party, i.e. thirty-five men in grubby raincoats or thirty-five women in silly hats. The further 'selection' process is equally a nonsense: there are only 630 MP's and a party with just over 300 MP's forms a government - and of these 300, 100 are too old and too silly to be ministers, and 100 too young and too callow. Therefore there are about 100 MP's to fill 100 government posts. Effectively no choice at all...It follows that as Ministers have had no proper selection or training, it is our patriotic duty to arrange for them to make the right decision as often as possible (Lynn & Jay,1981:57-58).

By this logic, the Minister, his special relation to 'the people' undermined, falls under the aegis of the expert claiming to know and act in 'the national interest', the man differentiated from 'the people' and its would-be representative by training. Again, Humphrey to Bernard in "The Right To Know": "[i]t is not the Minister's job to run the Department. It is my job, for which I have had twenty-five years' training and practice" (Lynn & Jay,1981:130).

The struggle between Hacker and Sir Humphrey is presented as turning on the civil servant's efforts to usurp, at one time, 'the people' as the source or 'represented' of politics, and at others, the politician as the representative of 'the people'. Sir Humphrey explains just who it is the Minister represents:

[a] Minister has three functions: (i) He is an Advocate. He makes the Department's actions seem plausible to Parliament and the public. (ii) He is Our Man in Westminster, steering our legislation through parliament. (N.B. Ours, not his.) (iii) He is our Breadwinner. His duty is to fight in Cabinet for the money we need to do our job (Lynn & Jay, 1981:130).

Here is a picture of the Minister properly doing his job when he represents not 'the people' but is the delegate or agent of the trained experts of the civil service, seen as the motor of government. Hacker himself puts his finger on the phenomenon of the civil service 'standing in for' public opinion when he translates what is styled as the civil service code language during a tussle with Sir Humphrey over a report on civil service overmanning:

[i]t says, for instance, that a phased reduction of about a hundred thousand people is 'not in the public interest'. Translation: it is in the public interest but it is not in the interest of the Civil Service. 'Public opinion is not yet ready for such a step,' it says. Translation: Public opinion is ready but the Civil Service is not! (Lynn & Jay, 1981:104).

To Sir Humphrey these distinctions remain opaque: as a meeting of Permanent Secretaries decides, "[i]t was unanimously agreed that we constitute a real cross-section of the nation" (Lynn & Jay, 1983:32). And, as already indicated, training and expertise are ironically asserted to be a surer criterion for knowing the public interest than any other shabby mechanism of selection used to determine 'the people's' representative.

The second and probably more telling deployment of the figure of 'the people' is made through the appearance of a variety of characters who show themselves to be both individuals and of 'the people'. This is signified through either their occupation with ordinary everyday matters (such as plumbing, cleaning, cooking), their matter-of-fact grasp of events, their enunciation of common sense, their domestic location (according to the common rendering, noted in Chapter 6, of the public/private distinction in which the private domain is the 'real' world and public life is the realm of appearance and image) or a combination of these markers. In

different episodes there are, for example, the cleaning lady ("The Economy Drive"), the Minister's driver Roy ("Jobs For The Boys", "The Compassionate Society"), Mrs. Phillips, the warden of a city farm ("The Quality Of Life"), a percipient school girl ("Equal Opportunities"), two female backbenchers, Joan Littler and Betty Oldham ("The Greasy Pole" and "A Question Of Loyalty"), and, repeatedly, Hacker's wife Annie. Before focussing on the important character of Annie, it is worth noting the textual work performed by just two of these minor characters.

In "The Economy Drive", Nellie, the cleaning lady, innocently explains her presence to Hacker: "They've cancelled the night shift. Some idiot's started another of those economy drives". When she discovers that she is talking to the Minister (who launched the 'economy drive') Nellie is pleased. "Oh really, oh I'm ever so pleased to meet you. I voted for you", and with her good natured and forceful directness has Hacker uncomfortably invite her to call him 'Jim'. When the scene ends with Hacker impatiently ordering her from the office against her protests that "I've got to get on you know [with the work]", Nellie makes a dignified exit and has the last word, "All right, all right Jim, I can take a hint". The scene generates several meanings. From Nellie's side, it registers what she expects as natural when she votes - a direct, one-to-one relation between elector and representative; from Hacker's, an unease with the direct relation to the elector, as one of the 'ordinary people', signalled by first names and the stripping of institutional titles (Bernard too looks askance at Nellie's 'Jims'), and a dismissal of the necessary work of cleaning. And from Nellie's equanimity and phrasing ("another

of those economy drives") comes the image of the 'enduringness' of 'ordinary' working people such as herself against the panicky hubbub of the Minister and the civil service (Sir Humphrey: "we don't measure our success by results, but by activity" (Lynn & Jay, 1982:33)).¹⁹

In "Jobs For The Boys" it is the Minister's driver, Roy, who alerts the out-of-touch Hacker, astonished at a (mere) driver's gossip-informed grasp of government matters and trying to hide his own unseemly ignorance, to the potentially electorally devastating collusion between Sir Humphrey and an entrepreneur over a government project. Hacker's assumption of 'the people's' ignorance of matters administrative and political is both underlined and shown to be erroneous. In "The Compassionate Society", Roy again alerts Hacker to an administrative scandal, the new hospital with staff but no patients, and articulates an egalitarian and commonsense position:

Roy: "If you and Sir Humphrey Appleby went to work on a No.27 you'd have to make the bus service much more efficient, wouldn't you?"
 Hacker: "We certainly would". [He then realizes with horror what he has said.]

While the linguistic figure of 'the people' in Sir Humphrey's speech is made ridiculous ("thirty-five women in silly hats"), or in Hacker's made a self-serving and abstracted principle (his routine slips where concern for 'the people' is shown to be concern for 'the marginal seats'), this embodiment of 'the people' in individual characters offers unambiguous viewing positions for audiences. Annie, Roy, Nellie are never (unlike Hacker, Sir Humphrey, the political adviser Weisel, etc.) the object of laughter. Not all minor characters, however, are attributed the status of 'ordinary person':

Hacker's daughter, Lucy (caught up in the institutional positions purportedly offered by university sociological courses, conservation groups and Trotskyite left-wing political parties), unionists, academics, businessmen, and most journalists are all shown as cut off from the 'ordinary person' by their sectoral or institutionally derived interests and privileges, as if 'ordinary people' live outside the parameters and frameworks of institutions which, nevertheless, increasingly intrude on their 'private' freedoms because of the bureaucratization fostered by the Sir Humphreys of the world and not effectively resisted by the Hackers.

Appearing in many episodes, Hacker's wife does more than simply humanize or psychologize the character of Hacker by extending the range of detail that can be attached to the role. (Though it is significant that this does occur, contrary to the treatment of the Sir Humphrey character, as it allows Hacker the effects of conscience, moral dilemmas and development which are important for the potential, if not yet effective, representative of 'the people'). Beyond this function, the character of Annie (named, significantly, 'Annie' rather than a more formal 'Anne') sets up a position in its own right and this is the site of truthful personal relations, plain speech, common sense, correct moral pronouncement (especially in "The Whisky Priest" and "Equal Opportunities"), necessary work and a sense of humour. Equipped with these resources, all patently lacking in the politician and the civil servant, Annie's speeches and narrative presence effectively operate as those of the extra-political 'ordinary person' and, thus, given 'the people'/state opposition prominent in Hacker's and Sir Humphrey's speech, as issuing from the discursive origin of

'the people'. As such Annie's role forms a support and basis of both toleration and subjection as she is variously shown as 'put upon by' and having to 'put up with' the politician.

This position is established, significantly, in the first five minutes of the first episode of the series, "Open Government". In the pre-credit sequence we see Hacker and other candidates on the balcony of the town hall as Hacker's electoral victory is declared. From a freeze-frame on Hacker's face the image dissolves to the cartooned clock face of Big Ben and the caricatures which constitute the title sequence. From this opening, firmly set in the public terrain of constituency, state and nation, the immediate post-credit sequence takes place in the domestic space of the Hacker's lounge-room. The shift allows an explicit and early signalling of politics as an intrusion into the more 'natural', human and commonsense sphere of the personal:

Annie: "So who was on the phone?"

Hacker: "Frank Weisel. He's coming right over."

Annie: "Why doesn't he just move in?"

Hacker: "Sometimes I don't understand you. He's my political adviser. I depend on him more than anyone."

Annie: "Why don't you marry him?"

Hacker: "Oh darling, you do overreact to everything so." [Hacker jumps as the phone rings.]

While Hacker waits for his imminent elevation to the cabinet of the new government, his tenuous and possibly arrogant and uninformed link to the ordinary everyday realities necessarily occupying his wife (and, implicitly, the rest of the 'ordinary people' who have just voted for their representative) is spelt out. As he waits for the phone to ring Annie serves coffee to the seated Hacker; he is unable to reciprocate by going out for the cigarettes Annie's nerves ("I'm just a politician's wife, I'm not allowed to have feelings") require:

Annie: "Oh Jim I've had it. Would you pop out and get some?"

Hacker: "Sorry love, daren't leave the phone."

Annie: "Look, if the PM wants you to be in the stupid cabinet the PM will phone back if you're out or you can phone back."

A practical observation (if possibly in breach of party-political etiquette), but 'popping out' is clearly incommensurate to the importance of the political moment. The denigration of Annie's needs and common sense is, of course, accomplished on screen by the acting techniques of facial expression and tone of voice as well as dialogue so that in Yes Minister: The Diaries we find Hacker's recorded 'thoughts' provide an accurate rendition of the on-screen effect by the inclusion of personal comment:

Annie kept me supplied with constant cups of coffee all morning, and when I returned to the armchair next to the phone after lunch she asked me to help do the Brussels sprouts for dinner if I didn't have anything else to do. I explained to her that I couldn't because I was waiting for the call. 'Who from?' Sometimes Annie really is a bit dense (Lynn & Jay, 1981:9).

And, "Annie betrayed her usual total lack of understanding ...Annie will never understand the finer points of politics" (Lynn & Jay, 1981:10). It is not only from mundane matters like cigarettes/brussels sprouts that the politician distances himself in his concern for his own career path, but also from his constituents:

Hacker: [hanging up the phone] "Alderman Spotteswoode. I do wish people [in The Diaries "all sorts of useless people" (1981:10)] wouldn't keep ringing me up to congratulate me. Don't they realize I'm waiting for the Call?"

The denigration of his wife's intelligence in political matters and the inability to respond to her jokes -

Weisel: "Did you know Martin's got the Foreign

Office, Jack's got Health and Fred's got Energy?"
 Annie: "Has anyone got Brains?"
 Hacker: "What? Do you mean Education?"
 Annie: "No. I know what I mean."

- are the compositional devices used to construct both the naivety and the masculinist moral failings of the character of Hacker. What is constructed is the character of a politician distanced, despite all his rhetoric, from the necessary work and common sense of the 'ordinary people' he has been elected to represent.

There may be a quibble about the politician's wife, well-dressed, articulate and expecting to celebrate wedding anniversaries in Paris ("Big Brother"), being said to voice the everyday feelings and sense of 'the people'. Clearly the figure of 'the people' activated in Yes Minister is not the same as a social historian such as E.P.Thompson might work to recover. Importantly, 'the people', a category which begins by decentring class divisions and differences and emphasizing unifying concepts of nation, is in Yes Minister routinely blessed with the social attributes of the middle classes. Thus, Annie (visually placed in comfortable and modern but sufficiently modest loungerooms, kitchens, bedrooms, as in most television situation comedies) works as the neutral and reasonable centre ground between the 'toffs' (the Oxbridge set of civil servants, board members, industrialists) and the organized working class-cum-trade union officials (shown as involved in a discredited form of politics) and constituency organizers, who are presented as, between them, having a stranglehold on power. The reasonable and modest wants of 'the people' are set against the clichéd triumvirate of 'big business, big government, big unions' stressed by the populist

critique of corporatism.

'The people' in this situation comedy is also, through Annie, domesticated. Yes Minister grafts the concept and notation of 'the people', central to what politics allegedly should be about and by nature pitted against public institutions and power, onto television's tireless formation of the position of the 'normal citizen', defined in large part by his or (especially, in this case) her domestic place in a family. That is, while Yes Minister deviates from the classic situation comedy format in that its situation and problematic are not singularly that of a family,²⁰ the family (metonymically presented by Annie) is nevertheless textually important. The familial and familiar are used to set up meanings about the social and public realm. As we have indicated, the first episode establishes an image of politics - as an activity which divorces its practitioners from mundane work, distances them from 'the people' they are elected to serve, and operates on a lack of immediate practicality and humour - by contrasting it to the familiar realities of the home and the household. As well, it is largely and most tellingly from the space of the home that a moral accounting of the political can be made, as in the episode "Equal Opportunities":

Hacker: "She [a school girl interviewer] asked me some very difficult questions."

Annie: "They weren't difficult. Just innocent. She was assuming that there is some moral basis to your activities."

Hacker: "But there is."

Annie: [after responding by laughing helplessly]
"Oh Jim, don't be silly."

Having considered the deployment of 'the people' in Yes Minister as a televisual rhetoric²¹ contributing to populist capacities of political analysis and action, Yes Minister's

figuration of the state as the other half of the populist opposition of 'the people' versus the state can be noted by analyzing the 'situation' or framework of the comedy. While this situation is subject to some development over time as Hacker is institutionally and manipulatively 'house trained', the first episode is again exemplary.

The situation of Yes Minister is the Department of Administrative Affairs (significantly, not parliament) and the equilibrium, that will be conventionally disturbed and then restored as in prevailing discourses of comedy, is that of the civil service governing according to its principles of managerialism (not democracy), where 'the people' have to be ordered and managed (not listened to or answered). The indicative management of Hacker (as political representative of 'the people') is accomplished in a variety of ways, including the ubiquitous red boxes of departmental documents which usurp the surgery in Hacker's constituency, the already filled diary, the disposal of Hacker's political adviser, Bernard's remark about swivel chairs for ministers who go round and round and another type for ministers who fold up instantly (a remark which earns Sir Humphrey's disapproval as all too redolent of the civil service's hand), and Sir Humphrey's statement that 'government is not about answering questions'.

In the first episode disequilibrium is signalled by the introduction of Hacker and, with him, a discourse articulated around the 'representation of the people', 'the public will' and 'democracy'. This discourse, competing with that of managerialism (in the sense of 'politics' against 'government') is encapsulated in the notion of 'open government', the slogan for the mandated policy commitment to democratic accountability

of elected representatives to 'the people', and the title of this initial episode. Paul Attallah (1984) has argued that the specificity of the situation comedy as a television genre lies in its organization of disruption in terms of discourses, and it is the clash of forms of speech as elements of discourse that marks Yes Minister's 'situation'.

In Hacker's first minutes in his ministerial office he symbolically brings the 'humanity' and direct common sense of 'the British people' with him. Explaining the policy of 'open government' to Sir Humphrey (the title economically exnominating him from 'the people'), Hacker tries to present politics and the policy as an expression of the human: "[n]ow then, to business. You'll have to forgive me if I'm a bit blunt, but that's the sort of chap I am".

This attempt at putting the human stamp on politics follows a similar move in the introductions between Hacker and his Principal Private Secretary:

Bernard: "Sherry, Minister?"
 Hacker: "Jim."
 Bernard: "Oh gin."
 Hacker: "No no Jim, Jim, call me Jim."
 Bernard: "Oh, well I think if it's all the same to you I would prefer to call you minister Minister."
 Hacker: "Minister Minister? Oh, quite quite, I see what you mean. Does that mean I have to call you Private Secretary Private Secretary?"
 Bernard: "No, do call me Bernard."
 Hacker: "Thank you Bernard" [taking glass].
 Bernard: "You're most welcome, Minister."
 Hacker: "Cheers Bernard."
 Bernard: "Your health, Minister."

The thwarting of Hacker in this minor etiquette matter of establishing a personal basis for his politics is a predictive defeat. As the narrative formula of the series will soon establish, Hacker's common sense foray into open government will be defeated by Sir Humphrey by the end of the episode.

But, as well as this, Bernard's misrecognition and then refusal of the informality and 'humanness' of 'call me Jim' is the first of a central feature of Yes Minister - a confusing use of language on the part of the Civil Service. Bernard's 'Minister Minister' is quickly followed by the excess of Sir Humphrey's speech about who works in the Department (a bewildering proliferation of Principal Private, Permanent, plain Private, Parliamentary Private, Deputy, Assistant, Under and Parliamentary Under Secretaries, none of whom do what the common meaning of 'secretary' infers - type). And, in what for regular viewers will become routine practice, Sir Humphrey translates Hacker's bald and panicky "[c]ould we hush it [Hacker's first damaging gaffe] up?" to the politically usable "[y]ou mean that within the framework of the guidelines about open government that you've laid down you want to adopt a more flexible posture?" Hacker's gratefully warm reception of this 'doublespeak' marks his acquiescence to his selling out of 'open government', and the supremacy of one form of speech over another indicates the restoration of managerial, governmental order over the clumsily attempted populist-democratic incursions of 'open government'. The device and theme of rhetoric, understood in its predominant and pejorative modern sense of words offered to mislead, is established.

Of course, at the same time, this use of language is also one of the primary means for generating the programme's comic effects: Sir Humphrey's smirking delivery of long and supposedly unintelligible but technically coherent lines and the reaction shots of Hacker's stupefaction. But laughter is also won from Bernard's unwanted attempts at clarificatory erudition, and Sir Humphrey and Bernard are by no means

identical.

Bernard, while of the civil service, maintains a somewhat ambiguous position, characterized as he is as a potentially 'high flying' employee of the state whose training has yet to be completed. For instance, in "Open Government" Bernard slips into the competing speech of the Minister, saying to Sir Humphrey "surely the citizens of a democracy have a right to know". Sir Humphrey has to remind him that, on the contrary, "they have a right to be ignorant". In this way, Bernard plays a third, almost mediating position to the adversarial discourses of Hacker and Sir Humphrey and is thus routinely positioned in the set, between the politician and the civil servant, occupying the space of observer. From here Bernard sees both Hacker politics and Appleby government at work, and his remarks often set up an ironic distance on Hacker's sloppy and Humphrey's corrupt use of language. For while Bernard seems to share Sir Humphrey's way with language, his use is not Machiavellian; he does not use language to obfuscate or mislead except when under orders from Sir Humphrey. Rather, the linguistic jokes delivered by this character flow from the relentless way in which Bernard attempts to safeguard the English language (policing the mixing of metaphors, incorrect derivations, accurate quotation) and, thereby, repeatedly happens to highlight the shabby truth of a situation. This safeguarding gets in both the politician's and the civil servant's way: Hacker treats Bernard's offerings as pedantry, in a direct supervisory role Sir Humphrey finds Bernard has regularly fallen short of his training. To sum up, in Yes Minister language is presented as a living national heritage to be protected which, rightly used, serves as a means to the

expression of truth and representation of reality, but is also susceptible to corruption as a manipulative means for achieving the ends of particular elite groups rather than of the whole British nation.

This relation to language as the expressive vehicle of truth is paired with Bernard's modest refusal of politics. In "The Middle Class Rip Off" Bernard tells Hacker, who has just suggested a political career for him, "I once looked it [politics] up in the Thesaurus...it said, 'manipulation, intrigue, wire-pulling, evasion, rabble-rousing, graft' ...I don't think I have the necessary qualities". In various ways, by making the use of language an index of virtue,²² the characterization of Bernard offers, in the absence of an Annie or a Roy in a scene, to secure a particular perspective for the audience on the failings of Hacker and the machinations of Sir Humphrey.

It is this complex of ways in which language is deployed - beyond any explicit use of Orwellian notations such as 'Big Brother' (as episode title, narrative concern, and easily available connotation) or, in The Diaries, aphorisms such as "all Permanent Secretaries are equal, but some are more equal than others" (Lynn & Jay, 1982:50) - as well as the related thematics of 'the people', common sense and an all-powerful bureaucracy, that mark out Yes Minister as a particular activation of Orwellian discourse. This activation helps secure the readability of Yes Minister, the feeling of recognition and of correct diagnosis to which a range of audiences, in various ways, has attested.

To conclude my analysis of the 'situation' and depiction of the state, we need to note that, if Hacker's discourse,

which disturbs the initial order of the situation, is a discourse of populist democracy, nevertheless, the strength of this discourse is compromised at the start by the prior characterization of Hacker as engrossed in his own career path and distanced from the conceived essence of representative liberal-democracy, 'the people'. Thus, the conventional narrative work of preparation for an inevitable outcome is accomplished: in a sense we know Hacker cannot and will not hammer home his avowed democratic principles because the necessary expressive relation to 'the people' is lacking. (At the same time a 'cynicism-effect' is achieved as we are presented with a devaluing of the discourse of democracy as so much more 'rhetoric'). This knowledge of Hacker's deficiencies as 'the people's' representative is merely confirmed when, towards the end of the episode, he lapses into Churchillian cadences whilst rehearsing his speech about open government and how, without it, the civil service is able to favour American imports over British goods. This lapse is always coded, when it routinely occurs, as highly comic by means of the actor Paul Eddington's facial gestures and the quotation-effect of so many previous and humorous impersonations of the voice with the cigar. The effect works from the viewer's textually derived knowledge of the incommensurability of Hacker (the political hack) and Churchill (the statesman and mythical unifying hero of 'the British people'²³). Thus, Hacker's shift into Churchillian phraseology is always open for reading as a sign of his moral failing (of not being 'the people's' champion) and imminent failure.

Hacker's weakness guarantees a return to the initial order of managerialism, with 'the people' being governed by the

bureaucracy for the self-perpetuating power of the bureaucracy. But Hacker does not always lose: sometimes the 'Yes Minister' with which the episodes obligatorily close is a furiously wrung admission from Sir Humphrey that the politician has bested him. However, far from such outcomes signalling the triumph of democracy they are actually again the result of Hacker's overriding concern with his political survival and kudos. For example, in "The Greasy Pole", 'the people' may have had the threat of a harmful chemical plant removed in the teeth of business, union and civil service support for the various benefits involved, but this is the coincidental outcome of Hacker's immersion in the same logic of personal survival which he uncovers in Sir Humphrey ("Minister, Government isn't about morality...It's about stability. Keeping things going, preventing anarchy, stopping society falling to bits. Still being here tomorrow" (Lynn & Jay, 1983:116)), and which prompts Hacker's diagnosis of his Permanent Secretary as a 'moral vacuum'. Hacker, as demonstrated by the relentless stripping away of his routine assertion of principles, is propelled by the calculations of voting in marginal seats, tomorrow's newspaper headlines, the approval of the Prime Minister.

On the matter of outcomes, and if the consistent academic judgments of the ideological effects of narrative and in particular televisual narrative are correct, this leaves us with a strange reversal of how narrative structure is generally said to work. There are other exceptions,²⁴ but the 'order' to which the television narrative returns us, after an instructive journey into disorder, is usually positively characterized (for example, the stability and essentially harmonious relations of a real or metaphorical family in the situation comedy, the

restoration of public safety and the physical survival and reaffirmed moral righteousness of the lone individual battling for natural justice and for us against criminals and red tape in the cop show, the certainties of the weather and then the anchorperson's presence at the end of the news).

However, in Yes Minister there is little doubt that the order re-established by the civil service or occasionally won by the politician is negatively characterized as 'what's wrong with the country'. Yes Minister thus gives audiences a lesson in what is wrong; a trained and unprincipled elite is in power, and 'the people' is not correctly represented by its politicians. (We could note that the dystopian structure of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm works in the same way.) This could be called Yes Minister's 'descriptive' effect, and no doubt it is also another effective strategy of its realism, presenting, like for example the British mini-series about nuclear power, Edge of Darkness, 'the uncomfortable truth' rather than the 'too good to be true' view of society found in the great bulk of situation comedies.

But Yes Minister also serves an effectively prescriptive rhetorical purpose in presenting persuasive indications of what needs to be done in order to rectify 'the situation'. Thus, occasionally, Hacker the careerist politician is confronted by properly functioning politicians who are presented as voicing the concerns of 'the people', taking a commonsense approach, pursuing plain speech, refusing to be 'snowed' by Sir Humphrey. Significantly, these are backbenchers and female (Joan Littler in "The Greasy Pole" and Betty Oldham in "A Question Of Loyalty"); backbenchers, which minimizes their distance up the political ladder and away from 'the people' they represent;

female, in what emerges as a recurrent privileging of this gender in matters of moral authority, moral purpose and practical wit. In this latter regard the character of Annie might be remembered. Not a politician, she nevertheless demonstrates the error of Hacker's denigration of her political capacities as she (and not the political animal, Hacker's adviser Weisel/Weasel) proves on more than one occasion to be her husband's best (that is, effective and principled) ally as she advises on how to handle the red boxes, how to handle Sir Humphrey, and reminds Hacker of his own earlier principles and effective work as representative of 'the people' as editor of Reform. Annie's actions in these areas float the proposal that the 'ordinary person' is intuitively capable of understanding and having some bearing on the public sphere of politics,²⁵ or could do so were it not for the weight of the civil service and its obscurantist protocols against them.

In Yes Minister these possibilities of politics expressing 'the people' (that is, of politics working 'properly') are few in comparison with the examples of its contrary operation. Despite this, they serve not only to indict the proffered picture of current political realities, but also to indicate a preferred and at least thinkable scenario. To this end, even Hacker, as the quintessential example of politics failing 'the people', is presented as recoverable. As Annie pronounces, Hacker is not the moral vacuum of Sir Humphrey: "He's lost his sense of right and wrong...You've still got yours...It's just that you don't use it much. You're a sort of whisky priest. You do at least know when you've done the wrong thing" (Lynn & Jay, 1983:130).

The whisky priest goes on, of course, to become Prime

Minister in the follow-up series, Yes Prime Minister. In these episodes Hacker retains his weaknesses and failings, but is, nevertheless, aided to some effective and right decisions by his new political adviser, Dorothy Wainwright. The character of Mrs. Wainwright, a good-looking, well-coiffed, middle-aged woman with Thatcher-esque teeth and imperious demeanour, works with a shrewd practicality and common sense (see her questions to Sir Frank in "A Real Partnership") to penetrate the civil service's self-serving power. A possible reading is that the presence of this Thatcher-esque type in the PM's office secures the most obvious trouncing of the civil service in the whole situation comedy, when Sir Humphrey in "The Key" is deprived of automatic access to the Prime Minister and finishes as a 'burglar', able to intrude on the Prime Minister's work only by an illegal entry through the office windows.

The other decisive victory of the (increasingly distanced) 'people's' representative over the civil service comes about through the intervention of the personal into the political space. In "A Victory For Democracy" Hacker learns the truth of an escalating international situation only when he invites an old university friend, now the Israeli Ambassador, for a private drink in his home. Truth can only enter into politics as a foreign body and in individualized form, but, while Yes Prime Minister still presents the civil service as 'winning' more often than not and the Prime Minister as more often than not winning for his own benefit, it, too, builds up the possibility of this entry and its salutary effects. This possibility is held out in the form of strong leadership in the name of 'the people's' liberties and tackling bureaucracy as outmoded, corporatist and stifling of individual enterprise and

initiative.

III: Conclusions

What I have provided above is a reading of Yes Minister (and briefly, of Yes Prime Minister) which concentrates on the operation of its populist discourse. However, in any cultural instance the text is simply one element of a wider apparatus. Certainly, 'watching television' is not as clearly delineated a cultural apparatus as those found in the English classroom; we are still struggling to adequately describe what watching television entails.²⁶

Nevertheless, we can say that watching television involves the activation of certain practices or habits of reading, such as familiarity with generic and narrative codes and conventions, in which we are trained in the classroom. Perhaps most importantly, the episodic form of the television situation comedy calls on what Hunter has named the modern apparatus of character reading. In the education system this apparatus takes the form of systematically repeated and assessable exercises in textual analysis; what we commonly call 'character appreciation' and imagine to be simply the formalization of a natural human response to life-like characters, but is actually the outcome of operations specific to the nineteenth-century organization of popular education which provided the "systematic conditions under which children form moral imperatives from the reading of fictional texts" (Hunter, 1983: 233).²⁷ This modern apparatus of character reading, still central to English syllabuses today and thus formative in organizing the production and consumption of character in adjacent sites

such as television, generates not only the fictional character, but also the moral character of the student or viewer. Of course, it does this in concert with other mechanisms of character formation found in such places as families, religious institutions, scouting and girl guide movements and sporting associations, and so on.

It is the text's role as one element in an apparatus which helps to form selves in relation to a set of norms that allows me to posit for a programme such as Yes Minister a certain limited but important effect; that, activating morally inflected readings of Hacker, Sir Humphrey, Annie etc., it grafts onto the self as apparently self-governing principle of behaviour and decision a conception of politics organized along populist lines. The effect is thus that a personal and seemingly unmediated relation is secured to questions of public life and government and, more importantly, to the answers the situation comedy implicitly supplies to these 'questions'. In this way, given Yes Minister's insistent presentation of 'the people' and its common sense as one of the 'answers' to the organization of public life, the viewer is called on to participate, by virtue of her or his trainings, in the formation of 'the people', to form her or himself as an individualized component of a particular audience and constituency. Such a constituency will be responsive to only certain limited presentations of issues and actions. To it, only an expressive politics will seem possible and only a populist politics (expressive of 'the people') really desirable. To it, a politics expressing 'the people' will be liberal representative 'democracy' or conservative democracy, effectively blocking any other way of thinking what 'democracy'

could mean.

One way of indicating what is both problematic and generally idealist with such an expressive conception of politics is to consider the question of 'means and ends' and how this is presented in the situation comedy. In Yes Minister the civil service, in particular through the character of Sir Humphrey, is explicitly associated with an amoral concern with means alone, governed by nothing outside itself, and no logic other than self-preservation. When Sir Humphrey talks about truth it is to suggest Hacker discusses 'the nature of truth' as a means to evade a Select Committee's interrogations (Lynn & Jay, 1982:172). To Sir Humphrey the only ends in administration are "loose ends" (Lynn & Jay, 1983:163): "[a]s far as I am concerned, Minister, and all my colleagues, there is no difference between means and ends" (Lynn & Jay, 1983:117), a view equally demonstrated by the characters of union leaders and administrators, as in "The Compassionate Society" where the hygienic running of an empty hospital, not the healing of the sick, is the object.

Similarly, throughout Yes Minister, language, which in the populist view should properly be a means for revealing an extrinsic reality and conveying the facts of a situation, is used by the civil service as an end in itself so that means become the end in, what is for 'ordinary people', an opaque and impenetrable wall of words. Hacker, as the whisky priest, possesses the rhetoric of morals and principles, but his failure to secure the ends he proclaims and is individually committed to (open government, democratic freedoms) is presented as precisely what is wrong with the nation. Repeatedly, the politico-moral generalities of Hacker are

thwarted by the administrative specificities and mechanisms, presented as 'red tape', of Sir Humphrey. With this familiar division of means and ends and condemnation of means loosed from extrinsic ends, as well as the presentation of means in pejorative Machiavellian ways, any other consideration of means becomes impossible. Or, to put it in other words, when 'government' (whose administrative means Yes Minister equates with the civil service) is presented in such an irredeemably negative fashion, the detailed and pervasive power-knowledge relations named by 'governmentality' are dismissed as simply unwanted and non-essential practices.

By condemning Sir Humphrey and the focus on means and mechanisms that he comes to signify, an opportunity to rethink what are the possible sites of political calculation is not only blocked but taken off the agenda. Such an opportunity consists of the redirection of analysis away from concern with an ideal or utopian form of liberal, representative democracy, that is, the expression of an essence, and towards the historically and institutionally varying mechanisms and strategies for contesting and democratically restructuring not a sovereign power ('the people') but the specific power-knowledge relations of "particular significant spheres of social organization" (Hindess, 1980:45). Such an attention to 'means' rather than to 'ends' would not mean that questions of morality are abandoned or marginalized, as is the usual objection to such a proposal. Rather, it suggests that morality can be thought and constructed as codes of behaviour and conduct operating in the same domain as that of the means structuring power-knowledge relations and not, as has traditionally been the case with hegemonic philosophical

discourses, thought of as secured in terms of a telos or absolute and static 'ends', such as 'the good society'. Or, as Hindess puts it, while principles play a part in political life, they always do so "in conjunction with a variety of other concerns, interests and objectives" (1987:159). Such a rethinking of the status of the considerations bearing on and shaping politics leads to the recognition that the 'means' or techniques and policies calculated as likely to produce particular, for example, democratic 'ends' or outcomes always entail a certain 'gamble'. Both the functionalism and the utopianism of the overarching and all determining 'end' are displaced in the conceptualization of the 'gamble of politics',²⁸ which rests on the historical building up and development of governmental power relations across diverse institutions and the barrier this places to power relations having any guaranteed systemic function.

To extend this perspective to the question of language, rather than imagining for English an origin in the timeless national cultural traditions of 'the people' or reality (a common tongue supposedly neutral, free of power relations, available to all in unifying fashion but still able to express individuality in aesthetically pleasing and moral ways), and seeing different speech as the usurpation of that expressive origin by a self-perpetuating and power-protected elite, it is possible to recognize a range of institutional and technical uses of language, which might reasonably be expected to be not completely accessible to differently institutionally located language users.²⁹

These remarks are not an advocacy of the expedient pragmatism of a Sir Humphrey, nor of the routine use of Sir

Humphrey's language, nor a proposal that what might appear to be his 'anti-populism' will set us on the path to a non-populist conception of democracy. As I noted in Chapter 5, elitism does not indicate the absence of populism but is its mutual support, and Sir Humphrey's elitism needs to be interpreted in this way. Rather, what I am suggesting is a shift out of the zero-sum game of Yes Minister. Such a shift would involve a clear distinction being made between the populist conceptions of politics circulated and endorsed by this highly successful situation comedy and a different accounting of the negotiation of power relations which, worked out on the terrain of particular institutions and their specific and differentiated constituencies, could provide the sites for democratic organization extending beyond the general and 'expressive' mechanisms of representative democracy assessed at national levels which gloss over social divisions and differences across institutional networks. It is to this shift I will address myself in Chapter 8.

NOTES

1. See, for example: Kurt and Gladys Lang on the "misevaluation of public sentiment" produced by the televisation of public events (1966:290); Robert MacNeil's query "are we headed toward an Orwellian world in which television is the voice of a not always visible Big Brother?" (1970:xix) and concern that, despite its democratic potential, "[n]o other medium...poses so serious a threat of reducing politics to triviality" (1970:viii); despite his useful examination of television and its shaping impact on American political culture, Austin Ranney's inference that these changes have occurred because "televised political reality" has become for viewers "real reality" (1983:30); Lasch's contention that mass media constitute "a system of communication that systematically undermines the very possibility of communication and makes the concept of public opinion itself increasingly anachronistic...by destroying collective memory...and by treating all ideas, all political programs, all controversies and disagreements as equally newsworthy, equally deserving of fitful attention, and therefore equally inconsequential and forgettable (1981:19).

 2. Yes Minister began as a television series but has since been published as Yes Minister: The Diaries Of A Cabinet Minister By The Rt. Hon. James Hacker M.P.: Vols.I,II,III, edited by Jonathon Lynn and Antony Jay (the writers of the series), BBC, London, 1981,1982,1983 respectively, and also adapted for radio. The correlation between dialogue in The Diaries and the television episodes is extremely close: among the quotations that follow, some are taken from viewing of the television episodes (unreferenced, but episode indicated), and some from The Diaries (specifically referenced).

 3. In the sense that 'to govern' is to structure the possible field of actions of others. See Foucault (1982:221).

 4. Though this direction could be argued to have been signalled much earlier by the deregulation of the financial sector in the government's first term.

 5. As Kent Middleton (1986), calling for examination of Yes Minister, suggests, especially in fn.6, p.31. And see Hirst (1987), especially p.8 where he draws attention to the 'popular chord' struck by such a rhetoric.
- While some usages are specifically referred to in this chapter (p.248), for an indication of the extent of this rhetorical practice see Bibliography II, which lists some items from a continually expanding and far from exhaustive dossier.
6. See Frank Castles for the argument that "[i]n countries like Britain, the US and New Zealand, the 1980s have been a time of a much more far-reaching shift to the right than has occurred in Australia" (1990:13).

7. The Public Service Association of South Australia inserted "We're Still Waiting" advertisements in a campaign by the Department of Community Welfare in 1987 for adequate staffing levels. Titles included "Yes Minister, we see the community hurting...". On 'incentivation', see No by-line (1987).
8. Excerpt from unidentified episode used in the ABC's television current affairs programme 7.30 Report (1986), June 6.
9. Excerpt from unidentified episode ("The Greasy Pole"?) used in the ABC's television current affairs programme Four Corners (1986), July 14.
10. For a detailing of this argument see Hunter (1983,1988).
11. On Crossman as an "intellectual populist", see Hitchens (1990). In Australia, former federal Labor M.P. Clyde Cameron's published diaries (1990) and 'confessions' (transcribed interviews given by Cameron) (1990a) have been presented as serving a similar purpose of providing 'a picture of what went on behind the scenes', and used by some politicians and commentators to boost a proposed policy reversal on annual leave loading on PAYE wages and salaries.
12. See Hennessy (1985:32) on the failed aim of Crossman's Diaries of a Cabinet Minister which Yes Minister is said to make good.
13. For example, "[m]ore and more people have come to realise that behind all the laughter there is a great deal of accurate observation and pertinent revelation about the way the British are governed", back cover blurb of Lynn & Jay (1983). And, "'...chillingly accurate...Yes Minister performs a valuable public service by telling viewers something important about the way in which their country is governed', Gerald Kaufman M.P., The Sunday Times", quoted on backcover of Lynn & Jay (1981).
14. It is this sense of a precise and historically achieved relation of representation, where one thing is practically made to stand for and in a particular relation to another, that alone remains useful in the concept of representation. This is in direct contrast to Laclau and Mouffe (1985:121) as, for them, "[r]epresentation is...constituted not as a definite type of relation; but as the field of an unstable oscillation...".
15. Backcover blurb, Lynn & Jay (1982).
16. The concept of experience can be usefully understood as "the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture", (Foucault,1986:4).
17. See Hall et al. (1980) on the construction of the post-war 'consensus', which in its 'levelling up' of the working classes to unprecedented standards of material consumption

worked to construct a new and differently unified sense of 'the national people'. Such overcoming of class differences is an insistent theme in the Ealing film comedies and other drama productions of the time. On Ealing productions, see Barr (1974,1974a).

18. Different, for example, from MacCabe's linguistically based critique that, in its undoubted usefulness, has enjoyed a currency in Cultural and Media Studies. In this departure from MacCabe, "[w]hat is at stake is not cinema [or any other medium] as a language, but the type of relation that exists between cinematic practices and that wider array of institutions (employing, for example, narrative and characterological techniques) involved in the formation and policing of human conduct and capacities" (Hunter,1984:54).
19. As an earlier example of the 'enduringness' of 'ordinary' working people see the attributes ascribed to the figure of 'the proles' in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four.
20. In writing about the television situation comedy genre Eaton (1981) has specified the centrality of the family as situation. This may be a real family or a metaphorical family found in the workplace (employees as good or bad children, bosses as good or bad father figures), where love and work are merged in an essentially harmonious universe dominated by personal relationships. Both versions provide a group of individuals tied together in a harmony into which disturbances intrude but only in order to be routinely expelled in a return to the normal situation of unity.
21. For a discussion of television as a rhetorical text, see Eco (1979), especially pp.19-20.
22. On the relation of Bernard's point of view and Yes Minister's presentation of truth see the narrational device "Sir Bernard Woolley Recalls" in Yes Minister: The Diaries. For example, in "The Bed Of Nails" it is Bernard's 'voice' that tells us "how the Civil Service in the 1980s actually worked in practice" (Lynn & Jay,1983: 97). Bernard's point of view offers narrational truth.
23. See Anthony Barnett on 'Churchillism' - "the warp of British political culture through which all the main tendencies weave their different colours" (1982:33) - and on which Prime Minister Thatcher drew very effectively in the conduct of the Falklands campaign.
24. In different ways, the British series The Young Ones (which breaks the routine patterns of the situation comedy), the American police series Hill Street Blues (which has been argued to provide, in its early series, only provisional and often unreassuring closures), or Butterflies. See Hall (1980a) on this latter series' structural inability to resolve the domestic situation.
25. This is also the theme of Jay (1972) The Householder's

Guide to Community Defence Against Bureaucratic Aggression.

26. For example, Morley's (1986) project in Family Television.
27. These operations are: "a...practice of supplementing the text with a moral discourse on character-type"; "a technique for deriving moral imperatives from the text, resulting in a common moral space for reader and character"; "a set of operations for constructing the characters' point of view that forms part of a technique of reader-identification with the character" (Hunter, 1983: 230-1).
28. For a development of arguments around this concept of 'gambling', see Peter Williams (1987).
29. Despite its narrative role, Sir Humphrey's speech is not the opposite of 'the common tongue'. The comic effect of his 'gobbledegook' actually depends on the technical intelligibility of his speeches. The effect is secured through the formal rather than conversational delivery of the lines (formality as an indicator of rhetorical training and therefore - in the populist view - lack of spontaneity and truth) and the reaction shots of Hacker.

CHAPTER 8
An Exit from Populism

In previous chapters I have argued the ubiquity of populism as a political regime of truth in Western liberal-democratic societies, that is, as a way of conceptualizing the operations of politics and the organization of social relations. I have attempted to demonstrate its invocation of the entity 'the people' as a component of political argument and practice rather than as an adequate account of political activity, and sought to establish some of the historical discourses that provide the peculiar character of the populism that structures political literacies in modern Western nations. In later chapters, the detailing of some cultural technologies and some of their recent textual components has aimed to establish a sense of the practical ways in which this occurs.

At the same time, I have sought to indicate the limitations of populism as a political discourse (both as a 'programme' for political action and in terms of the explanations it can provide) by considering the historically formed political concept of 'population' and a concomitant range of governmental techniques and relations that resist comprehension in terms of the populist categories of 'the people' and of a sovereign power (either 'the people' or its usurper) directing government via the state as the realization of its will. By critiquing the essentialism that is central to populism - its belief in 'the people' as a given and natural essence - I have argued its inability to connect with the ways and conditions in which social and political actors are historically and institutionally constituted.

Throughout, I have repeated a seemingly banal but crucial point: the coincidence of the discourse of populism with that of democracy (and not only in regimes purporting to implement

popular democracy such as new African states, but in the routine claims for and readings of, for example, opinion polls in liberal-democratic states). Simultaneously, I have suggested the possibility of a different currency for democracy, most clearly in the conclusions to Chapter 7. So far this has mainly served to provide a critical distance on populism. What remains is to elaborate the position from which this critical stance has been taken, that is, to elaborate an alternative concept of democracy that exists from the essentialist conceptual terrain of populism.

Before doing so, let me rule out the implication that we can proceed to such an alternative concept on epistemological grounds. It is not a matter of stating what democracy 'really' is, in the light of which we can finally recognize the falsity of populist democracy. There is no basis for such an assessment, only the arena of argument in which such epistemological claims to the absolute definitions of entities is made. I want to eschew such claims and, instead, argue in terms of the practical limitations and benefits of different concepts of democracy and what they can organize. A shorthand way of indicating the disadvantages of a populist concept of democracy is to note its inability to provide the tools for analysis and calculation capable of dealing with the political and social realities entailed in what Foucault and others have identified as 'governmentality'.

It is with just such realities, or to put it differently, with the constitutive and dispersed nature of 'governmental' power, regulating human conduct and attributing capacities, that a concept of democracy has to connect if it is to provide the basis for practical outcomes germane to the institutionally

differentiated daily routines of whole populations. Why would this be considered necessary? This is a question that can only be answered politically and, then, only provisionally: without a democratic strategy for negotiating these dispersed power relations they are unavailable for recruitment to the collective project of (non-Stalinist) socialist policy objectives, that is, policy shaped on the broad terrain of an organization of social relations and production geared not towards the privatized accumulation of social resources by individual social subjects and agencies but towards their socialization for negotiated, equitable use. Socialism, in this tentative statement, is given some general shape by defining it against individual-ism, though it necessarily involves individuals and individuated capacities and forms of activity. More precise definition risks specifying in advance of its social production what such institutional structure and power-knowledge relations might consist in: though we can note, with Hirst, other general and historically established concerns, such as "equality and the provision of resources and services on the basis of need" (1986:10). Again, such concerns establish general directions for argument rather than set final parameters for political doctrine and policy formation.

It can be noted that a certain convergence of non-Stalinist forms of socialism with democracy is emerging in these formulations. Together with a number of recent writers reconsidering socialism, I argue that socialism cannot be defined in advance of its democratic negotiation. At the same time, the outcome of democracy cannot be separated from its conjunction with a particular politics, that is "a strategic assessment of current conditions and proposals in relation to

some definite set of substantive concerns and objectives" (Hindess, 1983:54). This allows that democracy is able to be linked to various politics: there is no guarantee that it will work in favour of what are decided as socialist objectives. However, democracy is necessary to provide the conditions in which an equitable socialism, if it is to be made at all, can be made. Thus, the instituting of democratic procedures and practices emerges as of primary importance, but not as an end in itself. This is because non-populist democracy, that is democracy not conceived in an essentialized relation to 'the people', does not exist as an 'end'. Neither does it become simply instrumental to the 'end' of socialism, as in proposals for a democratic 'road' to socialism. What an exit from populism disrupts is the familiar teleology of means and ends narratives¹ in which the ends of a politics are already provided in the form of given political subjects - ('the people', the individual, the working class, etc.) and the values which issue from their nature, and means are correspondingly devalued as merely instrumental to the 'realization' of these ends and producing no actual constitutive effects themselves. To define democracy in a non-populist way involves considering it as an ensemble of means or mechanisms or techniques whose specific outcome cannot be known before they are historically and institutionally constituted. Such definitional work and its implications have been most rigorously pursued by Barry Hindess (1983) and Paul Hirst (1986), and in not unconnected work by Raymond Williams (1989). Their arguments help remove democracy from the doctrines of an essential or somehow organic sovereignty in which definitive claims as to the ends of democracy are made.

I: The displacement of sovereignty

I noted in Chapter 4 that, as a concept and set of associated practices and relations, democracy has only commonly emerged within a doctrine of popular sovereignty. The thesis has located this doctrine within a populist discourse, because of its notion of 'the people' as rightful sovereign, as the natural origin of power conceived in humanist terms of right. In this doctrine, democracy consists of the rule of 'the people' (or, in its liberal inflection, of its component, the autonomous individual and his or her (self-)interests) and, as a secondary consequence entailed by this primary emphasis, of the mechanisms this is held to require. One such type of mechanism is a mechanism of representation, understood as properly linking all decisions and actions undertaken by the state to the will of 'the people' as sovereign. Mechanisms of representation are the basis of parliamentary or 'representative' democracies with parliamentary members argued to be the most effective representatives of constituencies of 'the people' and translators of its expressed and aggregated interests into the decision-making of large and complex nation-states. In 'participatory', 'popular' or 'direct' democracies 'the people' is said to be directly present (or to represent itself) in all decision-making processes of the state, through such mechanisms as plebiscites or referenda, or through the differently representative bodies of soviets or China's neighbourhood committees.³

Now, I have argued consistently against the existential status of 'the people' as an entity 'recognized' in doctrines of sovereignty and able to function as an origin for these

ideally expressive mechanisms of representation (or self-representation) and guarantor of what they will deliver in the domain of the state, that is, the dominance of 'the general will', or the interests of 'the people'. Simply put, doctrines of sovereignty do not accurately describe or address the action of these mechanisms which they subordinate to a sovereign entity. (Neither do they specify the domain of the social as a network of empirically but contingently connected institutions which organize and differentiate their specific populations in particular ways.) In regard to 'popular' democracy, Hirst notes:

[t]he 'people' as such cannot act. Indeed, what the 'people' as a political entity is must be defined by specific organizations and by laws: its composition is the result of political decisions as to nationality...age, sex and competence (1986:41).

'The people' cannot therefore represent itself or speak for itself, because its 'self' is always the effect of particular institutional procedures.⁴ A parallel problem arises for the criterion of 'representativeness' said to define parliamentary democracy: there can be no knowledge of the constituency being represented beyond the means of its representation. Thus,

[m]easuring the effectiveness of democratic mechanisms as 'representation' depends on a conception of what the 'interests' to be represented are, and of necessity the only way of measuring this effectiveness is to use some other mechanism of representation of interests (opinion polls, local committees, referenda or whatever). The circle of 'representation' can never be closed, however much it is doubled by other representative mechanisms and measures (Hirst, 1986:39).

The means and relations of representation are not the obedient shifter of an original essence from site to site but constitutive of the social existence of a constituency or social subject and its interests.

This constitutive nature of the means of representation

and their inability to be recalled to their alleged source is not a bar to accepting the efficacy of representative democracy unless one maintains a belief in the primary ontological status of 'the people'. That is, it is not a problem unless one claims more for 'representation' than that it is a definite⁵ institutional relation between socially constituted categories. For instance, it is only Rousseau's commitment to the essential nature, or natural existence, of 'the general will' that makes him refuse the possibility of its being represented, that is, of a non-identical entity substituting for it.

There are other grounds on which it is possible to argue against the claims of representativeness as an accurate gauge of democracy, which are the claims made for it in doctrines of sovereignty. Mechanisms of representation provide an insufficient conceptualization of democracy not because of any failure to make manifest the will of the sovereign 'people', but because of the necessarily limited domain of effects which they produce. That is, the relations of representation established in voting procedures set up particular, enforceable ways of providing the personnel of certain bodies, such as parliament. However, they cannot in themselves guarantee the effectivity of parliament to make the other state institutions supposedly in its purview accountable to a wider constituency.

As an effective means for securing the limited outcome of the provision of decision-making personnel, representative or parliamentary democracy is valuable. Both Hindess and Hirst argue against those critiques of representative democracy which, in rejecting its claims to derive from a popular sovereign (either because, adopting a doctrine of direct democracy, such representation is constitutionally unable to

make manifest 'the general will', or because, from a Leninist point of view, representative democracy ensures the 'wrong' sovereign, in the effective rule of the bourgeoisie), reject also its limited, practical benefits. Their endorsement of representative democracy and parliamentary institutions as one particular arena for struggle is made on the basis of such practical considerations. The first of these is, as Hirst correctly insists, that "there is no alternative to political struggle with the forces and arenas at hand" and this means, in the countries of Western Europe and similarly organized nation-states, "political parties and electoral competition" (1986:2). As well, Hirst cites two other advantages of the system of voting in parliamentary democracy that have nothing to do with the representation of prior interests:

(1) Certain minimum political requirements are placed on all (competent) agents; a legal capacity and requirements to vote interpellates all persons as political subjects. Elections serve as a means of political education and induction on a wider scale [than direct democratic organization is able to provide]...(2)...[I]f the means of agitation, opposition and the conduct of campaigns are widely available...different policy lines [can] be openly debated, state and other agencies' conduct publicly reviewed, and mass commitment to enforcing regulated and ordered forms of political decision-making generated (1986:44-45).

It is for its pedagogic effect and its support for a certain kind of active pluralism (set out elsewhere by Hirst as irreducible to the conventional liberal conceptualization of social difference being dependent on autonomous individuals and specific forms of private property (1986:6-10)) that representative democracy should be taken seriously and engaged with.

Finally, while both Hindess and Hirst recommend forms of direct or popular democracy, the desirability of parliamentary

democracy is entailed in the need for parliamentary and electoral politics as "fundamental arenas of social decision-making" (Hindess, 1983:11) historically required by the "technical needs of specialist administration and the social differentiation produced by a complex division of labour" characteristic of advanced industrial nation-states (Hirst, 1986:4-5).

Despite this enumeration of the useful effects of representative or parliamentary democracy, we must also recognize, as Hindess stipulates, that they can tell us very little of the nature of a particular parliamentary democratic regime. That is to say, the effects of the mechanisms of parliamentary democracy cannot be divorced from the other conditions with which they are bound.

Having disaggregated the mechanisms of representative democracy from the claims made for them in essentialist doctrines of sovereignty, it is possible to expand on the concept of democracy as a definite set of mechanisms with criteria other than representativeness. I can do no better here than to quote Hindess at some length:

'[d]emocracy' is employed along with other concepts as a means of specifying certain of the conditions and characteristics of the mechanisms involved in reaching collective decisions, including the appointment of personnel (MPs, delegates, chairpersons, etc.). To say that a mechanism of collective decision is democratic is to say that it depends on a 'free' vote within some relevant constituency or constituencies, otherwise it is not democratic. To talk of democratic control over some set of decisions is to say that those decisions are made by democratic mechanisms. What the consequences of a democratic or non-democratic mechanisms are will depend on its scope, how the mechanism is organized and the conditions under which it operates. In the case of a mechanism that is putatively democratic its scope refers to the

range of decisions reached through that mechanism rather than in some other way. How it is organized covers such things as: the formation of constituencies, that is, those who may or may not take part in voting or discussion, which always involves some means of inclusion and exclusion; the way votes are aggregated to produce an outcome; conditions for initiating motions and for blocking them; rules governing a quorum; etc. But mechanisms of decision and appointment always operate under conditions that are not fully determined by their scope and organization...The consequences of democracy are always dependent on the conditions under which it operates, and they are never reducible to the way the democratic mechanism itself is organized (1983:48-49).

Democracy thus names social procedures to regularize the way decisions affecting a particular population are made, which removes them from the arbitrary choice of an autonomous individual actor, by yoking them to a constituency of some kind. Such decision-making involves the negotiation of differences, rather than the expression of an intent or somehow pre-given interest, though the extent or range of those differences will depend on the way constituencies are formed, which will always be a matter of political argument and contention, and the manner of negotiation will similarly depend on how it is organized that votes are aggregated, motions are initiated, etc. Democracy makes decision-making a visible work of social production and, thus, at a minimum, exposes the conditions and features of that work of production to possible argument and future amendment.

Such arguments over the scope and organization of democratic mechanisms and the conditions under which they operate may, for example, emanate from a concern for equity amongst a plurality of different social groups. Constituencies would in this case be defined as including all individuals and groups involved in a particular issue or activity, and

negotiation organized to allow all those an equitable input into the decision-making process. As Williams has put it:

[t]he condition of socialist democracy is that it is built from direct social relations into all necessary indirect and extended relations... decisions must remain with those who are directly concerned with them (1989:273).

Clearly, however, such a description of a more thorough-going democracy, rather than a speculative or moralizing overview in the name of such generalizing categories as 'the people' or 'social totality', does not exhaust argument. This will be ongoing, concerning, for instance, what constitutes 'direct concern' with a decision or 'involvement' in an activity, what the boundaries of a decision, issue or an activity are, what capacities are required to admit of an 'equitable input'. All these can only be determined politically and in relation to the specific case at hand. And these arguments will not be confined to only those sites where socialist objectives are on the agenda. As Hindess notes,

the assessment of democratic mechanisms in this way [that is, divorced from a notion of sovereignty] is inescapably complex and controversial, for there is no one dimension along which different mechanisms can be ranked simply as being more or less democratic... (1983:53).

A further matter to be considered is that of the domains in which democratic mechanisms are held to be appropriate. I have already discussed the ways in which parliamentary democracy is a socially useful arena and form of struggle. This was not, however, a concession to the liberal-democratic argument that parliamentary democracy furnishes the state and the nation or society in general with an essentially democratic nature. As both Hindess and Hirst demonstrate, this argument

depends on certain assumptions about the homogeneity of the state which are unsustainable outside doctrines of sovereignty. It is the concept of sovereignty which gives the state an expressive unity: "'[s]overeignty' defines the state as a homogeneous space of realization of the will of the sovereign subject (monarch, people-in-representation)" (Hirst,1986:26). It is this assumed expressive unity that enables the operation of democratic mechanisms providing the personnel of parliament to be understood as making the state as a whole responsive to a democratic control.

If, however, we refuse the account of society that the notion of sovereignty entails, then we can approach the state as "a complex of differentiated agencies of decision" (Hirst,1986: 23). Or, as Hindess puts it,

[r]ather than take the unity of the state as given, we should be concerned to analyse it as a specific set of institutions and arenas of struggle subject to definite internal connections and relations to other agencies and forces (1983:46).

Indeed, I have already implied that it is a nonsense to conceive of the state in an expressive relation to 'the people', and thus able to be unified by 'the people's' notional unity. In Chapter 4 I noted that the assumption of the independent existences of 'the people' and the state, providing the separation necessary to the form of an ideally expressive relation between the two, was misplaced. The modern forms of the state and 'the people' or, more accurately, the state and national populations conceptualized as 'the people', emerged together: the state is an effect and an instrument of 'governmental power', helping to shape the disposition of a population, but not the only or privileged location of this constitutive power. As Pasquino has already been cited as

arguing, once the state is no longer thought as an instance separate from the 'social body', or from 'the life of the population', and relations of power are analysed as wholly within this social body, the successful political struggle cannot be limited to the 'seizing' of power by taking control of the state and waiting for the 'necessary' effects which allegedly flow from this, whether it is conceived of as involving the redirection or the 'withering away' of the state. This means two things: 1) a particular approach to the differentiated institutional agencies that comprise the state, and 2) an extension of democratic mechanisms throughout the social domain. These two points will be elaborated, touching on some more of the varied organization of democratic mechanisms that are appropriate to a modern democratic polity.

1) A particular approach to the differentiated agencies that comprise the state:

The desirability of parliamentary democracy having been accepted, political struggle to democratize the social domain and to make an equitable democracy cannot rest with a preferred political party simply taking over the reins of government and using parliament and the state apparatuses to introduce social reform. Hirst makes this point when he writes that,

Labour governments have concentrated on using existing parliamentary and administrative means to deliver social reforms and economic benefits rather than on changing the machinery of representation and administration (1986:109).

While this acceptance of the "political landscape" (1986: 110) continues, socialization as a process, rather than as a list of

static demands, is unachievable. Parliament and state bodies can be reformed as well as used to reform other areas of social activity. If democracy is not an essence to be spread from its source in 'the people' through parliamentary and state institutions as mere channels, then these institutions are the starting point for the development and extension of democratic mechanisms. It is only in this way, according to Hirst, that the "elective despotism" of big government, which stems from the paucity of detailed supervision or restraint offered to executive power (1986:116) and not from a 'Machiavellian' personnel staffing the administrative machine as ascribed by Orwellian discourse, can be checked. The mechanisms pertinent here are those commonly described as belonging to direct or popular democracy. This is broadly the same thrust we find accompanying Williams' engagement with parliamentary democracy:

the socialist intervention will introduce the distinctive principle of maximum self-management, paired only with considerations of economic viability and reasonable equity between communities, and decisively breaking with the new dominant criterion of administrative convenience to the centralized state (1989:274).

How appropriate and workable are forms of direct democracy for the complexities of the late twentieth-century capitalist or state-socialist state? Doctrines of direct democracy have repeatedly stumbled on the twin problems of, a) their romantic assumption of a sovereign 'people' indivisible and thus unable to be represented, which possesses natural rights and is thus sufficiently equipped to make appropriate decisions; and, b) the assumption of a society manageable by the-directly-present-'people', that is, "a world where there would be no specialist and hierarchical administrations" (Hirst, 1986:117). However, having displaced essentialist conceptions of sovereignty as a

necessary component of doctrines of democracy, what direct democracy might entail can be reassessed. First, without the defining concept of the sovereign 'people', representation is no longer the betrayal of its indivisible unity; the usual diagnosis of the incompatibility of direct and representative democracy that this has led to does not make sense. This, in turn, addresses accusations of the inability of direct democracy to find a role within a differentiated and multi-levelled society. Within specific institutions, equitable (but not undifferentiated) mechanisms of direct decision-making may coexist and connect with the representative democracy needed to provide a system of political organization capable of negotiating the complexity of the modern administrative state.

In addition, if we do not assume the prior existence of an homogenized figure of 'the people' and its natural human right to power to be the hallmark of direct democracy, then it is not reducible to the simplistic act of 'the people' expressing its already given self and interests on whatever matter requires a decision. The constituencies involved in self-management owe their existence to arguments (that must be made and won) as to their capacities and the relevance of these to the sphere of decisions involved, as well as to their structural position as the locus and managers of the outcomes of decisions taken. For instance, in Departments of Social Security such constituencies would include not only administrators but also social workers, clerical officers, 'front desk' staff and some organized form of consultation with clients. In other words, once the project of direct democracy is removed from doctrines of sovereignty, it can be the facilitator of differentiated, specific and locally appropriate resources for decision-making, rather than

the harbinger of an homogeneous 'general will' blind to specialized activities and problems. The social and political usefulness of direct democracy is thus dependent on its differentiation from the usual characterization of it in terms of 'rights', which

conceived as the attributes of individual human subjects deriving from their nature or essence... always lead to a conception of social organization as expressive of a principle, a singular and homogeneous derivation of the will of subjects or individuals (Hirst, 1986:54).

As Hirst goes on to say, such doctrines of 'rights' "are incapable of sustaining the complexity and heterogeneity of state institutions and social relations" (1986:54).⁶

As well as the loci of socially acquired capacities (and of socially organized rights) for participation in a decision-making process, rather than as possessors of natural rights, the constituencies enabled and empowered by mechanisms of direct democracy can also be considered as the point at which large numbers of the population can gain at least a basic administrative capacity. Or, as Hirst puts it, where direct democracy can work, "as enterprise and local-level self-management", it is valuable as a political training ground, as well as "low-cost administration...and as a bedrock of political pluralism" (1986:102-3).

It is worth noting that, alongside the self-management proposed to diffuse decision-making power and authority in central and local government administration, Hirst suggests two other mechanisms, corporatism and inspectorates. These are proposed to deal with the inevitable problems of "coordination, assessment of efficiency, maintenance of common standards, and so on" that would be thrown up by such decentralization and

democratization (Hirst,1986:121). Corporatism, the centre of some heated debate on the left,⁷ is explicitly removed by Hirst from the pejorative senses deriving from its fascist career and its usage by critics such as Panich since the 1960s and 70s, and defined as "the institutionalized representation of organized interests" (1986:121). Direct corporate representation of, for example, welfare recipients, consumers, and regional groups, in, to use Hirst's instance, a reformed upper chamber in the British political system⁸ or in state administrative bodies, would provide a means of making government bodies accountable "not merely upwards to superiors but to diverse agencies and levels within" (1986:120). Inspectorates, where individuals or groups with specialist knowledges are recruited to devise and check levels of competence and efficient organization operating in specific institutions, offer another solution to the problems of accountability and coordination stretching beyond the possible boundaries of directly self-managing bodies.⁹ Inspectorates would also provide a means of supplementing the capacities of self-managing bodies, and of making them responsible to definitions of 'social interests' achieved through their surveillance by wider constituencies.

2) The extension of democratic mechanisms:

I have been considering the first of two consequences that derive from rethinking the nature and role of the modern, Western state. As outlined, this is the need for the "democratization of government from within" (Hirst,1986:117), and to describe this I have discussed the possible role of

mechanisms of direct democracy. The second point that arises from this rethinking is that, as democratization of the component institutions of the state cannot engender any automatic effects, the need emerges for democratization of the other social institutions whose routine techniques and varied objectives govern the lives of populations. That is, "[w]e have to develop both our conceptions of what the democratization of significant areas of social life would involve and the organizational forms in which we could begin to realize it" (Hindess, 1983:45).

This necessary work has been most often pursued in the area of industrial democracy. Hirst argues the need for industrial democracy in both private and public enterprises, and for, at least, the consideration of a diverse range of mechanisms ("from self-managing worker-owned cooperatives to workers' representative on boards of management" (1986:120)). Both Hindess and Hirst, in different ways, refer to the specific example of the Bullock Report in Britain in 1979; Hindess, to stress that a decision to democratize industry is only an entry into complex, contentious and ongoing assessments of particular mechanisms (for example, Bullock's proposed union-based worker representation) and their relations to "existing struggles and forces" (1983:84); Hirst, to argue more prescriptively for sources of worker representation in enterprises extending beyond the single option of unions, for including managers as workers and thus beginning to deconstruct their identity as 'bosses', for introducing lower-level mechanisms of self-management as well as and, perhaps, as a basis for worker representation on top-level boards, and for creating "enterprises of an organizational form and scale such

that workers can identify with them and help to manage them" (1986:139).

Working with a range of examples, but particularly directed towards the current Australian situation with its historically different central apparatus of conciliation and arbitration, John Mathews has also developed arguments for industrial democratization that stem from a conceptualization of 'democracy' as central to socialism (which he also conceives as a process),¹⁰ of the important but limited role of the state and of government bodies, and so on. In discussing industrial democracy, Mathews focusses on direct forms of democracy or self-management. This he calls the "democratisation of work" defined as consisting of "worker involvement in the design of technology, of jobs, of work organisation, of patterns of skill formation and industrial relations systems" (Mathews,1989:172). He notes that this differs from the more commonly-used sense of industrial democracy, which is actually a representative or indirect form denoting "various structures of representation, such as works councils, and joint employer-union workplace committees" (1989:172). Importantly, and at one with Hirst's suggestion of an openness to a variety of democratic mechanisms, Mathews insists on the importance of both direct and representative forms, emphasizing the former simply because of its frequent neglect in discussions of industrial democracy structures and legislation.

Mathews' discussion of industrial democracy, involving numerous case-studies selected to analyse particular piecemeal actions always attached, when they are successful, to clear political and social goals, takes place within a wider elaboration of what he has termed 'associative democracy'. And

with this concept some of the useful particularity of Mathews' discussion is offset by a problematic return to generalities. 'Associative democracy' entails an argument for "an extension of our notion of democracy from the political domain to the social, economic and industrial domains" (Mathews, 1988:9). Such extension is seen not as the task of external regulation by an ever-extending state, nor as the necessary consequence of political democracy, but as the work of the variously situated members of the population, "organised in their associations as citizens and workers" (Mathews, 1988:19). It is with this final point, with the generalized categories of 'worker' and 'citizen' where 'citizen' is a synonym for 'people' (Mathews, 1990:28), that problems emerge. These categories come together to provide for "the 'public interest' [that] will be expressed through a multitude of associations". Beyond this suddenly unified reference point of what is elsewhere claimed by Mathews as a pluralistically conceived democracy, 'the public interest' is, even more problematically, presented as prior to the associations that might otherwise be thought to formulate it: "[i]ndeed, it could be defined as that 'entity' around which associations form in the first place" (1990:29).

Such a unifying figure is also evident as the kind of basis from which Mathews can speak of the singularity of a "future social order" which has yet to be developed, but must be "within a framework that gives [new social institutions] their core values and structure". Such a finally normative framework, which is at once "open and yet structured" (Mathews, 1990:30), is strongly reminiscent of the 'hegemony without a centre' that is the hallmark of Laclau and Mouffe's concept of a radical and plural democracy: that is, an always provisional

yet society-wide hegemony with all its problems of a residual vanguardism and disabling generalization. For these reasons, it is necessary to detach Mathews' more useful and limited points about areas that could be strategically targetted for democratization from the broader vision entailed in his projection of an 'associative democracy' in which an authoring political subject appears to be reinstated. Along with the democratization of industrial work noted above, Mathews discusses the democratization of capital accumulation and management through mechanisms such as the profit-sharing collective investment fund suggested by the Australian Council of Trades Unions in 1986 as a means of broadening the base of decision-making on issues such as investment, trade and production.¹¹ Further, he proposes a programme for the democratization of the media in Australia (1988:38-39) and, more particularly, for the diversity of its press (1988a). These later proposals focus on the role of governments in providing a legislative framework for the democratization of institutions, though this is always viewed only as an enabling condition and not a guarantor of the achievement of democratized social relations.

The point that I want to make is drawn from the range of these suggestions about industrial and other forms of democracy made by Hindess, Hirst and Mathews. Democracy, as a set of mechanisms for socially organizing the making of decisions, is appropriate and thinkable in all social institutions, that is, at the level of the detailed, continuous, constitutive government of populations in their day-to-day lives, as well as in the more visible and rare displays of power when 'the

people' exercise their socially designated sovereignty on election days. Similarly, the form of those mechanisms cannot be reduced to a governing political subject, and therefore given as singular, but will need to be devised, within the broad criteria outlined, according to the particular institutions and conditions involved, in socially networked but perhaps discontinuous ways.

What I have been considering are ways of conceiving democracy free of the problem of the undifferentiated and 'natural' constituency of 'the people' that populism yokes to the term and to the mechanisms then commonly accepted as providing the conditions of sovereignty for this constituency to express itself. The problem of such a populism and the means for displacing it can be examined in more detail by taking the example of a debate over the operation of just such an administrative state body as Hindess, Hirst and Mathews target for democratization. The debate, occurring in Australia in the mid-1980s, raises questions of the democratization of culture.

II: Disaggregating 'the people'; a policy example

The Australia Council is a statutory body, established by the Commonwealth Government in 1975 to allocate public funds to a number of specialized Boards overseeing certain demarcated cultural activities (literature, visual arts, crafts, Aboriginal arts, etc.) unable to achieve commercial viability, initially at least. As such, its task has been to decide between applications and proposals on the basis of criteria of excellence and equity, inherited from an earlier stage of Commonwealth patronage of the arts. Questions as to the

conceptions of audiences related to such criteria (excellent for whom? equitable for whom?), and the assumed outcomes of the activities funded make the operation of such a body a litmus test for more than a narrowly conceived definition of 'culture' might suggest. As Rowse has put it, "[a] discussion on arts policy becomes a discussion about some of the ways Australian leaders understand democracy" (1985:5). Such questions have accompanied the life of the Council, and continue today. The particular 'debate' I will focus on is provided by an exchange of views between the sometime Chairman of the Council, Timothy Pascoe, a Professor of Sociology, Bob Connell, and a political sociologist then undertaking an analysis of Commonwealth cultural policy, Tim Rowse. These appeared in the Australian cultural journal Meanjin between 1983 and 1985.

The first contributor was Pascoe, appointed head of the Australia Council by the Fraser coalition government in the late 1970s and Chairman until 1984. In "Australia Council Funding Priorities" he sets out what are nominated as "his personal opinions" as to the preferred direction of the Council in its second decade. While these are said to carry "no official Australia Council status" (Pascoe, 1983:264), given their source and circulation as a discussion paper within the Council, they no doubt constituted a weighty input to policy deliberations.

Pascoe argues that such deliberations as to the overall role of the Council in supporting the arts are appropriate because: a major review has not occurred in a decade of operation; Council resources from federal consolidated revenue are declining while clientele is increasing; relations with state and local government arts agencies require attention as

these agencies increase their activities; in difficult social and economic times art has a role to play in social cohesion and identity; and increasing technological change demands attention to developing a distinctive national cultural identity. The impetus to policy reformation is conceived by Pascoe as primarily financial and structural but also in terms of the social role of art.

To answer these challenges Pascoe proposes a three-part strategy to establish funding priorities. This strategy involves

tightening criteria for support of excellence; a differential increase in support for the creativity of 'primary producer' artists and innovative organisations; and similar preference to programmes that re-integrate the work of artists and the arts with daily community life (Pascoe,1983:273).

On the face of it the entailed criteria of 'excellence', 'creativity' and 'integration' appear unexceptionable. In fact, in some quarters Pascoe was seen as a dangerous radical in his identification of a "false mantle of excellence" routinely protecting the traditional arts of opera and classical drama, high-priced arts, international artists, and extravagant presentation (1983:268); in his support of the 'truly alternative'; and the proposition that "[a]ll Australians have a right to the arts" (1983:271). For some traditionalists often opposed to arts funding and subsidies in general, Pascoe seemed to be proposing a worrying democratization of the arts.

However, a closer inspection of the framework of Pascoe's argument indicates that what informs his policy recommendations is a species of right-wing populism or populism 'from on high'. Any radicalism is of an avant-garde aesthetic kind, and even then, Pascoe is quite conventional in his valorization of

originality ('creativity') and original artists or authors ('primary producers'): these are the familiar categories of Romantic and Modernist criticism and their historical role in setting the boundaries of what is counted as 'legitimate' culture. Pascoe's populism consists of his linking up the elite cultural minority creating and providing for such legitimate culture to "all Australians" (1983:266,267,271), who inhabit that common sense domain of "daily life" (1983:271,273) and can be known in terms of their preoccupations with the "everyday activities of life" (1983:266). In this article, 'all Australians' stands proxy for 'the people', as befits Pascoe's concern with aesthetic and cultural contributions to a national social identity. Australians apparently reside in no specialized institutional locations, but rather in the 'everyday' and 'life'.

The link between a creative elite and the undifferentiated audience of 'all Australians' is established as the former providing the latter with "the spiritual and intellectual benefits that the arts offer". Thus will all individuals, through the expression of personal experience that art entails, "build personal identity and self-worth" (Pascoe,1983:271). In other words, Pascoe's is a very familiar concept of art's social mission: as excellence, the 'best that has been thought and said', it has an improving effect on 'the whole person'. Just as Matthew Arnold claimed in his radical proposals for the diffusion of 'Culture' throughout the populace (also linked to concrete policies, in his case, of popular education), for Pascoe art provides the means to transcend social divisions and differences by, paradoxically, being an end in itself (in 'excellence'). In this high-cultural version of art for 'the

people', it is the 1980s economic recession, "a time of social and economic dislocation" (Pascoe,1983:267), that requires this healing and unifying mission: "[l]inking the arts with daily life will integrate communities through shared experience, values and enjoyment" (Pascoe,1983:271)¹². A common culture will unite the nation and aesthetic consumption will individuate the masses, thus rendering them suitable constituents of an Australian cultural identity, that is, the cultural identity of a liberal-democratic nation, where any social groupings intervening between 'individuals' and 'nation', other than 'family', are seen as unnatural and unnecessary inventions.

If this populist strategy is about democratizing culture, it is, despite Pascoe's claims (1983:271), restricted to questions of access. The problems with such a project is that, as Bourdieu has shown, access means little to those members of social groups who have not socially acquired, through reason of particular class and gender trainings, the necessary means of appropriation of what is deemed legitimate culture (1968,1984). Without the familiarity with these means and the prevailing codes and conventions they entail, the 'natural' interest of 'individuals' in culture is also an impossibility. Under cover of the avowed egalitarian category, 'all Australians', this 'common culture' thus becomes a practical tool for distinguishing between those who can respond to the 'common human experience expressed in art', and those who are deemed to act politically and 'harp' on social divisions, such as unemployment, and 'fail' to recognize the 'wider human truths'. Bourdieu has argued that "culture classifies - and classifies the classifiers" (1971:1255): as I have noted in connection with other right-wing populisms, such as, for example,

Nisbet's, what Pascoe's invocation of 'all Australians' enables is the maintenance of an elite group of classifiers, benevolently bestowing culture-as-art on the population, only some of whom will prove to be worthy of its call.

Bob Connell joined in debate with Pascoe in the next issue of Meanjin, in an article entitled "Democratizing culture" (1983). Connell takes issue with Pascoe's priorities, and some of the points above are also his:

[e]ven in Pascoe's argument for 'linking the arts with daily life' there is still a concept of 'the Arts' as the bearers of 'spiritual and intellectual benefits' from a purer realm above, down into the materiality of mass life. Pascoe's concept of Australian culture as a 'store-house' duly stocked with 'treasures' (his terms), which it is the business of cultural policy-makers to heap up, is cut of the same cloth (1983:295-6).

But, while Connell is concerned to provide a broader, sociological definition of culture as "the side of human life that has to do with meaning, symbolism, forms of expression, self-conceptions, images of the world" that cannot be limited to only certain human activities, and thus to challenge Pascoe's imposition of his 'high' cultural definition onto "ordinary people" (1983:296), in doing so he mobilizes another kind of populism. This is inherent in his use of categories such as 'ordinary people', as Rowse was to point out in his rejoinder.

Briefly, Connell's left-wing populism, or populism 'from below', derives from his counter-claim that everyday life, far from needing to be integrated with art to acquire a spirituality and intellectuality, is endowed with "its own richness and inventiveness" and that "the common people" (1983: 297), for example, "Margaret and Bill" from a Sydney western

suburb with their "bruising experiences of schooling" (1983: 299), while having their skills and tastes excluded from what is predominantly defined as 'legitimate' culture, have their own independent cultural forms. What is problematic here is not the broadening of the domain in which cultural production and consumption is said to occur but the implied purism (see Burke's points in Chapter 3, p.112), and the homogenization entailed in Connell's recourse to 'the people'. Connell attempts to avoid the homogeneity of this category when he advocates, against Pascoe's elitist priorities, the criterion of interests of the majority for judging cultural policy issues, but his claim that "we have to think of kinds of coalitions of groups and forces that can be rallied in support of a democratic cultural policy, and that will constitute majorities" (1983:299) is undercut by the more pervasive sense of an essential and centralized unity that will be the condition for such coalitions: "[b]y 'democracy' I mean power in the hands of the people" (1983:304). Moreover, at the end of his article, Connell offers his view of what would be appropriate content in a democratized culture, or culture judged by the interests of the majority/'the people': "[m]y contribution to the shopping-list is to say that one thing we need is surrealism [such as "The Goon Show"]" (1983:306). The point here is the easy slide between the announced contribution of a particularly placed and formed social actor and that all-encompassing, all-legitimizing 'we' that claims Connell as just another, equal member of 'the people'.

This is the problem with which Rowse begins, in his article "Doing Away With Ordinary People" that continued this

particular debate in Meanjin in 1985. Rowse draws attention to Connell's status as an academic sociologist, the historical role of intellectually-trained workers in administering the lives of the working class for the owners of capital, and concludes that

we must acknowledge the class interests of the intellectually-qualified and urge them to question any aspiration they might have to generalise, however sympathetically, about the interests of 'ordinary people' (1985a:169).

Rowse notes that, in places, Connell almost abandons the category of 'ordinary people' but is finally unable to because it serves as his rationale for arguing for a particular populist concept of democracy against elitism (1985a:163). But, as is the way with populist democracy, far from 'ordinary people' delivering up their own demands or interests to cultural providers and thus securing cultural democracy, it remains, of course, for a particular interest (here the sociologist's) to represent them from a position of centralized patronage: 'the people' as such cannot act...

More, however, than the sociologist's well-meant populism, it is on its enabling condition, the category of a naturally united, relatively undifferentiated collective subject such as 'ordinary people' as audience that Rowse wishes to focus, or on its "fantastic status" (1985a:163). This, and the exclusively majoritarian calculations it enforces, is what must be displaced, according to Rowse:

I want to argue that in order to put forward a programme of cultural democracy, it is first necessary to cease constructing 'ordinary people' as the constituency for which radical intellectuals might try to speak. Instead we should argue for institutions which will make the presumption of a mass of 'ordinary people' meaningless, because that mass would be pulled apart by confidently expressed differences. A programme of cultural democracy must

deal with procedures of patronage rather than with the substance of what is to be patronised (1985a: 163).

Such a 'pulling apart of the mass' or disaggregation of 'the people' constitutes a different conception of the social subjects being targetted, catered for or responded to in policy formation, from that informing the procedures of centralized patronage and suggestions of 'universal intellectuals', be they right- or left-wing. As Williams has famously said,

[t]here are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses...What we see, neutrally, is other people...In practice, we mass them, and interpret them, according to some convenient formula...it is the formula, not the mass, which it is our real business to examine (1971:289).

What is suggested is that we stop seeing masses, or 'the people' (announced as such or as 'the popular masses' or the 'ordinary person', or as the working class as 'vanguard'¹³), and in the place of this 'natural' and unitary agency of decision (or illusion and reaction, as is more commonly the image of the masses) make visible, and enable calculation for, the varied range of historically and institutionally formed, and changing, social groupings that populate modern polities.

In taking such a direction Rowse moves along a similar path to that I have described above as the displacing of generalizing appeals to an idealist concept of sovereignty. For Rowse, 'cultural democracy' means not the installing of the (this time correctly perceived and represented) interests of 'the people' as the criterion for deciding what shall be funded, but the provision of the institutional and political arrangements for the cultural consumers and producers involved in a particular activity to decide what it is that shall be funded, to identify and represent themselves, and to calculate

their own interests and artistic cultural strategies. (Rowse's proposal thus echoes Bourdieu's argument concerning the social production of 'public opinion' and the need to equip respondents such that they are able to formulate questions and issues.) The crucial point here is that such groupings of cultural consumers and producers will be plural with particular audiences for operatic productions, other audiences for the exhibition of craftwork, others again for workplace murals, or for shop-floor theatre, community writing, women's arts, trade union cultures of work, and so on. Though the membership of these audiences may overlap, they remain distinct collectivities, engaged in quite particular sets of cultural practices and social relations. It is these "series of minorities, some of them tiny" that Rowse argues must, where they exist, be recognized and, where they do not, be actively encouraged and enabled in order to determine the substance of the cultural activity they favour (1985a:167). As Rowse notes, it is such minorities that Connell's populism runs shy of, preferring instead the singularity of an amassed majority. Or, to put it differently, the temptation is

to identify the electoral majority that might conceivably mandate a decisive change in cultural policy with the actual clients and audiences of popular culture genres...these are two quite different political entities. Whereas the former can and must be treated as a statistical mass because that is the way electoral systems and opinion polls work, the latter should be treated as a series of minority cultural interests (1985a:167).

The populist temptation is to overlook the way constituencies¹⁴ and interests are constituted and reduce all of their historically diverse forms to the privileged form of 'the people' or its other, the hegemonic elite.¹⁵ To paraphrase Rowse,

then, a policy of non-populist cultural democracy must be alert to the existence of the 'publics' of a diversity of cultural interests and work to embody this actuality in the institutional determination, formulation and implementation of cultural policy. His proposal of an apparatus or network of 'decentralized patronage' is thus designed to displace

the essential fallacy of [the existing system of] centralised patronage - the idea that Australian society is a single cultural constituency, that all are to some degree implicated in the success of those cultural treasures that are allowed to flourish with public money (1985a:168).

It is only this notion of a single cultural constituency that makes possible the use of a monolithic and abstract criterion like 'excellence': decentralized patronage would introduce a range of different criteria, specific to particular constituencies, and enable a more culturally visible registering of social differences of class, gender, race, ethnic affiliations, region, generation, sexuality, etc.

Rowse does not provide a detailed accounting of how to restructure the Australia Council. Rather, his emphasis on the obvious need for principles of selection workable in the face of multiple funding options and limited revenue from a central, federal source entails the retention of such a central agency, but he does offer some indicative examples of moves towards a dispersal of patronage other than to particular states of the Commonwealth. He notes that the Community Arts Board "look[s] not just at the artist or company to be funded, but also at... a 'community' organisation that vouchsafes the necessity and usefulness of the subsidised activity, from their point of view" (1985a:168). On this proposed model, the interests of plural constituencies could be formally represented by

intermediary bodies, located between Arts Boards and the recipients of funds.¹⁶ These intermediary bodies would have the job of deciding what (rather than who) was to be funded; the central agency would decide on the funds to be disbursed to the intermediary bodies, or 'patrons', according to other negotiated criteria, for example, the relative social claims of differently placed constituencies. These criteria would be the site of political struggle, and the displacement of exclusively 'cultural' criteria would recognize the social, rather than¹⁷ charismatic, nature of cultural consumption and production, and would be a useful object of struggle for cultural and social equity and testify to the cultural domain as a site where social relations of power between individuals and groups are negotiated.

III: Displacing but not dismissing 'the people'

It remains to make some concluding comment on the role of 'the people' and of the concept of its sovereignty once these have been displaced as the informing centre of democracy.

I have argued from the outset that the thesis' analysis and critique of populism is not part of a quest to establish a philosophical yardstick against which all political forms could be measured. A non-populist democratic project of the sort I have attempted to indicate is no more 'real' or 'true' than its populist variants. 'Real' to whom?; 'true' to what? To claim that it was would be necessarily to claim that existing parliamentary democracies are not democracies at all, and this is emphatically not the assertion of this work.¹⁸ Parliamentary democracies are counted as such (and not by the philosophically

'relative' minds of individuals but by the socially organized criteria of representation of constituencies), and we cannot escape this aspect of political truths. Nor should we expect or plan to, unless we are intent on building up a pure and isolated (and deluded) domain into which one exits from politics.¹⁹

Non-populist democracy is differentiated by the practical ways it engages with the features of Western societies as networked institutions and the governmental techniques targetted on and constituting the life of their populations. It can rightly be pointed out that populist democracy, predicated on the sovereignty of 'the people', also engages in a practical way with current features of the operation of power relations. In this vein, I have noted how a national 'people' is legislated for, according to definite legal and political criteria, and then constituted by particular voting procedures and aggregation methods, as well as by opinion polls in their increasingly 'indispensable' role in the political process and by accompanying media practices. The resulting figure of 'the people' is powerfully used to shape up a variety of decisions, first and foremost of which is who occupies the treasury benches in parliament. It would be stupid to overlook this, in some utopian dismissal of 'the people', because it is an institutionally and discursively constituted agency. On this important point Hindess has written, in relation to British politics,

talk of the sovereignty of parliament...can... function as an important component of political practice by providing some of the terms in which strategic calculation and debate may be conducted. Talk of sovereignty is a component in a number of important arenas of current British politics. It is used, for example: as a means of arguing for

greater parliamentary control; as a means of presenting the civil service as a body of politically neutral administrators; as a means of campaigning against the compulsory reselection of Labour MPs by constituency Labour Parties; as a means of campaigning against EEC membership; and so on (1983:78-79).

Closer to home, we may recall how the particular legislative constitution of 'the people' in the Australian state of Queensland - specifically, the absence of equal electoral representation of all adults in the formal political institutions - enabled conceptions of 'the people' to be used, as it were, at will, as well as to the 'definite effects' to which Hindess calls our attention. A good instance of this usage occurred in the industrially and politically important electricity dispute of 1985, with the newspaper advertisements authorized by the then Minister for Mines and Energy (Gibbs) and then Premier (Bjelke-Petersen) headed "POWER STATION OPERATORS V THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND" (Gibbs,1985) and "POWER TO THE PEOPLE" (Bjelke-Petersen,1985).²⁰ In the government-authorized advertisements' assertion of 'the people' as on the side of law and the hard-earned ("billions of dollars") privilege of deserving citizens to uninterrupted electricity, and as utterly distinct from the greed, laziness, luxurious conditions, and bloody-minded irrationality attributed to power-station employees, these advertisements helped shape up the play of what the various media registered as opinion on the dispute by interpellating people into the particular, unuttered, unitary common sense of 'the people'.²¹

Discourses of sovereignty, and reference to 'the people', is thus "a component of particular arenas of political practice", but it is not a useful or adequate explanation of how they operate (Hindess,1983:79). This is one of its limits.

The other, as I have noted at length, is its inability to come to terms with the realities of differentiated populations, whose differentiations (such as those of class, gender, racial and regional relations) are the outcome of governmental techniques as much as of the resistances to these that are possible because of the limitations of any agency in the exercise of its activity.²² But for all these considerable limitations, on which I have based the need for a differently organized concept of democracy, it is clear that 'the people' as a stake in at least some political arguments cannot be given away or left uncontested. For example, Stuart Hall (1980) and Tony Bennett (1983) have demonstrated, in their analytical responses to Thatcherite authoritarian populism, how the 'articulation' of 'the people' to particular institutional processes, practices and relations remains an important consideration. Notably, Hall introduces the important distinction of the 'popular democratic' as a domain or discourse to be strategically and specifically constructed to actively contest authoritarian constructions of, and appeals to, 'the people'.

However, I have mentioned these last examples of work in the area, in part, to make a crucial distinction between them and the project of this thesis. The point has already been made in relation to Laclau's and Mouffe's work, but it bears repetition. It revolves around the concept of the 'articulation' of 'the people' and the problematic way articulation, while claiming to escape "the pitfalls of attempting to analyse ideology and culture in terms of pre-given (class) interests and destinies...retain[s] them as general terms of cultural and political analysis" (Hunter,

1988a:116). In both Hall's and Bennett's, as in Laclau's and Mouffe's work, what emerges, though only in the midst of much disavowal of economism and of resort to 'given' class interests, is some such central, coordinating and totalizing point which provides the way in which 'the people' can be correctly articulated, that is, linked up to the strategies of 'the left'. Indicative in Hall's article is the reliance on Althusser and Gramsci, and the unifying moves underpinning a valorization of the state, the diagnosis of a society-wide 'crisis', and the identification of the goal "'to put a new form of hegemony together'" (1980:168). In fact, anything less than this, anything less than the command of the articulating principle of "the whole relation of the state to civil society, to 'the people' and to popular struggles" (Hall,1980:166) "is condemned to following in the wake of those which really aim to command the field" (1980:168). Thus, for Hall, it is the struggle for hegemony which counts "'in the last instance'" (1980:168). The maintenance, though cautious, of the category of a determinate 'last instance'²³ enables his concept of 'democracy' to be inserted into political and cultural arguments in a particular way, for instance, as the stake in the moment of profound "transformism" identified as facing the left and right in the 1980s (Hall,1980:158-9), and as, therefore, an object in the service of an intensified class conflict and series of struggles. Hall's, and similar considerations of the figure of 'the people', through the related concepts of articulation and hegemony, end by attributing to 'the people' class characteristics that are at once "acquired yet fundamental" (Hunter,1988a:117). As Hunter has pointed out, the problem with this line of analysis is that

it puts cultural and political interests and capacities...on both sides of the equation - as something formed by ideological practices or processes of articulation which possess no necessary relation to particular classes or groups; and as something that classes and groups must already possess as the stake in the 'ideological struggle', as that which they seek to win consent to and hence express through ideology...[T]his theoretical oscillation is quite disabling for any attempt to develop forms of analysis of particular ...policies and institutions (1988a:118).

The route through the concepts of articulation and hegemony is not the path to a non-populist contestation of the figure of 'the people', given its relocation of 'the people' from one field of pre-given identity and interests to another equally problematic one. In the situations where such a contestation needs to be joined with it must be as a limited tactic within political analysis and calculation, rather than as their shaping strategy. The distinction of the limited tactic is its engagement with the particular institutional mechanisms by which 'the people' exist at any one moment (for example, the conditions and aggregation procedures of a national vote, or the variable techniques by which populations are interpellated as 'the people' in various cultural texts)²⁴ rather than the activation of a discursive machinery that produces the contestation as a basis for an overview of a totalized social formation.

NOTES

1. See Corcoran (1983) for a critical discussion of democratic theories posed in terms of means and ends. Corcoran argues that "democratic thought...emerges in the struggle for social power...as if in defiance of philosophy". Democratic aims and ends are not extrinsic "either morally or metaphysically" to their means (1983:22).
2. See also Williams (1989:261-264) on parliamentary democracy as a subset of representative democracy and the specificities of representation within this subset.
3. For a discussion of the operation of these neighbourhood committees which considers them in terms of governmentality, see Dutton (1988).
4. See Hindess (1988:104-5) on the same point in relation to the "spurious actors" of, for example, classes and societies: "[t]o apply the concept of actor to classes or other collectivities that have no means of taking decisions and acting on them, and then to explain some state of affairs...as resulting from their actions is to indulge in a kind of fantasy".
5. Clearly, once representation is accepted as a definite institutional relation what becomes important is the kind of institutional relation, how it is organized, and the particular socially constituted categories that it links. See Williams (1989:256-280) for a canvassing of some different forms of representation.
6. This is not to say that there is no place for 'rights' or principles in politics, only that all rights are historically achieved and institutionally organized and attributed; they are not the automatic "ontological attributes of subjects" (Hirst, 1986:57). Relatedly, while the "appeal to principles often plays a part in the processes in which decisions are made, followed through, or set aside" (Hindess, 1987:163), when principles are understood and referred to as ahistorical and universal rules or ruling ideas, reliance on them for assessment of social conditions and evaluations of proposals results in a hopeless underestimation of "the unavoidable complexity of social arrangements" (1987:159).
7. See, for example, Beilharz (1986), Beilharz & Watts (1983), Triado (1984), Dow, Clegg & Boreham (1984), Dow (1984), and Hindess (1987a:107-9).
8. Despite Williams' announced dislike of certain forms of corporatism, his proposed agenda for discussion of changes to the House of Lords (1989:276) bears a close resemblance to Hirst's advocacy of 'direct corporate representation' in this body.
9. The phenomenon of 'flexible specialization' and its requirement of coordination across heterogeneously organized and geared firms and industrial districts bears

- some similarities to the kind of arrangements considered here. See Hirst (1989:142-5).
10. Mathews writes, "[m]y agenda is one of processes rather than of goals. I do not believe that we shall ever know that we have definitively achieved socialism" (1986:193).
 11. For a full discussion of this see Australian Council of Trades Unions/ Trade Development Council Mission to Western Europe (1987).
 12. Pascoe reveals the concomitant economic considerations driving his argument when he specifies the area of product design as an important site for such a linkage: "[g]ood design combines aesthetics and economy" (1983:271).
 13. Hirst identifies the populist elements of Stalinized Marxism: "[t]he representative bodies of bourgeois democracy are rejected in favour of a doctrine of direct representation of the masses (the notion of 'people' remains central despite classes; the organized working class are conceived as the representatives/leaders of the whole people, the 'vanguard' that represents the objective interests of the masses as a whole)" (1986:28). This problematizes those Marxist accounts of populism that treat an emphasis on 'the people' as antagonistic to, or displacing of, a proper emphasis on classes as the fundamental social subjects, for example, Macpherson (1962) and McQueen (1971). That populism and Marxism have not been, historically, inherently mutually exclusive alerts us that populism is not dismantled by disaggregating the category of 'the people' into differentiated categories of social subjects, whether classes, genders and races or what-have-you, if these are conceived as simply given prior to their social organization.
 14. Hindess provides a useful antidote to populist conceptions of 'interests' in the following passage: "[w]e begin by noting that interests are defined and articulated in the course of argument or evaluation...[which is to say] that their definition is subject to dispute...In that respect arguments from 'interests' to political conclusions must always be regarded as problematic. Again to say that interests are the product of evaluation is to say that they are articulated by particular agencies, by individuals or by organizations such as governments, trades unions or political parties" (1983:73).
 15. Such an opposition is found in the Yes Minister episode "The Middle-Class Rip-Off", in which Hacker plans to save his local football club by money raised from the sale of an art gallery. Sir Humphrey, as the 'hegemonic elite' patronizing opera, or, as Hacker puts it "Wagner and Mozart, Verdi and Puccini...the culture of the Axis Powers (Lynn & Jay, 1983:140), responds indicatively to Bernard's diagnosis of Hacker's plan as popular: "[t]he Minister's scheme to demolish the Corn Exchange Art Gallery would in your opinion be popular. This is undoubtedly true. It would be distressingly popular. Hideously popular..."

Subsidy is for Art. It is for culture. It is not to be given to what the people want, it is for what the people don't want but ought to have. If they really want something they will pay for it themselves. The Government's duty is to subsidise education, enlightenment and spiritual uplift, not the vulgar pastimes of ordinary people (1983:136).

On the problematic over-generalizing that certain usages of the concept of 'hegemony' may lead to, especially in relation to populist attempts to assert the counter-hegemonic value of popular culture, see Rowse (1985b).

16. For another discussion of the role of intermediary bodies in arts funding see Williams (1989:41-55).
17. In his discussion of the formation of audiences or cultural consumers Bourdieu identifies 'charismatic ideology' as the practice of taking what is socially formed (eg., the tastes, aptitudes and skills that are the result of education, both formal and informal) to be inherent or 'natural'.
18. Such a claim is made in Bulbeck (1987), and see the response in Greenfield & Williams (1988) which sets out the thesis' position on populism and democracy in relation to the case of Queensland.
19. On the notion of an 'end of politics' built into Leninism and Stalinism, see Polan (1984).
20. The advertisement inserted by a group of unions in support of the South-East Queensland Electricity Board's workers, "Open Letter To The People Of Queensland" (Rockett, 1985), adopted a significantly different mode of address by speaking to 'the people', rather than speaking as 'the people'.
21. On this and other instances of populism in Queensland, see Greenfield & Williams (1986, 1988).
22. This important point, which provides an answer to those who would see in accounts of the constitutive and dispersed nature of power relations a hopeless and ahistorical functionalism, is made by Hirst in his rejection of "the chimera of 'absolute' power". He argues, "[a]ny agency is limited by the means of exercise of its activity at its disposal and the capacities of other agencies" (1986:44). I have included this point to distinguish the historical plurality connoted by the concept of 'resistance', as used here, from that essentialized wellspring of difference and resistance summoned up in, for example, Laclau and Mouffe's work.
23. In this regard, see the way Hall wishes to adopt the Foucauldian argument of a dispersal or "microphysics" of power, but to supplement it with a "macrohydraulics of power", that is, "to insist that there are centers that operate directly on the formation and constitution of discourse" (1988:70-71).

24. For example, the interpellation of the viewer as one of 'the Australian people' in the mini-series Vietnam differs from the construction of 'the Australian people' (as outside politics and more or less homogeneous) in The Dismissal, Bodyline, and True Believers (see pp.226-231). Vietnam offers a construction of 'the Australian people' as politically engaged and as differentiated according to ethnicity, generation, gender and experience, and only finally unified in a humanist recognition of diversity and the fluidity of Australian social composition. See Stuart Cunningham (1987:9) on Vietnam as an instance of the Kennedy-Miller mini-series' "grand humanist multiperspectivism": in this regard, Vietnam is the most successful of the Kennedy-Miller mini-series in instating a "radical humanism...a politics of 'national reconciliation' that simultaneously acknowledges the integrity of historical moments of non negotiable sectoral division" (emp.added).

CONCLUSIONS

In Australia, 'we' are repeatedly addressed by the media or, through the media, by politicians and public figures as 'the Australian people'. In legal fact, however, our status is that of subjects of the British crown - a fact that becomes acutely important at particular historical moments, such as 1975, or in the repeated strategy of the Queensland Bjelke-Petersen government to thwart or delay federal government policy initiatives by (the now defunct procedure of) appeals to the British Privy Council. Thus we are constituted, as a sovereign 'people', in ways that cannot be, constitutionally or politically, finally acted on. Such an observation indicates clearly the particular value that doctrines of sovereignty, or more accurately their legal achievement, can have.

This thesis, however, has been concerned to argue the inadequacy of a politics and of political analysis and argument organized in terms of the unified social subject of 'the people' and its sovereignty, which I have defined as populist. This inadequacy is not a philosophical lack or error, but a practical, historical inadequacy. It derives from the fact that the particular rationality or set of doctrines that animates populism, that of a given social subject exercising its natural right to power or struggling to assert that right over another, opposed subject, is far from exhaustive of the rationality organizing the forms of governance which saturate the domains of the modern state and constitute the institutional lives and conducts of its population.

In the face of populism's inability to conceptualize, and thus effectively intervene in, the dispersed and anonymous

power relations that characterize modern Western societies, I have argued the possibility of and need for a rethinking and reconceptualization of democracy, divested of its historically populist core, and able to engage with diffused, differentiated and ongoing mechanisms of power, whose outcome is not set by the intentions or interests of an authoring subject or the limits of an objective structure but produced in an amalgam of situation-specific determinations of which a democratically organized decision-making practice may thus be one. It is the need to engage with such mechanisms rather than simply the declared interests or rights of political subjects, or with the 'inherent' tendencies of a social system, that demands a newly limited conception of democracy, revoking its reliance on a telos of some sort and confined itself to the specification of certain mechanisms.

Such shifts, if the full extent and complex operation of the power relations or apparatuses of governance within which we live are to be rendered intelligible and at least conditionally calculable, are perhaps what Foucault had in mind when he wrote that "[p]olitical analysis and criticism have in a large measure still to be invented" (1980:190). This statement can easily seem obnoxiously dismissive of varied and valuable traditions of political thought, and also easily refutable: it is not new, for example, to define democracy in terms of mechanisms, as anyone conversant with Madisonian political theory's break with contractarianism's emphasis on liberal, popular sovereignty knows.

Nevertheless, perhaps this provocative claim does have a point, and as it bears on a train of argument accompanying the more particular and explicit contentions of the thesis, I shall

hazard a suggestion as to what it might be. As with most of Foucault's work, the contribution lies not in the uncovering of new knowledge but the example of a genealogical reordering of the elements and a rethinking of the bases of received knowledges. Following this example, it could be argued that one important task facing contemporary political analysis is its recasting in a mode no longer dependent on a unified knowing subject, that is, its recasting in a mode that forgoes the imperative of an epistemological foundation. I have touched on this earlier, in criticism of 'universal intellectual' perspectives and their implicit claim to a capacity for knowing and analysing in totalizing excess of their particular historical and institutional conditions. An assumed epistemological basis to analysis is also evident in the ontological status accorded to its categories. Such has routinely been the case with 'the people', or with its analogues 'the individual' (in a populist liberalism) and 'the working class' (in a populist Marxism). These categories, as first principles, have been the inevitable supplement to previously influential conceptions of democracy which have, yes, attended to and even stipulated the centrality of the mechanisms involved. The supplement makes sense of what the mechanisms are for, and saves the proponent from being branded as amoral, a 'Sir Humphrey' or, his (erroneously established) prototype, a Machiavelli; or, within the political circles of the left, a pragmatic 'reformist without a project'.

But the consequence of such a supplement is to deliver a political technology - democracy - to the harness of supposedly pre-political or naturally given subjects, with somehow given interests, values, rights. This is damaging to political

analysis in that it exempts elements of situations and strategies from investigation of the conditions and practices which constituted, sustains and could change them. It provides politics, which is ongoing negotiation of power-knowledge relations, with an inert ontological core that pre-empts its activity. In the case of a democratically organized politics, it severely limits the reach of its democracy by providing, via a level of first principles, outcomes in advance of their democratic negotiation and historically variable social production. Putting democratic mechanisms at the service of 'the people' and the particular values it will be said at any one time to embody is not a simple crossing from the ranks of the amoral to the moral, but the imposition of a particular morality or set of orienting values that is, by definition, immune from situation-specific discussion or negotiation. The West's Cold War understanding of 'democracy' as individual expression, guaranteed representation, consumerism and freedom from politics/ideology is one such set of values that has been largely immune from challenge and is currently highly visible in the Western media's generally poverty-stricken reporting of the de-Stalinization and adumbral democratization of Eastern bloc countries.

Another way of making this point is to note that these apparently given, pre-political subjects are, of course, not born outside politics but only projected as such in what could be called a populist ventriloquism, with the ventriloquist firmly enmeshed in determinate conditions and power relations. Political analysis needs to rid itself of the epistemological foundation that analysts, speaking as if with magic access to first principles or foundational agents, import to it. To

paraphrase a description of the similar divestment of cultural analysis, political analysis may then

lack the glamour of a master knowledge, but it may come closer to promoting departures in...practice by furnishing criteria to characterise specific situations of action, without the effects of pre-emptive theory and while remaining sensitive to the continual adjustments necessary to effective interventions (Tagg,1988:27).

In other words, the task for political analysis is to find ways of producing knowledges of determinate situations without recourse to a unifying subject of knowledge or experience, either in the position of analyst or object of analysis. Hopefully, this thesis' work of displacement of populist discourses contributes to such a development of a materialist account of politics, whose historical materials and strategies for social equity are not set in advance.

APPENDIX



The Australian, Monday, June 3, 1985, 8.

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