THE PEOPLE OF NOW: HOW POPULISM UNDERSTANDS THE PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIP TO POLITICS

by

JAKE ANTHONY SCOTT

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Department of Political Science and International Studies

School of Government

College of Social Sciences

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how populism understands its own core constituency of 'the people', and how this understanding relates to the history of political thought. A central claim of the thesis is that 'the people' is a persistent and permanent feature of political thinking, regardless of whether that thinking is 'populist', but that populism has thrown into sharp relief the tension surrounding the question of *who* 'the people' is composed of. In the introductory chapter, the two main challenges through which the thesis works are identified: how does populism understand the identity of the people? And second, what are the conditions that make populism a realisable phenomenon?

The thesis thus *avoids* presenting a clear definition of populism until the concluding chapter. This is because, as the literature review shows, the definitions of populism presented usually reflect the normative commitments of those defining. Instead, the concept of 'the people' in the history of political thought is examined to established the traditions and conditions of thought that have allowed what analysts call 'populism' to emerge. Thus, whilst the literature review reveals a broad consensus on the study of populism in the present literature, and therefore useful points of reference to use when discussing 'populism', no single definition is adopted to avoid prescription.

As a result, this thesis offers a definition of populism 'through' an analysis of 'peoplehood'. This is done by undertaking a conceptual analysis approach to a broad number of political theorists, and how they have theorised 'the people' in relation to politics, subdivided into three distinct categories: spatiality; temporality; and corporality. These categories are identified in the introduction, which also shows that analyses of peoplehood – populist or otherwise – typically make the error of privileging one of the three categories, either subsuming the other categories under that privileged category, or neglecting the others altogether.

Thereafter, the thesis proceeds along the following structure: a chapter is given over to each category delineated, of each of which the internal structure includes discussions of genealogical developments to identifying latent 'schools' of thought in each category, followed by the 'populist' interpretation of each category thus far. A final chapter then discusses the developments analysed thus far, and summarises the preceding arguments, to make room for an analysis of populism in relation to each of those categories identified in order to arrive at a theoretical understanding of this phenomenon, and how populism understands the people's relation to politics. A new framework of peoplehood is offered, drawing on the morphological

work of Michael Freeden, which creates space for an understanding of *all* forms of peoplehood, be they populist, democratic, or otherwise, but in this thesis allows for an innovative, unique, and highly flexible definition of populism to be presented.

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Contents

Introduction

The story of populism as a phenomenon is well-told; from its beginnings in late-nineteenth century America and Russia, through its flowering in post-colonial Latin America, to the cotemporary debates that have seen, 'for the first time', populism in power (Gandesha, 2018; Mansbridge and Macedo, 2019), the typical developments of populism are well known. What has become more common in the literature recently, however, is the story of the *theories* of populism. Now, more than ever, political theory is turning in on itself to examine what the theorisation of populism reveals for wider commitments to democracy, political action and, as I show below, the concept of the people (Espejo, 2011; Urbinati, 2019b).

Moreover, this central conceptual vagary – of 'the people' – has become a major focus of democratic theory, expressed in the idea of the 'democratic boundary problem'. This problem is, as the name implies, an attempt to address what the 'boundaries' of a people may be in the sense of lines of exclusion and inclusion, and how they can be constituted. In some circumstances, this answer may be clearer and more exclusive, in the instance of a fascist or communist state, but in the circumstance of democracy, as Bonnie Honig writes, the problem lies in the commitment to democracy *ipso facto*, and the paradox of democratically determining who belongs to the people (2007). In theories of this problem, as Paulina Ochoa Espejo details, different theorists have emphasised different elements in order to respond to, and provide an answer for, the boundary problem, democratic or otherwise (2011: 7):

> New research into the edges of the political community, the composition of the demos, and the popular legitimization of the state treats the problem only tangentially, since it often takes the unified people as a given. Thus it tends to ignore the question underlying the problem: What is a people? What is its nature? For example, much of the recent research dealing with the people in political philosophy and constitutional theory assumes that there already exists a people, and then turns to examining what this people can do. These scholars ask: Can the people make collective decisions and self-rule? Can the people bind itself? Can there be

> democracy beyond a given people? But they usually do not ask whether their implicit assumptions about the nature of the people are correct or coherent.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a new, innovative framework for understanding populism by addressing its relationship to its central referent, of 'the people'. As Benjamin Moffitt details (2020), analyses of populism have generally come to a consensus on the effects and impacts populism has on institutional politics and democratic politics, organising into two very broad camps, which I label in the subsequent chapters the 'Critical Approach' and the 'Sympathetic Approach'. Whilst consensus has broadly formed, however, the key difference between these two approaches is the explanation of populism's relationship to 'the people'. The Critical Approach, which is championed by such political scientists as Jan-Werner Müller (2016), Cas Mudde (2004, 2017) and Michael Freeden (2017), considers the populist understanding of the people through concepts such as majoritarianism, popular sovereignty, and a Manichean division between the people and the elites, challenging the established mechanisms of liberal democracy and subverting the typical expectations of democracy. Conversely, the Sympathetic Approach considers populism to be an opportunity for a radicalisation of democracy to overturn those institutions and challenge hegemonic ideas of how politics is 'done' and what it 'is'; such an approach is typically associated with the work of Ernesto Laclau, who believed the very purpose of radical politics is the construction of a people (2006).

We are faced, consequently, with a series of problems: the first major problem, is that analyses of populism usually reflect the normative commitments of their proponents, who either see the populist 'appeal to the people' as a dangerous subversion of existing political systems, or as a creative and legitimising practice that cannot be 'exorcised'. Indeed, as

Margaret Canovan[1] notes, 'within contemporary politics, the language of the 'the people' is inescapable', simultaneously imprecise and promiscuous, acting as 'every politician's friend' and yet defying the fixity necessary to ensure the stability of any 'popular' regime (2005: 1, 140); this, however, gestures to another, but more minor, problem in any study of populism, which is the danger of eliding 'populism' with democracy or politics in general. Indeed, Laclau is well-known (and well-criticised) for his collapsing down of populism and politics into one another, thus endangering his otherwise very innovative theory of populism.

It is the second major problem, moreover, that has wider-reaching implications: with the exception of Laclau, no theorist working in the field of populism has overtly recognised that *all theories of politics*, and especially democratic politics, operates on the presumption of at least the existence of 'a people'. This is, conversely, a vibrant and creative discussion in democratic theory, in the aforementioned 'boundary problem', and – as Espejo's commentary above shows – is a deep well of reflections on what the people's role in democratic politics actually is. As one writer succinctly puts it, 'under democracy, the people came to be identified as the holders of sovereignty and the term became coextensive with the citizen. However, traces of the original image of the people as dangerous and irrational plebs still resonate in late modern politics, in an uneasy articulation with that of holders of democratic rights' (Panizza, 2005: 15). We are, therefore, confronted with two important questions, that will shape this thesis: first, how does populism understand the identity of the people? And second, what are the conditions that make populism a realisable phenomenon?

[1] Canovan is included, in the Literature Review, in the 'Critical Approach', but it is important to note that she straddles the two approaches more than any other theorist. Her work on the people's place in modern politics is extremely influential across studies of populism, but for the sake of concision, and the theoretical apparatus upon which she relies, Canovan has been included in the Critical Approach in the Literature Review.

The Concept of the People

Populism, and the theoretical and empirical debates surrounding it, have brought to the fore the significance of the concept of a people and, along with it, the necessary question of definition. When political theorists and scientists analyse populism, they usually ask the question 'who are the people to whom populism makes reference?' and inevitably take the specific examples of populism as indicative of how populism as an *entire* phenomenon understands the concept (Moffittt, 2020). This question is not constrained to the theoretical only: as Douglas Murray details, the presumption of a 'we' as a collective identity was necessary to European states' attempts to integrate vast numbers of refugees from Syria in the latter half of the 2010s, thus paradoxically presuming a 'we' whilst simultaneously accepting an indeterminacy in the future of that 'we', as refugees and immigrations altered the identity of the 'we'. But Murray's observation goes deeper than mere questions of fixity: when Angela Merkel declared 'we can do this', he asks 'who was this 'we'? What was the entity being urged to accomplish this hard-to-define thing?' (2017: 94). Was Merkel referring to the German political class, or her people? Or were her sights set wider, on a European people? Or was she going even further, and invoking a global community? The ambiguity in the word 'we' is so central to both political theory and practice that the answer is elusive – but not, necessarily, impossible.

The entire concept of a 'people' is, as with many concepts in politics, a myth (Morgan, 1988). But a myth is not the same as fiction; myths help us to understand how 'a set of people' conceive of themselves (Miller, 2009: 17), and by telling stories to themselves *about themselves*, 'the fact that individuals feel they are part of a continuous entity induces in them mutual dependencies and responsibilities' (Tamir, 2019: 39). In other words, 'a community is a group of individuals who imagine themselves connected to each other as objects of special concern and loyalty by something that they share' (Yack, 2012: 48). This view of community

as being necessary to the functioning of democracy can be instrumental, but it can also be aesthetic, especially given Michael Oakeshott's definition (1962: 44):

> Politics is the activity of attending to the general arrangements of people who, in their common recognition of a manner attending to its arrangements, compose a single community. To suppose a collection of people without recognised arrangements of behaviour, or one which enjoyed arrangements which intimated no direction for change and needed as attention, is to suppose a people incapable of politics.

Yet if 'the people' is simultaneously a myth and the necessary presumption of politics, as the community or common identity to which that politics is directed, relevant, or responsible, we then need to consider the different ways in which the people have been theorised in the history of political ideas. Only by doing this can we contextualise populism fully and understand it as a phenomenon in itself.

As a first step in doing so, we can observe that, when discussing 'the people', political theorists tend to use three terms to understand it: there is a reference made to the people's relationship to time; its relationship to space; and its ability to act in the world as an entity. I label these terms 'temporality', 'spatiality', and 'corporality'. This is a bold claim, and the critical reader will no doubt feel compelled to argue the case that this is a simplification of a quite obviously complex problem, which misses nuances and presents an overly-formalised approach; whilst objections are fair, in this instance it is my claim that this is a set of practices that already exists, and the lack of formalism in organisation has limited applicability and hampered attempts to understand different forms of peoplehood. In this regard, then, below I identify and explain this existing set of practices, but first there is a problem that must be addressed.

Discussion around peoplehood in relation to these three terms usually fall into one of two errors: they either privilege one of the terms, to the detriment of the others, whilst implicitly

recognising the others' existence; or, they focus on one term entirely, and neglect the others. One example of the first error is that quoted above, Paulina Ochoa Espejo's work, *The Time of Popular Sovereignty* (2011). Whilst the work is an exceptionally innovative intervention in the study of the boundary problem of peoplehood, in which Espejo argues that 'the people' is best understood as a 'process', leaning on process metaphysics – upon which I will elaborate below – Espejo does not ignore the spatial or corporal components of peoplehood, but phrases them as 'moments' in the 'process' of the people, such as environmental or decisional factors. To do so, as I say, is to implicitly recognise their existence, but to sublimate their importance and to privilege the temporal over the spatial or corporal. Likewise, an example of the second error would be Anna Stilz's Kantian approach to territorial justification in *Territorial Sovereignty* (2009b) that neglects the temporal whilst subsuming the corporal under the spatial. Why is this a problem? As a consequence, theorists fail to fully conceptualise peoplehood by considering only one part of what it means for a 'people' to exist and, therefore, address populism through a skewed and incomplete vision of peoplehood, damning any attempt to fully conceptualise populism at the outset.

It is my contention, then, that we must study all three terms in equal weight when attempting to understand how the boundaries of 'the people' are identified and understood. The difficulty lies in the problem I have identified above: theories either implicitly recognise all three terms but privilege one, or they neglect two and focus on the third. We cannot, then, work from within one of those theories or frameworks: we need instead to contextualise populism in *each term* to draw a successful conclusion as to what populism's peoplehood actually looks like.

Methodology and Thematic Construction

This thesis ages in a thematic genealogy by considering each component of peoplehood in the long history of political ideas. Each chapter will, then, involve a long view of history that traces the development of ideas and the major influential thinkers, with each thematic chapter organised into the two most important or influential 'traditions' in that component. In order to do so, first it is important to address exactly what each chapter will be discussing – as indicated, each chapter focuses on the aforementioned components of peoplehood, of spatiality, temporality, and corporality – but also the necessity of method in a political theoretical thesis. Indeed, as David Leopold and Marc Stears have remarked, 'political theorists rarely include much explicit reflection on method', preferring instead to begin their enquiries immediately; this tendency is an odd one, as 'the choice is not between having a method and not having one, but rather between deciding to think about that method or simply carrying on unreflectively' (2008: 1-2). Indeed, the proliferation of, not necessarily methods themselves, but richer understandings of the methods utilised by political theorists has been witnessed in recent years (Leopold and Stears, 2008; Blau, 2017). What has become more noticeable is the recognition that it is difficult to clearly delineate between categories in the field of political theory: Adrian Blau, for instance, has observed the necessity of conceptual analysis in the practice of historical interpretation, as definitional fiat is invaluable in facilitating historical enquiry (2017: 264). Importantly, for this thesis, Blau's observation is crucial.

As discussed, the structure of this thesis necessarily entails those two forms of theoretical methodology: conceptual analysis; and historical interpretation. Indeed, these two methodologies have often been twinned in what is known as *Begriffsgeschichte* – conceptual history, or genealogy (Blau, 2017: 249). In this regard, the general structure of each chapter will run as follows: the theme discussed will be given a rough, operationalisable definition through conceptual reconstruction in order to proceed with a historical enquiry. The important

methodological constraint to recognise here is that, as Blau notes, reconstruction of terms (with which conceptual analysis is most concerned) requires certain assumptions, which are modified through close textual, contextual and philosophical understandings (2017: 251-252). Each chapter will then, consequently, proceed in an interpretive manner, tracing the genealogy of the themes I examine through a defined historical period, which shall vary in each chapter. The intention is, therefore, to conclude each chapter with a more refined reconstruction of each term, as well as understanding how political theorists have utilised that term in their theorising.

Regarding conceptual analysis, by virtue of the terms and themes explored in this thesis, the approach to the study of peoplehood can be understood in the lexicon of William Connolly: peoplehood, as a conceptual unit of analysis, can be thought of (at this stage) as a cluster-concept, that incorporates the sub-concepts of spatiality, temporality and corporality. Understanding the concept of peoplehood in this way allows us to 'display its complex connections with a host of other concepts to which it is related', as well as recognising the variability of internal weighting within and between concepts (1983: 13-14). One further, significant development that has been made in the practice of conceptual analysis has been Michael Freeden's use of the method in the study of ideology (1996). Freeden expanded on Connolly's terminology to introduce the idea of polysemy in the study of concepts, language and meaning. In this, Freeden means a recognition that, just as concepts are not hermetically-sealed, complete units of analysis, but are contingent in their meaning on their relation to other concepts, so too are the minutiae of conceptual analysis – words. Each word derives meaning not only from context, but also from the semiotic field in which it is utilised, acting in an inter-definitional manner in such a reflexive form that actors (or more specifically, for this thesis, theorists) might use them in strategically innovative ways. As I show below, this component of conceptual analysis – 'narrowing down the polysemies' – requires a broad and deep understanding of each theorists' work so that their own understandings of each concept (in so

far as they are consistent in their use of a concept) is truly understood – which I explore further below.

When considering historical interpretation, fundamentally, the purpose of reading the history of ideas is to understand from where our contemporary interpretations of ideas originated. Certain challenges are intrinsic to the practice of historical interpretation, but the possibilities of such an approach far outweigh these obstacles; for example, while the 'evidence' of an argument in the history of political thought is often 'fragmentary' and 'incomplete' (Blau, 2015: 1180), this deficiency can be offset with a deep and broad understanding of an author's works, complimented with an understanding of that author's contemporaries (Blau, 2017: 246). As this thesis is concerned with tracing the development of the concept of peopleness in the history of political thought, the best method of doing so is to read those theorists, political or otherwise, who have engaged, either implicitly or explicitly, with the question of a people's identity, or relation to the political. Such an approach will involve a discriminatory approach to which authors to primarily engage with, as a broad survey approach can never fully engage with every author; the onus is on the researcher to be selective. As a result, the choice of authors engaged with might seem eclectic and, at times, counter intuitive.

Importantly, following Quentin Skinner, a full reading of a theorist's or author's works is necessary to reveal the extent of consistency in their work. The danger of selectivity is that 'it will become dangerously easy for the historian to conceive it as his task to supply or find in each of these texts the coherence which they may appear to lack (1969: 16). It might be possible to develop a coherent reading of an author's works, for example by considering a multitude of meanings whilst avoiding 'reading back' into historical texts contemporary meanings (Blau, 2017: 255) – in this way, the method of conceptual analysis is complemented with a consideration of those polysemies I detail above – but such an approach might involve

jettisoning an inconsistent reading in favour of a consistent one. Such decisions cannot be made arbitrarily, and must therefore involve an understanding of context, frequency of use, and – perhaps most importantly – intention. Discovering this might be difficult, but that in itself reveals the importance of genealogical approaches; most significantly, this thesis does not engage with a limited collection of authors, but rather a broad number of authors who have had an influence on the development of those themes explored. As a result, the consistency of an author's writings might not be the foremost issue, but rather which meaning of an author's terms has had the most historical influence. This question of 'intended meaning' versus 'interpreted meaning' is particularly salient.

Having detailed this method, highly appropriate and operationalisable in the study of political ideas, it is necessary at this stage to explain and offer a basic definition of those central terms at stake in this thesis, of spatiality, temporality and corporality. It is important to note that this ordering is not sequential; to make that mistake is to fall foul of the problems in the study of peoplehood I identify above. Instead, throughout the thesis, and in keeping with my central argument, continual reference will be made to the overlap between 'sub-concepts' where appropriate. With this in mind, I offer the following, working definitions, in light of existing studies of peoplehood , with one important caveat: focusing on the question of the relationship between the people and each concept may lead us to make the mistake of thinking there is a people already constituted prior to each concept, but – as I detail below – this relationship is co-constitutive and, importantly for the method chosen, varies depending on the theorisation.

Beginning with spatiality, we mean the relationship of a people to the space it inhabits. The contemporary theorisations of spatiality tend to exists on a spectrum, from a 'tight' relationship between people and place, to a 'loose' or even non-existent relationship. Examples of the former include nationalists such as David Miller, who claims that 'the fourth aspect of a

national identity is that it connects a group of people to a particular place, and here again there is a clear contrast with most other group identities that people affirm… a people must have a homeland' (2009: 24), or Yael Tamir, who argues that national identity inheres in 'the desire of national groups, concentrated in distinct territories, to capture the opportunity and demand self-rule' (2019: 8). Not all 'tight' spatialities are nationalist, though; Josaih Ober notes that, from a purely practical perspective, peoples occupy territories as the easiest criteria for autonomy (2017: 36-38). Conversely, 'loose' spatialities are those that see delineated, physical space as realities but circumventable, such as James Bohman's claim that the shared experience of globalisation 'does not produce a shared space. Instead it is experienced in different ways by different peoples or political communities, with markedly different impacts at different locations' (2007: 24), or pure cosmopolitanism that sees the entire globe as a single, 'human' space, such as Peter Singer. What matters is that space and a people's relationship to it is a continuous theme in the theorisation of peoplehood, and even attempts to do away with it cannot escape the reality that there is some geographical location of the people – as Carl Schmitt so thoroughly explored (2003).

Likewise, temporality is the way in which a people is understood in relation to time, in the sense that all theories of the people presume or make reference to some time-dimension. Paulina Ochoa Espejo claims there are two major approaches in contemporary theory: the first is of a 'unitary people', united at some point in time, whether that is the past (mechanical) or in the future (teleological); and the second is the processual account of the people's existence (2011). I do not think Ochoa Espejo is wrong in what she argues, but I do think there are a greater number of approaches in the history of political thought; for instance, as John Ma (2009) explains, in the Greek polis, the citizen-state acted as a 'body of social memory' that inscribed identity through consistent reinforcement of membership, much like Ochoa Espejo's people-as-process, but predominantly expressed through sites of memory and physical, public

mementos, such as altars, shrines, statues, but also festivals and public displays of celebration (2009: 250-254). Moreover, the relationship between a people and time remains a persistent theme in political thought from the Ancients to the Moderns, with the late Roman Republic emphasising the significance of custom (the mos maiorum, the 'ways of the ancestors') to the extent that in 'private, religious and public law, the term more and more came to adopt the meaning of a norm that potentially could conflict with other legal norms' (Straumann, 2016: 48). We see a continuation of this specific approach to a people's relationship to time embodied through custom in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas (1988), Baldus de Ubaldis (Canning, 2009; 1987; Kantorowicz, 2016), Edmund Burke (2004) and Georg Hegel (Beiser, 2002).

Though this is the most dominant manner of conceiving a people's relationship to time, it is not the only one: especially, but not exclusively, during the high Enlightenment, the above perspective on temporality came to be challenged by a conception of 'presentist' temporality, typified especially in Thomas Paine, who contended 'for the rights of the living, and against their being willed away, and controuled and contracted for by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead' (2008: 92) in favour of the conditions of 'nature', by which Paine means 'the condition that preceded all social and political arrangements and therefore the facts regarding what every human being is, regardless of social or political circumstances' (Levin, 2014: 45). In many ways the two approaches see temporality in the same way; as being expressed through 'custom', which is of a higher-order norm than legalism, especially where Paine argues that the validity of custom is only in the constant renewal by living generations (2008: 95). The distinction between the two matters but not so much for our concern: instead, what I aim to do here, is show that even a 'timeless' conception of a people such as Paine's, still makes reference to a time-dimension.

Finally, corporality is the acting body of the people in the political world. This is the source of much confusion in writings on the boundary problem, as theorists focus on this theme to the

detriment of others the most, especially when it comes to democracy. This problem is made worse since theorists often are aware that democracy possesses its own spatiality (Miller, 2009) and temporality (Ochoa Espejo, 2011; Habermas, 1992), but do not interrogate fully the implications of such a relationship (again, notably with the exception of Paulina Ochoa Espejo – but even then she ordinally ranks the relationship between democracy and time). Instead of getting wrapped up in this paradox, I argue that we should think of corporality as the acting body of the people in the political world. The multitude of variations make this a difficult term to truly define, but the central claim is that if a people wishes to exist in the political world it has to create or identify ways of transferring its will/decisions/identity into concrete political consequences. We might think of substantive answers to the corporality of the people: again, the polis offers an interesting example of this, as Bryan Garsten argues that Aristotle's Ethics is concerned 'with the philosophical questions that practical disputes' raise, specifically (in his circumstances) the tyranny of The Ten in Athens, and whether democratic Athens ought to be responsible for the loans they took out. 'Which actions belong to a city-state as a whole? When, if ever, can the city-state reasonably be viewed as an agent capable of acting and being held responsible for its actions?' (2013: 325). As Garsten has shown, Aristotle makes it clear that 'the city', so to speak, is the product of the deliberative actions of its citizens, perhaps in the same way Burke's 'moral nation' is the product of the voluntary, spontaneous association of its members. However, it must be made clear that whilst there is a conceptual separation between 'citizens' and 'city' in the deliberative act, the historical evidence shows that the city and its inhabitants were considered synonymous to the extent that 'Athenia Poleis' could have meant 'the Athenians' as much as 'Athens' (Cartledge, 2016; 2019). Regardless of the actual content of the polis as a corporal entity, what matters is that the question of how a people acts has been a consistent theme of political theory, with different answers being offered through time, from the King's Two Bodies (Kantorowicz, 2016), to the City Council of the Italian City

State (Canning, 2009) to constitutionalism (Urbinati, 2006). The point is made simply by Carl Schmitt in his Constitutional Theory: a constitution is the form a people gives to itself (2008).

One final point here regarding language: the word 'corporality' conjures up images of the body, and indeed I have described corporality as the 'acting body' of the people, but this may raise questions as to whether the term is overly presumptuous. As noted above, however, these definitions are methodologically necessary and – importantly – malleable, and may shift as the study goes on. Despite this, there are several reasons as to why this term has been chosen, rather than arbitrarily selected: first, 'body' is a term that is used consistently by theorists in relation to the people as a collective agent, and in relation to that people's representative in the political world (Ober, 2017). The most extensive study of this phenomena, however, is Charlotte Epstein's Birth of the State (2021), in which she argues that in modernity there is a noticeable decline in the use of the term 'body politic' at the exact same time the physical human body became the metaphorical tool used to justify statehood, especially the security state. Clearly, then, 'body' has major historical weight. Notably, the different 'forms' of corporality are dependent on how a people's 'body' is theorised, which is why I have chosen the term 'corporality', derived but distinct from 'corporeal' which is specifically a material vs. spiritual distinction which, as I show in the thesis, is not conducive to understanding how corporality has been written about in the history of political ideas.

Structure of the Thesis

The scope of this thesis is ambitious, but well within the bounds of possibility. 'The people' is a recognisable trope in both democratic theory and analyses of populism, to the extent that Margaret Canovan felt comfortable describing populism as *the* 'ideology of democracy' (2002a) and Ernesto Laclau was able to assert that populism, hegemony and democracy are synonymous (2001, 2005a). Whilst theories of the boundary problem are explicitly concerned

with the ways in which 'the people' is theorised, analyses of populism make consistent reference to the concept without taking the time to analyse exactly what it means *in the context of populism*; consistent references are made to moral/Manichean distinctions, antagonistic frontiers, majoritarianism and so forth, yet the normative or theoretical frameworks within which theorists of populism work are rarely interrogated, to the extent that 'populism' is judged from a standpoint of what the people *ought to be*, rather than understanding that populism is simply one form of understanding the people amongst many others. In order to provide a full overview of the rather crowded field of studies of populism, the subsequent chapter provides a thorough Literature Review. This chapter examines the most influential theorists in the field of populism studies, organising them (broadly) into the aforementioned Critical and Sympathetic Approaches. These theorists are, respectively: Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Margaret Canovan, and Benjamin Stanley; and Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Benjamin Arditi. As the chapter shows, there are more similarities between these two approaches than a cursory glance might indicate, but the normative differences between them reveal the central concept of 'the people' remains hazy – both in the study of popular identity in general and in the field of populism especially – and the relationship between populism and 'the people' is underexplored. We need to identify, then, exactly what 'populism's peoplehood' is. Importantly, critical appraisals are made of both the normative assumptions of each approach, looking especially at the early theoretical work of Michael Freeden, who has influenced the Critical Approach's 'ideological' populism, and the theoretical works of both Antonio Gramsci and Carl Schmitt, who have been the greatest inspiration behind the Sympathetic Approach's 'radical' populism. These normative and theoretical frameworks are established in the context of each approach, but closing this chapter will be a close reading of Aletta Norval's and Simon Tormey's respective summaries of the differences and similarities between Freeden and Laclau's works. From this conclusion to the Literature Review, I argue that we need to

understand populism as a phenomenon of peoplehood by addressing directly its understanding of 'the people'.

Three thematic chapters then follow for each of the main concepts of spatiality, temporality and corporality, with the same structure in each: first, a consideration of contemporary scholarship on the concept allows us to understand the particular relevance and disagreements over that concept's significance to the formation of a people, as well as indicating where the literature on populism has engaged, however briefly, with that concept. Second, I then trace the two most dominant expressions in the intellectual history of that concept, before turning, third, to the populist understanding of that theme, and how it challenges, develops or elaborates on those traditions of ideas.

Chapter Two considers the Spatiality of peoplehood in the history of political ideas, looking specifically at the 'intrinsic' and 'incidental' perspectives of spatiality. A broad range of thinkers are considered in this chapter, with the intrinsic perspective tracing the spatial theories of peoplehood being attached to a specific area of land, from the *polis* through the Roman imperium, the moralisation of space in the age of European colonialisation and imperialism, and significantly the high-Enlightenment thought of Montesquieu's theory of the *causes physiques* as a rationalist expression of such an intrinsic perspective; likewise, the incidental perspective considers the tradition of a 'decoupling' or lack of attachment between peoplehood and land, from the civic thought of the Roman Republic, through the age of Kingship and the tension at the heart of colonial spatiality. I argue in the third section of that chapter that populism is closely aligned to the first perspective, the intrinsic, but does not fall entirely within it, as some populists reject the deterministic element of the intrinsic perspective whilst others aim to reassert the intrinsic relationship to a greater degree.

I then turn in Chapter Three to the Temporality of peoplehood, and begin by pointing out that leading theorists of populism, with the slight exception of Nadia Urbinati, neglect the

politics of time that lurks behind populism's emergence, in order to consider the ways in which populism is or is not concomitant with the two major traditions. These traditions are what I label an 'intergenerational community' and 'the presentist vision'; in establishing the first of these, I consider those temporalities that see a political community as persisting through time, and whilst there are multiple variations within this tradition, they all presume that a people's identity persists and is somewhat separate from the individuals who live as part of it. To do so, I consider the thought of the late Roman Republican and the *mos maiorum*, followed by the political thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, Baldus du Ubaldis, and Edmund Burke. I then establish the second tradition, of the presentist vision, by considering the work of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Thomas Paine, accompanied by a commentary by Patrick Deneen; it is my argument here that this tradition sees the living individuals of a political community as the most important expression of the people, and therefore cannot be constrained by any past – or, indeed, future – generations. The chapter concludes by considering the work of Hannah Arendt, and how her work can help us to understand the populist temporality, to make the argument that populism centres itself around a rupture, as a moment in the history of the people when the chain of persistence has broken and left the people adrift, without a political world in which to act.

Chapter Four follows by considering peoplehood's Corporality, and the two major ways in which a people is thought of acting in the political world. The first looks at the tradition of thought that considers the people to be literally present in whichever corporality they take, and whilst there are a great number of different corporalities that can exist in this tradition, the one on which I focus is that of Kingship, guided mostly through a close reading of Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies* (2016), as well as a number of other texts on the significance of Kingship thought in the corporality of peoplehood. Due to this tradition's presumption of the people as literally present in their (for lack of a better word) 'representative',

I refer to this tradition as the ‘presentist people’. In contradistinction to this, I examine the emergence of popular sovereignty as a distinction between the site of sovereignty and the site of governance, particularly in the works of Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, Joseph Sieyès, Benjamin Condorcet and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; this tradition I label the ‘absent people, not because the people are banished, but because they are considered to be ‘present in their absence’. The final section argues that populism revives elements of the present people corporality, and attempts to combine this with the democratic sovereignty of the absent people corporality, but in turn inverting certain elements to create a radically new understanding of the people’s corporality.

Finally, I conclude by summarising the arguments made in the final section of each chapter, and drawing them together. In doing so, I return to the assertion of the introduction, that the three concepts are essential for understanding the boundaries of a people, and argue that a morphological approach, based on Freeden’s later work, to the relationship between these concepts is the clearest and most robust method for understanding how peopleness is constructed. I close by showing that I have provided a robust model for understanding populism phenomenologically and with no prior normative commitments that express a value judgement on populism. Moreover, this opens avenues for future research, including but not limited to: does populism imperil the state? Can there be a ‘populist constitution’? Can a fully coherent populism be created?

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the current state of the literature surrounding populism, in order to establish the direction of travel in terms of research and study. As it stands, the literature can be summarised into two broad groups, though it is important to clarify at the outset that I do not believe these groups are mutually exclusive (indeed, this will form part of the discussion in the closing section of this chapter). The first of these groups is what has broadly been termed the Critical Approach, in which populism is conceived of as an ideology, though with specific limitations; the second group is the Sympathetic Approach, which examines populism in terms of strategic and heuristic manoeuvring, involved in the construction of hegemonic blocs and radical democratic politics. This distinction within the field is fairly well-established at this point, and the groupings themselves are not particularly innovative (Moffittt, 2020); what is under-explored, however, is that normative weighting that has resulted in the labels I have chosen. Whilst Simon Tormey has explored this briefly (2018: 262-263), this chapter draws greater attention to the normative presumptions at the heart of the dominant approaches to the study of populism.

The structure of this chapter will therefore follow the groupings I have identified above, due to the fact that each requires significant explanation of the theories involved in the construction of that approach so far, as well as identifying and delineating the tensions within that approach, and the shortcomings of each. It is important to note that some authors bring under the heading of 'Critical Approaches' to the study of populism what I delineate as the Sympathetic Approach (Hawkins and Kaltwasser, 2017a, 2017b, 2019). No doubt this is an attempt at synthesis within the literature, and is an important development that will be discussed later in the chapter; however at this stage I would like to make it clear that within the boundaries of the Critical Approach I group those approaches specifically considering populism to be an *ideological phenomenon*. Consequently, first I reconstruct the Critical Approach, drawing

mainly from the writings of Mudde, Canovan, Freeden, Stanley and Rovira Kaltwasser. This will involve reconstructing Freeden's morphological approach to ideology in order to understand the conceptual framework within which each of the other authors have operated and conceived of populism; then, each author's own conception of populism in the framework of ideological morphology shall be explained and explored, before turning to the tensions within the Critical Approach that each of these conceptions reveal; finally, I shall address objections made to the Critical Approach, and summarise where the Approach stands at the time of writing. Secondly, the most prominent alternative approach in the study of populism shall be reconstructed – the Sympathetic Approach. This Approach has been elucidated most explicitly by the post-Marxist thinkers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, whose original work, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, informs much of their analyses. As a result, the main thesis at the centre of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* will be explored, before turning to individual critical thinkers to see how their works have influenced the Sympathetic Approach's study of populism.

Section I: The Critical Approach

At the centre of the Critical Approach is an understanding that populism, like most 'isms', can be conceptualised best as an ideology (Pauwels, 2014: 18). This understanding involves some inherent assumptions that will be addressed later in this chapter, foremost of which is that populism is most prevalent, as are ideologies in general, in democratic polities in which ideas must be neatly and accessibly packaged in order to appeal to a large electorate (a 'simplified map of the political world'); however, the ideology of populism is specifically limited to a 'thin-centred ideology' with core concepts only, and no marginal or peripheral concepts capable of narrowing down the polysemic concepts at the ideology's core (Canovan, 2002a:

29, 34). In order to understand what this actually means, it is necessary first to reconstruct the morphological approach to the study of ideology.

Freeden's (1996) morphological approach to ideology begins from a recognition that 'the answer to the question 'what is an ideology?' must, from the morphological perspective, be sought in identifying, describing and analysing the building blocks that constitute it and the relationships among them' (1996: 48). In doing so, Freeden pursues a heuristic approach that examines the specificity of political concepts, their semiotic content, and 'the parallel interdependence of concept and concept': the first step of this approach is 'the postulate that words have indeterminate, rather than intrinsic meanings; that they are social constructs whose meaning is determined by their usage' and, while the actual content of words may differ over time, the persistent usage of those words means that 'the meaning of political concepts must rely on diachronic perspectives, even if… their morphology incorporates important synchronic aspects'. The consequence of this persistent usage is that 'political concepts… have components that are ineliminable not in a logical sense, but simply in the sense that an empirically ascertainable cultural commonality ascribes to them some minimal element or elements' (1996: 50, 61-63). Put simply, words in and of themselves cannot be reduced to fixed or ineliminable meaning, which they gain through a persistent and *shared* usage, leading to a socially constructed but still perceptible content of an otherwise objectively 'empty' signifier.[2] The relevance of this for ideologies is that, while ideologies trade in signifiers incapable of being authoritatively defined in and of themselves, there must be a heuristic method whereby these signifiers can be more extensively filled.

In response to this, Freeden develops the matrix of core-adjacency-periphery; this is a relational method that is capable of ordering concepts by significance to the ideology utilising

[2] This is not the 'empty signifier' of Laclauian post-Marxism – such terms will be explored further in Section Two, though the similarities between the approaches will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

them, wherein the most essential concepts to that ideology's formation is placed in the core. Importantly, within the core of the ideology resides a cluster of concepts, rather than a singular concept to which that ideology can be reduced fundamentally, that may be accorded 'different proportional weight in each particular manifestation'. In accordance with the rejection of conceptual content as reducible purely to the ineliminable content, these concepts are not unchangeable in their particularity; for instance, one of the core concepts of socialism might be 'equality', but that does not mean a fixed or permanent interpretation of *what kind of equality* (2013a: 125). This is due to the synchronicity explained above; expressions of concepts, as well as conceptual ordering, are contingent, and defined by association with other concepts: again, by joining the concepts of 'equality' and 'legalism', we might say *that* synchronic expression of socialism is concerned with 'equal standing before the law', in other words *constitutionalism*. Therefore, while the concepts (Freeden, 1996: 78):

> each have their ineliminable cores, they are filled out in a distinctive way due to their mutual proximity… all these skeletal or 'thin' concepts develop elements, both logically and culturally, that form overlapping and shared areas, which then react back on their separate ineliminable components to constitute full but mutually dependent concepts.

In addition to this core within which privileged concepts interact to create such mutual dependence, the field of meaning derived from this mutual dependency is further defined by the concepts within the adjacency. 'Adjacent concepts are second-ranking in the pervasiveness and breadth of the meanings they impart to the ideology in which they are located', meaning that they anchor the core 'into a more determinate and decontested semantic field' (Freeden, 2013a: 125). Specifically, while the core must retain certain ambiguities in order to act as a diachronic focal point for members of an ideological family that might synchronically differ, the adjacency is the method whereby such diachronic indeterminacy is narrowed down further to allow for conceptual reflexivity. Contradistinctively to the core, as the core of an ideology

is where ineliminable concepts reside, the adjacency has no such requirement, and the boundary of the adjacency is much more 'porous' than the core is (though *less* porous than the periphery, which is examined below).

Finally, in the same way the adjacency narrows down the polysemy of the core, the periphery further narrows down the polysemy of the adjacency. Freeden sub-divides the periphery further into two areas: the margin, 'the dimension of significance'; and the perimeter, 'the interface with time and space'. The margin, says Freeden, 'pertains to ideas and concepts whose importance to the core… is intellectually and emotionally insubstantial. Concepts may often gravitate from a more central to a marginal position, or vice versa' and therefore 'modifications will often be longer term arrangements, reflecting accumulative changes'. In association, 'the perimeter reflects the fact that core and adjacent concepts are located in historical, geographical and cultural contexts' and acts to prevent ideologies from being 'couched at levels of generality' and therefore must 'conceive of, assimilate, and attempt to shape 'real-world' events' (1996: 78-79). As a result of this matrix, we can see how concepts become (temporarily) decontested as they are fed through the core, to the adjacency, and finally to the periphery, and similarly how ideologies react to real-world events as they feed in reverse through the same matrix (Freeden, 2013a: 126; 1996: 81).

Due to the nature of discussions surrounding populism as a 'thin-centred' ideology within the Critical Approach, it is important to briefly analyse this conceptualisation of an ideology before moving on to each particular theorist's work. Freeden notes that a thin-centred ideology is one which 'has an identifiable morphology but, unlike mainstream ideologies, a *restricted one*. It severs itself from wider Critical contexts by deliberately removing or replacing many concepts we would expect an ideology to include' (2003: 98). Taking feminist, nationalist and green ideologies as an example, Freeden describes these as 'thin-centred, assimilative ideologies, which then either challenge the relevance of additional ideological baggage' (i.e.

resist the need to become full, 'thick' ideologies) or 'thicken by ingesting the patterns of other ideologies' (i.e. utilise 'host' ideologies) (1996: 485). Significantly, thin-centred ideologies suffer from 'a structural inability to offer complex ranges of argument, because many chains of ideas one would normally expect to find stretching from the general and abstract to the concrete and practical, from the core to the periphery, as well as in the reverse direction, are simply absent' (1998: 750).

The question Freeden poses regarding thin-centred ideologies, that remains relevant for the Critical Approach to populism, is 'do they have cores and, if they do, are those cores sufficient to bear the weight of adjacent and peripheral concepts, or do they need to graft on to them the self-contained morphologies of other ideologies?' (1996: 485-486). With regards to feminism, Freeden concludes that it is 'insufficiently comprehensive to carry a general ideological programme in direct competition with the major ideological families', but for political theorists the utility of analysing feminist ideology is that 'what seems a thin ideology from the perspective of conventional ideological analysis may be interpreted as an attempt by feminists to cut the cake differently' (1996: 525; 2013a: 100). 'Thin' ideologies, therefore, might struggle from conceptual indeterminacy due to relative infancy (when one considers the ages of liberalism, socialism, Marxism etc. compared to green ideology, feminism, or populism), but they remain significant in that they challenge what we understand as an ideology, and might perhaps be 'ideologies of ideology' in seeking to challenge broad assumptions made by all significant ideological families (1996: 515-517).

Utilising this analytical framework, we can now examine competing attempts at a substantial definition of populism as an ideology; however, there are even significant disagreements within the Ideological Approach as to what constitutes the 'core' of populism. For instance, Canovan argues that the central concept is ''the people', followed by 'democracy', 'sovereignty' and 'majority rule' (2002a: 33); whereas Mudde and Kaltwasser

substantiate the core of populism as 'the people, the elite, and the general will' (2013: 500). Aside from 'the people' as a core concept, there is clearly no agreement between Canovan, and Mudde and Kaltwasser, and Stanley disagrees even further; Stanley conceptualises populism's core concepts in a more discursive manner, focusing on the existence of two homogenous units of analysis (people v. elite) with a specifically antagonistic relationship, in which the people are valorised and the elites are denigrated, alongside the idea of popular sovereignty (2008: 102). To understand this difference, and perhaps to find points of reconciliation, I shall explore each of these conceptions of populism in turn.

§ Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser

Mudde comments that he understands populism to be 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people' (2004: 543). Furthermore, in his work with Kaltwasser, using the language of Freeden's morphological approach, Mudde develops this further to suggest that populism is a 'thin-centred' ideology with three core concepts: the people; the elite; and the general will (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013: 500).

In this understanding, while 'virtually all authors agree that 'the people' is a construction, at best referring to a specific interpretation (and simplification) of reality' (2013: 501), Mudde argues that 'the core concept of populism is obviously 'the people'; in a sense, even the concept of 'the elite' takes its identity from it (being its opposite, its nemesis)' (2004: 544). As a result, Mudde begins with the assumption that 'the people' is *always* the starting point of any populist rhetoric or movement, and defines 'the elite' as the negative to whichever construction of the people is salient in that movement. However, rather than remaining abstract in their discussion of 'the people', Mudde and Kaltwasser identify that the term is 'most often used in one (or a

combination) of the following three meanings: the people as sovereign, the common people, and peoples as nations. In all cases the main distinction between the people and the elite is related to a secondary feature: authenticity, socioeconomic status, and nationality, respectively' (2013: 501). Therefore, two concepts help to determine the nature of 'the people'; morality and spatio-historical context. By this, Mudde means that 'as populism is essentially based on a moral divide, the people are 'pure'; and while purity is a fairly vague term, and the specific understanding is undoubtedly culturally determined, it does provide some content to the signifier'. In addition, that cultural determination means that 'if populists want to become politically relevant, they will have to define the people in terms of some of the key features of the self-identification of the targeted community' (2017: 32).

In contradistinction to 'the people' is, necessarily, 'the elite'; as indicated above, Mudde and Kaltwasser conceptualise the distinction between the two as a normative one, centred on a view of *morality* as the defining category (as identified above), with 'the people' remaining 'pure' or 'good', and 'the elite' as 'corrupt' or 'evil'. In addition to this, 'populist actors will use a variety of secondary criteria to distinguish between the people and the elite. This provides them flexibility that is particularly important when populists obtain political power'; indeed, 'the elite' is defined only in opposition to 'the people', meaning they might be the political elite, the economic elite, the cultural elite, or the media elite; 'all of these are portrayed as one homogenous corrupt group that works against the 'general will' of the people' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017: 12).

In an attempt to materially ground the abstract theorising undertaken in his work with Mudde, Kaltwasser (with Kirk Hawkins) has argued that an antagonistic relationship to 'the elite' arises out of a social context in which populism 'argues that political elites are conspiring against the people, acting knowingly in ways that benefit themselves at the public's expense' and is therefore 'an *intentional failure of democratic representation*'. Hawkins and Kaltwasser

than divide this contextual framing into two subdivisions: in economically underdeveloped nations, populism responds to 'clientelism' and an elite abuse of 'their control of state resources to benefit their personal or partisan interests at the expense of the public'; and in economically developed countries, populism 'is more often a response to failures of programmatic representation' in which 'parties have become ideologically distant from their voters, missing or ignoring the issues that their voters would like to see on the public agenda' thus 'losing their responsiveness function' (2019: 7-8).

Finally, the concept of 'the general will… closely linked to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau', is evidenced by 'populism's monist and Manichean distinction between the pure people and the corrupt elite' (Hawkins and Kaltwasser, 2019: 8). Mudde uses this concept specifically to determine populism's conceptualisation of the relationship between the people-elite struggle, and the role of institutions and the rule of law, arguing that 'populist is inherently hostile to the idea and institutions of *liberal democracy* or *constitutional* democracy' (2004: 561). As a result, populism supports 'an extreme majoritarian model of democracy that opposes any groups or institutions that stand in the way of implementing 'the general will of the people'' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017: 91). Therefore, 'rather than a rational process constructed via the public sphere, the notion of the general will employed by populist actors and constituencies is based on the notion of 'common sense'. This means that the general will is framed in a particular way, which is useful for both aggregating different demands and identifying a common enemy' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013: 505). In so doing, populism favours an interpreted, rather than deliberated, idea of democracy in the generation of its goals. Consequently, the general will acts as a legitimating principle in determining the nature of the populist *movement* that coalesces around the ideology, in its classic association with 'the strongman' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017: 63).

To summarise, Mudde and Kaltwasser's conceptualisation of populism within the morphological framework is built around three core concepts: the people; the elite; and the general will. All three work inter-determinately to construct a vision of the underlying tension of politics as an antagonistic relationship between a frustrated, morally pure people and a corrupt, obstructive elite, whose moral statuses are derived from their position in relation to the general will.

§ Margaret Canovan

Canovan, in her article 'Taking Politics to the People' (2002a), argues 'the key concept that lies at the heart of populist ideology is undoubtedly 'the people', followed by 'democracy', 'sovereignty' and 'majority rule', each defined through its links with the others.' The interdefinitional work of these concepts therefore synthesises the polysemy of each term to create the following definition: 'thus, democracy is understood as government by the sovereign people, not as government by politicians, bureaucrats or judges' (2002a: 33). Curiously, 'the elites' as a concept has been excluded from Canovan's assessment, and only alluded to at the end; however, this article must be understood in the context of Canovan's wider work. To take this definition, the resulting product of the interdefined concepts 'people' and 'sovereignty' as 'the sovereign people' becomes salient for any analysis of populism. Popular sovereignty, for Canovan, acts in two ways: one, it forms a boundary between 'the people' and 'the power elite' as well as those beyond the boundaries of the polity; two, it identifies 'an entity, a corporate body with a continuous existence over time' (2002a: 34). However, as Canovan has noted, the traditional understanding of the concept contains two seemingly mutually exclusive ideas (2005: 91-92):

> The problem of popular sovereignty is therefore the attribution of ultimate political authority to a 'people' that manages somehow to be both a set of concrete individuals,

> taking action in a particular place at a particular time, *and* an abstract collective entity with a life beyond such limitations.

Significantly, Canovan's definition departs from Mudde in that she does not specifically identify a 'general will' as a concept in its own right, but rather identifies it as a product of this 'popular sovereignty', noting that social contract theory gave rise to the idea that a body of individuals 'becomes a new 'moral entity', a 'compound moral person' with its own will in which the wills of all individuals are subsumed'. To resolve this tension, Canovan proposes an interpretation of John Locke's social contract theory, wherein 'the people' as a concept remains absent but in reserve until a 'moment of revolution' dissolves the bonds between the people and the authority, and requires collective action in order to resolve this moment (2005: 102-104).

As a result, Canovan's reading of Locke suggests 'the people' is a contingent group, existing in the abstract until a crisis forces individuals to associate to *restore* a vision of authority that has been compromised since the social contract was entered into. It is not, therefore, 'a timeless abstraction but… an outcome of political mobilisation… an occasional community of action' (2005: 121). For Canovan, this idea of the people 'taking action' derives from Hannah Arendt's theory of politics. For Arendt, 'the People' must share a 'political world', which involves a reference to shared institutions, capable of mobilising individuals into collective action; to illustrate this, Arendt contrasts the American and French revolutions, in the former of which 'Arendt can point to political institutions round which the (free, white, male) Americans gathered and in defense of which the People could take place' whereas in the latter 'the poor' were not the 'real People' because 'they were held together only by bodily necessity, by the identical pangs of hunger they suffered' (Canovan, 2002b: 411-412).

The significance of this interpretation of Arendt is twofold: one, Canovan sets up 'the people' as a *positively* defined group, made with reference to a shared political world (or the

potential of creating a new one) and can be mobilised 'in favour of the interests they all share'; and two, this form of mobilisation means the people 'can act as one while maintaining their plurality as distinct individuals' in much the same way Locke conceived of 'the people' as an aggregate of individuals *acting* as a collective in a moment of crisis (2002b: 414). Thus far, Canovan understands 'the people' as a *potential* collective that emerges in a moment of crisis requiring collective action, which as a collective (*not* a 'unity') can exercise 'popular sovereignty' as a 'compound moral person' to defend the shared political world it has either inherited or built together. Therefore, two concepts remain in Canovan's work that need explaining; democracy and majority rule.

To specify 'democracy', Canovan argues that 'democracy as we know it has two faces… its 'redemptive' and its 'pragmatic' faces, and… populism thrives on the tension between the two'. By 'redemptive' and 'pragmatic', Canovan means respectively 'achieving perfection or salvation' through mass mobilisation, increasing (government) power, and placing this power in human hands; and a suspicion of power, with low expectations of government action, and following the rule of law. Modern democracy, therefore, is 'a point of intersection between redemptive and pragmatic styles of politics' and 'populists appeal past the ossified institutions to the living people, proclaiming the *vox populi* unmediated' (1999: 8-9, 14). Therefore, 'democracy' is understood as a demand that 'political decisions be under popular control' and 'so-called 'direct democracy' (the use of popular initiatives and referenda) has a much better claim than representative institutions to be the real thing'. Consequently, we can see how 'majority rule' is used as an inter-defining concept with 'democracy'; 'the point of voting is to declare the will of the people' (2002a: 33-34).

Here, Canovan's analysis of populism results in a conception of politics that *must* be a democratic one, as it is the only one in which the 'people's voice' is expressed *clearly*; but as this 'people', as identified above, must be a corporate entity acting in a moment of crisis,

democracy is therefore a tool of clarity in a state of confusion. The people are appealed to, acting as a single, moral entity, and the plainest method of articulation is 'direct democracy'.

§ Benjamin Stanley

Stanley begins with a slightly different conception of populism. Stanley argues that 'populism is a 'thin' ideology that in practice is to be found in combination with established, 'full' ideologies' and, rather than identifying it in terms of substantial concepts ('the people'), takes this concept as given and instead proposes to analyse populism as 'an ideology dedicated to identifying the people as the privileged subject of politics'. Therefore, populism consists of *four* key concepts: the existence of two homogenous units of analysis (the people and the elite); the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite; the idea of popular sovereignty; the positive valorisation of 'the people' and the denigration of 'the elite' (2008: 95, 102).

For Stanley, involving 'the people' as inherent to a 'binary ontology' allows populism to avoid the complex process of decontesting the term, and instead creates a structure wherein 'any identification of the people will involve *at the same time* an identification of the elite'. By avoiding decontestation and remaining committed to a certain degree of conceptual ambiguity, ''the elite' of populism is neither the bulwark of the social order championed by conservatives; nor the enlightened legislative and administrative cadre of liberalism. Rather, its fundamental distinguishing feature is its adversarial relationship with the people' (2008: 103). In his analysis, Stanley introduces the Schmittian concept of the political that sees all political relationships as antagonistic and centred around the binary opposition between 'friend and enemy' (2007). This 'profound otherness' (Stanley, 2008: 103) is best summarised by Paul Hirst, that it is not a simple case that the two opposing camps are positioned on either side of a debate with a unifying consensus between them; it is that they fundamentally value different

things (1999: 9). It is important here to note that the 'value divide' usually means the distinction or separation between the two camps cannot be resolved; one must emerge as 'the victor'.

The consequence of this approach to populism is that it addresses what others have noted as a conception of established political institutions and agreements between parties within these institutions as 'cartelisation' (Fink-Hafner, 2016: 1325). As a result, 'populist ideology simplifies the complex task of 'constructing' the people by arranging the discursive field such that the people can be identified 'by contrast with the power-holders'' and, due to the lack of substance within these concepts of the people and the 'power-holds' (elites), 'the third and fourth concepts enter to provide a qualitative, directional gloss on populism's ontology'. These two concepts, that of popular sovereignty and a valorisation of the people, 'serves to underline the authenticity and legitimacy of the people and delegitimize the elite' (Stanley, 2008: 104). Therefore, in the discourse established with reference to a fundamental antagonism between 'the people' and 'the elite', the people are defined through a negative process, privileged through the concept of popular sovereignty, and made into the *only* legitimate actor in the antagonism identified.

Stanley then introduces two further concepts in the ideological morphology of populism, 'majoritarianism and authenticity': majoritarianism relates to the practical use of direct democracy 'on the assumption that these instruments allow the majority voice to have an impact on decision-making and agenda setting'; in turn, this helps to 'reinforce the *authenticity* of the will of the people. The greater a majority in favour of a particular policy or moral value, the more credibly it can be said to reflect the popular will'. Authenticity, therefore, acts as a second-order concept to narrow down the polysemic concept 'the people' identified *only as a negative* in its dialectic with 'the elite', and majoritarianism acts as a supporting concept in this narrowing-down to allow populism to speak in a 'democratic language', i.e. an appeal to the concept of a majority. Practically speaking, 'the positive–negative schema allows the populist

to posit antithetical criteria by which the people and the elite can be identified'. Closing this argument, Stanley notes that 'the manner in which these identifications occur will depend on the particular context in which a populist discourse is articulated' (2008: 104-105).

In summary, Stanley's conception of populism is not, as Mudde's and Canovan's each are, an ideology intended to answer practical questions of where power ought to lie, but instead 'offers a distinct interpretation of the political' (2008: 107):

> The people may be decontested in so many ways that going beyond the 'who' of politics to identify what the people want and in what way they should receive has not elicited a coherent body of ideas that may be identifiable with the ideology of populism.

Stanley's conception therefore incorporates much of the ideas of the Sympathetic Approach into the Critical Approach, while maintaining committed to utilising the morphological approach to ideology to understand how the distinct concepts in the morphological core work together to define a specific conception of the political: that of a fundamental, irreconcilable antagonism between a morally superior people and morally corrupt elite.

§ Objections to the Critical Approach

The Critical Approach to populism is not without its criticisms; indeed, most strikingly, Freeden himself has engaged in an attempt to provide some clarity to the debate, though he is not alone in doing so. Here, I outline the criticisms made by Paris Aslanidis and Benjamin Moffittt, before turning to Freeden.

Aslanidis identifies three objections to the Critical Approach: the notion of 'thinness' is 'conceptually spurious'; there are 'significant methodological inconsistencies' in the approach; and its 'essentialist connotations erect insurmountable obstacles with regards to classification and measurement' (2016: 89). Regarding the first of these objections, of conceptual

spuriousness, Aslanidis notes that Freeden 'is conceptualising thin-centred ideologies as inferior instances of a super-ordinate category, diminished subtypes of an ideal type of ideology, thus actually employing a radial structure for the concept of 'ideology',' but he 'never clarifies how exactly thin ideologies becomes subordinate' thus 'rendering us unable to distinguish between thick and thin ideologies if we are unwilling to rely on arguments from authority'. Aslanidis summarises that 'almost any political notion can acquire the status of a thin-centred ideology as long as it contains an alleged 'small' number of core concepts', before listing a multitude of examples, amongst which is racism, fundamentalism, and Keynesianism (2016: 90-91).

The second objection is that the methodological inconsistencies reveal themselves with Mudde's (2004) attempt to portray elitism and pluralism as the opposites of populism: 'however, rudimentary methodological consistency dictates that when discussing antithetical concepts, we compare concepts of the same rank, co-existing at the same level of conceptual hierarchy' and therefore Mudde and Kaltwasser's analysis 'would entail that elitism and pluralism are also ideologies, thin-centred or otherwise' (2016: 91). This objection does reveal an inconsistency in the Critical Approach broadly in that elitism and pluralism are generally not considered to be ideologies in themselves, but either the foundational facts that makes ideological formulation necessary (Freeden, 1996: 95), or synchronic expressions of ideologies themselves, for instance conservatism's historical reliance on hierarchical social orders, or liberalism's natural assumption of social pluralism.

Finally, in the third objection Aslanidis argues that 'allegiance to ideology is usually perceived as a dichotomous exercise; one subscribes to an ideology, or one refrains from doing so' and that 'treating populism as ideology reiterates this essentialist perspective. Hence, a political party or leader can or cannot be populist; there is no grey zone' and therefore the Critical Approach is betrayed by 'degreeism' (2016: 92).

Presenting an alternative set of criticisms, Moffitt argues that ideology is 'used relatively unproblematically throughout the literature on populism, and often ends up serving as a catch-all term that implicitly swallows up other approaches along the way – specifically the discursive approach – thus losing its initial apparent clarity'. As a result, 'many of the authors working within this approach add tacit criteria to their definitions of populism in order to make them operationalisable for political analysis' such as 'mistaking features of the 'host' ideology for features of populism' and therefore the 'ideological minimal approach may not be enough to sustain a nuanced account of populism' (2016: 19). From this, it seems as though populism is therefore only a permutation of the host ideology, and not treated as an ideology in itself. What then is the purpose of analysing populism alone? Might it be better to understand populism as a potential formulation of any ideology that can be evolved into or out of? It feels that we run into a serious analytical roadblock; is populism an ideology in itself, or does it rely on a host, in which case is it really an ideology at all and not a rhetorical formation of a host ideology? As a result, it seems that we cannot think of populism as an ideology in isolation; it must be understood as a form of another ideology.

Moffitt builds on this objection to suggest another related problem; whether a thin ideology can 'become so thin as to lose its conceptual validity and usefulness' and that, unlike 'other 'thin ideologies', [populism] has made no attempt to become 'thicker'' (2016: 19-20). In this objection, Moffitt refers to the very lack of any identifiably populist canon, noted by Stanley: 'there is little evidence of institutional elements indicating a common purpose or unity amongst populists; there is no Populist International; no canon of key populist texts or calendar of significant moments' (2008: 100). Indeed, this problem seems key; there is no identifiably international populist movement (Canovan, 1981: 6) or 'populist intellectuals' that can co-ordinate or moderate the internal disagreements within the extraordinarily broad and disjointed

expressions of populism in the same way that disagreements within feminism, for example, can be moderated by a relative cohesion of thought (Freeden, 1996: 489).

Whilst the objections offered by Aslanidis and Moffittt are useful, Aslanidis' claim that 'any political notion can acquire the status of a thin-centred ideology' is a misreading of Freeden's work. Importantly, Aslanidis is not wrong, but his criticism is actually the foundational reason that Freeden has adopted the approach to ideology that he has; drawing on the analysis of linguistics undertaken by Wittgenstein, Saussure and Levi-Strauss, Freeden argues that 'political concepts are expressed, or signified, in the form of words' and 'the parallel interdependence of concept and concept' should be studied in order to understand the determination of a linguistic field, by considering that words might have an ineliminable core of meaning, but this meaning can only be understood and subsequently thickened out in relation to other words (1996: 49-50). Therefore, Freeden's morphological analysis of ideology that focuses on concepts is predicated on the same analysis of language and words: words themselves have a semantic 'core' that, in isolation, means nothing, but can be inter-determined through their relationships with other words in close proximity. To suggest that Freeden's morphological analysis can therefore be used to construct all 'political notions' as thin-centred ideologies in themselves is to misunderstand that that is exactly what Freeden proposes in his use of language, but that ideologies are specifically clusters of concepts, not singular words in themselves. Likewise, Aslanidis has again misunderstood the porous nature of morphological analysis that allows for congruence between ideologies, as well as a 'degreeism' built into the core-adjacency-periphery matrix that allows for broad groupings of synchronic expressions of ideologies within a 'family resemblance' while allowing for illegitimate expressions to be expunged (i.e., pushing National Socialism out of the 'socialism family') (Freeden, 2003: 76-77).

Freeden is more sympathetic to the objections made by Moffitt, regarding the loss of conceptual validity that comes with 'thinness', observing that populism is dissimilar to other thin-centred ideologies for two reasons: first, because other thin-centred ideologies (nationalism, feminism and ecologism) have 'a positive, self-aware, drive, whose transformative alternative are not predicated on resurrecting primordial social intuitions but on future-oriented change'; and second because 'thin-centred ideologies have the potential to become full if they incorporate existing elements of other ideologies; whereas the truncated nature of populisms seldom evinces such aspirations or potential', noting the example of the United Kingdom Independence Party's 'post-referendum' implosion (Freeden, 2017: 3). For Freeden, 'populisms, like liberalisms and socialisms, exist only in the plural, though they will share fundamental elements' (2017: 2). It might be wrong, therefore, to speak of populism as a concrete ideology, but populisms as a multitude of existing permutations of an ideal type, in the same way morphological analysis makes room for a variety of synchronous expressions within an 'ideological family'. This does not mean that it is wrong to pursue an ideal-type populism, provided we remember that it is not an authoritative and restrictive definition. Consequently, Freeden proposes to understand populism 'like conservatism' by analysing its 'underlying features' as its core elements. Significantly, Freeden comments that a thin-centred ideology needs the possibility of becoming more than just a core, thus addressing Canovan's claim, and that the populist core 'is all there is… it is emaciatedly thin rather than thin-centred'. (2017: 3-4).

Clearly, there are a multiplicity of problems within the Critical Approach, and we can broadly summarise these thus: that the morphological method of ideological analysis is not conceptually useful in the study of populism, as it either suffers from deficiency to the point of not even being 'thin-centred', or it relies too heavily on associated or 'host' ideologies; doubt over whether populism and elitism are ideological or practical opposites, given Aslanidis'

criticism that Mudde and Kaltwasser present elitism and pluralism as ideologies in themselves; and that it fails to take into account material changes or circumstances, both in the fermentation of populism, and in populism's impact on the structure within which it operates.

Section II: The Sympathetic Approach

The Sympathetic Approach to the study of populism has involved a radical change in the understanding of the field, and its relationship (specifically) to democracy. This radical change was part of a move away from, on the one hand, essentialism in the social, and on the other, the supremacy of liberal individualism; instead, the Sympathetic Approach emphasises a focus on the contingent and constructed nature of social actors, to suggest that populism is either a perennial, or even positive force in politics. For instance, Francisco Panizza theorised that populism is 'a mode of identification available to *any* political actor operating in a discursive field in which the notion of the sovereignty of the people and its inevitable corollary, the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, are core elements of the political imaginary' (2005: 4-5).

The significant contemporary theorists in this approach have drawn from a wide variety of sources, most notably from Antonio Gramsci and Carl Schmitt. Therefore, to understand this radical ontological shift, it will be necessary to first, re-examine Gramsci's contribution to the Marxist tradition that introduced the significance of articulatory practices; and in turn, consider Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* (2007) and the fundamental antagonism of the friend-enemy relation, of which, Chantal Mouffe argues, liberal democracy has refused to accept the significance (1993). Following this, three significant thinkers shall be examined in the Sympathetic Approach: first, I re-construct Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's central argument in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2014) which has informed much of the

contemporary literature within the Sympathetic Approach; and second, Benjamin Arditi's approach to populism as a form of identity politics 'on the edge of politics' is examined (2007).

§ Antonio Gramsci

In his *Prison Notebooks* (1971), Antonio Gramsci identified a dichotomy between two forms of power: 'domination', in which 'a social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to 'liquidate', or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force'; and 'intellectual and moral leadership', in which such a social group 'leads kindred and allied groups'. This 'intellectual and moral leadership' precedes any *formal* political success, as the group or individual claiming to possess such leadership must 'already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well'. This, Gramsci states, is the condition of hegemony, best exemplified by 'the Moderates' of the Action Party who performed the 'gradual but continuous absorption, achieved by methods which varied in their effectiveness, of the active elements produced by allied groups – and even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile' (1971: 57-59). Significantly, Gramsci's emphasis on the relations between State and civil society (1971: 238-239), which was revealed as a 'sturdy structure' 'when the State trembled' allows us draw out three elements key of his thought in relation to the exercise of politics: the complexity of social relations revealed by 'civil society'; the relationship between forces in society; and the process of hegemony. This importance of civil society emerged out of Gramsci's criticism of Marxist-Leninism's emphasis on the State 'as 'a machine for the repression of one class by another' [as] defective and 'economistic'' (Simon, 2015: 69). Instead, the relationship between social forces is more complex than the answer posed by class-reductionism; within the superstructure, two levels can be identified,

‘the one that can be called ‘society’, that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’, and that of ‘political society’ or ‘the State’’ (Gramsci, 1971: 12).

Despite working within the framework of an obviously Marxist ontology, Gramsci ‘identified civil society with the ideological superstructure, the institutions and technical instruments that create and diffuse modes of thought’ and consequently ‘departed… from Marx’s equation of civil society with the material superstructure’ (Femia, 1987: 26). Therefore, as Simon summarises, the definition of civil society that can be constructed out of Gramsci’s thought runs as ‘all the ‘so-called private’ organisations… that are distinct from the process of production and from the public apparatuses of the state’. However, Gramsci does not depart fully from Marx, in his assumption that the two classes of labour and capital, and the relations between them, remain fundamental to all social relations, even if there is a degree of relative autonomy possessed by each class from the relations of production within such superstructure (Simon, 2015: 71). Where Gramsci does depart from Marx is the rejection of ‘false consciousness’, which ‘is problematic for Gramsci since it presupposes notions of true consciousness and reality. These notions are anathema to Gramsci’s view of the mechanics of normative coercion’ (Rojek, 2003: 112).

As indicated, though civil society is a distinct part of the superstructure, it is a part nonetheless; ‘civil society must be somehow distinguishable from the state so that it can be independently conquered… on the other hand, civil society must be linked to the state at least to the degree that its conquest has political ramifications’ (Adamson, 1980: 215). Considering this Marxist foundation, and the degree to which Gramsci rejects its *determinism* to win the ‘war of manoeuvre’, it is regarding this question that the relation of social forces is conceptualised. For Gramsci, the determination of the relation of forces can be understood through a three-stage process: first, the ‘objective’, structural relation in which the social identity of an agent requires that he stand in solidarity with similarly positioned agents - this is

the determination the group to which an individual belongs, for example, the working class (1971: 180). The second, 'the relation of political forces' extends the same logic of solidarity throughout the entire class, i.e. the working class, in order to win a degree of equality dictated by the existing structure, for example legal voting rights – but significantly, this does not challenge the fundamental structures of society (Simon, 2015: 28). As Gramsci commented, it is the moment when 'consciousness is reached of the solidarity of interests among all the members of a social class… already at this juncture the problem of the State is posed – but only in terms of winning politico-juridical equality with the ruling groups' (1971: 181).

Finally, the third stage is 'the most purely political stage' as it is the moment when 'one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests… transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinated groups too' (1971: 181). This idea of transcendence returns to that process of alliance building identified above, wherein the Moderates of the Action Party were capable of welding together 'antagonistic demands' into a single political movement. 'Hegemony', therefore, is the practice of one of the fundamental classes building an alliance with other classes within civil society in order to maintain or challenge the existing power relations. This is the third element of Gramsci's thought above, and it brings together the other two elements: by working from an ontologically innovative foundation, which rejects the class-reductionism of 'vulgar Marxism' in favour of a less deterministic understanding of the social, Gramsci proposes hegemony as the method of understanding how political alliances form, despite their supposed antagonistic or irreconcilable demands or identities. Though Gramsci is significant for the discussion on Laclau and Mouffe, and therefore populism, it is important to turn to Carl Schmitt before this discussion, as Schmitt's 'concept of the political' has been influential on Mouffe's work in particular, but is also drawn on by other theorists in an attempt to understand populism.

§ Carl Schmitt

Carl Schmitt's relevance appears increasingly salient in theorising populism: besides playing an essential role in the formulation of Chantal Mouffe's approach to democratic politics, Schmitt's significance has been noted by Stanley and Arditi, though each thinker uses Schmitt in different ways. In order to understand why, here I shall delineate the basic principles of Schmitt's 'concept of the political', which shall be referred back to in forthcoming sections.

At the heart of Schmitt's theory of the concept of the political is a recognition that it must remain independent of other antitheses 'in that it can neither be based on any one antithesis or any combination of these antitheses, nor can it be traced to these'. This distinction to which Schmitt refers here is that other distinctions exist independent to the political, rather than as specific antitheses to a concrete 'thing' that we can call 'politics'. Due to the common association between State and Politics, Schmitt dismisses the mistaken assumption that associations within nineteenth century society existed as antitheses to the political, such as religious, cultural, economic, legal and scientific groups, which consequently remained distinctly 'unpolitical'. Schmitt's work is, therefore, an attempt to understand 'the political' as independent of the aforementioned associations; instead, his definition of the political turns on the claim that its own antithesis must be understood as the distinction between 'friend and enemy'. Importantly, Schmitt is making no substantive claim over who the 'friend' may be, explicitly rejecting any normative belief that the friend must always be 'good' and the enemy must always be 'bad'. The only distinction Schmitt makes is one of identity, stating that 'the enemy need not be morally evil… but he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger, and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specifically intense way, existentially something different and alien' (2007: 23-27).

Owing to Schmitt's identification of the State as the highest concrete political entity, a political enemy is not an one of personal hatred and therefore private conflict, but is a public

adversity, thus rejecting any notion of individual (private) decision over the enemy's identity (2007: 19-20, 28-33). Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde has argued that Schmitt's identification of the State as the highest concrete authority is due only to the fact that the State has, historically speaking, created the situation that allows a legal system to emerge, and consequently a situation of 'normalcy' (peace) (1998: 42). Indeed, even though juridical writings have attempted definitions of 'the political', the attempt to identify the political via the law is predicated on a stable State within whose framework laws operate, and therefore cannot precede the political (Schmitt, 2007: 21; 2008: 67-74).

However, Schmitt does not rest the State's position as the ultimate concrete authority on any normative criteria, accepting that its place as the highest authority is an historically contingent one.[3] This is because there is the ever-present possibility that the antagonisms between those other aforementioned antitheses may erupt into 'civil war', and it is simply the task of the highest authority to prevent that from happening. As the antagonisms between different antitheses always have the possibility of intensifying into a conflictual relationship, to allow this antagonism to become so intense is to threaten to the common identity of the political entity upon which the State rests. This is because the antagonism between the two sides of any antithesis can become so strong as to constitute social identities more intensely than their previous shared (public). Put simply, *every* antithesis can become a political one if it is 'sufficiently strong enough to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy' (2007: 36-38). It is important that the polarisation between the friend and enemy must always retain the potential intensity to have *the possibility* to lead to conflict, not as a necessarily normatively *positive* course of action, and Schmitt is quite clear that 'the politically reasonable course resides in avoiding war', but such a possibility of intensity is essential for

[3] As I show in later chapters, this point is absolutely essential for populism; the ever-contingent reality of the State is a condition for populism's emergence, and the Schmittian consequences of this recognition have been badly ignored in the literature.

the political to come into existence, because such an intensity provides the concepts 'friend', 'enemy' and 'conflict' with their real meanings, of 'the existential negation of the enemy'. The political gains its meaning therefore from the fact that it demands of the members of political entities the duty a physical responsibility; the dual possibility of killing, and being killed (2007: 33-35).

A significant part of Schmitt's thought for the study of populism is the simplification of society, as a result of the polarisation inherent in the friend-enemy relation. What Schmitt understands as the Anglo-pluralist tradition denies the 'sovereignty of the political entity by stressing time and again that the individual lives in numerous different social entities', which each control him in varying manners, so that it is impossible to say which exerts the most influence on him and is therefore sovereign. This commitment to pluralism poses a challenge; 'which social entity… decides the extreme case and determines the decisive friend-and-enemy groupings?' Taken to its logical conclusion, such an understanding of liberalism as pluralism holds that the State – what should be the highest authority – is 'another society amongst societies' which places a major burden of proof onto liberalism, asking why States would form at all, when there are religious, economic, or cultural groups that might be more compelling, 'and what would be [the liberal State's] specifically political character'? Due to liberalism's central concept of the autonomous individual, it (incorrectly) focuses its analysis of 'the political' on 'the internal struggle against the power of the State,' thus encouraging a condition in which individuals are able to *withdraw* from their political, and therefore fundamentally constitutive, grouping. Liberalism, in Schmitt's understanding, is actually a denial of the political character of the State by refusing to recognise it as a higher authority, reducing it to 'another society' from which the individual is at liberty to remove himself (2007: 40-46, 70). The consequence of the liberal desire to reject the fundamentally collectivist nature of politics – evident most clearly in the 'bourgeois *Rechsstaat*' 'rule of law' as 'a system of guarantees of

bourgeois freedom' that only ever attempts to 'repress the political, to limit all expressions of life through a series of normative frameworks' – is to misunderstand the political (Schmitt, 2008: 90-94). Paul Hirst summarises the point well; because of Schmitt's central recognition that this division must run deep enough to result in conflict, there is a fundamental (unbreakable – Schmitt, 2008: 92) antithesis between friend and enemy. Any political system built upon the concept of mediation is bound to run into an existential dead-end; 'there can be no genuine agreement, because in the end there is nothing to agree about' (1999: 9).

§ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe

Having now identified the two thinkers most influential for Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe respectively, this section will now re-construct their central thesis in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* alongside a consideration of their own works. The motivating reason behind Laclau and Mouffe's radical theoretical approach to democracy is a desire to transcend the dichotomous tendency in democratic theory between liberal individualism, and communitarian politics, each of which involves a number of assumptions about the constitutional identities of democracy (individuals, or groups), and how those identities interact with one another; as Laclau states, 'individuals are not coherent totalities but merely referential identities which have to be split up into a series of localised subject positions. And the articulation between these positions is a social and not and individual affair (the very notion of 'individual' does not make sense in our approach)' (2005b: 35). Similarly, Mouffe has noted that 'societies are confronted with the proliferation of political spaces which are radically new and different and which demand that we abandon the idea of a unique constitutive space of the constitution of the political', stressing the deficiency of the liberal conception of the pre-social individual, the 'unencumbered self' (1993: 20), and in the place of such a rejection of both a determinable 'social' and a 'pre-social individual', a new theoretical approach must be constructed to

understand how political and social identities form (Laclau, 2005a: x-xii). Furthermore, it must be noted that for Laclau and Mouffe, populism is understood as merely a logic of this construction of the socio-political identity, and therefore 'populism' and 'politics' cannot be separated; by extension, the process by which these identities assert themselves and their conceptions of the social is referred to by Laclau and Mouffe as 'hegemony' (Laclau, 2001: 5, 13) and therefore the three terms are used somewhat interchangeably in their theories. Though Laclau focused on populism in his work, and Mouffe on agonistics, their respective theorising each amounts to roughly this same conception of politics (hence Mouffe's recent return to the question of populism [2018: 17]); as a result, here I shall use the three terms (hegemony, populism, and politics) interchangeably, but towards the end of the section I shall draw everything together under the term 'populism'.

Laclau and Mouffe begin from the Gramscian perspective in which there is an important and radical break with the 'reductionist problematic of ideology' which specified that 'political subjects are not… classes, but complex 'collective wills'' to move away from the original Marxist emphasis on the base/superstructure. Instead, Laclau and Mouffe pose the alternative understanding that 'the concept of hegemony supposes a theoretical field dominated by the category of *articulation*; and hence that the articulated elements can be separately identified', and therefore 'if articulation is a practice… it must imply some form of separate presence of the elements which that practice articulates or composes' (2014: 57, 79). In other words, the space in which hegemony can take place is necessarily one in which resides a plurality of actors, whose relationship is not essential, but constructed through articulation; 'all groups are particularities within the social, structured around specific interests' (Laclau, 2001, 6). Rather than this space in which hegemony can take place as occupied by rationalised individuals, 'politics always consists in the creation of an 'us' versus a 'them' and that it *implies the creation of collective identities*' (Mouffe, 2005: 55).

To understand how these social/collective identities are constructed, Laclau and Mouffe propose that as 'the multiformity of the social cannot be apprehended through a system of mediations, nor the 'social order' understood as an underlying principle', there must instead be an understanding of totality as one 'with the difference that it would no longer involve an underlying principle that would unify 'society', but an ensemble of totalising effects in an open relational complex' that rejects essentialism by recognising the overdetermination of some identities which, due to their constitution relying on an external other to reveal the identity-boundaries, can never be fully closed. The consequence of this argument, therefore, is to 'abandon, as a terrain of analysis, the premise of '*society*' as a sutured and self-defined totality' as there is 'no single underlying principle fixing – and hence constituting – the whole field of differences' (2014: 82, 90-91, 97). Therefore, hegemony begins from an understanding of the social as an unconstituted totality defined by a unity present in its own absent fullness: 'the being or systematicity of the system which is represented through the empty signifiers is not a being which has not been *actually* realised, but one which is constitutively unreachable' (Laclau, 1996: 39). Given this radical rejection of the social as a terrain of analysis, Laclau and Mouffe propose instead the following thesis (2014: 100):

> The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity.

As a result, rather than basing their theory on an essentialist ground, Laclau and Mouffe move to a stance in which all identity is constructed through an articulatory process that reveals that identity's relation to power, in what is termed the 'subject-position'. Subject-positions are, in this theoretical ground, identities reflecting the relationship between subjects within an articulatory terrain and the position of power; Laclau identifies this as the first 'defining

dimension of the hegemonic relation: *unevenness of power is constitutive of it*' (Laclau, 2001: 7).

This articulatory terrain thus acts as an 'horizon of exclusion'; to understand this, we need to return to that concept identified above, of an unconstituted totality: the 'first effect of the exclusionary limit is that it introduces an essential ambivalence within the system of differences constituted by those limits… each element of the system has an identity only so far as it is different from the others: difference = identity' (Laclau, 1996: 38, 52). By this, Laclau means the circumstance in which the recognition of a multitude of difference (a plurality of groups) results in the closing of a differential space via expulsion of (at least) one of these different groups, but resulting in an 'irretrievable fullness' by virtue of the fact that those *included* groups share equivalence in their *difference* to the excluded group and simultaneously an unresolvable internal tension due to their difference to one another (2005a: 70, 129). Similarly, Mouffe points out that Schmitt's criticism of the liberal-democratic paradigm recognises the necessary nature of exclusion: 'the logic of democracy does indeed imply a moment of closure which is required by the very process of constituting the 'people''; the drawing of frontiers is therefore a necessary component of the political, and reference to 'the people' as the most significant category is because of its role as a key concept in democracy (2000: 43-44).

Therefore, beginning from this recognition of a subject-position, agents then coalesce into tendential identities relative to demands articulated in relation to this subject-position. These identities are what Laclau and Mouffe refer to in the above quoted section as nodal points. Nodal points are essential because 'the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of a *society*', but particularities within the social each undertake 'an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre'. Therefore 'the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation' act as nodal points that each attempt to provide a discursive construction of the social (2014: 98-99). Laclau has made

specific use of this construction of meaning to identify the most significant concept within the Sympathetic Approach, of the 'empty signifier', arguing that since all political terms are 'the name of something to which no content necessarily corresponds, it borrows such a content from the particular force capable of contingently incarnating that empty universality at any particular moment in time', i.e. the process of a discursive construction of the social (2001: 9).

Nodal points are significant in this theoretical approach because, as identified above, the differential relation is one of unevenness; in other words, the subject-positions are defined by an existence that should not exist (2014: 144):

> The equivalential displacement between distinct subject positions – which is a condition for the emergence of an antagonism – may thus present itself in two fundamental variations. Firstly, it may be a question of relations of subordination already in existence which, thanks to a displacement of the democratic imaginary, are rearticulated as relations of oppression… but the antagonism can also arise in other circumstances – for example, when acquired rights are being called into question, or when social relations which had not been constructed under the form of subordination begin to be so under the impact of certain social transformations.

As a result, the historic bloc is united in light of what each nodal point *lacks*, not what they share, and this lack is necessarily one of being excluded from power; 'all of them are seen as related to each other, not because their concrete objectives are intrinsically related but because they are all seen as equivalent in confrontation with the repressive regime' (Laclau, 1996: 40). Where these demands translate into populism involves a subtle move from democratic demands – those that can be accommodated by the existing order – to popular demands – those that remain unfulfilled by the institutions to which they are addressed; from this 'embryonic' beginning, popular demands act as the foundational units for the emergence of 'the people' defined *ipso facto* in opposition with 'the elite' (Laclau, 2005a: 74, 126-127).

After this historic bloc associates itself through the recognition of shared repression, the process of 'tropological cross-contamination' takes place: as 'the equivalence involves that

demands cannot be dealt with in isolation from each other… the hegemonic articulation of a plurality of demands can only be satisfied through changes in the relation of forces in society' and so the negative relation of a shared lack of power between groups must be transformed into a positive relation in the pursuit of social change; in other words, 'the equivalence proceeds entirely from the opposition to the power beyond the frontier' (Laclau, 2001: 10; Laclau, 2005b; 39). This is the process by which each nodal point, beginning from an equal position, attempts to align its goal (around which the tendential identity has formed) with the others within this chain, thus asserting itself into a position of privilege, and therefore become the hegemonic leader (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014: 152-153).

It is here that empty signifiers become salient. As I have explained above, the act of articulation proceeds from the arrangement of subject-positions into nodal points, to the establishment of a differential chain within which one nodal points emerges as the hegemonic actor, to the attempt by that hegemonic actor to act as the signified capable of determining the meaning of the concept salient within that historical juncture. This concept is specified as the empty signifier; 'something which points, from within the process of signification, to the discursive presence of its own limits' (1996: 36). Laclau summarises this thus (2005a: 70):

> What we have, ultimately, is a failed totality, the place of an irretrievable fullness. This totality is an object that is both impossible and necessary. Impossible, because the tension between equivalence and difference is ultimately insurmountable; necessary, because without some kind of closure, however precarious it might be, there would be no signification and no identity.

Here we return to that concept I specified above: an unconstituted totality. Only now, we can see why this totality is unconstituted: the horizon of exclusion closes around a plurality of social actors (subject-positions, arranged into nodal points) each claiming to have a valid relationship with the same concept (the empty signifier); within that horizon, however, some

social actors become excluded from that valid relationship, however defined, and the realisation of that exclusion arranges those nodal points into an alliance in opposition to exclusion (the chain of equivalences) (1996: 27). What makes this *populist* is the invocation of the entirety of 'the people' (as noted above) as an empty signifier, signed (represented) only by a part – 'a *plebs* who claims to be the only legitimate *populus*' – a 'synecdoche', the whole taking the name of a part (2005a: 81).

Here, the significance of Schmitt and Mouffe's work on 'the political' becomes important. For Mouffe, Schmitt's 'challenge to liberalism' involves the recognition that the foundation of all political mobilisations is the 'relations of power and antagonisms' that construct 'a 'we', a collective identity that would articulate the demands found in the different struggles against subordination'. Significantly, 'to deny the need for a construction of such collective identities… is to remain blind to the relations of power. It is to ignore the limits imposed on the extension of the sphere of rights by the fact that some existing rights have been constructed on the very exclusion or subordination of others' (2000: 20). Mouffe returns to the thesis of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, that 'any social objectivity is constituted through acts of power' and 'we should not conceptualise power as an *external* relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities, but rather as constituting the identities themselves' (2000: 21).

Therefore, 'to institute an order, frontiers need to be drawn and the moment of closure must be faced. But this frontier is the result of a political decision; it is constituted on the basis of a particular we/they, and for that very reason it should be recognised as something contingent and open to contestation'. Furthermore, expanding on the recognition of the formation of chains of equivalence in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Mouffe remarks that 'what characterises democratic politics is the confrontation between conflicting hegemonic projects, a confrontation with no possibility of final reconciliation. To conceive such a confrontation in

political, not ethical, terms requires asking a series of strategic questions about the type of 'we' that a given politics aims at creating and the chain of equivalences that is called for' (2013: 17-18). We can see the re-introduction of Schmitt's language of friends-and-enemies in the democratic imaginary, which is significant for Mouffe's conception of politics as it addresses the failure of democratic theory, specifically the inability 'to tackle the question of citizenship' that 'is the consequence of their operating with a conception of the subject which sees individuals as prior to society, bearers of natural rights, and either utility maximising agents or rational subjects'. This conception makes the mistake, because, 'in all cases they are *abstracted from social and power relations*, language, culture and the whole set of practices that make agency possible' (2000: 95-96).

However, where Mouffe seems to depart from Laclau is on the topic of *when* the process of subject-position realisation takes place. Laclau's theory rests on a process similar to that identified by Gramsci: the determination of a subject's position in relation to power arises through an articulatory practice, and the realisation of the unevenness of the social (i.e. the recognition of a lack, 'difference = identity'), that aligns subject-positions either with or against the hegemonic power; from this, those nodal points that have coalesced around shared subject-positions mobilise in the chain of equivalence, to challenge the hegemonic power. Contradistinctively, Mouffe seems instead to draw on Schmitt's concept of the political, as recognising the moment of the intensification of the possibility of conflict, to suggest that significance rests in the moment of crisis of the hegemonic ideology as the determinant factor in the *realisation* of subject-positions: 'we can speak of a 'populist moment' when, under the pressure of political or socioeconomic transformations, the dominant hegemony is being destabilised by the multiplication of unsatisfied demands' (2018: 11). What this doesn't mean is that it is only in that moment that subject-positions are determined, but rather that the challenge or destabilisation of the dominant hegemony is necessary for the realisation of the

position of the subject; indeed, this is what Mouffe diagnoses as the cause of the present populist discontents (2016).

In addition, to return to the point above – that politics involves the drawing of frontiers – Mouffe emphasises that 'politics aims at the creation of unity in a context of conflict and diversity; it is always concerned with an 'us' by the determination of a 'them'' (2000: 101). To draw this together, Laclau and Mouffe's conception of populism-as-politics involves a re-imagination of the social as a radically undecidable space, constituted through the drawing of frontiers and the assertion of a particular idea of what that social looks like through the process of hegemony; all identities within that space are relational and reflect the dominant power relations in their constitution, rather than pre-social or unencumbered individuals; which in turn draws internal frontiers that challenge within the social space defined by the hegemonic actor within that space. This internal frontier is typically drawn along the lines of 'the people' versus an 'other' which, by both the logic of hegemony and the Schmittian recognition of the contingent nature of the friends-and-enemies, does not possess any essential features but is only *the powerful*. All politics, therefore, is a renegotiation of the power structures within a contestable social space, in the form of a conflict fought in the name of 'the people' against the 'powerful', because it involves the creation of mobilisable relational identities that exist in a state of conflict with one another; 'if populism consists in postulating a radical alternative within the communitarian space, a choice at the crossroads on which the future of a given society hinges, does not populism become synonymous with politics? *The answer can only be affirmative*' (Laclau, 2005b: 47).

§ Benjamin Arditi

Though Laclau and Mouffe are the most influential thinkers in the Sympathetic Approach to the theory of populism, I wish to elaborate some significant contributions made to the field

by another thinker within the Approach; Benjamin Arditi. Arditi's contributions owe much to Laclau and Mouffe's ground-breaking work but, as I show below, departs from their legacy in a number of areas. Arditi's major claim rests on his conception of populism as a 'spectre' of democracy, due to a series of ontological shifts he makes from Laclau and Mouffe, and the consequences of that shift.

Arditi identifies two significant points at which Laclau remains unsatisfactorily ambiguous: first, on legitimacy; and second, on the question of the role that crisis plays in populism. First, Arditi observes that the claims made by Laclau and Mouffe that 'the people' is constructed through the emergence of a frontier between those admitted to the privilege of power, and those defined by a 'constitutive lack' of power, is indebted to Jacques Rancière's idea of the *demos* as that which 'is not a pre-existing sociological category' – in much the same way Laclau thinks of all identities as referential – 'but the name of an outcast, 'of those who are denied an identity in a given order''). Where Laclau and Rancière diverge, argues Arditi, is the question of legitimacy. Laclau uses the synecdochic move of a *plebs* claiming to be the 'only legitimate *populus*' but, after introducing the notion of legitimacy, does not elaborate further on what that means for a 'populist challenge' to the instituted positions of power (Arditi, 2010: 489-490). Secondly, the 'condition of crisis' remains ambiguously addressed in Laclau's work. While I have shown that Mouffe is clear on the role that crisis plays in the precipitation of a populist moment (2016; 2018), Laclau's work varies between, on the one hand, claiming that all subject-positions are referential and relational, and realised through interactions with power that leave demands either fulfilled or unfulfilled, thus determining their future engagement with a populist movement (2005b: 36-37), and on the other hand claiming that populism is 'the starting point for a more or less radical reconstruction of a new order *wherever the previous one has been shaken*' (2005a: 177). Arditi points out that 'it is difficult to hold on to the argument that politics-as-populism has a constructive force' and at the same time 'claim

that populist interventions are dependent on the prior crisis in the existing order, for then the political would be subservient to those junctures, and, therefore, its status would be derivative rather than constitutive' (2010: 494).

Moving to Arditi's own writings, Arditi has been concerned with what populism represents or reveals about political modernity, and his contribution to the study of populism has been, in a similar vein to Laclau, to consider the influence of Freud on politics. Arditi draws inspiration from the Freudian idea of the 'internal periphery' to claim that 'the internal periphery refers to phenomena on the edges whose permanence within the territory of liberal politics is undecidable outside a disagreement'; in so doing, Arditi aims to reveal the limits of liberalism not by contemplating its external opponents, but by considering the internal frontiers of the practice, of which populism is merely one (2007: 4-5). To do this, Arditi begins by considering the historical context he believes has shaped our political language (and, by extension, action): Arditi considers the debate on 'difference and identity' to have its roots in the semiotic shift that 'made us aware that the system of differences we call language is not value-neutral; power relations are embedded in it, if only because many everyday linguistic expressions reflect and reproduce inequalities' (2007: 10-11). This is not unlike the emphasis Laclau and Mouffe place on articulation and discourse that I explored in the previous section – what Arditi aims to do is contextualise such theorisations themselves in a philosophical movement that aimed to emphasise language as a site of contestation, rather than merely a tool to engage in contestation with.

There were, according to Arditi, two consequences of this semiotic shift: one, a 'gradual – if often grudging – acknowledgement of the right to be different as part of the acceptable status quo'; and two, 'an unexpected political underside' – 'the relentless vindication of particularism served to part ways with, say, the class reductionism of Marxism' (indeed, this abandonment of essentialism was the emphasis within Laclau and Mouffe's work) 'but it also

turned the question of difference into something akin to the *essentialism of the elements* that was as illegitimate as the essentialism of the totality is criticized' (2007: 12-13). Arditi here has in mind the identity politics of challenging exclusionism; this maintains a large degree of similarity with Laclau's idea of the frontier of exclusion drawn by the lack, such as those whose identities are *articulated* as belonging to a certain social without the practical realities of that social's privileges (Laclau, 1996: 42). For Arditi, however, this challenge 'soon found itself enclosed in a self-referential reasoning and almost anything could be seen as offensive to the members of an aggrieved group'. The consequences of this reasoning are stark (2007: 14):

> What characterises this weakening is the exaltation of a limited modality of the pronoun 'we', one in which the pronoun 'us' is enounced with the horizon of a particular group and seen to be at odds with the superordinate 'we'. The language of the Tupí Guaraní people of Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil has two different pronouns to designate these modalities of 'we'. One is the *oré* or the exclusive mode, as in 'us women' or 'we immigrants', and the other the *ñandé* or inclusive mode, as in the case of 'us citizens' or 'we the people'. The play between the *oré* and *ñandé* is not a question of numbers or size, or of a relation between particular and universal. It designates the fluctuating domains of exclusive and inclusive modalities of the 'we'. This is of course a fixture of all politics, but identity politics privileges the *oré* at the expense of the *ñandé*.

Arditi argues that the consequences of this reasoning and privileging of an exclusionary form of identity is to endow a group with the Westphalian entitlement to sovereignty that forbids the 'intervention of other states in their 'internal affairs'' – most significantly, this closes boundaries around groups that 'make it more difficult to forge horizontal links between particular groups' (2007: 14), posing a significant problem for the theorisation of political alliances presented by Laclau and Mouffe; if particularised identities adopt a 'stay in your lane' approach to 'internal identity governance', it limits (indeed, negates) the possibility of building a counter-hegemonic movement. I refer to this challenge hereafter as 'sovereignisation'.

This sovereignisation can also result from an undecidability introduced by the democratic logic itself: Arditi elaborates on Claude Lefort's recognition of 'the undecidable nature' of democracy as 'characterised by the dissolution of the markers of certainty, and therefore, by an explicit recognition that the foundations of the political order and the social order vanish'; consequently, 'confused by the fluidity of identities and the precariousness of certainties, many can take refuge in all sort of groups that offer simpler and more structured images of identity' (2007: 23, 27). To this end, Arditi cites Laclau and Zac's claim that 'whatever political order exists would be legitimate *not as a result of the value of its own contents*, but due to its ability to incarnate the abstract principle of social order as such' (Laclau and Zac, 1994: 21). It is here that Arditi's observations can translate best into a discussion on populism: for instance, Laclau and Zac's emphasis on the need for order *of any kind* in the face of an undecidable disorientation 'can facilitate the appeal of charismatic leaders who present themselves as self-styled saviours, or lead people to seek the sense of belonging offered by aggressive forms of nationalism, uncompromising religious sects, or violent urban tribes' (2007: 27). More generally, Arditi conceptualises populism as a particular form of that 'underside of democracy' discussed above; in this, he builds on the work of Margaret Canovan and her theory of the two faces of democracy to argue that populism is specifically a *spectre of democracy*.

Rather than consider democracy in an Aristotelian fashion to be a Golden Mean between the two faces of democracy (the redemptive and the pragmatic), Arditi rightly points out that both Canovan, and Michael Oakeshott (from whom she takes inspiration), identify the mean points as a 'middle region of movement' between the two faces, and therefore 'contingent arrangements resulting from variable mixes between the two political styles of modernity' because 'both pragmatism and redemption are *necessary* for the working of democracy and, if anything, each acts as an endless corrective for the other' (2004: 138). However, Arditi notes with regards to the gap that lies between the two faces, 'there is no reason to think that it will

father only populist offspring' – this poses a dilemma, as it suggests that the constitutive gap that lies within modern democracy is a breeding ground for *any radical politics* (2007: 47-48). For Laclau this is not a problem, but Arditi finds it disconcerting, 'for it seeks to specify the conceptual valence of populism by endowing it with the attributes of the political' (2004: 140). To resolve this, Arditi proposes to correct Canovan's metaphor of populism as the 'shadow of democracy' by instead referring to it as a *spectre*: 'a shadow is, by definition, that which will always accompany a body. If populism is a shadow of democracy, it will follow it always as a possibility', but fails to capture the undecidability that is 'inbuilt into populism', which is captured more by the metaphor of a spectre, 'for it can be something that both accompanies democracy and haunts it' (2004: 140-141). To elaborate on this, Arditi proposes three 'modes of appearance' of populism that specify its spectral nature: a mode of representation; a turbulent edge of politics; and a threatening underside (2005: 77).

The first mode, of representation, specifies *how* populism conceives of representation: Arditi here draws again from the work of Canovan, remarking that 'representation means rendering present, bringing into presence though a substitute, 'the making present of something that is nevertheless absent', or… 'means acting in the interested of the represented, in a manner responsive to them'', which in itself presupposes three elements: of two levels (the represented, and the representatives); a gap between the levels which prevents them collapsing into one another; and the return of the people through a substitute, which cannot be reduced to an 'unaltered sameness' (2005: 80-81). On the question of *who* is being represented, populism remains deliberately vague, as 'it enables [populism] to blur the contours of 'the people' sufficiently to encompass anyone with a grievance structured around a perceived exclusion from a public domain of interaction and decision hegemonised by economic, political or cultural elites' (2007: 65). We can see, as I mention above, a commitment to remain within the Sympathetic Approach's parameters in the use of language similar to Laclau's: 'grievances'

and ‘demands’; ‘perceived exclusion’ and ‘constitutive lack’; and ‘public domain of interaction’ and ‘unsutured social space’. However, Arditi’s consideration of populism’s dissolution of that second element above (a gap between the representatives and the represented) departs from Laclau’s theory: the ‘presumed immediacy of the relation between the people and the leader or his movement’ as well as a perception of the leader as a ‘vehicle for the expression of the popular will’ results in a preference for *presence* rather than *representation* because the latter involves a ‘corruption of the general will’ (2005: 82). As a result, populism does not think of representation in the same manner as traditional political conceptions, but instead transforms democracy from a trustee conception of representation to one more aligned with delegate representation. It goes further still: rather than the delegate being sent to act on behalf of the people, the delegate is there to incarnate the people.

This moves Arditi onto the second mode of populism: as politics on the edges of democracy. This mode shifts the attention of populism from the ‘institutional site’ to the ‘democratic imaginary of politics’; it is ‘an internal element of the democratic system which also reveals the limits of the system and prevents its closure in the pure and simple normality of institutional procedures’, because it ‘destabilises a clear frontier between inside and outside… [it is] part of an internal *foreign* territory’ (2005: 88-89). It is here that Arditi makes his most significant contribution to the study of populism: ‘populism functions as a paradoxical element that belongs to democracy – they both endorse the public debate of political issues, electoral participation, informal forms of expression of the popular will, and so on – and at the same time interrupts its closure as a gentrified or domesticated political order’ (2007: 77).

Leading on from this, and arriving at the third mode of populism, Arditi notes that ‘the very fact that it has a capacity to disrupt democratic politics compels us to inquire about the darker possibilities that can come along with populism’. Returning to the transformative power of populism on representation, ‘the fantasy of a unity without fissures’ (as the incarnation of

the people through the delegate seeks to do) results in the populist confusion of 'the government with the state' (2005: 94-96); this in turn leads to 'populist representation gradually [slipping] into the symbolic 'standing for' and ultimately into a Hobbesian authorisation whereby the gap is dissolved *de facto* in favour of the representative. This is when the shadow begins to show its other, more ominous face, and the danger of an authoritarian streak enters the scene' (2007: 83).

In summary, Arditi's comments on populism reveal two things: first, that populism reveals the aspirational limits of democracy by making explicit the necessity of maintaining a responsiveness to the foundational constituency that democracy is meant to govern over, whilst also collapsing the fields of representation into one another in such a way that the representative is seen as an incarnation, rather than a symbolic presence, of that foundational constituency; second, that populism can be seen as a certain democratic transformation of that shift to identity politics and 'sovereignisation' that closes boundaries around identities, and demands that those identities be given the paramount authority in deciding their own fates. Indeed, if the semiotic shift has made identity self-referential in a closed circuit of reasoning, then it follows that there cannot be a bifurcation between members of an identity and whomever is chosen as 'representing' that identity, as there is no logic or moment capable of providing a constitutive gulf that bifurcation can be built upon.

Section III: A False Dichotomy? The Need for a New Approach

At the beginning of this chapter, I identified the two most prominent approaches to the study of populism in the literature as it stands, with an important clarificatory note that I do not consider the dichotomy to be accurate or helpful. The reason is that each approach presumes what appears to be separate methodologies, but in reality, are more similar than first thought. These methodologies – the morphological study of ideology, and the post-Marxist approach -

each appear to draw on separate ontologies and study separate phenomena, and has led to a situation in which the two approaches 'speak past' each other, without really engaging or attempting to reconcile with one another, resulting in a digression of taxonomical analyses that do not go to the heart of the problem of what populism actually is. However, as Aletta Norval has examined, the similarities between the two methodologies are greater than the literature on populism is prepared to admit, whilst Simon Tormey shows that the normative presumptions of each approach prevents a complete collapsing down into a single synthesis. This is not to say that there is no use for the discoveries that the two approaches have yielded, but that the dichotomy between them is not so simple as the established literature makes it out to be, and even where it exists, it does not provide a clear conceptual clarity over the true nature of populism, resulting in a taxonomical obsession that obscures the real meaning of populism; for this reason, a new approach is needed.

Norval addresses the presumptive dichotomy between morphological and post-Marxist studies of ideology (though, with the important clarification that 'ideology' is merely shorthand for the 'processes of decontestation'), whilst admitting that 'this focus on decontestation' as a point of familiarity between the two approaches 'should not, however, be used to erase marked differences between them' (2000: 316). For Norval, the starting point of Freeden's morphological analysis, 'is an understanding of ideology as nothing other than a language of politics deployed to legitimate political action, and to establish and/or alter a society's moral identity' which, importantly, 'resonates in important respects with the work of other contemporary writers on ideology who draw on Gramscian post-Marxist and post-structuralist traditions of thinking' (Norval, 2000: 320). As a result of a focus on decontestation, there is a shared implicit assumption of the role of power between the two approaches: for instance, 'Freeden places great emphasis on the fact that while ideologies are essentially political in character, they have the paradoxical effect of decontesting the meaning of central political

terms, so covering over the power relationships that are central to a given concept', whilst Laclau and Mouffe 'argue from the general proposition that ideology entails an attempt to decontest central political concepts and relations of domination even though such attempts must, of necessity, fail'. Consequently, 'Freeden and Laclau and Mouffe share a broad agreement on the ubiquitous nature of ideology, and on the fact that ideologies function through processes of decontestation' (2000: 322, 326-327).

At the heart of Laclau's understanding of decontestation is that which I analyse above, the 'empty signifier'. The empty signifier acts to represent that very communitarian space that is absent, and to represent the shared aspiration of the communitarian space that is yet to be achieved: 'in that case, the hegemonic operations would be the presentation of the particularity of a group as the incarnation of that empty signifier which refers to the communitarian order as an absence, an unfulfilled reality' (Laclau, 1996: 44). However, as Norval shows, the role played by the empty signifier is akin to that played by the concept in Freeden's terminology (2000: 332):

> The place of the empty signifier is thus structurally equivalent to that of the ineliminable features of political ideologies in Freeden's morphological analysis, and the 'filling function' of particularist demands are equivalent to its quasi-contingent features. The series of further analytical distinctions Freeden provides, most notably his detailed treatment of logical and cultural adjacency could be used to supplement and deepen Laclau's gesture towards the 'relevant social context'.

As a result, 'decontestation' is not only a shared methodological reality, but a point over which the varied studies of populism as a political phenomenon can coalesce.

The methodological similarities notwithstanding, it is the normative commitments of each approach that so far has prevented a real overcoming of this division within the field of theories of populism. Whilst Tormey agrees that the division is dominant and difficult to overcome, he argues that we should instead consider populism in the same vein as a

Pharmakon, a 'powerful substance intended to make someone better, but which might end up killing him or her. This sense of *Pharmakon* as both a poison and a cure was intrinsic to the meaning of the term. Whether it was one or the other depended on dosage, context and the receptivity of the body to the toxin'. In this regard, Tormey considers the normative commitments of the Critical and Sympathetic Approaches as hindrances to understanding the role that populism performs in a democratic setting, which forces us to 'have to choose between them, and, consequently, between accounts that stress that populism has either negative or positive consequences for democracy' (2018: 261-264). What makes Tormey's analysis particularly penetrating is that he recognises the common denominator of *crisis* in studies of populism; what varies is whether populism is a *corrective* or a *cause*: 'one's view on whether and to what extent democracy can be said to be in crisis depends in large measure on the framework one is working from, as well as the normative commitments one brings to issue' (2021: 22). For studies of populism, then, and in agreement with Norval, Tormey recognises that the 'what' of populism studies – the component features – is less at stake than the normative consequences and commitments that determine the different approaches.

From here, we can begin to understand the points of agreement and disagreement across the two, which are still fruitful for an analysis of populism, to show that a) there is greater agreement than presumed when studying populism, but b) they have limitations that require a new approach. The first, and most obvious, is that 'the people' is important as a concept. All the theorists examined in this chapter, and active in the field of studies of populism, agree on the centrality of the concept, least of all because of a normative commitment to the value of democracy as a legitimating system of self-government. For thinkers such as Mudde and Kaltwasser, but also Albert Weale (2018) and Jan-Werner Müller (2016), the threat of populism is not necessarily derived from its appeal to the people, as all democratic systems of thought must make this appeal; instead, the threat arises when populism claims to be the voice of the

real people, thus undermining the open nature of democracy twinned with liberal norms. This is, therefore, the reason this approach has been termed the 'critical' one; it sees populism as a threat, and treats it as such, criticising its existence and claims from the standpoint of a more inclusive democracy. Regardless, the agreement within the Critical Approach of the significance accorded to 'the people' as a concept within populism – even if it is a qualified concept, in the sense of being 'for the true people' – is reinforced by the recognition that the significance of 'the people' in populism comes from its belief in the will of the people as the *foundation of action*. This is true whether it is the 'true sovereignty' of the people, as in Canovan or Stanley's understanding of 'the populist people', or if it is the 'general will', as in Mudde and Kaltwasser's understanding.

Likewise, the Sympathetic Approaches stresses the centrality of the concept of 'the people', to an even greater extent: Arditi's engagement with Laclau and Mouffe's work shows that the construction of peoplehood is coterminous with the democratic logic itself. Whilst this usually reflects a radical democratic project of the authors, it nevertheless assists our understanding of just how significant a full analysis of exactly *how* a people is constructed to the identity of a political phenomenon itself. Moreover, due to that elision of 'populism' and 'democracy', in which '*all* political identity is necessarily popular' (Laclau, 2006: 677), any attempt by a particular social group to speak on behalf of all the people, and thereby project themselves *as* the 'true' voice of the people, resonates with the Critical Approach's understanding of populist peoplehood, except the Sympathetic Approach sees this as not a problem, but a necessity possibility in the construction of popular identities – and therefore, the construction of 'the people'. But this is not to say that all appeals to 'the people' are populist (Tormey, 2018: 265):

> Appealing to "the people" is an everyday device used by most politicians. It also expresses what is distinctive about democratic politics: that it proceeds from an understanding that the

> people are sovereign – or the subject of politics. On the other hand, by flattening out distinctions between kinds or styles of politics, as Laclau does, we lose the specificity of populism, and thus its utility for describing or explaining distinct political phenomena.

In addition, alongside the significance of 'the people', both Approaches share a broad agreement regarding the presence of 'the elites' as a concept within populism, though within the Critical Approach there is disagreement over the significance accorded to that concept, whilst between the two approaches there is a lack of agreement over the *normative* implications of the presence of elites, and their role in the formation of the populist people. For instance, Canovan does not include it as a core concept of the ideology of populism; she may consider elites to be significant, but this is only ever a contingent significance, and one that does not inform the core identity of populism. However, Mudde, Kaltwasser and Hawkins argue for a normative relationship between 'the people' and 'the elite' that must, by necessity, include an antagonism between the two concepts. Likewise, Stanley's analysis involves a recognition of this antagonistic relationship, but whilst Mudde's analysis sees the people as a determined group, as an homogenous force identified negatively via the people, Stanley sees the people as defined negatively in a dialectical relationship with the elite, allowing for an ambiguity in definition that opens up the identity of 'the people' and avoids prescription. By consequence, Mudde and Stanley agree on the presence of both 'the people' and 'the elite' as concepts within populism, but accord 'the elite' different significance, depending on whether it is the product of a dialectical negativity, or the cause.

The Sympathetic Approach, meanwhile, sees the existence of elites as necessary in the emergence of a popular identity, but due to the structural reality of democratic politics. Taking seriously Lefort's claim regarding the disappearance of the 'markers of certainty' and the consequent emptying of the central place of power (1988: 232), the Sympathetic Approach understands the 'social' as a terrain of fundamentally uneven power relations, in which a

democratic identity *must* occupy the position of power, but subsequently act as the marker of an internal power differential. In other words, 'elites' are a necessary component of democratic politics, even if 'elitism' is not, and the exact identity of the elites in question are contingent. As a consequence of the influence of Gramsci and Schmitt, Laclau and Mouffe do not imbue populism's people-elite distinction with any *Manichean* content, instead referring consistently to its open nature, and the reality that the structure of democratic politics makes negotiation (and renegotiation) of power a constant facet, rather than a deficiency, of the political system. This is why Laclau collapses populism and democracy into one another, and why the Sympathetic Approach is more concerned with the actual process of the constitution of a people than the Critical Approach. It is here, however, that Arditi's critique of Laclau's work becomes salient: Arditi's argument that populism, as a specific sovereignisation of a *particular part of the people*, reveals the constitutive limit of democracy, helps to correct Laclau's collapsing down by recognising that the structural elements of democracy, such as the representative gap and the sundering of the people from itself, whilst arising from *within* democracy, is *not coterminous* with it. Regardless, the Sympathetic Approach certainly understands and privileges the existence of elites in the determination of the identity of a people; but the process by which this determination takes place is different from that understood by the Critical Approach, as the former sees the determination of a people-elite frontier as inevitable because of its structuration-via-power, whilst the latter only ever sees identify formation as following some perversion of a democratic promise, be it the 'two faces' thesis of Canovan, the materialism of Mudde, Kaltwasser and Hawkins, or the corrupted elite of Stanley.

Regardless of the similarities, however, there remain fundamental ontological differences that prevents a unifying theory of populism's understanding of 'the people', if we work within this framework only. For instance, Freeden's commitment to a highly formalist, liberal approach to the study of political thinking and ideologies, upon which the Critical Approaches

to the study of populism generally coalesce and make reference, clashes with Laclau's refusal to ground the subject in any foundationalist worldview. But whilst the differences between the two approaches as methodological and ontological gaps remain significant, the two most important points to draw from this chapter are thus: first, 'the people' remains a privileged and essential component of populism, whilst attempts to engage with the populist *understanding* of the people are limited and highly structured by those ontological presumptions; and second, 'decontestation' is an important element in identifying the conditions within which the construction of concepts takes place. This second point requires some elaboration: 'decontestation', understood by both Laclau and Freeden, is an inevitably incomplete process, and so understanding the (always contingent) decontestation of a concept at any moment requires an awareness of the history of that concept, and therefore the intellectual conditions of the decontestation in question. It is here that we can return to the two questions that shape this thesis: first, how does populism understand the identity of the people? And second, what are the condition that make populism a conceivable phenomenon?

Spatiality

> "Every new age and every new epoch in the coexistence of peoples, empires, and countries, of rulers and power formations of every sort, is founded on new spatial divisions, new enclosures, and new spatial orders of the earth."
>
> -Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europeaum*, p. 79

Questions on populism, and indeed many questions on democratic politics, often focus on the phrase 'who are the people?'. This is a salient question, and the underlying concern of this thesis is to attempt to understand populism's answer to this question; however, another equally salient question, is '*where* are the people?'. After all, the myth of democratic politics requires a suspension of disbelief in the people as an acting body as one that is 'neither in permanent session nor available for emergency recalls' (Weale, 2018: 110). However, this is not, in Albert Weale's words, a 'modern myth', but one that has its roots in the Greek Pnyx, agora, and *polis* (Cartledge, 2016: 55, 113; Ober, 2017: 19).[4] The inability of the entirety of a political community to inhabit a single space has resulted in a proliferation of answers as to where the spatial boundaries of that community lie, including kingship, representation, and limits to the size of that community.

My concern in this chapter is the preinstitutional question of a *people's* relationship to space, and populism's unique understanding of that relationship. This relies on an implicit, but not always clear distinction between the state, and the people over whom that state governs. For instance, the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States laid out the criteria for statehood, with four necessary components: a permanent population; a defined territory; a government; and the capacity to enter relations with other states. What is

[4] This problem of the 'acting body' is one that I address in my fourth chapter, 'Corporality'. There have been a multitude of answers to the question of how the people can be depicted as an acting body whilst respecting the practical and moral autonomy of individual members; however, this question is deeply tied to the notion of that acting body's geographic limits or identity, and so it makes sense to deal with the topics sequentially.

particularly revealing, in my analysis, is that the Convention specified 'population' and 'territory' as *separate entities*. This is revealing for two reasons: first, that it shows their importance as concepts in the preinstitutional foundations of statehood; and second, there is a clear conceptual separation between a people and a territory. This might seem intuitive, but this was not always the case; indeed, as this chapter traces, there were many thinkers who saw a people and the space it inhabits as intrinsically connected. It is in relation to this point that Stilz, in her work (2009, 2019), has attempted to defend territory as a necessary *moral* component to the existence of states in informing the identity of the population of that state.

What also confronts studies of populism and peoplehood, however, is the ancillary association of a state, people and space in the dominant idea of nationhood and the nation-state. Typically, 'the *people as nation* claimed their right to self-rule as a special, distinct collectivity – but did so in terms that linked nation, republic and sovereignty to *people in general*, the bearers of universal natural rights' (Canovan, 2005: 27). However, in attempting to disentangle the oft-confused monikers of 'nationalism' and 'populism', Benjamin de Cleen has proposed that 'it will be helpful to think about the structure of nationalist discourse in spatial terms; this will also help to distinguish it from populism', because the basis of the nationalist in-group/out-group distinction is 'shared time… space… and the shared language, customs, etc. that follow from this'. Instead, he claims, populism works from an up-down distinction that defines 'the people' in opposition to the 'elites' (2017: 344-5). This distinction is too simple for two reasons: one, the genealogical relationship between 'people' and 'space' is more complex and historically weighted than de Cleen recognises; and two, whilst nationalism may put *more* emphasis on the territorial basis of in-group/out-group distinctions, that does not remove the possibility of populism's own spatialisation. Furthermore, the conceptual elision of 'space' and 'territory' masks a major distinction made in the field of political geography (Elden, 2013: 4-5):

> The first thing to note with regard to territoriality is that unlike, say, "spatiality", which is generally understood as a property or condition of space, something pertaining to it, territoriality has today a rather more active connotation… Space is, for Raffestin, the anterior term, because territory is generated from space, through the actions of an actor, who "territorialises" space.

To talk of 'territory' only, then, is to talk of institutional politics, and acting bodies capable of that territorialisation. However, the corporal problem of a people as an acting body capable of territorialising space leads us into an ouroboric problem: does a people in a space act to territorialise it, or does a space territorialise a people?

By shifting our focus to a preinstitutional relationship of a people to a space, we can do two things: one, proceed in a more logical manner to understanding populism's understanding of the people by disentangling its corporality from its spatial element; and two, avoid the conceptual elision between territory and statehood, and space and peoplehood, that leads into an infinite regress of 'who came first?'

Although my consideration in this chapter is the theorisation of the relationship between *people* and space, the political entity of the state has been rightly pointed out as relying heavily on a territorially bounded conception of its existence (Braddick, 2000; Strayer, 2016); consequently, in the emergence of the nation-state as a political entity, nationalism came to take on the spatial element of the state more solidly, as David Miller has observed, stating that one aspect of national identity 'is that it connects a group of people to a particular geographical place, and here again there is a clear contrast with most other group identities that people affirm… a nation, in contrast, must have a homeland'. Moreover, 'it is this territorial element that has forged the connection between nations and states, since as we have already noted a state is precisely a body that claims legitimate authority over a geographical area' (2009: 24-25).

However, Bernard Yack argues that a conceptual separation between nation and people is inherent in the modern state, writing that modernity relies on 'a relatively new image of the people, one that emerges in response to the modern state's extraordinary concentration of power'. Consequently, (2015: 98):

> This is the image of the people as the group from which all legitimate authority is derived and to which it returns with the dissolution of government. While this image of the people is easy to confuse with the older republican or democratic image of the people as the body that determines the will of a political community, it is in fact an invention of early modern political thought. It envisions the people as the ultimate source of political authority and judge of how it has been used, rather than as its wielder, as the constituent rather than the governmental sovereign.

Whilst Yack considers this to be the populist image of the people, the polysemic ambiguity in the supposed interchangeable terms of 'people' and 'nation' means there is a very real possibility we are examining the same concept in different ways, which results in a dilemma; are 'nationalism' and 'populism' really only two different expressions of the same referent, or is there a more substantive distinction that can be made between the two?

To consider this question, Margaret Moore's *A Political Theory of Territory* helps to outline a contemporary account of the pre-institutional ownership of property, in which she contends (2015: 3):

> Political scientists operating within the general field of international relations typically begin by noting that it is inherent in state sovereignty that it involves political authority over a territory (a geographical domain), and while they theorize extensively the relations between such sovereign units, the territorial dimension of sovereignty is rarely questioned, or theorized.

Consequently, building from Miller's triangulation, Moore notes that 'when we think of territory, we tend to think of it as involving a triangular relationship between three key elements: (1) a piece of land, (2) a group of people residing on the land, and (3) a set of political

institutions that govern the people within the geographic domain' and that *any* persuasive theory of territory 'should have a coherent and persuasive account of the territorial right-holder, or collective agent'. Here, Moore argues that it is the people 'defined in non-cultural terms', that remains the right-holder (2015: 8-9).

Moore rejects the proprietarian conception of state-based territoriality, as 'there are no conceptual resources to consider the wishes and well-being of the people who live on the territory' as the primary relationship was between 'the sovereign and his/her territory, conceived of as a kind of property, and no integral relationship was established between the people and political authority, or people and territory'. Instead, Moore argues, 'we can trace the beginnings of the self-determination idea of territory at least from 1791. In article II.2 of the 1791 Constitution of France, the sovereign is described in a way that relates him primarily to the people, rather than to the territory'. This 'incidental perspective' is contingent on a series of theoretical distinctions between a political community and the place that community merely happened to inhabit, but the important semiotic shift is that 'the main legitimating relationship is with the people, and that the geographical domain is determined by the area occupied by the people' (2015: 25).[5]

It is Moore's emphasis on 'the people' that is salient. She argues, 'territory, on the jurisdictional authority view, is the geographical domain in which (ideally) the people express their will through institutions' and 'there is a contingent relationship between the people and the state in the sense that the people, as a collective agent, can preexist the state and they can survive the state (if it collapses)' (2015: 27-28). Following this emphasis on the pre-institutional entity, 'the people', Moore then seeks to define the *collective moral right* of occupancy, arguing

[5] Historically speaking, this is not entirely factual: much debate was had by the French Revolutionaries over the 'natural' boundaries of 'la France', with many settling on the Rhine as the 'natural frontier' of either *la République* or *la patrie* (McPhee, 2016: 267-268). Furthermore, as I argue throughout this chapter, there is no clear transitory moment from one perspective to the other, but instead a perennial tension that political actors and theorists refer to at different times, perhaps strategically.

'people form relations and attachments with others in a particular place,' and 'people's aims and activities often rely on background assumptions about the physical place that they live' (2015: 38). In this way, Moore places an emphasis on settled places as a *shared* location, arguing that (2015: 40):

> many of the collective identities that people have as members of groups are not free-floating identities but are located in a specific place. The group's way of life and identity and history are bound up with the specific geographical area, and the members of the group are attached to a specific area, which is the locus of their plans and projects. Occupancy rights, which attach to groups, give the group that same rights that attach to individuals… but they are not merely an aggregative form of individual residency rights.

From this, Moore argues that members of a community have an *interest* in controlling the place 'which they live in and are attached to. Just as expulsion from a place is disruptive to people's plans and projects and relationships, including relationships to a place, so transformation of the place in ways that the person, or the community, *does not control*, can also make the person insecure and feel not 'at home' in their own community' (2015: 43-44).

This is significant for our discussion on populism, but what is more important is Moore's attempt to define 'a people'. Moore defines a people as a 'collective agent' that meets three satisfactory criteria: (1) they must 'share a conception of themselves as a group' either presently, or desiring to be, engaged in a common political project; (2) a 'capacity to establish and maintain political institutions' is necessary to achieve that common political project; and (3) there should be a 'a history of political cooperation together'. With these conditions Moore lays out, the result is that ''peoplehood', as distinct from other social groups or types of collective agents, is defined not simply in terms of a shared 'we', but by a *relationship marked by a shared aspiration to exercise collective self-government*', for which there must be a capacity, and 'a 'people' that is entitled to exercise collective self-determination (over a

territory) is not a collection of individuals, but a group whose shared identity has been forged and maintained by actual historical relations' (2015: 50-52).

Here we can draw a conclusion regarding Moore's contemporary theory of the spatial element of 'a people', that the question of a state's right to occupation of a territory must rest on an entity prior to itself; the people. The answer as to what kind of relationship exists between the people and the state to whom it transfers its jurisdiction, presented by Moore, is one of a *collective moral right* rather than an aggregation of individual rights, based in the three points of an internal relationship within the people, a relationship between the people and the land, and the aspiration of the people to self-government. In that regard, this chapter examines the two most prominent conceptualisations of that collective moral right that has persisted through history: the Intrinsic Perspective, that a clear relationship exists between a people and a *specific* space; and the Incidental Perspective, that while a people must exist in the physical world, the space they occupy is neither specific, nor bounded, but elastic and incidental. Each of these conceptualisations, it must be specified, are not concerned with how far space matters; as I show, space *does* matter to each of them in different ways, but it is the relationship between that space and the *identity* of the people that is at question.

The Intrinsic Perspective

One of the two most dominant perspectives on the spatiality question is what I term the Intrinsic Perspective. What matters in this perspective is that the place is *specific*; it is not that a people possess an identity in any space, but in a determined location; whether this is for religious, cultural or historical reasons, the Intrinsic Perspective holds that the specificity of a particular space is essential to a group's identity. While it is always treacherous footing to talk of the 'origins' of ideas, the first recorded expressions and clearest elucidations of the implications of this perspective are to be found in Ancient Greece, both in political and cultural

writings (Saxonhouse, 2009). The emergence of the Intrinsic Perspective can be understood through the examination of two interrelated concepts: first, the semi-religious 'founding-myths' of the autochthony; and second, the etymological connection between a space and a people.

As Arlene Saxonhouse has pointed out, part of the disconnect in understanding between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns' is the modern preoccupation with beginnings, normally the 'process of constitution making, the creation of institutions, and legal safeguards'.[6] Importantly, Saxonhouse notes that 'it is only with the emergence of constitutions derived from "popular will" that there is the radical shift from ends to beginnings' (2009: 42, 46). What is significant is the alternative understanding of political communities as directed towards ends which, famously, is part of what informs Aristotle's concern with the *telos* of man and the focus on virtue. What matters for our discussion, however, is what the absence of an examination of political beginnings means in the pre-Aristotelian Greek world: specifically, the 'founding-myth' of *autochthony*.

Autochthony, properly understood, was the belief that the *polis* of Ancient Greece came into being at the exact moment that a race of people emerged from the literal ground on which that *polis* would be founded. This founding-myth reflected the belief in pre-Aristotelian Greece that, in the words of Plato in the *Menexenus* (1929, 237b-c):

> The forefathers of these men were not of immigrant stock, nor were these their sons declared by their origin to be strangers in the land sprung from immigrants, but natives sprung from the soil living and dwelling in their own true fatherland; and nurtured also by no stepmother, like other folk, but by that mother-country wherein they dwelt, which bare them and reared them and now at their death receives them again to rest in their own abodes.

[6] The significance of temporal understandings of political and pre-political communities is explored further in the following chapter, in which I focus on the implications for populism's concern with distinct 'beginnings' to communities.

Not alone was Plato in such a noble lie; Isocrates too claimed that 'we [Athenians] are a lineage so noble and pure that we have for all time continued in possession of the very land which gave is birth, since we are autochtonous' (cited in Elden, 2013: 22). The conscious use in literary and political writings of the autochthony myth reveals the extent to which identity was intimately bound-up with a specific place; in addition, as Elden writes, 'the theme of autochthony is useful in a number of ways. First, and as noted above, it provides a unity to the polis. Second, the boundaries of the polis are set by nature rather than human agreements. The polis is natural, rather than set in opposition to nature. Third, the land is seen to belong to the people by right, by birth' and, consequently, 'the polis must be understood in a dual sense – as the site where the action takes place and as the people who live there' (2013: 25-26, 29).

This dual understanding is merely two sides of the same coin: *polis* was taken to refer to both a specific area of land and the people who occupied it *simultaneously*; 'as settlement a *polis* consisted of houses; as community it consisted of people: one is a concrete physical sense, the other more abstract and personal'. However, there is still a certain ambiguity in the usage of *polis* in reference to space, specifically: whilst the symbiosis of 'people' and 'city' is reasonably incontestable, the relationship between that city and its surrounding land is less certain. The ambiguity of the word *chora* is indicative of this, with it meaning either territory when *polis* means 'state', or hinterland when *polis* means 'city' (Hansen, 2006: 56-57). Though a discussion on the *polis* as an incorporation of the people pre-empts part of Chapter Four on Corporality, the significance of the pre-Aristotelian elision of people and space cannot be overestimated. Though Paul Cartledge dates the emergence of this particular sense of the word to the mid-seventh century BC, the pre-*polis* nature of Ancient Greece still understood a people to be rooted in a specific place, which carried over with the reforms undertaken by Cleisthenes (or Kleisthenes). Under such reforms, for instance, 'the new basis of citizenship was enrolment in a deme: confusingly, the same word *demos* as in 'People' here meant 'village' or 'ward'

(2016: 37, 66-7). What matters is the natural assumption that a political community was *both* the people and the space they inhabited. Stretching as far back as Homer, 'it is clear that the term *demos* – like *polis* – has a meaning of both a particular place and the community within it' (Elden, 2013: 37).

It is unclear, however, how far this spatiality extended; as noted above the ambiguous relationship between a *polis* and its *chora* (or *khora*) poses a problem for how far a *polis* could be clearly aligned with a territory. Although, what makes this ambiguity a little clearer, is the working presumption within Plato's works. In *Republic*, for instance, Plato inevitably draws on the myth of autochthony as the inspiration for his 'noble lie' (Elden, 2013: 40-41); what is significant for our discussion, is Plato's own use of the Republic as an extended metaphor for living the Good Life, in that the internal morality of the *polis* is the tool to then return to the internal morality of the individual (1994: 328d). But Plato's concern with autochthony goes further than *Republic*: he writes in *The Laws* that a newly-founded *polis* must have at least enough land for it to be reasonably self-sufficient. The Athenian Stranger elaborates on the new *polis* of Magnesia that 'the citizens must make a distribution of land and houses; they must not farm in common' but 'should regard it as the common possession of the entire state. The land is his ancestral home and he must cherish it even more than children cherish their mother' (1970: 739e-740a).

What must be noted here is the reasonable absence of a claim to autochthony, by virtue of the act of founding a new colony (*apoika*). As there is a clear spatial disconnect between the *metropolis* (mother-city) and the colony, autochthony as specifically a founding-myth runs into obvious logical shallow waters. However, in many ways this allowed the more normative elements of autochthony to be emphasised, as a certain form of connection between the settlers and the *metropolis*, emphasising their claim to Greekness in their temporal continuity over their

spatial continuity.[7] The key point here is the immediate presumption in the act of colonisation that the settlers will establish a *polis* and divide the land accordingly, and not take any other action (Elden, 2003: 144). After laying out the prelude to the laws that must be constructed, the Athenian Stranger undertakes a discussion of distribution of land and size of the population (Plato, 1970: 736d, 737e) in the new *polis*; as Elden notes, it is the assumption of the spatiality concept that makes any distinction between *polis* and the land surrounding it (and, we can logically conclude, the people occupying it) 'alien to the discussion' (2013: 39). Instead, the two concepts – land and political community – are commensurate, and one could not exist without the other.

This neat symbiosis of people and space, however, is disentangled in the work of Aristotle; given Aristotle's preeminent role in the history of political thought, this disentanglement is of particular importance. Indeed, it is Aristotle's description of the emergence of the *polis*, both normatively and practically, that is typically taken to be classical definition, and in this regard it is his discussion on Plato's *Laws* that reveals his conceptual separation between people and space; whilst Aristotle believes Plato is right that the foundation of an *apoika* requires both the land (*khoran*) and people (*Anthropos*) but whilst Magnesia is an exercise in idealism, Aristotle warns that a founder 'ought to take note of the neighbouring territories too… [the state] must provide itself with such arms for warfare as are serviceable beyond its borders' (1981: 1265a18). Furthermore, Aristotle's proto-realist approach would result in him emphasising the people over the land: provided that the territory of the state ensures a degree of sufficiency, something that he is particularly sceptical of in Plato's formula (1981: 1265a15), the actual space itself is merely a second-order concern. There is a debate to be had here as to whether Aristotle ought to be included in the Intrinsic Perspective, or if his accordance of priority to

[7] I explore this further in Chapter Three on Temporality, showing the prevalence of an intergenerational community in ancient political thought.

people over space warrants an inclusion in the Incidental Perspective. Indeed, Aristotle states quite explicitly that (1280b29-35):

> It is clear therefore that the state is not an association of people dwelling in the same place, established to prevent its members from committing injustice against each other, and to promote transactions. Certainly all these features must be present if there is to be a state: but even the presence of every one of them does not make a state *ipso facto*.

However, even though Aristotle makes such a statement, he reiterates that 'The state is an association intended to enable its members… to live well… however, this will not be attained unless they occupy one and the same territory and intermarry… for it is our affection for others that causes us to choose to live together' (1280b40). Moreover, later in *The Politics*, he reiterates the point that 'the first part of a state's equipment is a body of men… the second is territory; we shall need to determine both its extent and its character' (1326a7-9).

What then is the origin of this ambiguity between space as both essential and second-order in Aristotle? Quite simply it is because of his specific normative conception of what it meant to be a political citizen: 'it is not enough to say that a citizen is such by *residing in a place*, because foreigners and slaves might share this dwelling place. Rather, a citizen is someone who is eligible to take part in the offices of a *polis*' (Elden, 2013: 45). It is this identity of the *polis* as a *political* community that distinctly marks Aristotle's conception of the role of space out from Plato and his forebears; whilst their concern is with the pre-institutional relationship between a people and a space (and, therefore, pertinent to our discussion), Aristotle is much more concerned with the *polis* as a political route to virtue; but he still retains a practical sense of a space's importance in the formation of a people.

Aristotle, then, offers a useful conceptual break with his forebears, or at least those Greeks who ideationally followed the reforms of Cleisthenes: consensus remains in the study of early Greek *poleis* that a *polis* was a 'politically autonomous community of people living in a defined

territory', in the words of Philip Manville (1990: 53), or a 'a group of citizens established on its territory', as Nicole Loreaux puts it (2000: 49-50). As Elden summarises, 'however their relative importance may be seen, it thus seems evident that both notions of site and community need to be borne in mind when thinking of the *polis*' (2013: 50). Similarly, as Cartledge notes, the *polis* might be better rendered as 'citizen-state' and *not* 'city-state', given that '*poleis* (plural) were not necessarily or indeed often highly urbanised affairs, and Greeks spoke of these political entities as (say) 'the Athenians', not 'Athens', since they took the view that 'men are the *polis*', meaning by 'men' adult male full citizens' (2016: 15).

In many ways, this conceptual distinction between people and space in Aristotle's thought coincides with both the historical decline of the city-state *polis* and the rise of the territorial state (Cartledge, 2016: 231; Cartledge, 2019: 222-223). The emergence of the Macedonian Empire, Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire, and the eclipse of the Hellenic world by the Roman Empire, undid much of the close conceptual relationship between 'people' and 'space', due in part to the Roman perspective that the boundaries of the Republic, and then the Empire, were not permanent, but only ever temporary limits that would be overcome in future expansions (Kratochwil, 1986: 35-36). That being said, there remained a concept in Roman thought of there being *natural* boundaries to a distinct group of people as an ethnic body; in many ways, the Roman world resulted in an inversion of the relationship between the hub of the political community, and the land surrounding it, in that the authority of the Greek *polis* radiated outwards into the *khora*, whilst the Roman administrative approach to land management worked to identify the limits (*fines*) of a people's territory first, and classify those *within* the boundaries after. For instance, 'the unit to which these fines [limits/borders] applied was frequently described by Ceasar as a civitas, a grouping of people within a particular area, which can only be misleadingly translated as "tribe"' whilst 'the conquest of lands was

partnered by a conquest of people, most notoriously the rape of the Sabine women in order to populate and perpetuate the state' (Elden, 2013: 57, 70).

It suffices to say here that 'Roman citizenship [was] no longer limited by, or tied to, territorial boundaries. People anywhere in the world, regardless of geography or ethnicity, [could] find a pathway to Roman citizenship'; of course, this is rhetorical flourish, as well as Emperor Claudius' extension of citizenship to all people within the boundaries of the empire in 212 AD, 'was inextricably linked to the… expansion of the Roman Empire' (Atkins, 2016: 66). It must also be remembered that history is never so neat as to separate ideas completely, and ideas that a people's identity might be tied to a particular space – however loosely – still persisted; for instance, Claude Nicolet observes that 'the beginning of the Empire marks a series of mutations in knowledge, perception and mastery of the space over which power is exercised: both geographical space but also social and political space. In other words, lands and seas, and the people which populate them' (cited in Elden, 2013: 77). It is by the end of the empire, however, and the fracturing of the Western half especially, that 'led to power rooted in diverse places rather than centralised through an imperium that was becoming too large to effectively govern' (Elden, 2013: 94). Consequently, the European world after the Romans was one in which space became significantly marginalised in the concept of peoplehood, and whilst the regionalism that followed the collapse of the imperial administration would lead eventually in the direction of territorial rulership, the relationship between that ruler and his subjects was distinctly *not* territorially defined, and instead one centred on fealty and personal ties (Canning, 1996: 2, 64). It is telling, for instance, that Charlemagne, and many Frankish and German kings following his example, would claim their titles as 'of the Roman people', not of Rome.

The twilight of the Intrinsic Perspective began to wane, however, in the years following the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Politics.* Indeed, both historical fact and developments in political theory precipitated the (re)territorialisation of rulership, and the subsequent association of

people with space: the first was the long-standing tension between universalist and the territorial sovereignty, especially between temporal rulers and the Catholic Church; and the second was the gradual emphasis on specific spatial dimensions of the people over whom rule was exercised. This first tension between the Church and secular princes was, in part, precipitated by the emergence in France of a claim by the French monarchy in general, and Philip IV in particular, to claim leadership over *all who lived within his territory*; the tension was especially revealed in the claim made by Philip to be capable of taxing the members of the clergy within the French kingdom, a claim that Pope Boniface VIII had rejected initially in 1296, but eventually acquiesced to. The significance of this cannot be overstated: whilst 'the principle was reinforced that the king was the supreme judge in secular matters within his kingdom' and 'in this respect *there were no islands of clerical immunity*', Philip's move thus began to undermine the despatialised and universal claims of rulership that underpinned the Catholic Church (Canning, 2009: 140-144). Moreover, the French monarchy claimed its capability to tax the clergy on the basis of the defence of *la patrie* in the war with England; 'in the case of France in the age of Philip the Fair the word patria had actually come to mean the whole realm, and that by this the territorial - perhaps we may even say national - monarchy of France was strong enough and sufficiently advanced to proclaim itself as the communis patria of all its subjects and to demand extraordinary services in the name of the fatherland' (Kantorowitz, 1956: 236-237) and, most significantly (1956: 247-249):

> the loyalty to the new limited territorial patria, the common fatherland of all subjects of the Crown, replaced the supra-national bonds of a fictitious universal Empire… all the… arguments which theologians and jurists had previously put forth to justify on religious and legal grounds the devotion to and death for any patria, were on this occasion, so to speak, drawn together and summed up and placed as a coherent system and consistent ideology in the service of a clearly defined patria: the national monarchy of France.

It must be remembered here, this is not a continent-wide transformation, but was specifically limited to the French kingdom; but what is undeniably significant is the presumption of territorial loyalty prior to the personalised loyalty of the universal Church. It is telling that, in a tract intended to defend Philip in his tension with Boniface, the theologian John of Paris defined Kingship, in 1303, in the following terms: 'it is clear that it is necessary and useful for man to live in a multitude and especially in one which can suffice for all the purposes of life, like a city or a region, and especially under the rule for the common good by one man' (cited in Canning, 2009: 145-146).

Whilst the historical fact of Philip and Boniface's conflict influenced the theoretical output of those such as John of Paris, Baldus de Ubaldis (1327-1400), was particularly concerned with the 'city-populus' as a specific political entity. Importantly, whilst Baldus' thought is concerned with corporational entities, the subject of Chapter Four, we can still draw out of his thinking the recurring significance of a spatialised people for political rulership. Furthermore, Baldus' thought presents an important pivot for the purposes of our discussion, specifically 'the acceptance that universally sovereign authorities, in the form of the emperor and the pope, coexist with territorially sovereign entities' (Canning, 1987: 17). The reassertion of the spatial element, but in concert with a broad acceptance of the universal authority of both emperor and pope, shows us the ambiguous and indeterminate role that territory would play in Western political thought over the next half-millennium. Indeed, as I show in the following section, part of the European strategy of colonialism was to emphasise the despatialised relationship between people and government to facilitate the spread of empire and ensure sovereignty stretched across territory; the practical circumstances in which Baldus was writing, however, preceded this period, and was marked instead by the withering away of the papal-imperial relationship, 'a Europe in which territorial states were becoming more consolidated', and the Holy Roman Empire was increasingly considered to be German, not universal. As a result, whilst Baldus

stressed papal majesty (*maiestus*) as universal, he made the sharp contrast between majesty and administration (*administratio*); in doing so, Baldus remarks that the papacy 'concedes' authority in administration to territorially defined kingdoms and cities (Canning, 1987: 45-46).

This is not, however, quite a simplistic return to the Cleisthenian symbiosis of people and place, and still very much relies on an 'acting body' capable of territorialisation. Regardless, as he was very much aware of the tension between territorial, secular rulers and the universal papacy, Baldus' understanding of territory as a key component to a 'sovereign citizen-body' is particularly indicative of a spatial turn in political thought (Canning, 1987: 185). This is especially true as Baldus places emphasis on space as a key marker of a *people's* identity; Elden notes that 'alongside the territorial dimension, Baldus stresses the importance of the people, and the endurance of the arrangements beyond the lives of those ruling it', and 'the crucial step that Baldus takes is that the *populus* itself is a territorial entity, defined in its corporate state by its bounds. Territory is thus not just the limit of the jurisdiction but its very definition' (2013: 231-232). Whilst this allows Baldus to extend the autonomy of the city into corporational theories, the significance is that 'the sovereign city replaces the emperor within its territory. Territory defines as much as it limits a city's sovereignty. In the gaps left by the effective retreat of universal imperial authority in northern and central Italy there has emerged a plurality of powers whose sovereignty or autonomy must by definition be territorial' (Canning, 1987: 127). Additionally, Baldus would treat 'kingdoms within the overall *de iure-de facto* structure which he had applied to cities. According to Baldus, peoples, deriving their origin from the *ius gentium*, could on this basis by the exercise of their natural reason establish, through election, their form of government' (Canning, 2009: 171).

Of course, the historical tension of territorial versus universal authority was settled in favour of the territorial unit at the Peace of Westphalia – or so the story goes. As Derek Croxton writes, 'anyone who studies the treaties [of Osnabrück and Münster] in detail comes away

disappointed' and, whilst no clear statement was made of this kind, the general presumption of the Peace of Westphalia was the establishment (or, more accurately, the conciliation) of a system of sovereign states in which 'each recognises the others as the final authorities *within their given territories*' (1999: 569-570). As recent literature has revealed, the Peace of Westphalia was one step in a long path to the bounded territorial states we take for granted today – an important step, but a step, nonetheless; for instance, in the Holy Roman Empire, 'political theorists agreed that the estates exercised sovereignty as a group within the Reichstag. However inefficient and ineffective collective action in the Empire became, the Empire remained a collective sovereign entity' (1999: 574). What cohered with this historical development, however, was a flowering of theorisations regarding the importance of space in relation to the people who occupied it as a prior condition to government; Thomas Hobbes, for instance, noted that in the absence of a social contract, 'the Dominion followeth the Dominion of the place of his residence. For the Sovereign of each Country hath Dominion over *all that reside therein*' (2017: 165).

The thinker I believe offers a unique perspective on the relationship between *people* and place that I wish to explore, that is usually neglected in the literature on populism, is of the Baron de Montesquieu. Montesquieu's famous *Spirit of the Laws* is notable for many innovative ideas, least of all the close relationship between the spirit of a people and the climate in which they lived. Whilst this concept is closely associated with Montesquieu, however, he was neither the first nor the last to make such connections and major emphasis was placed on this idea by colonial explorers setting out from Europe. Moreover, whilst this climatic theory has fallen out of favour in academic circles, it is my contention that populism uses a specific form of this thought in its construction of the people.

Laws, argued Montesquieu, are – or ought to be – an expression of the spirit of the people for whom they should be shaped. In this respect, laws, taken to mean the 'political forms and

institutions of a country' were 'dependent on the "spirit" of the regime and its physical and historical circumstances' (Himmelfarb, 2010: 161). In this respect, book XIV of *The Spirits of the Laws* lays out the origins of that spirit: for instance, Chapter II opens with (2011: 84):

> A cold air constringes the extremities of the internal fibres of the body; this increases their elasticity, and favours the return of the blood from the extreme parts to the heart. It contracts those very fibres; consequently, it increases also their force. On the contrary, a warm air relaxes and lengthens the extremes of the fibres; of course, it diminishes their force and elasticity.

The entirety of that Chapter is dedicated to laying out the empirical nature of such a connection between climate and physical action, before turning in later Chapters to the relationship between that action and laws. Montesquieu, it must be remembered, is not arguing for climatic determinism, but rather for a recognition of the influences of climate and the need for good laws to remedy them (2011: 86). To that end, in Book XIX, Montesquieu abstracts such influence to the 'general Spirit of Mankind', where he observes that 'men are influenced by various causes', the *foremost* of which is 'the climate' (2011: 112). The priority cannot be overstated here: Montesquieu clearly believes that human society, as a *natural* phenomenon, arises 'as a result of biological laws as naturally as do flocks of birds', lending his vision of society a specifically organological dimension (Berlin, 1979: 139). This notion of the *causes physiques* (physical causes) is summarised by Paul Rahe as 'the impact of climate on human physiology; speculating as to its importance for the shaping of the laws more generally; and then exploring the manner in which the climate can encourage and perhaps even dictate the establishment of slavery, the subjection of women, and the institution of despotism'. For example, Rahe notes, 'men who lived in cooler climates have a great deal 'more vigour' than those who live in warmer climes', where the heat 'produces in human beings 'a very great faintness of heart'' (2009: 153, 155-156).

As I say above, Montesquieu was not the first thinker to associate the climate with the spirit of a people; in many ways, Montesquieu merely represented the typical Enlightenment rationalisation of antecedent thought. What matters, however, is the tendency to associate an identity of a people with the space they inhabited in a deeper manner than mere physical proximity; indeed, Laura Benton observes that, throughout the European colonial experience, the association between types of land and climate, and the capacity of the inhabits to civilise, was almost taken for granted. For instance, the region of Asunción in Paraguay was associated with 'stories about the innate rebelliousness of Asunción – not of the people, but of the place, which seemed to turn outsiders like Antequera into insurgents'; similarly, in the British Raj, associations were made between 'the plains and high plateaus with civility, royal control, and church authority, while painting the highlands as places good for sheltering heretics and forming horizontal solidarities', whilst the Spanish territories, especially New Mexico, further entrenched the 'classical and medieval notions of the link between settlement and civility', a link which, as I have laid out in this chapter, goes deeper than 'civility' and extends into what we might term 'civilisability', or a capacity for civilisation (2010: 89-90, 228-233).

Moreover, this moralisation, not of the space itself, but of the connection between those who inhabit the space and the physical land, had long been the logic behind the English and American yeomanry, the notion that 'the ability of the people to exercise sovereignty and control their government rested on the righteousness, independence, and military might of the yeoman farmer, the man who owned his own land, made his living from it, and stood ready to defend it and his country by force of arms'. It was believed, quite simply, that 'the strength of the king, it was argued, came from the strength of his people, and the strength of the people came from the security of their own property' (Morgan, 1988: 153-155). This is not quite the climatic theory of Montesquieu, but it is remarkably similar in associating a particular construction of a people through their relationship to the physical land which they inhabit.

Here, we can summarise the presumptions that have lain behind this morphing perspective. To begin, in the pre-Aristotelian, Cleisthenian-period Greek world, *autochthony* allowed the Hellenic world to depict the origins of political order as intrinsically connected to the people and the place understood as two dimensions of a single organ, expressed in the unit of the *polis*. Whilst Aristotle's work conceptually separated the two dimensions, they remained symbiotically associated in such a way that, as I show above, Aristotle could not conceive of one without the other. Furthermore, once the Roman conception of citizenship, which I explore in the following section, worked to decouple the two further, it was the rise of the city-*populus* and the emphasis placed on this by Baldus de Ubaldis, that reintroduced the people as a pre-institutional entity, capable of acting and being acted upon. The final figure whose thought I considered, the Baron de Montesquieu, showed the high point of Enlightenment rationalism's approach to the association between place and people, in emphasising the influence of climate on spirit. This association, however, was not introduced by Montesquieu, nor was it confined to his work only; the colonial association between space and a people's capacity for civility reflects an underlying assumption, especially in European polities, of a close relationship between space and people. As I show in Section III, the moralisation of space as conceived by Montesquieu and similar thinkers has largely declined, but the use of space to delineate between peoples has persisted in similar ways. What is important to conclude from this section, is the unifying theme of the Intrinsic Perspective: that the space a people occupies is a necessary and essential element of their singular identity, and to abstract that people from the space they occupy is for them to lose a key component of their identity. Section III returns to this point regarding populist spatiality, but here it is worth stressing that this is the reason I have termed this as the *Intrinsic Perspective*: the space occupied is not merely *where* that 'people' is, but it is a factor in determining *who* that 'people' is.

The Incidental Perspective

This section is concerned with what I term the 'Incidental Perspective', the view that the connection between a people and the place they inhabit is not essential to the formation of that people's identity. Of course, human beings as physical beings are necessarily *in* the world and therefore occupy *a* space but, in this perspective, the space occupied does not form an integral part of a people's identity. This is not to deny the influence that space might have; this is why I chose to term the perspective as 'Incidental Perspective' because, contrary to the unifying theme of the Intrinsic Perspective, the unifying theme of the Incidental Perspective is that 'the people' would have the same identity *wherever it find itself*. In the same way we cannot talk of the 'origins' of the Intrinsic Perspective, so too we cannot with the Incidental Perspective. This being said, however, the perspective has as long a legacy, if not older; in the Old Testament of the Bible, for instance, the Book of Exodus discusses the departure of Israel *from* Egypt (King James Bible, 1997: Exodus, 12:30-51), which reveals the concept of both the spatialised, Intrinsic Perspective (Egypt as a rooted place) and the despatialised, Incidental Perspective (Israel as a people distinct from place); and just as the Biblical stories show the presence of the Incidental Perspective, so too have studies of the Native American peoples, nomadic tribes in the Russian steppes, and Bedouin Arabs. What matters for us, however, is the presence of this thought in *political* theory; and just as the previous section explored the prevalence of the Intrinsic Perspective in the Greek world, this section begins by looking at the transition from spatialised politics to empire in the late-Roman Republic.

Whilst the previous section noted the Roman tendency to associate bodies of people with natural geographic limits – the 'Germans' essentially being people East of the Rhine, for instance – the political system of empire did not 'think of themselves as coexisting alongside other units that together make up a wider *territorial system*… the empire does not allocate authority according to recognised territorial boundaries, and it does not organise people into

distinct, partly closed jurisdiction' (Stilz, 2019: 4). Internally, however, political theory in the late Republic reveals an understanding of the relationship between a people and the space they inhabit. Cicero, for example, introduced an early form of the concept of the state of nature into Republican constitutionalism, and thus taking a radical shift away from the Greeks by depicting a *pre-political* man, something Aristotle would have considered absurd. Importantly, the idea of some things being held 'in common' in Cicero's works reveals a moment of transformation from a mere multitude to a people, by virtue of their shared world, a world that exists 'prior to that establishment [of a commonwealth] and re-emerge in times of collapsing institutions' (Straumann, 2016: 163-165). What Straumann is most concerned to show, moreover, is the difference between Ciceronian (and by extension, Republican Roman) thought and Platonic or Aristotelian thought: in Cicero's *Republic*, for example, he delineates between republics and other forms of political association on the condition of a 'real' public, which is 'not every kind of human gathering, congregating in any manner, but a numerous gathering brought together by legal consent and community of interest'. However, in a similar way to Aristotle's conceptual separation, Cicero observes that it is only once this community has been formed, that they *then* 'founded a settlement in a fixed place for the purpose of building houses' (2008: 19, 1:39-40). It is this sequential relationship, however, that undoes the symbiosis of Greek thought in two respects: the first is the presumption that there exists the possibility of a distinct political world that *follows* a people and the second is, due to Cicero's normative assumption that property rights are the justifying method of a state emerging – on the basis that they are pre-political (Straumann, 2016: 165, 185-187) and 'citizenships were constituted especially so that men could hold onto what was theirs' (Cicero, 2001: 79-80, 2:73) – it places emphasis on the necessity of a *bounded space* as anterior to that political world. In other words, there is a clear sequential process that follows the founding of a community, to the settlement of that community in a space, to the emergence of a political order, and deliberately in that order. No

longer is the symbiosis of *autochthony* countenanced, nor is the *polis* as the citizen-state understood in the same way.

It was in the decline of the Republic, and the emergence of the Empire, however, that the extension of Roman citizenship radically altered the relationship between people and space, especially since 'Rome' was both the physical city *and* the empire as a whole; indeed 'empire' as a form of political association *relies* on despatialisation and instead a much more direct relationship between ruler and ruled. Anthony Pagden, for instance, notes that the Roman Empire was frequently conceived of as the empire *of the Roman people*, stating that 'as it grew the Roman empire increasingly became less a people with a standing army than a population in arms' (2001: 30, 35). A second-century poet, Aristides, made such a point in his oration to the Roman People (cited in Atkins, 2016: 66):

> Neither sea nor intervening continent are bars to citizenship, nor are Asia and Europa divided in their treatment here. In your empire all paths are open to all. No one worthy of rule or trust remains an alien, but a civil community of the world has been established as a free Republic under one, the best, ruler and teacher of order; and all come together as into a common civic center [*sic*] in order to receive each man his due. What another city is to its own boundaries and territory, this city is to the boundaries and territory of the entire civilised world.

It is the emphasis placed on 'a civil community of the world' that is particularly revealing: Rome saw its boundaries as temporary, based on an 'ideology which aimed at world domination,' such that 'by the time Augustus came to power "the World" – the *orbis terrarium* – and the empire had come to be identified as one' (Pagden, 2001: 42).

However, it was the decline of the Western Roman Empire and the waves of migration and invasion that both fractured the previously-unified conception of a single Roman 'people' – no matter how diluted it may have been (Atkins, 2016: 67) – and contributed to the Incidental Perspective's prevalence. What is interesting is the despatialisation of the Roman Empire somewhat turned in on itself with the increasing regionalisation of post-imperial Europe, as

rulership adopted a more direct relationship. Joseph Strayer describes notes that in early Medieval societies 'there was a strong sense of reciprocal obligation among those who knew each other personally, *but this sense of obligation faded rapidly with distance*… some, which lasted longer in time, moved about fantastically in space; in a few generations the kingdom of the West Goths jumped from the region of the Baltic to that of the Black Sea to that of the Bay of Biscay' (2016: 3-4, 13). Evidently, rather than a claim to universal rulership, 'kingdoms' had to rely on immediacy, with a tight-knit community as the focus of its power, distinctly unconnected from a specific space (Canning, 2009: 2, 16-18). This is not to say there was not a transition to territorial rulership; indeed, Benjamin de Carvalho notes the shift in Tudor England from individuals as 'subjects of the king' to 'subjects of the realm' (2016: 59-60). What de Carvalho reminds us, however, is that 'territory' and 'inhabitants' were distinct concepts, each experiencing a history independent from the other, and by eliding the two, 'it brackets out the historicity of people and the forging of ties of political subjecthood. They are assumed to follow into the fold of the state as an epiphenomenon of the process of territorialisation', an assumption that is problematic because 'it generates the false assumption that people are brought into the fold of the state, turned into subjects… by an extension of modes and processes of territorial governance' (2016: 64-65).

Furthermore, it was the turn in theoretical writings to a despatialised conception of people that marked the Medieval period, especially in the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo, who most clearly defined a people as 'a fellowship of a multitude of rational being united through sharing in an agreement about what it loves' (1994: 162, XIX:24). This definition is important for what it *lacks*, specifically *any mention of place*; as Etienne Gilson summarises, 'if the name city means "any group of men united by a common love for some object, we say that there are as many cities as there are collective loves… since there are two loves in man, there should also be two cities to which all other groupings of men are reduced"' (cited in Elden, 2013: 108).

Significantly, the object of love might be a place; but the fact that this is one of any number of options, shows its incidental nature. Moreover, Augustine returned to this question many times (Elden, 2013: 110):

> "What is a city but a group of men united by a specific bond of peace?" "What is Rome without the Romans?" and [Augustine] suggests that a "city is its citizens, not its walls". What we find therefore in Augustine is a continual wish to stress the interpersonal relations constituting political communities rather than their location or the abstract nature of these entities. He tends not to use words like *imperium* and *res publica*, but to talk about emperors and kings.

For Augustine, the association between 'a people', thus defined, does not require a specific space. Moreover, this conceptualisation remained prominent throughout early Medieval political thought, and recurs after; Elden shows that, 'following Augustine, [James of Viterbo] notes that such a community can be of three kinds: household, city, and kingdom… He is at pains to underline that each of these is determined by the people who make it up, rather than the dwelling place, the stones, or the land of kingdom', and just as Augustine separated the 'city' from its 'walls', so too does Viterbo claim that 'a kingdom properly so called is nonetheless an association of peoples and races' (2013: 188).

The recurrence of this perspective, though in continual tension with the Intrinsic Perspective, is evidence of its enduring influence, especially in the age of the rediscovery of Roman Law: for instance, Bartolus of Sessoferrato wrote that a *civitas sibi princeps* ('the city is the prince'). Responding to the concerns of the time, Bartolus was attempting to justify both the practical existence of city-states in Northern Italy, and regard them 'as being their own superiors' (Ryan, 2000: 66). As Elden summarises, '[Bartolus] is taking the notion of land, or land belonging to an entity, as the thing to which jurisdiction applies, thus providing the extent of rule. The *territorium*, then, is not simply a property of a ruler; nor is jurisdiction simply a quality of the *territorium*. Rather, the *territorium* is the very thing over which political power

is exercised; it becomes the object of rule itself' (2013: 221). In other words, it is the city as a legal entity that is the sovereign actor to whom power is attributed. What is most revealing for our concerns here is Elden's comment: 'the *civitas sibi princeps* should be understood to mean "the city is a prince itself," not, as it was later reinterpreted, "the people are the prince"' (2013: 225). The retrospective reading of such a phrase is indicative of the later prevalence of the Intrinsic Perspective, but Elden's study shows us that, at the time of Bartolus' writing, there was a *need* to put into words an otherwise assumed perspective. Similarly, Giovanni Botero later wrote that 'a state is a stable dominion *over people*' and 'a city is said to be an assembly of people… and the greatness of a city is said to be, not the largeness of the site or the circuit of the walls, but the multitude and number of the inhabitants and their power' (cited in Elden, 2013: 269-270). These comments, taken with those of St. Augustine, James of Viterbo, and Bartolus of Sessoferrato, reveal a clear conceptual separation between a physical, juridical entity of the city-as-place, and the abstract notion of the city-as-community in the Medieval period and in Medieval political thought. What is revealing is the manner in which Medieval theorists imagined a place to be the locus of power, *without a definitive connection to those who inhabited it*.

Here, there are two developments in the early modern period that the Incidental Perspective took: one historical, and the other theoretical. The first, the historical development, has been traced by Laura Benton, specifically in regard to the process of European colonisation: in this, says Benton, even by the mid-seventeenth century (2010, 103):

> sovereignty did not have an even territorial or juridical dimension. Instead, sovereign spaces followed corridors of control, from estuary enclaves through river networks, and they depended on reinforcement through the formal incorporation of subjects in political communities, while sheer distance strained ties between subjects and sovereigns.

I think it is reasonable to assert here that, in many ways, the discussion amongst Medieval theorists made possible the transportation of sovereignty into the colonial regions, which were claimed by initially the presence of representatives of the home peoples, and in turn by that 'incorporation of subjects' Benton identifies. Indeed, 'Europeans imaged law as travelling with them along sea routes composing their "tubulous" world. Individuals… did not imagine themselves as cut off from legal authority even when very far from home' (Benton, 2010: 110).

The point to bear in mind here is that the European conception of peoplehood, still somewhat distinct from the still-emerging states of Europe, was not dependent on an immediate and intrinsic connection to any specific space. What is interesting to note is that, as I have shown in Section I, Benton's same work has revealed the European imaginary of the moralisation of space and the influence that plays on the spirit of the people who inhabit it; this might seem contradictory, and indeed in many ways is. However, it is worth bearing in mind that 'Europe' was not a homogenous actor in the colonisation period, and in fact the tension between the two perspectives illustrates my argument regarding the shifting influence of the two. Furthermore, the earlier period of colonisation, a period of time closer to the Medieval theorists than to the Enlightenment figure of Montesquieu, imagined the moralising effects of spaces to be *irrespective* of those who lived there; Asunción, as above, was considered to be a corrupting influence on the Europeans who passed through it, and not merely on those who were born and raised there. It was as time moved on, and the colonists increasingly 'rationalised' their intuitions that the connection between space and civilisation crystalised.

However, even as the process of empire building carried on, there remained a tension with the Intrinsic Perspective, in that there remained 'the understanding that English law extended into sea space in two ways: through the ties of English subjects to their sovereign and through the exercise of a version of jurisdiction over territory' (2010: 128). Arguably, the use of both perspectives was a strategic choice intended to consistently extend English sovereignty in the

development of its empire, but regardless the presence of *both* perspectives is evidence of the Incidental Perspective perspective's continuing influence. Furthermore, such influence was not limited to England alone; 'petitioning the king had long been a prerogative assumed to travel with Spanish subjects and where all kinds of subjects routinely presented appeals to regional high courts' (2010: 182-183). But it was as the pre-eminent power of the nineteenth century that England, and Britain, grappled with the question of imperial *citizenship*, 'that guaranteed British subjects the same rights everywhere in empire', or whether location could also be a factor (2010: 212).

The second, the theoretical development, came with the thinker who represented the high-point of late-Medieval, early modern political philosophy: Jean Bodin. Bodin's famous *Six Letters of the Republic* attempted a systematic understanding of sovereignty that had, thus far, remained underexamined, but what remains noticeably absent from Bodin's conceptualisation of sovereignty was *territory as a component element*. This is not, however, accidental; 'Bodin did not omit territory as a category through some oversight. His view was consistent with an early modern construction of sovereignty as spatially elastic. Because subjects could be located anywhere, and the tie between sovereign and subject was defined as a legal relationship, *legal authority was not bound territorially*' (Benton, 2010: 288).

Benton's claim is not uncontested: Sara Miglietti observes that 'Books 4, 5 and 6 [are] where Bodin discusses crucial issues relating to territory, demographics and territorial expansion'. Despite this, Bodin retains a relatively Augustinian idea of '*la cité*' as a juridical concept with which sovereignty is primarily concerned, contrasted to the physical entity of *la ville*; indeed, Miglietti herself notes that 'spatial unity – the fact of living together in one place, which characterises the *ville* – is *not relevant for defining the cité*, which remains such even when its members are [very far from each other and in several countries]'. We see here a continuation of the argument made by Augustine that 'the city' can be understood in either the

physical or the juridical sense, and the binds between ruler and ruled was not territorially defined but juridically. This is not to say territory was not a concern for Bodin: indeed, he argued that, in the definition of a state, 'territorial extension' belongs to the category of 'what is helpful but not strictly necessary': the place of a state's primary location must be 'of an adequate size for accommodating (and providing for)' its inhabitants' (Miglietti, 2018: 18-24). However, it is this specification – of being helpful but not necessary – that shows clearly the importance spatiality held in Bodin's priorities. Which, in this case, is not really at all.

We can see, therefore, a consistent and significant influence in political theory of the Incidental Perspective on a people's relationship to a place. From as early as the Old Testament, through the rise of the Roman Republic, and then Empire, and gaining prominence mostly in the Medieval period in the struggle to understand from where obligation came in a despatialised world, the Incidental Perspective has remained important. This perspective, moreover, probably would not have enjoyed the legacy it did if it had not been for the colonial period and the necessity in the European imagination to justify the extension of the sovereignty of European powers over vast distances.

Populism and the Boundaries of Community

By now in this chapter, I have done two things: one, presented a theory of territory by Margaret Moore that aims to show why peoplehood theories of pre-institutional territorial ownership are compelling and significant; and two, trace the genealogy of two implicit but heretofore ignored approaches to the relationship between people and space in political thought. These two approaches, the Intrinsic and the Incidental, are not sequential but exist in tension and can alternate in their predominance. For instance, whilst the contemporary political world tends to operate on the presumption of bounded territorial political entities in the form

of nation-states, there have been concurrent political theorists who argue for an international or global perspective that challenges such spatialisation.

It would be misguided, then, to think that populism, as Benjamin de Cleen claims, does not have a perspective on space and peoplehood, or that it merely coheres with a spatial theory such as nationalism (de Cleen and Stavrakakis, 2017); similarly, it is overly simplistic to assume that populism is merely a 'kind of nationalism' in which the terms 'the people' and 'the nation' become synonymous (Stewart, 1969, cited in Brubaker, 2019: 45). Instead, there is a need to understand the spatiality of populism with reference to both theory and genealogy, in order to determine what the spatial perspective of populism is, and how it relates to, *and differs from* the existing perspectives in political thought. After all, as Brubaker notes, '*distinguishing* between populist and nationalist discourses is one thing… *excluding* nationalism from populism by definitionally restricting populism to vertical appeals is another thing altogether' (2019: 53).

First, populism draws on the recognition that territory is important for the self-determination and identity of a people, in the manner outlined by Moore and concurrent with the Intrinsic Perspective, in two regards: first, as Moore stipulates, an identifiable bounded space is a significant component in a political community's capacity for both self-governance and identity, which in turn necessitates a sense of control over that space by that community. As I show in the introduction, Moore conceives of territory as 'the geographical domain in which (ideally) the people express their will through institutions' and, importantly, the people 'as a collective agent… can survive the state (if it collapses)', establishing a clear connection between political self-determination and bounded space that places a people as ontologically prior to the political acting body it takes the form of. Moreover, regarding collective self-determination, Moore asserts that a significant component of peoplehood is 'aspirations to control the basic institutions that govern the collective conditions and *physical location of*

people's lives'. A further, interrelated component is that of 'relationships between people which persist over time and are conceived of as valuable'; though I explore the conceptual issue of a temporal identity of a people in the Chapter on Temporality, for Moore the persistent relationships between people are both constitutive of an identity *and* intricately bound-up with a specific location, as 'the relationships that mark both aspirant and realised political communities are morally valuable in part because they are characterised by agency goods. They are spaces in which members co-create their own political project' (2015: 62-64).

This matters for populism as populism draws from the latent promise within democracy that collective agency can be realised in a political manner, as Canovan shows. However, whilst Moore's theory aligns with a less strict reading of the Intrinsic Perspective, in which a specific space matters to a people's identity, but it is due to historically or geographically shaped practices and not, say, race or autochthony, populism seems to have a stricter approach, or a more conceptually 'thick' relationship between a people and the space it occupies. For instance, whilst populism does not seem to quite reach the intensity of spatiality in autochthony, the emphasis of a *polis* as an autonomous collective living in a *defined territory* is certainly one that seems to carry into modern populist discourses. There is, however, a major conceptual difference: whereas *poleis* were considered to be, as Cartledge shows, 'citizen-states' that suggest all inhabitants are constituents of a spatial identity, populism thrives on an exclusionary dichotomy that is used to denote the *true* people from the intruders, the pretenders, or the usurpers (usually as 'the elites').

In this regard, there is a growing recognition that populism has emerged alongside an increasing divide between those who value a specific, rooted politics, and those who do not, mimicking the tension between the Intrinsic and Incidental Perspectives. For instance, following the British vote to Leave the European Union, David Goodhart's *Road to Somewhere* defined the preceding debate over 'Brexit' in terms of the 'Anywheres' and the 'Somewheres'.

These identities, Goodhart argued, were not necessarily reflective of a material condition, but of a value-divide, in which 'Anywheres' have 'portable 'achieved' identities' whereas 'Somewheres' have ''ascribed' identities… based on group belonging and particular places' (Goodhart, 2017: 3). It is important to note that Goodhart still differentiates within these categories, so they are not monolithic blocs – for instance, Goodhart estimates that three to five per cent of Anywheres are members of the 'Global Village', individuals who 'would support open borders… and are as likely to identify as European or as a citizen of the world as they are British', as well as being 'often secular and mobile and often (though not always) highly successful and are likely to belong to internationalised networks, maybe living in more than one country' (2017: 31). In summary, Anywheres possess 'three defining characteristics': feeling comfortable about the modern world; having a loose and open idea of national identity; and putting liberty before security. Somewheres, on the other hand, are almost (but not quite) mirror-images of Anywheres, in that they do not feel comfortable in the modern world, put fellow citizens first, and are more prepared to sacrifice liberty in favour of security. (2017: 45).

Populists, I argue, line up with the Somewhere identity, mostly reflected in the 'fellow citizens first' attitude, but even this begs the question of *who* the 'fellow citizens' are. For instance, Goodhart argues that 'there is nothing perverse or mean-spirited about… exclusion so long as one accepts the idea that countries belong to their citizens- that existing citizens have a right, through their politicians, to broadly control the character of their society and therefore who joins it and in what numbers' (2017: 117). As I say above, this is indicative of a tension between promises and reality in the view of territory as essential to self-determination, which I explore further below, but whilst the relationship between a people and space in populism is somewhat identifiable, it is still not clear *who* the people are. In order to move towards an answer on this, we can turn to a development in political theory, and populism studies especially, that emphasises 'audience politics' and the performativity of leaders, and consider

how this is a method of constructing the people. For instance, Benjamin Moffittt, in his book *The Global Rise of Populism*, examines the performative element of populism in which (2016: 43):

> 'The people' is both the central audience of populists, as well as the subject that populists attempt to 'render-present' through their performance. 'The people' are also presented as the true holders of sovereignty. This appeal to 'the people' can take many forms, from invocations of 'the people', 'the mainstream', 'the heartland', or other related signifiers, to performative gestures meant to demonstrate populists' affinity with 'the people'.

One of the analytical benefits of examining the performativity of populism, as Moffittt notes, 'brings the issue of how *populist representation* operates to the forefront of any discussion of the phenomenon. By conceptualising populism as a political style, the question is not only *who* the people are, but also *how* the activity of interpellating or 'rendering-present' 'the people' actually occurs' (2016: 49). Audience and performance are significant parts of populism and, to carry the metaphor of 'audience' further, we have to try and understand where that audience is imagined to be; after all, the metaphor of 'audience' implies an interior-exterior distinction that does not *necessarily* lend itself to existing spatial boundaries, but certainly operates in a spatialised discourse, and in the context of populism's spatiality of territory as a site of self-determination. 'Audience' metaphors also allow us to understand that populism does not operate purely on the national level; indeed, it can be local, regional, sub-national, national, and transnational, as populism depends on spatial boundaries that are contingent on the direction populism moves in.

Furthermore, as Nadia Urbinati states, 'populism capitalises on the fact that "the people" – unlike other unifying concepts, such as "the class" and "the nation" – can be entirely constructed by discourses, leaders, and movements' but within this ambiguity there is a typical recognition that '"the People" is generally taken to mean "the overarching authority over a territory,

inclusive of all members of the polity," and the criterion guiding the judgements of legitimacy (of the government)' and whilst this is the aspirational element, '"the people" is taken to mean "the great many as the generic ordinary or those who share in some social or ethnographic condition"' (Urbinati, 2019a: 77-78). Though there is recognition of the people as 'the overarching authority over a territory', the territory is not, as I say above, of a specific type (national, for instance). However, this leads us back into a circular problem akin to that I identified in the introduction to this chapter: which is identified first, the spatial boundaries, or the people who reside within?

This circularity can be broken, I think, by returning to Margaret Canovan's theory of the two faces of democracy as a source of inescapable tension that encourages the populist frustration to emerge and thrive, and applying this to the spatially bounded world in which we currently live. In democracy as it is understood and practiced, there are two 'faces': the 'redemptive' face that contains the promise of self-determination and the capacity to shape the world through political means, especially through mass mobilisation and action; and the 'pragmatic' face that channels that energy into reality but, in the process, must make the necessary compromises that 'constitute [power] and make it effective' (1999: 10). This can be utilised alongside Moore's theory to consider that, the increasing spatialisation of politics historically cohered with the contingent promises of nationalism that aimed to fulfil that very demand Moore identifies: self-determination. Many of Canovan's observations, outlined in the Literature Review, can be applied to a spatialised context: for instance, whilst spatialised politics are a significant component of a political community's capacity to think of its self-determination, and therefore requires the autonomy of the constituent actor of that community over the space defined, this clashes (at times violently) with the reality of international norms and cooperation that limits the capacity of the constituent actor to be sovereign in its own space. In that regard, the tensions inherent in the relationship the *promise* of spatial politics as the site

of self-determination and the *necessities* of international relations can precipitate a breeding ground that populism feeds off. For instance, Inigo Errejón, leader of the left-wing Podemos party in Spain, remarked that 'in the Spanish case there is a major current that is not so much concerned with total breakup or disengagement from the state, but which demands the fulfilment of the promises and guarantees that formerly held us together as a society' (Errejón and Mouffe, 2016: 131).

This inherent tension has been exacerbated in recent years by increasing globalisation that many see populism as inherently opposed to. I do not think this is necessarily the case, but the tensions placed on the nation-state model have certainly contributed to this: Wendy Brown, for instance, has identified the tendency for many regimes around the world, of different types, to respond to increasing globalisation by further emphasising the bounded, sovereign-space paradigm, especially in the performative construction of border fences: 'while the particular danger may vary, these walls target nonstate transnational actors – individuals, groups, movements, organisations, and industries. They react to *transnational*, rather than international relations' (2017: 33, emphasis added). I emphasise here 'transnational', because these actors are not acting via national institutions, but represent the emergence of a post-Westphalian world. This is significant because 'most walls constructed by nation-states today draw on the easy legitimacy of sovereign border control even as they aim to function more as prophylactics against postnational, transnational, or subnational forces that do not align neatly with nation-states or their boundaries' (2017: 44). Moreover, Brown's work is extremely useful for bringing together Canovan and Moore's theories, as she shows that 'the relationship between democracy and sovereignty is posed as a question today consequent to the partial and uneven deconstitution of the sovereign nation-state in late modernity, a deconstitution effected by unprecedented flows of economic, moral, political, and theological power across national boundaries' but, importantly, 'it is nearly impossible to reconcile the classical features of sovereignty – power

that is not only foundational and unimpeachable… with the requisites of rule by the *demos*' (2017: 60-61). Brown's emphasis on the increasing flow of forces across, over and under national boundaries suggests that the key promise of territory as a component of political community – of self-determination – is aspirational rather than realistic.

As a consequence, populism seems to at least recognise the erosion of spatially-bounded constituent powers in favour of a post-territorial politics, and respond in a multitude of ways, with two main alternatives emerging: either, a rejection of the cosmopolitan worldview and a retreat into immediate spatial entities (nation-states or sub-national groups); or, an acceptance of the breakdown of bounded entities to move in the direction of postnational constituents. I will explore this further, but here I want to stress two things: first, the contemporary tension between spatially-bounded political entities and the erosion of or stresses placed on those entities by globalisation can be considered a synchronic determination of the diachronic tension between the Intrinsic and Incidental Perspectives, and the decline of the former in favour of the latter; and second, that the populist recognition of the tension inherent in the self-determination of territorial politics and the emergence of a post-Westphalian world helps us to explain why populists do not take the same substantial spatiality (nation, etc.) but do still retain spatiality as the formal language of politics (emphasising the homeland and the public square, etc.).

In regard to this tension, and in reaction to the stresses placed on national sovereignty by increasing globalisation as a form of the Incidental Perspective, populism engages in more than merely exploiting this tension and contesting it, but also discursively moralises spaces, in a manner redolent of the Intrinsic Perspective's turn in the colonial period that linked civility and 'civilisability'. Whilst there is a certain degree of continuity with this expression of the Intrinsic Perspective, however, there is a specific populist alteration that takes place: the moralisation of space is made in regard to *power*. This relies on a precipitating construction of power itself as immoral or corrupting: Urbinati has analysed this in what she calls the 'antipolitics of the

ordinary' that arises from an 'antiestablishment' sentiment; 'antiestablishmentarianism… consists in the drive toward *anti*politics that is implied by the association of power with impurity or immorality. This frame grounds the phenomenology of populist leadership' (2019a: 56). Urbinati's comments are particularly revealing for the association between morality and space in populism: 'people are uncorrupt not because they are superior or somehow immune to immorality in a godlike way but rather because *they do not exercise political power*, and so do not run the risk of making decisions that will affect their entire society… ordinary citizens are deemed 'moral' only because of their structural 'externality to political power'. Moreover, 'ordinary people may be naïve or poorly informed, but these qualities are not perceived to be as dangerous as dishonesty', of which 'the elites' are guilty purely because of their exercise of power (2019a: 57). As a result (2019a: 62):

> the morality that the people claim to vindicate is easier to have, and to preserve, because ordinary people do not have (nor want) "hard" power. Hard power, on this argument, creates the conditions that expose human beings to things that are politically necessary but immoral and corrupt, at least from the personal moral point of view… protest against intellectuals, high culture, and college people and attacks against the cosmopolitan "trash" of "fat cats" in the name of "the common sense of the common people" (those who live by their work and who inhabit the narrow space of a village or a neighbourhood) are components of an ideology that is immediately recognisable as populist.

Urbinati is correct to identify this, but I wish to explore further the implication of the attacks against 'cosmopolitans' in favour of those who occupy a 'narrow space'.

An identifiable and persistent trope of populism is the moralisation of spaces in which power is exercised. The commonly-recognised 'early' populists of the *narodniki* in Russia and the People's Party in the USA offer striking parallels: though both reacted against what they considered to be 'predatory capitalism', in Russia this expressed itself in 'its distrust of parliamentary institutions' and the tsarist system, partly because 'political freedom modelled

on the English system was bound up with the development of capitalism', but the consequence was that revolutionaries ought to 'go to the people' which, importantly, meant the *narod*, the peasantry living in rural Russia, alongside a belief that socialism 'should be the homespun variety of the Russian peasant' (Walicki, 1979: 225-229). Similarly, the People's Party in the United States – formed as a result of an alliance between the Knights of Labor movement and the Kansas Farmer's Alliance in 1892 – were part of a movement to 'try to control prices, which were increasingly set in distant markets' that saw themselves 'representing the "people," including farmers and blue-collar workers, against the "money power" or "plutocracy"'. The formal political challenge was expressed in the spirit that 'the fruits and toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up the colossal fortunes of the few', a theft in which the government and established parties were complicit, with one sympathetic senator posing the question 'will you stand with the people… or will you stand facing them, and from the plutocratic ranks fire a ballot in support of the old parties and their policies of disorganisation, despotism, and death?' (Judis, 2016: 22-23, 25). The Knights of Labor especially feared the oligarchisation of American politics, warning against 'concentrating unaccountable power in large corporations' and the 'power for evil of aggregated wealth' (Sandel, 1996: 185).

This is a trope that has not disappeared, but if anything, it has intensified. Recognisable discursive moves have emerged from populists in recent years: they who bemoan the 'Westminster bubble'; who wish to 'Drain the Swamp'; and who urged fellow citizens to 'Occupy Wall Street'. These are different iterations of the same underlying tension, which is of a general distrust of 'distant elites', but this 'distance' is not necessarily physical distance only. Indeed, whilst the above remark regarding the People's Party's fear of 'distant markets' was reflective partly of the purchasing of Midwestern farmsteads by Eastern-seaboard companies, it is the discursive construction of that power specifically as *distant* that matters; after all, 'market forces' are neither distant nor far, as they are by their very nature immaterial. The

‘distance’ emphasised, instead, is a *political* distance, of a particular construction of power as being ‘beyond the reach’ of the people over whom it is exercised; Brubaker has argued, for instance, that ‘in the vertical register, ‘the people’ are defined in opposition to economic, political and cultural elites’, a common theme in the literature. Brubaker, however, has emphasised the *spatialisation* of this opposition, as ‘‘the elite’ are seen as living in different worlds, playing by different rules, insulated from economic hardships, self-serving if not outright corrupt, out of touch with the concerns and problems of ordinary people’. Whilst this would suggest that Brubaker agrees with de Cleen’s claim made in the introduction to this chapter, the ‘vertical register’ reveals that for populism (2019: 54):

> ‘the people’ are understood as a bounded collectivity or community, and the basic contrast is between inside and outside… the bounded collectivity may be construed in economic or political terms… even in this case, there may be a reference to culture, in the broad sense of shared values or way of life… the bounded and threatened collectivity and its shared values or way of life need not be construed in ethnic group or nation but rather as a ‘moral community’.

In this regard, we can see a continuation of that which I identified above, the significance of audience construction, which I will analyse shortly, but here the importance of the moralisation of spaces can be understood as being *mostly* directed against institutional sites of power, such as Westminster, Washington DC, Brussels, or Paris, or similarly against sites of the exercise of despatialised powerful forces, as in the Occupy Wall Street protests.

The discursive spatialisation of power is significant for two reasons: first, it leads to a feedback loop in which a) the people are moral because of their externality to power, b) the sites of power are then ‘outside the people’, and c) the ‘true people’ are to be found in the spaces ‘outside’ the ‘corrupt places’. This helps us to understand the moralisation of the people in relation to spatiality and why populism does not attach itself to a specific site *a priori* but instead the spatiality it infers is a product of a sense of a bounded community that is threatened. Second,

this sense of the bounded community being threatened results in the attacks and hostility identified by Urbinati towards 'cosmopolitans' is because, as I say above, the sites of power are discursively 'outside the people' which concludes in a construction of these places as sites of external influence that disrupt the realisation of the self-determination promised by territorially-bounded politics identified in the outset of this section. At this stage, the sites of power are not only *physically* outside the bounded-community, but also *morally* and *politically*.

If we return to the practice of audience politics I identified above, we can see how this extends beyond the simple 'left-right' dichotomy and is indicative of populists of any stripe. What 'audience', therefore, does populism imagine? Populism certainly appeals to a bounded conception and not an indeterminate conception as with the Incidental Perspective, but I contend that there is no pre-determined limit to this boundary, simply that the boundary has to be drawn at a certain point. Indeed, some populist movements even extend as far as the entire globe. Note, however, this is *not* the same as a despatialised conception of 'the people', as I show below, but still relies on a reference to the spatiality of international communities in order to draw lines of exclusion and, in Laclau and Mouffe's words, antagonistic frontiers. In this regard, some writers, though not populist in themselves, have explored the implications of Laclau's theory of populism for global resistance to neoliberal hegemony. For instance, Mark Wenman has commented that 'at the core of economic globalisation is a series of developments, made possible by the revolution in information technology, that have ensured the consolidation of neo-liberal disciplinary control across the planet' which has manifested in 'the relative demise of the efficacy of national government' and the 'incapacity of national elites – and their representatives in the G8 and G20 – to address the financial and sovereign debt crises reinforces the idea that economic processes, and especially capital mobility and investment priorities, are now effectively beyond the control of elected officials' (Wenman, 2013: 265-266). This is resonant of a populist perspective outlined above, even if not aimed at a particularly populist

goal; moreover, Wenman's earlier work on 'militant cosmopolitanism' has attempted to 'extract a globalist strategy from Laclau's theory of hegemony, and… his theory of radical democracy (*qua* necessary but impossible universalism) pints in the direction of a militant form of cosmopolitanism' (Wenman, 2008: 113).

It is important to note here that Lacau does, of course, see populism and politics as synonymous, and that synonymity relies on a particular construction of the political. Furthermore, whilst Wenman uses the term 'cosmopolitanism', his own recognition of the impossibility of the universal in Laclau remains a necessary qualified in the attempt to build a radical global counter-hegemony (2008: 121-122):

> Laclau acknowledges that national boundaries cannot be taken as given and that the frontiers that bind the imagined communities of the 'sovereign' nation-state are – like all frontiers – contingent and politically constructed nodal points… However, as I see it, a theory and practice of militant cosmopolitanism is inherent in Laclau's understanding of hegemony in terms of (impossible) universalism, and there is certainly nothing in his theory which precludes the possibility of struggle for hegemony on a global scale.

All of this is based on the salient issue of where populists imagine their audience to be. As Eric Kaufmann has explored, part of the populist-right reaction to elite governance is not necessarily a reaction to elites *per se* but a sense that elites do not consider themselves responsible to the constituent body that elected them, and instead draws their legitimation from an alternative source. For Kaufmann, this alternative source in the case of populist-right reaction to immigration is the 'global community' rather than the 'national community', and 'international adulation for advancing an ideal' (2018: 154). Importantly, as Brubaker argues, 'left-wing variants… are more likely to emphasise the elite's supranational or global economic ties, horizons and commitments. Syriza's leader Alexis Tsipras did so, for example, by punningly coupling 'external troika' and 'internal troika'… as a way of delegitimising the previous three-

party ruling coalition by linking it to the hated troika (the European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF)' (2019: 55). I think we can more accurately term these in the context of populism as 'closed' populists, as it reaches across the left-right divide, with many progressive populists relying, for instance, on democratic socialist arguments for the limitation of immigration or the withdrawal from the European Union, such as Bernie Sanders' rejection of open borders as a 'Koch Brothers proposal' intended to drive down the average wage of workers. 'Closed' populists seek their audiences from a sense of immediacy, from the spatialisation of community in a limited and exclusive interior.

Contradistinctively, 'open' populist movements, such as those that Wenman draws out of Laclau, seem to assert that the spatial boundaries of their audience are much more expansive, to the extent that the true 'spatiality' of the people is considered to be top-down, rather than in-out. However, this analysis seems to ignore that all populist movements, even those of an 'open' attitude, engage in the moralisation of space and the consequent drawing of boundaries around 'the people' on the basis of *authenticity*. Consider that participants of the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement of the post-2008 crash referred to themselves as the 99% and, whilst they railed against global capitalism, a bogeyman that is inherently despatialised, they descended on key *locations* that, in their eyes, 'represented' global capital, such as Wall Street in America, and legislative chambers across the West. In much the same way, the environmentalist Extinction Rebellion movement has targeted banking institutions and 'representatives' of 'global capital'. Moreover, self-proclaimed 'progressive populists' assert that 'the challenge for a left populist strategy consists in reasserting the importance of the 'social question', taking into account of the increasing fragmentation and diversity of the 'workers' but also of the specificity of the various democratic demands' to the extent that 'it is impossible to envisage a project of radicalisation of democracy in which the 'ecological question' [of the future of the planet] is not at the centre of the agenda', but fundamentally 'a radical democratic conception of

citizenship could constitute the locus of construction of a 'people' through a chain of equivalence' (Mouffe, 2018: 60-61, 66). Moffittt has noted, with regard to the 'left-wing parties' of Europe, that Syriza and Podemos 'defend immigrants and socially marginalised sectors, they press a strong social rights agenda' whilst Jean-Luc Mélenchon explicitly aims to recognise the 'legalisation of individuals *sans papiers*' (2020: 84). Whilst still technically working within a nationally-bounded paradigm, these populists clearly do not have a 'closed' view of the spatial boundaries of 'the people', with the implicit acceptance that immigration is not a salient issue, or at least is nowhere near as salient as it is for those of a 'closed' populist spatiality.

Of course, this leads us to the topic of immigration, a topic which no engagement with populism can ignore. Whilst Kaufmann's systematic study of the impact of immigration on emergent right-populism, and the response by white majorities in Western nations is extraordinarily helpful in understanding the connection between immigration and a bounded community's sense of control over the space in which they live, it is also a pertinent example of the over-emphasis placed on 'right' populism's relationship with immigration. However, as inextricable as immigration seems to be from the existing populist movements on the *right*, there are two major issues to this: first, its over-emphasis on right-wing populist movements, due understandably to its increasing electoral influence and success; and second, the literature seems to consistently confuse immigration's role in the emergence of populism. At times, analyses argue that immigration is the cause of (right) populism's emergence, and others that immigration is merely a performative hook with which populists rally support. I have suggested, meanwhile, that immigration rises up the populist agenda as merely one example of depoliticisation and can be placed, therefore, in a second-order category of concerns that, while important in determining the direction of travel of populist movements, is neither the starting point nor the terminus (Scott, 2022).

I advance an argument here that populism's relationship to immigration is neither a product of a left-right binary, nor is it a simple case of immigration acting as merely a cause, symptom, or performative slight, but one example of many different expressions that populism can take based on its spatialisation of people. To begin with, immigration as a *concept* can only really make sense in a conceptual world that sees politics as inherently spatially bounded. To talk of immigration as a politically salient concept in an era in which the Incidental Perspective on spatiality was prominent would be possible, but not particularly important; if the relationship between ruler and ruled is decoupled from space then the desire to retain a spatially bounded idea of *people* is not entirely plausible. However, this is not to say there was not an intellectualisation of such an idea: the use of a despatialised, chaotic 'exterior' in the colonial world as a constitutive outside to the spatialised, ordered 'interior' of Europe is a well-documented attempt at legitimating law and order at home, and domination and the suspension of legal norms abroad, which has persisted into the contemporary period (Benton, 2010; Agamben, 2006). In this capacity, 'immigration' is a threat at home, but inconsequential abroad. Regardless, the point remains: immigration can only become a politically salient topic against the backdrop of a spatially bounded order. Hence, in order to understand why *some* populist movements, but not all, become hostile to immigration, we have to understand that it is rooted in a conception of peoplehood I outline above, based on Moore's stipulation that a political community must have a sense of control over the 'place which they live in and are attached to'. Moreover, Moore's stipulation that a spatial people must have the capacity to think of self-determination is connected with immigration on the contingent fact of *pace*. For instance, Kaufmann notes that (2018: 69):

> The base of support for anti-immigration politics in countries' populations is rooted in the Settlers. Most Settlers are psychologically *conservative*, seeking to secure their multi-generational group attachments and identity reference points for posterity… Ethnic changes

> are particularly jarring as they disrupt the sense of attachment to locale, ethnic group and nation. These ascribed identities provide a broader storyline which anchors their lives and lends meaning to their daily routines.

Furthermore, Kaufmann and Matthew Goodwin have explored the influence of pace of change than immigrant presence on populism and white hostility, stressing that rapid change can produce a shock factor whilst more incremental change – both ultimately achieving the same level of minority population share – does not (2018: 127). Another example of this, presented by Goodwin with Eatwell, is the scale of immigration preceding the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom: 'support for Brexit was stronger in areas that during the preceding decade had experienced *rapid inward migration*, such as the town of Bostin in Lincolnshire' which had experienced a growth of its immigrant population from 3% to 15% in the space of ten years (Eatwell and Goodwin, 2018: 166). Neither was this without historical precedent, with the rapid pace of immigration leading to the first ever British National Party-dominated council in an historically Labour Party heartland (Embery, 2021: 65); indeed, Kaufmann's historical survey tracked the changing attitudes to immigration in the United States to reveal that opposition to immigration rose sharply alongside pace, not scale (2018: 74).

It is here we can start to question the inevitable associations made between populism and immigration. Moreover, a neat explanation of populism's opposition to immigration because immigrants are an obvious 'other' is complicated by the 'anti-pluralist' tendencies analysed by Moffittt that presents non-racial identities as 'enemies to be excluded or destroyed' (2016: 146; 2020, 75-78). Instead, I think we need to understand populism and populists' opposition to immigration as one expression of the 'closed populist' reaction to the tension that lies between the Intrinsic and Incidental Perspectives, and the stresses placed on the nation-state model of spatial politics. Moreover, immigration at a high pace is seen to present a dual challenge to the relationship between a bounded community and territorial self-determination as it a) challenges

the presumption that a key component of that self-determination is the capacity to draw boundaries at all, and b) complicates the identity of the bounded group necessary to act out that self-determination in the first instance. This is for much the same reason that sites of power are constituted as external to the people; it challenges the notion that a clear line can be drawn between territorial occupation and self-determination by a continually identifiable bounded community.

This is, as I say, dependent on a conceptual world in which 'immigration' is possible; if the form of populism that emerges does not understand the boundaries of community in a way that makes immigration a salient topic, then it will not rise to the top of that populists' agenda. This is why 'open populists' tend to find immigration on their agenda but not in the upper register: if, for instance, populists do draw an international boundary around their people – as the DiEM25 (Democracy in Europe Movement 2025) aims to do by constructing a 'European people' on the basis of a 'radical, anti-authoritarian, democratic Europeanism' (Moffittt, 2020: 45-46) – then it would not see the mass movement of individuals across that space as 'immigration', whilst those committed to a national (Poland) or sub-national (München) spatiality would. Those populists that draw a global boundary in which the 'outside' is merely the corrupted sites in which power is exercised would likely never find immigration to be a problem at all.

As one final note, there remains a specific point of tension that prevents populism being elided entirely with the Intrinsic Perspective. Whilst populism bears the hallmarks of that perspective of spatiality, with its own specific interpretations – the moralisation of space, the essentiality of a specific location to the identity of the bounded group, and the immediacy of the community – a common trope of populist movements is a form of direct communication with the leader. This is extremely important for the Chapter on Corporality, so here I will not analyse the implications for representation and political leadership, but in terms of the spatiality

of populism, this is reminiscent of the Incidental Perspective's turn to kingship as a method of representing the geographically diverse body politic. Does this mean, then, that populism falls out of the Instrumental Perspective genealogy? Not necessarily: what I propose this to mean is that it allows the populist movement or leader to overcome the conditions of mass society that do not allow for a face-to-face form of governance, and retain a sense of immediacy necessary for the bounded community to recognise itself. In this regard, populist spatiality continues to thrive on the tension between the Intrinsic and Incidental Perspectives by tapping into the aspirational element of self-governance necessary for a bounded community, as Moore shows, and aims to speak to the 'real people' that might not recognise themselves as a singular, bounded community because of their diverse or unrecognised geographic location, and in the process of constructing this audience, draw the spatial boundary around it that creates a geographic component of the people's identity that might otherwise not exist.

Populist Spatiality

I have shown in this chapter that the populist spatiality can be understood by taking a genealogical perspective of the ways in which political thought has understood space as a component of a people's identity, and attempting to find points of continuity and difference between these different perspectives and the populist perspective. To do this, having first reconstructed a political theory of territory by Margaret Moore, I then traced the two major perspectives on spatiality, which I have termed the Intrinsic and the Incidental, to see how they developed and were understood by different thinkers throughout the history of political thought.

This has allowed us to understand populist spatiality by recognising its key components and continuity and difference with the Intrinsic and Incidental Perspectives. These components are a recognition that a territory is a necessary and important element in the self-determination and identity of a people; the construction of an audience matters as a method of drawing the

spatial boundaries of a people, whether this is concomitant with existing political boundaries or not; populism engages in a discursive moralisation of power and the sites in which it is exercised in order to draw a physical, political and moral boundary between the 'authentic' people and the sites of external or inauthentic influence in that people's self-determination; an opposition to immigration on the basis of pace as it complicates the identity of the people as a self-determining group, *but only on the condition* that the mass movement of individuals crosses the conceived boundaries of the people; and a direct connection to the leader that allows for a construction of an audience in the absence of, or aspiration to, a clear spatiality.

Temporality

> "The People are divided in their existence. Insofar as the People exist within time and space, they can appear fallible, divided or even despicable, as when they take on the features of 'mob rule' or 'popular caprice'… in their atemporal existence, they win their true identity, and reveal themselves to be infallible and at one with themselves, to be in legitimate possession of an absolute right."
>
> -Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, p. 240-241

At present, the populist thinking about time remains remarkably under-theorised in the literature. As I have shown, there is an abundance of observations on populism's perspective of the relationship between established institutions, yet there seems to be little consideration on what this reflects in terms of 'political time'. For instance, institutions themselves presuppose a certain temporality, both that those who establish the institutions do so with concern for the generations that come after, and that those generations see themselves as coterminous with the preceding generations (Ober, 2017). What is more, a political constitution is predicated largely on the assumption that 'the defining thesis of self-government' is 'the self that governs itself over time is governed by commitments of its own making, apart from or even contrary to its will at any given moment' (Rubenfeld, 2001: 92). This phrase, 'of its own making', reflects that presumption of temporal continuity. Indeed, it is an essential part of thinking about self-government that decisions must not be made by a body external to the sovereign – which necessarily requires that previous generations are not considered to be 'external'. As Jed Rubenfeld has argued, 'constitutionalism is properly understood as a nation's struggle to lay down and live out its fundamental political commitments over time' which therefore, as I say above, presupposes 'that a people might be regarded as a collective agent, persisting over time, able to make and to live under its own commitments' (2001: 93).

This synonymity made by Rubenfeld between a 'nation' and a 'people' is not as contentious as it first appears, especially with regards to time. As Bernard Yack makes clear (2012: 146):

> For in order to conjure up an image of the people as standing apart from and prior to the establishment of political authority, you have to think of its members as sharing something more than political relationships. And the pre- or extra-political community that most resembles the form of the people is the intergenerational community celebrated by nations.

This 'intergenerational community' is another phrase for that presumption in the background of constitutionalism, of a temporal continuity capable of 'internalising' preceding generations into the 'sovereign body' of the people in the moment. However, this is where populism marks a significant break with established political theory.

Significantly, in *Me, the People*, Urbinati has made an interesting intervention in the relationship between populism and time, especially with regards to Yack. She draws out a latent conceptual distinction within Yack's own work by pointing out that he 'has written that the 'nation' is an 'image of community over time', while 'the people' "presents" an image of community over space'' (2019a: 87). While her following observation – that 'this seems to be a useful distinction that captures the specificity of the new (indirect) form that popular sovereignty takes within modern states that have adopted elections' – will be explored in the Corporality chapter, here there needs to be a greater focus on temporal dimension of populism that Urbinati seems to, in my opinion, get wrong. Urbinati, believing that populism acts from within representative politics in order to transform it, immediately places populism within this paradigm in such a way as to misunderstand its impact. She states, for instance, that (Urbinati, 2019a: 87):

> the populist leader, by contrast [to the demagogue], belongs to a representative kind of politics, in which words are both less dramatic in their immediate impact on decisions and more capable

> of creating a continuity of narrative. This continuity of narrative connects citizens from one election to another and makes for parties and partisan divisions that last longer than the voting moment.

What I show in this chapter, is exactly the opposite: populism breaks radically from the prevailing constitutionalist perspective of political time by externalising preceding generations from the body politic by emphasising the *literal* 'living voice' of the people. It does this by presenting institutions as obfuscatory and alien, thereby closing a sovereign boundary around that moment – voting or otherwise – to privilege the decisionism of the 'people of now'.

This chapter, therefore, proceeds along the following lines. First, I elaborate on that point made by Rubenfeld, that a people is a 'collective agent persisting over time', and show that this was (and still is) the prevailing view of political constitutionalism and time by drawing on its intellectual sources. In so doing, I also draw a rough boundary between the *political* continuity of the people, as best expressed by Rubenfeld, and the *anthropological* continuity of the people – or in Yack's words, the pre- or extra-political. Following this, I move onto the specific 'turn' that populism takes, in denying the temporal continuity specified in the preceding section, and from where this originates. Finally, I define populism's specific conception of time, by introducing the concept that I call 'the rupture', as a method of understanding populism's simultaneous emergence within, and radical denial of, a historical juncture. This really is the key point with regards to populism's conception of political time: whilst a lot of work has been done on the way populism closes a Manichean boundary between 'the people' and 'the elites', little work has been done on the way in which populism closes a temporal boundary around a highly contingent, specifically immediate moment of decision. It does this in two self-reinforcing ways: first, as noted by Canovan and Urbinati, populism thrives on the constitutional gap between the promises and the pragmatics of democracy, but does so in a way that emphasises the externality of institutions *and therefore previous*

generations to 'the people'; second, these institutions are not only external to 'the people', but have specifically perverted the identity of the people. To understand what I mean by this, I introduce a new concept to the study of populism, 'the rupture'.

An Intergenerational Community

To first understand what relationship populism imagines a people to possess in relationship to time, we must understand what the prevailing alternative is. What Rubenfeld has termed 'commitmentarian democracy' is, I believe, the closest definition to the dominant form of political thinking in the temporality of a people: 'a people, understood as an agent existing over time, across generations, is the proper subject of democratic self-government. This proposition joins two ideas: that peoples, and not merely individuals, can be political agents; and that democracy is properly understood as a people's collective struggle for self-government' (2001: 145). Indeed, Yack's attempt to understand the 'nation' as a form of psychological community has led him to argue that 'it is the shared *inheritance* of cultural artifacts and memories that distinguishes the nation, rather than the sharing of the artifacts themselves. In other words, it is the affirmation of a shared cultural heritage as a source of mutual concern and loyalty that makes a national community, rather than the sharing of any particular beliefs, practices or institutions' (2012: 74).

We must be mindful, however, that Yack's terminological focus – the 'nation' – is distinctly different from 'a people'. Indeed, a nation *presumes* a people, as does all political thinking; it merely offers a specific interpretation of that morphology in which 'time' is simply one concept. As Yack himself is aware, it is the 'conception of the people as *constituent sovereign*' that has 'steadily displaced its rivals as the foundation of a state's legitimacy' which 'provided the catalyst that has transformed the old and familiar phenomenon of national loyalty into that powerful new social force that we call nationalism' (2012: 7). So, we need to

distinguish between people and nation, even (perhaps especially) when taking into account that temporality of nationhood. What I believe distinguishes Yack's 'nation' from the more traditional understanding of the 'people' are those very things that Yack rejects: particular beliefs, practices and institutions. Indeed, it was this view that was best summarised, if not originated, by Edmund Burke at the close of the eighteenth century. Burke's famous and powerful repudiation of the social contract tradition is that well-known section of the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in which he claims that (Burke, 2004: 194-195):

> Society is indeed a contract… It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.

This is perhaps the most prominent articulation of the idea of the intergenerational community that Yack is conscious of but moves beyond in privileging the shared *inheritance* rather than 'the act of sharing'. However, Burke's description of the intergenerational community shows that the inheritance cannot be disentangled so neatly from those inherited objects. He states elsewhere in the *Reflections* that 'we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order' (2004: 120). Though Burke is known for his rhetorical flourishes, he was also the 'English constitutionalist par excellence' (Jones, 2017: 20). Indeed, Burke's defence of the constitution was a defence 'of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions' (2004: 121), which was most visible in 'a reasonable tradition transmitted by a process of accredited deliberation exemplified by the common law'. The metaphorical language of 'the analogy of change in nature' that Burke drew on 'stamped [national politics] in the image of "a relative in blood". Here, Burke drew on the idea of the *mos maiorum,* which

blended the authority of the past into the authority of the elders' (Bourke, 2016: 695-696). This concept, of the *mos maiorum*, shows the longevity and prevalence of that vision of the intergenerational community that Burke was giving voice to, and defending.

The concept of the *mos maiorum* comes from late-Republican Rome, given forceful articulation by Cicero: 'law was not thought up by the intelligence of human beings, nor is it some kind of resolution passed by communities, but rather an eternal force which rules the world by the wisdom of its commands and prohibitions' (2008: 128, 2.8) This was a specific understanding of a higher-order *lex* as the constitutional norm, specifically that of *custom*; the *mos maiorum*, by the time of the late Republic, 'had developed into a source of constitutional law that often competed with other such sources' (Straumann, 2016: 48). What matters here is the invocation of ancestors (*maiores*) as the source of higher-order norms against which laws (*leges*) were to be framed; all discussions on custom and ancestors imply *ipso facto* the presumption of a temporal continuity in the people (Straumann, 2016: 52-53). The use in Republican Rome of a specific concept to reflect the wisdom of ancestors, and therefore a history to the community as it existed even in that moment, indicates the long-standing nature of this historical attitude. Indeed, even into the end of the Roman Republic, the *mos* was considered an important element of the constitution of Rome (Cicero, 2008: 136-137, 2.37), thus setting up a precedent that where a constitution was not codified, the customs of a people was seen to fall within the purview of a constitution, not merely the formal institutional constraints of power that is associated with a 'constitution' in the modern era.

Furthermore, this understanding was not confined to the era of the Roman Republic alone; during the Mediaeval Period, 'public opinion and philosophy were largely at one about the authority of custom… at this point law was inextricably bound up with the people (*populus*), and with each particular people in the different forms custom took over Europe. For, as Roman law put it, custom derives its authority from its capacity to represent the true, considered will

of a people' (Black, 2012: 36). Granted, we are jumping forward quite significantly here; but in the intervening period, it was a people's constitution that was largely considered to be its defining feature, rather than any concrete political, theological, or even geographical component: for instance, on being crowned Emperor, Charlemagne was pronounced to be 'Emperor of the Roman People', a subtle but significant change (Elden, 2013: 137, emphasis added):

> The new designation was of the Respublica Romanorum, the res publica of the Romans, not the Roman res publica. As Ullmann notes, the "latter term was always synonymous with the empire. The former was no doubt modelled on the old term and yet conveyed an entirely different meaning." The difference is indeed significant. The new term meant "re-public" or "commonwealth of the Romans," that is, those of the Roman faith, Latin Christians. Thus, the geographical link to Rome the city was not essential. Indeed, the pope continued to maintain political rule over Rome itself. Charlemagne was, for the pope, Imperator Romanorum, Emperor of the Romans. The designation "of the Romans" is crucial because *it means a designation of peoples, not of land.*

In other words, custom was a method of a people perpetuating itself through time when there were no other fixed markers of doing so. If there was no settled geographical place, the people had to understand itself in the world in another way.

Most importantly, this understanding of the role of custom was recognised by St. Thomas Aquinas, who held that custom was *more important* than written law, remarking (1988: 80):

> wherefore, by actions also, especially if they be repeated so as to make a custom, law can be changed and expounded, and also something can be established which obtains force of law insofar as, by repeated external actions, the inward movement of the will and concepts of reason are most effectually declared; for when a thing is done again and again, it seems to proceed from a deliberate judgement of reason. Accordingly, custom has the force of law, abolishes the law, and is the interpreter of law.

What matters for us here is that Aquinas very clearly understood that the origins of a law are its people, not the other way around, in that a legal code cannot precede the existence of a people over whom it is exercised; but also, that a sense of reflexivity exists in the relationship between that people and its laws, in such a way that law ought to change to meet the demands of the time. These demands, however, are generated not through the limited reason held by individuals, but the shared *common* reason of the constituent members of a people (reason used in the sense of justification-after-the-fact, that there clearly was an instrumental purpose for doing something, even if the value of that thing is not clear until after its necessity has passed away).

Significantly, we also see the continuity of custom as a higher-order norm; but this higher-order norm is not the concrete fact of any custom in particular, but what that custom represents, specifically the desire and willingness for the people to *continue* existing together. Custom was not imposed from without, nor intended to bind together those disparate individuals who would otherwise separate: custom was the expression of a people facing shared challenges and, rather than taking the easy option of disassociating, overcame those challenges because of a desire to remain together as a collected people. As relationships between peoples and geographic space became more concrete, associations were consciously made between temporal continuity and a people; in France, for instance, the idea of *patria* made the defence of the realm 'a sacrifice all the more worthy because it was made for the sake of a body moral and politic which cherished its own eternal values' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 268). What persists, however, is the prevalence of *people over place*; Ernst Kantorowicz has highlighted that the persistence of a people through time becomes interwoven continuously with the legal order, largely through the rediscovery of the Justinian Code and the *lex regia* (Kantorowicz, 2016: 301). Once the idea of historical perpetuity via a people becomes conventional wisdom and accepted political thought by the end of the thirteenth century, the emergent 'doctrine of the perpetual "identity

despite change" of a community… might be taken to refer to the *eidos* of [that community], which was distinct from the material city at any given moment and detached from both the citizens living at present… and the bricks forming at present those very walls' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 302). We see here a clear tendency to consider 'a people' as trans-temporal, distinct from *both* the 'here and now', by making 'here' almost accidental and 'now' only ever contingent.

Instead of a continuity in space, the people's persistence ('identity despite change') is reflected in the legal code, especially following 'the possibility of treating every *universitas* (that is, every plurality of men collected in one body) as a juristic person, of distinguishing that juristic person clearly from every natural person endowed with body and soul, and yet of treating a plurality of individuals juristically as one person'; 'by this fiction, at any rate, the plurality of persons necessary to make up a corporation was achieved - a plurality, that is, which did not expand within a given Space, but was determined exclusively through Time' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 306, 387). The most important mediaeval thinker on this topic was Baldus de Ubaldis[8], who conceived of a people as existing not merely as an agglomeration of individuals, but 'a collection of men into a body which is mystical and taken as abstract, and the significance of which has been discovered by the intellect' (Canning, 2009: 187). The relation of this people to a space is accidental, in the sense that no definitive location is given to each people as it exists as a corporate entity (as above), but rather 'a realm contains not only the material territory, but also the peoples of the realm because those peoples collectively are the realm… for the commonweal cannot die… because in itself it lives for ever' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 299). The construction of the people as a single, juridical, corporate entity (a legal person) is the product of 'man's political nature', 'acting 'through the instrumentality of its members who represent it' (Canning, 2009: 191).

[8] Ubaldis' significance in the theorisation of a people's relationship to both time and acting body, as I show in the subsequent chapter, is evidence of the interrelated nature of the concepts that I discuss in the introduction, and analyse further in the conclusion, where I propose a framework for understanding that relationship.

Following Ubaldis, there remained a consistent vision of a people as a temporally continuous entity, that allowed for the political structures built upon such a people to persist. One such example came in the linguistic shift on the accession of monarchs in Europe in the medieval period: as Kantorowitz shows, political struggles over the continuity of a monarchy were circumvented in the exaltation of the body politic as the consistent – and therefore, principal – element in the constitution. He notes, for instance, that 'not the individual life was immortal; but immortal was the life of the genera and the species which the mortal individual [the monarch] represented. Time now became the symbol of the eternal continuity and immortality of the great collective called the human race'. Indeed, the medieval jurists developed a political fiction that each iteration of the hereditary principle (i.e., the monarch) was merely the latest link in a chain of 'oneness of the predecessors with potential successors, all of whom were present and incorporated in the actual incumbent'; in so doing, 'by this fiction, at any rate, the plurality of persons necessary to make up a corporation was achieved - a plurality, that is, which did not expand within a given Space, but was determined exclusively through Time' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 277, 387).

It is here, I think, that we can return to Burke. Clearly, Burke's observation of the temporal continuity of a people as the 'real' foundation of any "contractual relationship" was not an aberration in the history of political theory, but merely one synchronic expression of a persistent diachrony. To return to Burke's preference for institutions, is to observe Burke's own ontological distinction between the temporally *limited* people of a specific moment – a 'mass' – and the temporally *expanded* people of the 'primaeval contract'. In the *Reflections*, for instance, Burke is subtle on this distinction (2004: 151):

> Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be

> done *by a power out of themselves*; and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue.

The main point I wish to highlight here is Burke's distinction between those two forms of people I mention above – the 'mass', and the people – without characterising them as separate. Indeed, it is notable that the power exercised over the people is a power 'out of' themselves, *not* from *with*out. Though the question of institutions might pre-empt part of the discussion on Corporality in the next chapter, here it is important to show why Burke saw them as a specifically political expression of the principal of continuity in a people.

Burke's conception of political institutions was that they represented a temporally-generated form of governance, an epistemic justification of institutions that relied very strongly on the intergenerational vision of community. As J. G. A. Pocock observed (1960: 125),

> A nation's institutions were the fruit of its experience, that they had taken shape slowly as a result, and were in themselves the record, of a thousand adjustments to the needs of circumstance, each one of which, if it had been found by trial and error to answer recurrent needs, had been preserved in the usages and established rules of the nation concerned.

Pocock's concern, much like mine, was to place Burke in his intellectual context in the long-term view: 'Burke says clearly of his doctrine of traditionalism that it is a way of thinking which existed in the England of his time and had existed for so long that it was itself traditional' (Pocock, 1960: 126). Indeed, as Pocock observes, Burke's intention was to position himself within this "tradition of traditionalism": 'we have made the State not only a family, but a trust; not so much a biological unity, or the image of one, as an undying *persona ficta*' (Pocock, 1960: 131). And though Burke may have been hostile to the 'passions of individuals', it was a consistent part of his thinking that 'laws had to be adapted to the "genius of the people"' and, in the question of the Indian dominion, this preference revealed itself in Burke's unwillingness to *impose* institutions over 'expressed opinion made manifest through the custom of India's

"little platoons and clusters"' (Bourke, 2016: 548-549). Most importantly, 'legal rules had to be "agreeable to the general tenor of legal principles which overrule precedents. They had to be agreeable, in other words, to the overriding principle of the good of the community' (Bourke, 2016: 697). 'Echoing Montesquieu, [Burke] wrote that "the legislature of Ireland, like all Legislatures, ought to frame its Laws to suit the people and the circumstances of the Country"' (Donlan, 2012: 70) What we see, therefore, is a specific causal relationship between people and laws that privileged the experiences and *history* of the former over the latter – much like Aquinas' remarks, some five hundred years prior. What matters most in this relationship, however, is that very point that the edifice of law can only be built on the foundation of a *perpetual and persistent entity* – that of 'the people'.

The Presentist Vision

However, there is now the question of *why* Burke was expressing the view he did; in other words, what was the intellectual context that required him, in his mind, to reiterate an otherwise prevalent view? I do not mean here to reiterate the standard tale of Burke, of reacting to the French Revolution; in fact, as I hope to have shown above, my focus is not really Burke himself but the view of an intergenerational community that Burke was defending. In that sense, we have to ask, why had Burke felt the need to give voice to a previously uncritically accepted truism, so accepted that it had not needed expression for generations prior? In other words, why was Burke "speaking the unspoken"? The answer is, simply, that while the perspective of the people as an intergenerational community had gone unspoken for generations, there had emerged and found prevalence a countervailing perspective: that which would form the basis of what we can call 'liberal anthropology', the unencumbered self (Sandel, 1996: 11).

Patrick Deneen has argued that since Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* there has been a gradual development of the view of the foundation of political order as consisting 'solely of

autonomous individuals, and these individuals are "constrained" by the state'; what matters for our discussion here is the temporal element of this anthropology: that 'gratitude to the past and obligations to the future are replaced by a nearly universal pursuit of immediate gratification' (2018: 39). However, we have to ask how far this is true: Hobbes was not a radical break from the prevailing consensus of his time, but he did begin a trajectory that culminated (for Burke, and importantly for discussions on populism) in Thomas Paine. It is partly the product of a selective reading of Hobbes that he envisaged a political community as *only* an aggregate of citizens: significantly, it is in *De Cive* that he considers the different 'forms of commonwealth', in each circumstance of which he explicitly considers how 'the people' could transfer power (Hobbes, 1991: 195-199). Where Hobbes maintains a continuity with his near-contemporaries, Bodin and Grotius, is in the presumption of a people as retaining sovereign power, even if they are not the *acting* power: 'On Hobbes's account, a sovereign can be very thoroughly asleep: in the case of an elected monarchy, it might in principle be asleep for sixty or seventy years, or even more' (Tuck, 2016: 91). However, where Hobbes begins to depart from the view of the intergenerational community is his normative commitments of human nature, specifically the idea of humans as 'the rational, well-informed, and fearful creatures he draws for us' (Ryan, 2012: 424). This is, of course, Hobbes' declaration that 'during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in a condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man against every man'. Of course, Hobbes is *not* claiming such a condition to be historical: 'there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world' (2017: 102-104), but what matters is the individualism that Hobbes is working from. In imagining this to be the basis of the formation of his famous Social Compact, Hobbes establishes the first principle of the emergence of liberal anthropology which, importantly, presumes an unencumbered individual capable of rational thought that is inconsistent with the organicism inherent in the intergenerational community,

especially of the kind Burke would later defend (Jones, 2016: 166-167). By separating the individual's capacity to act from the circumstance that generated the knowledge guiding that action, Hobbes was subtly erasing that distinction made by Yack between a political and a pre-political people. As Alan Ryan puts it, 'Hobbes wants to show us the implications of removing government from our own society… it was not a society where the family-level forbearances and sanctions of a primitive society would suffice' (2012: 435).

Hobbes' refusal to distinguish between the pre-political and the political forms of association balances against his earlier writings that identified a temporal continuity in a people, but the continuous normative presumption within Hobbes' work is that the beginnings of a political entity is based on a willing association of individual men: in *De Cive*, for instance, Hobbes remarks that 'it follows that the consent of many… that is to say, that the society proceeding from mutual help only', and also that 'those who met together intention to erect a city, were almost in the very act of meeting, a democracy. For in that they *willingly met*' (1991: 167, 195). This is not inherently a contradiction that cannot be resolved: instead, it is an attempt on Hobbes' behalf to reconcile the legitimate foundations of government with the gulf opened up by Bodin between government and sovereignty; it does not follow that just because the foundations of government were established between autonomous agents that all society thereafter is atomised. However, what matters for our present discussion, is that Hobbes introduced a methodological tool that developed in a particular direction, culminating in the unencumbered self (Machan, 2016: 12). In terms of political time, the capacity to think of individuals as distinct from the societies to which they currently belong, subverted the prevailing intergenerational view by refuting the idea that society preceded the individual. As a result, 'the people' *could* exist through time, but only as a consensual aggregation of individuals, not as an organic entity with a *mos maiorum*, a 'considered will', 'custom', or a 'partnership in all science'.

Thus, as Deneen shows, John Locke as Hobbes' intellectual contemporary and successor carried the liberal anthropology forward (2018: 33):

> Locke – the first philosopher of liberalism – on the one hand acknowledges in his *Second Treatise of Government* that the duties of parents to raise children and the corresponding duties of children to obey spring from the commandment "Honour thy father and mother," but he further claims that every child must subject his inheritance to the logic of consent, and thus begin (evoking the origin of human society) in a version of the State of Nature in which we act as autonomous choosing individuals.

Of course, Locke's account of political obligation begins from a similar normative foundation as Hobbes', though phrased in a different manner: his claim that 'Man being, as has been said, by nature all free, equal and independent' (Locke, 2003: 309) is, as Ryan states, 'glaringly false' but it was not 'Locke's purpose to deny the ordinary facts of life but to make his readers think about them in a new light. To say that we are born free and equal is shorthand for the claim that political arrangements are artifices constructed by human beings for human purposes' (2012: 460-461). As with Hobbes, Locke's concern is the legitimate foundations of government and, again, shares with Hobbes the acceptance that 'there are no instances to be found in story of a company of men, independent and equal one amongst another, that met together and in this way began and set up a government' (2003: 311), but their joint conception of the individual and his consent as the lowest possible level of political analysis contributes to that I mentioned above – the subversion of the intergenerational community thesis. As this proto-Enlightenment view developed and matured, the two revolutions of the late-eighteenth century – in America and in France – revealed the contradiction that had been growing between the intergenerational community and the liberal anthropological view. It is here that we can turn back to Burke's time, with his most famous contemporary: Thomas Paine.

Paine – as he was in direct communication, and competition, with Burke – exemplified the apotheosis of the liberal anthropological view of political time. As he wrote at the beginning of *Rights of Man*, for instance, 'The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow,' and 'I am contending for the rights of the living, and against their being willed away, and controuled and contracted for by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead' (2008: 92). Clearly, by the time of Paine the liberal anthropology had moved decisively in favouring consent over continuity. Though it might be argued that the principles of liberal anthropology do not necessarily require such a decisive turn, as Yuval Levin has shown, Paine's writings show such a development: 'by "nature", he means the condition that preceded all social and political arrangements and therefore the facts regarding what every human being is, *regardless of social or political circumstances*'. Furthermore, 'Paine begins nearly all of his major writing by restating this basic case, the key features of which come from Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and other political thinkers of the Enlightenment… at his origin, man is an individual. And because he has no social relations to start with, he s burdened by no social distinctions and therefore is equal to all other men' (Levin, 2014: 45, emphasis added).

It is important not to over-simplify Paine's thought: he was keenly aware of the separation between society and government, which he references throughout the *Rights of Man*. 'A constitution is a thing', he says in the first part, '*antecedent* to a government, and a government is only the creature of a constitution. The constitution of a country is not the act of government, but of the people constituting a government', and that (2008, 122, 214):

> Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of government. It has its origin in the principles of society and the natural constitution of man. It existed prior to government, and would exist if the formality of government was abolished.

What matters for us, however, is the absence of continuity in that society as Paine sees it. He remarks, for instance, that 'altho' laws made in one generation often continue in force through succeeding generations, yet that they continue to derive their force from the consent of the living,' and 'as government is for the living, and not for the dead, it is the living only that has any right in it.' Most significantly, 'every generation is equal in rights to the generation which preceded it, by the same rule that every individual is born equal in rights with his contemporary' (2008: 95-95, 117). As Robert Lamb makes clear, 'the key point is, for Paine, that regardless of the way in which the parliament [of 1688] opted to act for the good of its constituents, it could have no right to act in any way that would subsequently bind future generations' (2015: 43). As Levin puts it, Paine's view was that 'the procession of generations through time tell us nothing of great importance about human life' (2014: 46).

Paine's work, therefore, respects the distinction between government and society, but admits no sovereignty to continuity. The other principle on which he bases this argument is, following as I say from Hobbes and Locke, the liberal anthropological assumption of the individual preceding society: indeed, the *Rights of Man* is peppered with references to such an assumption. He proceeds from the assumption that 'a nation… is composed of distinct, unconnected individuals, [and]… public good is not a term opposed to the good of individuals; on the contrary, it is the good of ever individual collected' (cited in Levin, 2014: 46), and asserts that 'the fact therefore must be, that the *individuals themselves*, each in his own personal and sovereign right, *entered into a compact with each other* to produce a government: and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist' (2008: 122). As with Hobbes and Locke, Paine is not suggesting there is no society, but rather simply that the individual 'in his own personal and sovereign right' precedes society: after all, he is conscious of the sociable nature of each individual to such an extent that 'society is produced by our wants' and 'promotes our happiness *positively*

by uniting our affections'. Indeed, 'man did not enter into society to become *worse* than he was before, nor to have fewer rights than he had before, but to have those rights better secured. His natural rights are the foundation of all his civil rights' (2008: 5, 119). This, as Lamb puts it, 'indicates that the moral individualism at the centre of his political theory is not antithetical to the ideas to ideas of community and social cooperation' (2015: 60).

To bring together the point thus far, the emergence of a countervailing view to the prevailing orthodoxy of society as an intergenerational community founds its clearest expression in the maturity of the Enlightenment liberal anthropology. From here, as Deneen shows, there emerged a particular conception of political time; or, more accurately, *timelessness* (2018: 72-34):

> Liberalism is about redefining the human perception of time. It is an effort to transform the experience of time, in particular the relationship of past, present, and future… Social contract theory was about the abstraction of the individual from human relations and places but also from time. It depicts a history-less and timeless condition, a thought experiment intended to be applicable at any and all times… The conceit appeals not to some historical "social contract" that we must look back to for guidance but to the continual, ongoing belief that we are always by nature autonomous choosing agents who perceive advantage for ourselves in an ongoing contractual arrangement… [W]hereas Pre-liberal humanity experience time is cyclical, maternity thinks of it as linear. While suggestive an enlightening, this linear conception of time is still premised on a fundamental continuity between past, present, and future liberalism in its several guises in fact advances of conception of fractured time.

What remains most pertinent for our immediate concerns, is that such a conception of 'fractured time' is not a recent critique of the immediate consequences of Enlightenment liberalism, but was one made by Alexis de Tocqueville. In the second book of *Democracy in America*, for instance, de Tocqueville notes that (1994, vol. II, 99):

> As social conditions become more equal, the number of persons increases who… owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering

> themselves as standing alone… thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.

The use of the term 'democracy' ought not obscure our understanding here; de Tocqueville is very much writing in the context of '*Individualism* in Democratic Countries', as the chapter is sub-titled. What's more, as Deneen writes, while de Tocqueville saw the tendency towards self-satisfaction and immediacy as part of human nature, he took a similar stance to Burke in emphasising the purpose of institutions as 'to chasten, educate, and moderate this basic instinct', and while liberalism 'regards such formative institutions, structures, and practices as obstacles to the achievement of our untrammelled individuality' (2018: 76), the intergenerational view understood such institutions as expressions of epistemic communal bonds, of the society that *preceded the individual*.

Thus, we find ourselves returned to Burke, and institutionalism. What matters for our discussion on populism is the prevalence of these two competing visions of the relationship between 'a people' and time: the 'intergenerational community vision', as we can term it, is not a homogenous and monolithic tradition, but possesses a multitude of different reasons and interpretations of *how* a people expresses itself through time, but what matters is the central principle of continuity. This vision, in the Enlightenment especially, came to its clearest expression in the thought of Burke, and the significance he placed on institutions as a method of distilling that continuous entity into a recognisable political world. As I say, Burke was not the only writer at the time who saw the people in this way, but it is extraordinarily significant that Paine, who presented the apotheosis of what we can term the 'presentist vision', in his emphasis on generational sovereignty, repudiation of the 'tyranny of the dead', and liberal anthropology that placed the individual as prior to society in both autonomy and identity. It is here, in anticipating a full discussion of populism, that the emphasis on institutions needs to be

made. We can understand their relationship to an intergenerational community if we characterise a people as a diachronic entity, with synchronous expressions in the form of 'concrete' circumstances. This view, perhaps anachronistically termed 'conservative', was defended by Roger Scruton thus: 'the freedom that British people esteem is… a specific personal freedom, the result of a long process of social evolution, the bequest of institutions, without whose protection it could not endure… Freedom without institutions is blind: it embodies neither genuine *social continuity* nor… genuine individual choice' (2002: 8). The normative contest over individualism versus communitarianism does not concern us: what matters is the way institutions are seen to be *expressions* of a people, in the same way that Burke believed true government to be 'a power out of' a people.

The Populist Turn

Having established the two major competing visions of a people's relationship to politics – intergenerational, and presentist – it is here we can turn to the specifically populist vision, specifically in terms of its origins and its implications. This is best understood by looking at the work of Hannah Arendt, Margaret Canovan and Nadia Urbinati, each of whom have, in connected ways, attempted to examine the relationship that populism shares with institutions, specifically. However, what is essential to a true understanding of populism is to go further: if we can correctly identify what populism's relationship to institutions is, then we can also identify what populism's relationship to political time is. As I explored with reference to Canovan's work, the tension between these two competing visions of temporality has expressed itself in a uniquely modern problem: ''the people' means concrete individuals; it is the people as a collective body that is uniquely problematic', Canovan states, and explicitly references Paine's arguments explored above in relation to these problem, as 'it is easy to contrast the real flesh and blood people with that sort of metaphorical nonsense', by which she means the

corporate theories of Burke et al, 'but the real flesh and blood people cannot possess or exercise sovereignty unless they are somehow united into an entity more coherent than a collection of mortal individuals' (2005: 94-95). I shall return to Canovan below but, as she has argued, one of the key attempts to overcome this ontological duality was made by Hannah Arendt.

Indeed, the view of institutions as expressing a shared political world was a key part of Arendt's work. For Arendt, a significant concern lay in discerning between legitimate popular action, wherein there would need to be a singular subject capable of acting – 'a people' – and an illegitimate form of action, that might be appropriately understood in her fear of the rootless mass (Arendt, 1963: 274). Indeed, a key part of the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century for Arendt lay in their 'perpetual-motion mania' and 'absence of continuity' that rested on a permanent mobilisation of the masses (2017: 399-403). Arendt's aim was to emphasise the role that institutions played in expressing and preserving a shared political world, but only insofar as they were continually re-animated: 'in so far as rulers can exercise power they do so only by drawing on popular support, on the willingness of their subjects to go on acting together to maintain the body politic' (Canovan, 1992: 201, 209). For Arendt, significantly (1998: 52):

> the term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it… It is related, rather, to the *human artifact*… to live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.

Most importantly, in continuing the point made by previous thinkers as above, Arendt distinctly distinguishes between temporal and spatial elements in the identification of a people: 'the *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organisation of the

people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be' (1998: 198).[9]

What makes matters confusing, is that Arendt has experienced a reputation as something of a populist herself (Bernstein, 1996: 126-133). However, as I say above, Arendt is specifically conscious of the intergenerational vision of a people, especially in arguing a semi-Hegelian case for the transformative power of action on the physical world to create a human world (2017: 251). Where Arendt straddles the line between the intergenerational and the presentist visions, however, is her emphasis on the living people: 'all political institutions are manifestations and materialisations of power; they petrify and decay *as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them*' (Arendt, 1972: 155, emphasis added). Consequently, Arendt's vision of the 'true' identity of a 'people' relied on the combination of a history that bound concrete individuals together into a shared political world, but one in which those individuals are 'continually joining together in dynamic association', an association so dynamic that it *might* require revolution to 'break with the past and its chain of predictable consequences' (Canovan, 1998: 214). Does this make Arendt a populist? Canovan argues yes, 'while deploring most cases of what others might classify as popular mobilisation': 'collective political entities *do* come and go, simply because they are the results of mobilisation. It is a matter of common observation that individuals can combine to bring into existence a party or movement that did not exist before', but their capacity to associate is very much bounded by the shared history they are acting within (2002b: 416-417).

If we are to take seriously the claim that Arendt is a populist, what is it about her work that makes her so? For Canovan, it seems to be the consistent emphasis that Arendt makes on the capacity for spontaneity and the coterminous potential for radically breaking with the past to build something new. This concept – of a radical break with the past, whilst recognising its

[9] As is clear at this point, there is significant overlap between the conceptual themes we are examining.

constitutive existence – is something that needs embellishment (Markell, 2006: 4). Here, therefore, we need to turn to examinations of populism itself, and what the populist turn looks like in understanding political time; Canovan's work is particularly informative on this. Where Canovan sees populism as having a specific relationship to political time is its emphasis on the formative power of the people in a closed moment; most importantly, populism derives a certain energy from a denial of the historical element of the community, by expressing an unbounded disdain for the mediating power of institutions. However, this remains an incomplete understanding of populism's understanding of political time, and requires further elaboration to be applicable. As indicated, the focus of much of populism's ire is institutions, and specifically their mediating power. For Canovan, the tension between populist transformative energy and institutional mediation is representative of *the* tension inherent in modern democracy, as laid clear in the Literature Review, but here I apply this theory more clearly to the question of political time.

Canovan differentiates between the 'politics of faith', which conceptualises politics as 'a matter of achieving perfection or salvation in this world', with 'the assumption… that governmental action can bring it about', and the 'politics of scepticism', that is 'suspicious of power and of enthusiasm, and has much lower expectations of what governments can achieve… for this style of politics, the rule of law is crucial'. What is significant is that the 'rule of law' is one specific permutation of the very institutional mediation that Canovan is wary of, and the intergenerational vision expressed through Burke's writings. Though Oakeshott is aware of these two styles of politics as 'abstractions from a concrete practice', Canovan develops this theory to suggest that, as indicated above, modern democracy lies at the intersection between these two styles of politics that presents 'two faces': one is redemptive, relying on the maxim of vox populi, vox dei (government of the people, by the people, for the people); and the other is pragmatic, 'a system of processing conflicts without killing each other'

and embodies political ideals (1999: 8-10). The contrast between these two styles of politics, Canovan argues, has three related principles. The first is the distinction between politics as a 'way of coping peacefully with conflicting interests', typically found in particular institutions and practices that make 'power relatively accountable', and democracy as a repository of aspirations to the betterment of human civilisation through political means. The consequence of this principle is that democracy is christened with a 'halo of sacred authority' as a way of ensuring public engagement and therefore its functional ability. In summary, 'pragmatism without the redemptive impulse is a recipe for corruption' – without a belief in the capability of democracy for securing a better life for the *demos* (however that might be specified) that spurs citizens into political engagement, the governing elite can become detached from those they represent and pursue agendas antithetical to the interests of the 'common people' (1999: 10-11). The first part of this principle – of politics as peaceful coexistence – is reminiscent of the stance taken by the intergenerational vision, that the momentary demands or desires of individuals might not be conducive to the stability or identity of a persistent community; in distinction, the second part – of transformative energy – is indicative of Paine's generational sovereignty notion, and the presentist vision's claim that the voice of the past should not overweigh the voice of the present.

The second principle, which follows logically from the first, notes that 'the content of democracy's redemptive promise is power to the people' but this exists 'in deep and inescapable conflict with democracy viewed in the cold light of pragmatism' and therefore concerns 'the contradiction between the power and the impotence of democracy' (1999: 11-12). This ideal of popular sovereignty persists elsewhere in Canovan's work (2002a: 34): for instance, the exalted constituency of democracy as 'the people' acts in two ways: one, it forms a boundary between 'the people' and 'the power elite' as well as those beyond the boundaries of the polity; two, it identifies 'an entity, a corporate body with a continuous existence over

time'. However, this 'continuous existence' of a corporate body is complex; it is not to ossify the people into a single, permanent constituency, but rather identify (as noted above) the locus of the *ideal of popular sovereignty* (Canovan, 2005: 91-92):

> The problem of popular sovereignty is therefore the attribution of ultimate political authority to a 'people' that manages somehow to be both a set of concrete individuals, taking action in a particular place at a particular time, *and* an abstract collective entity with a life beyond such limitations.

For Canovan, this ideal of popular sovereignty is intimately bound up with political action by drawing on the work of Locke: 'the people' is a contingent group, existing in the abstract until a crisis forces individuals to associate to *restore* a vision of authority that has been compromised since the social contract was entered into. It is not, therefore, 'a timeless abstraction but… an outcome of political mobilisation… an occasional community of action' (2005: 121). This is significant as it associates 'the people' with an external referent, specifically *crisis*; if, in contradistinction to the intergenerational vision, the identity of 'the people' is located *externally* to institutions, then it follows that institutions are external to 'the people'. This specification of the people as the constituency of democracy acts to locate the 'capacity for renewal' specified in the first principle within this constituency; however, populism exploits this by identifying the gap between the promise and the performance of democratic politics, to argue that the promised project of politics has been corrupted by a force external to 'the people', and only this contingent community can act to restore that promise.

Finally, then, we turn to the third principle: a perception that the redemptive power of politics, as achievable through democratic exercise, has been compromised by corruption, causing alienation between the people and democratic institutions: 'in so far as democracy's promise of popular power is made good, this can be done only through institutions that make power effective and lasting. But entwined with the redemptive strand of democracy is a deep

revulsion against institutions that come between the people and their actions'. This argument that institutions come between the people and the realisation of popular sovereignty suggests that populism relies on the capacity of popular sovereignty's corrective power to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate institutions – and those institutions that are illegitimate are those that remove power from 'the people'. However, without these institutions, government cannot function, so democracy is caught in an unresolvable paradox; 'populists appeal past the ossified institutions to the living people: proclaiming the *vox populi* unmediated' (1999: 13-14). This phrase – the ossified institutions – is almost an exact replication of Arendt's concern that institutions that become detached from the voice of the living people 'petrify and decay' in their disconnect. Indeed, Canovan's work throughout emphasises the importance of bringing the people *into* contact with the myriad mechanisms of power (2002a: 26), and the constant need for engagement in order to provide the 'halo of legitimacy'. However, this vision of 'democracy' is specifically a highly liberalised vision, dependent on mediating a political order that is composed of autonomous and competing individuals, as well as limiting the power of the state to prevent the imposition of a single ideal of the 'good life' on these autonomous individuals; Schmitt, for instance, identified three markers of a liberal structure that arose out of this political order as the separation of state and civil society, the rule of law, and parliamentarism (Bellamy and Beahr, 1993: 165-167). We need to emphasise here the regulatory role of the rule of law, and its claim to neutrality. Schmitt's own suspicions of this claim aside, the liberal vision is dependent on such a framework of a form of state, rather than a liberalised substantive political order that the formal institutions of liberalism are intended to mediate.

Turning back to populism, and recognising that Canovan's remarks refer to a specifically liberal form of democracy, it is all the more pertinent that populism blames these institutions for alienating those who imagine them to frustrate their capacity to fulfil their desires through

democratic action, with Canovan observing the 'strain of romanticism' in 'invoking the living voice of the people', especially in the 'populist mobilization of the living popular will against the dead letter of the law' (1999: 12-14). Where Canovan's argument needs correcting, however, is to recognise that for populism, institutions can *never* be considered to be legitimate: as Paine's logic works through the principle of generational sovereignty, the 'constant re-engagement' necessary for institutions to be legitimate is undermined by the very decisionism that they rely on. If, for instance, a generation were to decide that all prior political institutions were to be done away with – in any mechanistic manner – then populism sees no problem with this. Ironically, the very capacity for action provided by these institutions is the ground used to deny their legitimacy. Canovan herself seems conscious of this; she notes that 'New Populists… claim to say aloud what the people think, especially if it has been deemed by the elite to be unmentionable. New Populists often call for issues of popular concern to be decided by referendum, bypassing professional politicians and leaving decisions to the people' (2005: 76).

The populist construction of the boundaries of the people in a temporal sense immediately externalises institutions, as they are distinctly seen as products of a people who are 'not us'. Indeed, Canovan's notice of the significance of referenda, and other direct democratic mechanisms, has been furthered by Nadia Urbinati, who notes that 'direct democracy collapses the time between will and judgement, and so exalts the *moment of decision*' (2019a: 7, emphasis added). Indeed, Urbinati has developed a considerably incisive assessment of populism's relationship to the internal temporality of democracy. She notes, for instance, that (2019a: 89):

> The democratic people is like an "eternal present," yet in a kind of Heraclitean sense, as its eternal presence never shows the same configuration. In this normative sense, *it is always the same*: it has no history, one might say, unlike the nation, which is constructed through and by means of a *multigenerational memory* and conflicting historical reconstructions.

Similar to Canovan, Urbinati argues that populism sees institutions as legitimate only insofar as they are accorded an instrumental value, in denying them autonomy external to the people's will (2014: 160). What matters, when populists are successful in electoral contests, is that 'the victory of populism is not so much the victory of the people; it is a victory of the "authentic" people, whose "right" needs and wills a representative leader declares to know *as nobody has before*'. We see here a distinct separation between past and 'eternal present', embodied in a radical break from the old institutions, especially (and pre-empting the next chapter), representative politics that 'entails a government of temporality and distance – a *deferred* politics… populism, on the other hand, is a politics of *presentism and vicinity*… populism blurs the things that interpose between the people and the marker of the people's representation' (2019a: 165, 181). Jan-Werner Müller makes the same observation regarding populism's externalisation of institutions: 'what populists are necessarily against is liberal checks and balances… minority rights, etc., because their view of politics has no need for them at best – and, at worst, they obstruct the expression of the genuine popular will' (2012: 23).

The Rupture – Populism's Understanding of Political Time

The populist understanding of political time exists in a strange tension between the two major traditions I have thus far analysed in this chapter: rather than aligning itself with either side, it straddles the gap and 'borrows' elements from each, much in the same way Canovan's analysis shows that populism thrives on a tension between the two faces of democracy. As I say above, populism's understanding of political time both situates the deciding entity – the people – *in* a historical political world, whilst simultaneously rejecting the political expressions of that world – institutions. Clearly, this borrows from both the timeless and the intergenerational visions of a people, in that it recognises the heritage that has constituted the

identity of the people in its immediate permutation, but asserts the generational sovereignty of that immediate permutation. The question arises, how does populism do this?

The first step in this process, is populism draws from the intergenerational vision to imagine a historical political world in which 'the people' reside and draw their extant identity from. This is evident in the way populism's political identity is extremely particularised, similar to the explanation above by Canovan, in that each populist movement draws its identity from its immediate surroundings, only in this circumstance populism draws the identity of a people from a specifically immediate history. It might be at this moment that we rush to judgement and conclude that this is a strategic decision which allows populism to be able to close a boundary around 'the people' (as an historic entity) to exclude 'people' (as concrete individuals) that it does not see as compatible with the 'true' identity of the people by seeking an authentic identity in the past. However, this is a more common trope amongst reactionaries, and fails to understand those populist movements that are *inclusionary* with regards to historically excluded concrete individuals (Vergara, 2019). Instead, we need to understand how the populist understanding of political time can result in both the exclusive and the inclusive permutations that have dominated modern scholarship on populism (Moffittt, 2020: 71-72).

This reflexivity can be understood by looking at the next, and most important, stage in populism's temporality: after imagining a heritage to 'the people', populism claims a *disconnect* from that heritage. In this claim of a disconnect, populism imagines an historical juncture at which point the intergenerational community to which the immediate people *ought to belong* was compromised, as if the long chain of continuity in the Burkean tradition was severed, and an existential crisis was brought into being; as a result, we see something of a similarity in populism to Arendt's illegitimate form of collective actor, 'the mass', as an unmoored entity with no shared political world to exist in (Canovan, 2002b: 407-408):

> The members of the Mob have lost their places in a world that is still standing; the Masses are left stranded by the collapse of the world itself. Arendt uses the image of a house divided into apartments. As long as the house stands, the inhabitants are related to one another and form a group simply by sharing the house. But if the structure collapses, they are left as unrelated individuals. Similarly, if the structures that hold people together in society collapse, the inhabitants are turned into a mass of isolated individuals.

Contrasting this to the intergenerational vision, whereas the collapse of the 'structures' would leave 'individuals' isolated, so too does populism imagine that the severing of the intergenerational chain leaves individual *generations* isolated from the shared identity that ought to be theirs. What makes populism so unique, however, is that it imagines this crisis to have persisted *unaddressed*; as one nineteenth century example shows, 'William Cobbett, a deeply conservative figure who articulated poplar hostility to what he and others saw as oppression of the people by an increasingly corrupt elite… and his like believed that they were struggling to regain possession of a free constitution that was by right already theirs' (Canovan, 2005: 70-71).

Laclau's work with Mouffe shows a similar understanding of the utilisation of a break with an historical heritage in the emergence of populism. They note, in regards to continuity and disconnect, that (2014: 143):

> The equivalential displacement between distinct subject positions – which is a condition for the emergence of an antagonism – may thus present itself in two fundamental variations. Firstly, it may be a question of relations of subordination already in existence which, thanks to a displacement of the democratic imaginary, are rearticulated as relations of oppression… but the antagonism can also arise in other circumstances – for example, when acquired rights are being called into question, or when social relations which had not been constructed under the form of subordination begin to be so under the impact of certain social transformations.

Similarly, in another work, Laclau notes that (2005: 85):

> The frustration of a series of social demands makes possible the movement from isolated democratic demands to equivalential popular ones. One first dimension of the break is that, at its root, there is the experience of a *lack*, a gap which has emerged in the harmonious continuity of the social. There is a fullness of the community which is missing. This is decisive: the construction of the 'people' will be the attempt to give a name to this fullness. Without this initial breakdown in of something in the social order – however minimal that something could initially be – there is no possibility of antagonism, frontier, or, ultimately, 'people'.

There is clearly an awareness here of how the frustration of either a pre-existing or promised marker of social identity (Laclau and Mouffe use the example of 'acquired rights') that is rooted, not in an abstracted sense, but in an historical continuity can precipitate a disconnect from that continuity. What matters more is the note in the second quotation of a *frustration* of a series of demands; this is where the focus on institutions as an obfuscatory voice becomes salient, as in the previous section. If the institutions that have been generated by an intergenerational community are seen as illegitimate due to their inability to accommodate or even take notice of the concerns of 'the people', then they can be constructed as external to the boundaries of that immediate people.

Of course, having identified *how* populism closes this boundary, the obvious ancillary question is *why*: why does populism construct the image of a rupture that interrupts the continuity of an historical identity? Laclau's analysis is clear: a multitude of demands are continually frustrated (usually intentionally) by the governing regime that allows for the identification of those demands as 'losers' in an asymmetrical power differential (2001: 5-7); but the point must be made more simply. In other words, does populism emerge through frustration with institutional ossification, which in turn creates the sense of a rupture between generations, or does the rupture occur, with institutional ossification then occurring as the 'voice of the living people' is intentionally excluded from those discussions necessary for the legitimation of institutional power? It is my argument that the first is the case; populism arises as a sentiment of frustration with institutional ossification and the exclusion of 'popular'

demands (in the parlance of Laclau) from the agenda (Scott, 2022). This frustration *then* requires the institutions to be constructed as external to 'the people' as a legitimate actor; if we were to reverse the causality, and imagine that populism *first* constructs institutions as external to the people, and then seeks a reason for that externality, there is no inherent reason why populism would emphasise any temporal dimension to that externalisation. Consequently, any attempt to theorise populism would either miss or misdiagnose the temporal element of populism – something I have shown to be the case in the literature thus far.

From this reconfiguration of the populist understanding of time, there are three implications: first, that populism *must* rely on, or construct, a narrative of crisis; second, that populists claim a unique knowledge to the moment of rupture, and therefore they (and only they) can address the rupture; third, populism attempts to (re-)assert a sense of control over the destiny of the people. From these implications, we can draw a unifying principle to populism's conception of time, which will necessarily inform our discussion in the next chapter – that it relies on a constant mobilisation of the people.

Firstly, that populism relies on a narrative of crisis. It is clear from the established literature on populism that populism emerges in moments of crisis, perceived or otherwise, that populist actors use to legitimate their criticisms of the established political structure, which in turn taps into a discontent over the current state of affairs. Take, for instance, John B. Judis' *The Populist Explosion*: Judis believes that populists 'signal that the prevailing political ideology isn't working and needs repair, and the standard worldview is breaking down', and in 2016 'from the right and left, respectively, [Donald] Trump and [Bernie] Sanders were taking aim at the neoliberal consensus, to which many voters, without naming or identifying it as such, have become hostile, *particularly in the wake of the Great Recession* [of 2008]' (2016: 17, 63-64, emphasis added). Similarly, Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin's diagnosis of the shifts that precipitated the 'national-populist revolt against liberal democracy' emphasised the feeling

amongst populists that power is not only displaced from the people but obfuscated by institutions. For example, an early populist movement, the People's Party, 'proclaimed: 'we seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of the "plain people".' It set out a number of proposals for putting the plain people back into the heart of decision-making' whilst contemporary 'national-populist ideas are also linked to an emphasis on what are portrayed as 'European' values stretching back to classical Greek democracy and based on the Judeo-Christian tradition' (2018: 54, 72). The construction of this displacement as a crisis, however, is highly dependent on the perception that such a 'tradition' has not merely been eroded but, as I say, sharply broken with.

However, it must be noted that the crisis is not immediate, but temporally distant: granted, there were only eight years between the Great Recession and Donald Trump's entry to the White House but, as David Goodhart has examined, the Great Recession of 2008 was less of a shock and more of an apotheosis of a shifting political system, usually described as either (or both) neoliberal or globalist. For instance, Roger Inglehart and Pippa Norris's work, *Cultural Backlash* showed a remarkable number of trends between voting groups following the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom; what is most revealing, however, is how a sense of generational disconnect pervaded both sides of the referendum. On the Leave side, for instance, 'the heart of this cultural division concerns authoritarian values, endorsed by socially conservative groups that feel most threatened by the rapid pace of cultural change and the loss of respect for traditional ways of life' (2019: 396), a fact consistent with the point I make above regarding the 'reactionary' turn against rapid change, but Inglehart and Norris also note that one reason for growing electoral generation gaps in the UK 'could be that younger people feel that they face more limited economic opportunities than their parents and grandparents' and 'were also resentful that the decision to leave the EU was made by the older generation, and concerned that Brexit would limit their opportunities to live and work in Europe' (2019: 397-398). What

this reveals is a clear sense of disconnect that pervades the *entire* polity, not merely those usually understood as reactionaries (which have historically been grouped with populists due to such misunderstanding – see Robin, 2018), but affects also those considered to be progressives – something I explore further below. This is not to say that the entire polity is destined to become populist – far from it – but rather that the construction of a sense of crisis that erupted in the past *persists* in the polity, and (importantly) *attempts to address that crisis are frustrated and obfuscated by the institutions that existed prior to such a crisis.*

Secondly, and logically following on from the narrative of persistent crisis, is the sense that there is some unique privilege to the populist's capacity to know and understand the people, especially in relation to this crisis. Analyses of populism always note the 'leader's' claim to a unique synecdochic relationship with the people but, again, the temporal dimension of this relationship has been under-theorised to the extent that the role of the populist in articulating such a sense of crisis has been practically ignored. If we bear in mind that, for populism, the rupture is a moment in which the intergenerational community, which is constitutive of an historical identity, has been, for all intents and purposes, sundered, then we can understand how the rupture is *also* constitutive of the identity of the people: as the intergenerational community carries within it a sense of evolution of identity, and not merely accidental identity, it is not difficult to see how such an evolution, *if it were allowed to continue*, would lead in a specific direction, and as the rupture interrupted such an evolution, so too is the immediate identity of the people not allowed to be authentic. We can see here why institutions are necessarily misaligned by populism as obfuscatory; not only are they preventing the suture of an interrupted intergenerational identity but, in doing so, they also prevent the expression or articulation of the 'true' identity of the people. It might be reasonably argued that, if the institutions are remnants of a pre-ruptured identity, surely they should be *facilitating* the suturing of this identity, rather than preventing it? The answer to this, however, comes in

that which I raised above, as populism borrows from the presentist vision of political community as well; each generation is taken to be sovereign, but also, as the political world structured by the intergenerational community has collapsed, so too has the identity-chain, and each generation is therefore left isolated and individualised. Consequently, the identity of the immediate people is something of a chimera; it *ought* to have an historical identity, but as it does not, its identity is contingent on the rupture also. It remains an incomplete identity according to established thought, and therefore needs to be completed. As a result, the populist who claims to be able to identify the moment this rupture occurred, is also able to diagnose exactly *why* the potential identity of the people is not being achieved in the immediate moment and can offer a route out of this conundrum. Hence why populism relies on the construction of crisis for its emergence: a rupture has broken the intergenerational identity to which the people ought to belong, and has been ignored (perhaps intentionally), but must be resolved *in the immediate historical juncture*. Therefore, as a sort of double-punch, populism both constructs a crisis in the past *and* constructs a crisis in the present, with the result that populism claims that the persistent crisis must be resolved immediately, or the potential true identity of the people will be lost forever.

Third and finally, the naturally corollary of this is an urgent sense of a need to 're-assert control'. As the historical identity of the people has been broken and supressed from re-emerging, and can only be addressed in the immediate moment, populism must assert which historical actor is capable of this suture. Obviously, populism privileges the people as the actor capable of asserting its own identity, but it must be specified why. As I say above, institutions are necessarily constructed as external to the people, and so they are not capable of assisting this assertion of identity, nor are they trusted to prevent a rupture from taking place in any instance. However, it is here we can see a tendential relationship to democracy emerge; as Arditi has examined, populism's relationship to democracy can be understood as something

akin to a spectral presence. There is more to discuss on this relationship in the next chapter on corporality, but here it is worth noting that while populism is 'not equivalent to democracy, as a shadow that persists, populism must be conceived as a possibility embedded in the very practice of democracy' (2007: 50). I contest Arditi's claim slightly, and instead stress that populism's privileging of the people is not a product of democratic modernity, but is inherent in the claim that an intergenerational community ought to exist but does not: after all, as I show in the first section of this chapter, the underlying thought of the intergenerational community, given such formal expression by Aquinas, is that *the people provide the higher-order norm of legitimacy*. It is not a uniquely democratic thought, then, that the people are the legitimating actor to whom institutions ought to be subservient, but rather a consistent thought in the intergenerational vision; one that dovetails with the presentist vision. Here, we can bring the two together, and explain how populism draws on each in a surprisingly complementary manner. If the intergenerational vision of a political community emphasises the people as a diachronic entity for whom institutions are merely a synchronic expression, populism disentangles this emphasis from the somewhat dialectical relationship between people and institutions in the constitution of political identity by drawing on the generational sovereignty principle of the presentist vision, the impetus for which is of course the rupture, to assert that the people *have always been the principle actor of politics*, but it is specifically *the people of now who is the sovereign actor capable of addressing the rupture.*

What makes this point interesting, moreover, is that potential 'direction of travel' for populism; what I mean here, is that it is not predetermined whether populism will naturally take a reactionary direction in its attempt to resolve the rupture (which would involve a return to the *status quo ante*), or a progressive direction. It is my contention that both are viable possibilities for the populist movement to take. This is because the direction of development for the populist movement is contingent on two things: first, *which* rupture is constructed as

the origin of the immediate identity crisis; second, the nature of the populist actor constructing that rupture themselves. Here we might find ourselves mired in illustrative examples, for which there are many, but it is possible to compare the two populists of 2016 aforementioned: Donald Trump, and Bernie Sanders, and left-wing populists in general. Trump's (in)famous campaign slogan, of 'Make America Great Again' hardly needs dissection in its emphasis on temporal rupture, but what matters is the emphasis that Trump placed on *why* America is 'no longer great'; perhaps presciently, as Corey Robin notes, Trump parodied another phrase of Ronald Reagan's: 'it's not "morning in America," Trump declared in a recent campaign book… we are now "*mourning for* America"'. Why are we mourning? The answer comes, inevitably, in not only a sense of decline but a sense of a lost future (Robin, 2018: 243-244):

> Trump's ascendancy suggests that the lower orders are no longer satisfied with the racial and imperial privileges the [conservative] movement has offered them… a combination of stagnating wages, rising personal and household debt, and increasing precarity – coupled with the tormenting symbolism of a black president and the greater visibility of black and brown faces in the culture industries – has made the traditional conservative offering seem scant to its white constituents.

Thus, we find the populism of Trump, in terms of its temporality, seeking to restore an idealised past. After all, the phrase 'mourning' conjures the image of the departed; if we are mourning for America, it must no longer be with us.

What of Sanders' populism? It can hardly be said that it took a reactionary turn; but this is the point. Indeed, an essay by Nancy Fraser that called for the Left to adopt a more radically populist approach to politics, argued that (2019: 35):

> A progressive-populist bloc must make such insights its guiding stars. Renouncing the progressive-neoliberal stress on personal attitude's, it must focus its efforts on the structural-institutional bases of contemporary society. Especially important, it must highlight the shared roots of class and status injustices in financialised capitalism. Conceiving of that system as a

> single, integrated social totality, it must link the harm suffered by women, immigrants, people of colour, and LGBTQ+ people to those experienced by the working- class strata now drawn to right-wing populism.

It is perhaps indicative of the temporality of such 'progressive-populism' that the essay was entitled *The Old is Dying and the New Cannot be Born*; the emphasis placed on 'structural-institutional bases' is evident also of the anti-institutionalism inherent in the populist turn. Another similarly Left populist text from Chantal Mouffe, placed the blame for institutional externalisation, not in its structural bases, but rather at the door of neoliberalism, claiming that the *diktats* of financial capitalism and the limits they imposed to state interventions' have resulted in a drastic reduction to the role of 'parliaments and institutions that allow citizens to influence political decisions' (2018: 17). Bernie Sanders, presaging the arguments made by Fraser and Mouffe, maligned the 'billionaire class' who 'have significant control over the media… determine the legislation that goes on in Congress, and… are prepared to buy the United States Congress'. Importantly, 'Sanders agreed with Trump about trade treaties and foreign investment… but Sanders was a leftwing and not a rightwing populist. Unlike Trump and his supporters, he didn't blame unauthorized immigrants for the plight of American workers or seek to end terrorism by banning Muslims from coming into the country. He was entirely focused… on combating the "billionaire class."' (Judis, 2016: 81-83).

Populist Temporality

To bring together the multitudinous strands of this chapter into a neater summary, what I have shown is that populism possesses (and introduces) a unique understanding of the temporality of the people, that differs from the two prevailing visions of political time; the intergenerational, and the presentist. The intergenerational vision of political community long emphasised, in different ways, the dialectical relationship between people and institutions in

such a way that the political identity of a people was constructed *through time*, with each generation inheriting the built political world of the previous generations, and using that world to guide and shape (and, significantly, limit) the action of the immediate generation in such a way that it did not compromise the identity that had been built. These institutions are understood, therefore to be expressions of the persistent elements of the people's identity – not necessarily with a claim to authenticity, but certainly with a claim to deeper knowledge than the immediate generation – and, in Burke's words, grow out of the people rather than exist as an external imposition to them. In contradistinction, the presentist vision of political community introduced a radical emphasis on generational sovereignty, rejecting the 'tyranny of the dead', and so found legitimacy for a political world in the imminent consent of the aggregated individuals who resided within. As a result, the presentist vision elaborated on the liberal anthropological assumption of the unencumbered self to create the image of the unencumbered generation, which possesses absolute agency over their identity and future and, as Paine remarked, it is only with the 'consent of the living' that laws made in any preceding generation can continue to bear force.

Populism challenges this dichotomy and straddles the gap by drawing on elements in each. In a similar manner to Hannah Arendt's observation that the deconstruction of a political world transforms individuals into an aggregated mass, simultaneously atomised from one another and from other 'peoples', populism imagines that the constitutive political world capable of providing an identity acting to aggregate the collective individuals has been interrupted, to the extent that the immediate generation has an incomplete identity and exists in an unmoored relationship to the political world in which it ought to reside. As a result, populism's establishment of a temporal boundary between 'then' and 'now', with a clear break, allows for the articulation of institutions and all mediating channels (including elites, as I show in the next chapter) between 'government' and the people as *external* to the people, not as organic

outgrowths of a persistent historic community. As the rupture has not been addressed and continues to be constitutive of the identity crisis that populism claims to exist, therefore, the institutions that are externalised from the people are portrayed as not only implicit in this lack of resolution, but essential to it, thus legitimating populism's demonisation and radical rejection of mediatory institutions. The resolution to this identity crisis is considered by populism to be inherent entirely within the people external to the institutions that are complicit in it; drawing from the intergenerational vision's claim that the (historically constructed) people are the principle actor in the generation of their political world, populism twists this to claim that the immediate people are the sovereign actor capable of resolving their own identity crisis, in turn drawing on the principle of generational sovereignty that the presentist vision privileges.

As a final note, what I want to emphasise in this chapter is that populism does not have a predetermined content: it can become progressive or reactionary, revolutionary or reformist, left or right, and to focus on the content of the populist movement is to misdiagnose the origins. Regardless of content, all populists work from the same temporal logic: that a rupture has created an identity crisis in the people, and this crisis has gone unaddressed for too long. Consequently, the implication of this unaddressed rupture to populism is that it must be addressed *now*, if there is any hope of resolving the identity crisis. As I say above, this resolution might be one of attempting to resurrect an idealised past, or it might be used as an opportunity to move towards an idealised future, but either way, it is the people of the immediate temporal moment, the people of now, who populism sees as the redeeming actor capable of providing this resolution.

Corporality

> "And always the loud angry crowd,
> Very angry and very loud,
> Law is We,
> And always the soft idiot softly Me."
>
> - Wystan Hugh Auden, *Law Like Love*

As defined in the Introduction, 'corporality' refers to the capacity of a people to create or become an acting body in the political world. This notion is not without tension; indeed, it is the tension inherent in the presumption that a people *can* create or become an acting body that has been brought to the fore in recent discussions on the boundary problem. As Bonnie Honig has noted on the use of the term 'general will' in the act of constituting, 'the solution cannot be the right procedure or standpoint, for the people are in the untenable position of seeking to generate, as an outcome of their actions, the very general will that is supposed to motivate them into action' (2007: 5). In other words, in order to act as a body, there must already be a force capable of determining where the boundaries of that body lay – of acting to act. This question of action is at the heart of the tension in politics that populism revolves around: Margaret Canovan's work recognises that:

> populists are highlighting fundamental assumptions of contemporary politics: that the ultimate source of authority is the sovereign people; that all legitimate political power is based on the consent of the people, and that the people are capable on occasion of withdrawing legitimacy from one regime and bestowing it another.

This turns, however, to tension when 'any particular sovereign people… must somehow manage to be both a continuing, authoritative collective entity and a population of distinct individuals living and voting at a particular time' (2005: 84). I have already explored in Chapter One Canovan's own attempt to understand populism's relationship to the inherent tension in

modern democracy (1999), and in this chapter will consider multiple answers to the question posed above by Canovan, specifically 'can such a people be clearly conceived?'

Moreover, in the literature on populism, as I have shown in Chapter One, there have been a series of recent moves to understanding how populism interacts with, and ultimately 'transforms', democracy, whilst analysis on populism's understanding of representation and political 'style' has also become increasingly significant (Moffittt, 2016, 2020). Here, I want to make a note of clarification: as with every chapter, as I noted in the introduction, the question of corporality dovetails at moments with that of spatiality, especially as there arises the language of the 'place of power' and especially Claude Lefort's incisive observation of democratic politics that such a place must remain empty (1988: 225). There are occasions in which the theorists and writings I examine in this chapter use spatial metaphors, but I have differentiated between corporatist and spatial intentions on the principle that spatiality refers to a people's relationship, or lack thereof, with the place in which it resides, whereas corporality refers to the question of action and decision-making and the relationship a people has with such question. Despite this, there are times in which they overlap. Where this happens, I have made it clear, and attempted to delineate clearly why the sections I analyse are included in *this* chapter.

It would seem, on the face of it, that populism's corporality is a relatively settled question: almost all forms of populism revolve around the presence of a leader, and likewise theories of populism emphasise the 'personalism' of populist movements, even if the leader is not as significant as in other, more radical political phenomena (Landau, 2020; Mansbridge and Macedo, 2019: 65-66). However, recent interventions in the literature on populism have sought to properly understand the leader-centric view; Benjamin Moffittt argues in his *The Global Rise of Populism* that populism's emphasis on leaders is one in which the relationship between 'the people' and 'the leader' is particularly tight, almost to the point of symbiosis: 'In a strange

case of doubling, the threat to 'the people' and the leader are thus one and the same – the foreign or pathological enemy – tying the body politic and the leader's body together *in an existential bond*' (Moffittt, 2016: 68, emphasis added). Likewise, Nadia Urbinati notes that 'whenever populism seeks state power, the leader becomes both unavoidable and dominant, because populism does not want to be identified with traditional forms of representation (such as parties)' (2019a: 122). As I argued in the previous chapter, the populist avoidance and distrust of institutional politics is perhaps more complicated than Urbinati seeks to portray, but the significant point to draw attention to here is on the supposed *necessity* of the leader.

Moreover, Paul Blokker's recent attempts to understand 'populist constitutions' has complicated matters further. Blokker argues, for instance, that 'populist constitutionalism endorses… a program that promises to reduce the distance between ordinary citizens and the institutions… and to reenchant democracy, to make it meaningful to its citizens' (2019: 536). If, however, we take claims made by Canovan and Urbinati that populism rejects institutionalism in favour of the dynamism of the leader, how can this move towards 'populist constitutionalism' be squared with the circle of what Benjamin Arditi calls 'Caesarism with democratic dressing' (2005: 76-77)? And whilst David Landau is prepared to argue that 'put simply, major constitutional change appears concordant with populist ideology, and it demonstrates to supporters that populists are serious about overcoming the crisis of the old order' (2020: 299), this still fails to address the underlying tension between 'personalism' and 'constitutionalism': that they rely on *different ontologies*. The Kingship model, to which Moffittt makes reference, and constitutionalism, rely on different conceptions of 'the people', which are central to understanding the corporality of contemporary democracy, and where populism departs.

To make this clear, this chapter explores the two ontologies that have been elaborated on in the history of political ideas, upon which the two dominant forms of corporality have been

built: first, the 'Present People' form of corporality. This section considers, in detail, the work of Ernst Kantorowicz's seminal *The King's Two Bodies* and the Christological theology that underpins such an ontology of 'the people'. Second, Section II looks at the alternative form of corporality, of the 'Absent People' that arose as part of the 'democratic revolution', and the significant thinkers of such a form, specifically Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes; Jean-Jacques Rousseau; and Joseph Sieyès and Nicolas Condorcet. Finally, the third section argues that the populist corporality can be understood only when placed in this extended context of ideas, and that populist corporality is centred on the three elements of 'the leader', the General Will, and the simplification of society.

The Present People

The first of two forms of corporality is the Present People form. The Present People form of the corporality question is one in which the acting body is present in a physical entity as a recognisable centre of decision-making. This means, as I show, answers as varied as the assembled citizen-body of the *polis*, the body of the king as the physicality of the realm, and the city-state or city-republic as a corporate entity. As examined, the emergence of Hellenic states, the Roman *imperium* and the subsequent emphasis on the direct relationship between ruler and ruled in medieval kingship accompanied a rise in the incidental perspective on spatiality that moved away from a clear, defined location as a principle of peoplehood, and in its place looked to the unifying political figurehead, such as the 'Emperor of the Romans' or the 'King of the Goths', to embody that people's existence, and allow it to act as a single body; on this point, Elden has noted 'there are at least two lineages of the notion of a king in Western Europe. One derives from the Latin, the king as he who rules; the other is the Germanic the *Cyning* or *kuning* as "the man, or from, or representing the kin"' (2013: 119). This linguistic ambiguity over the organological or representational relationship between king and people is

especially important for this chapter. In this regard, Ernst Kantorowicz's seminal *The King's Two Bodies* analyses the corporeal function that kingship played, in both the continuity of a people and in the question of the acting body.

In Kantorowicz's analysis, there are three consistent themes that I wish to draw out here: first, the synecdochical relationship assumed between the physical body of the king and the unphysical 'body' of the people over whom he ruled; second, the important function of continuity that the office performed; and third, the normative relationship between ruler and ruled. However, before turning to these three themes, it is important to note that Kantorowicz's analysis revolves around two significant observations: first, that there was an awareness of the difference between 'the King', meaning of the office of monarch, and 'the king', meaning the actual person who occupied that office. This is the origin of Kantorowicz's chosen title: 'that by the Common Law no Act which the King does as King, shall be defeated by his Nonage. For the King has in him two bodies, *viz.*, a Body natural, and a Body politic', a juridical fiction which, logically, 'conveys "immortality" to the individual king as King, that is, with regard to his *superbody*' in such a way that, in one court case, loyalty to King Henry VIII could be demanded as if he were 'still "alive" though Henry Tudor had been dead for ten years' (2016: 7, 13-14). This is important as it relates to Canovan's aforementioned tension between the people as individuals and the people as body, though with a different substance; as I show in Section III, however, this is especially significant for our discussion on populism, in such a way that we might now need to think of 'the people's two bodies'.

The second significant observation is that of the role played by Christian theology in the creation of a language of organic unity between ruler and ruled. It was St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (chapter 12, verses 12 and 27) that affirmed the image of the Church as a single body, with Christ as the head, with whom the laity enjoyed unity, but the systematic expression of such a unity was St. Augustine's to make. He referred only ever to the Church as the 'Body

of Christ', or in his Latin, *Corpus Christi* – though interestingly, the phrase the '*mystical* body of Christ' was not St. Augustine's but was coined much later. Regardless, *Corpus Christi* refers to the idea that Christ 'is to be taken no longer as an individual, but in His fullness, that is, with the whole Church, with all of the members, of whom He is the Head, as constituting *one unit, one whole, one person*' (Grabowski, 1946: 73-75, emphasis added). It is important, however, to bear in mind *how* one individual person might join the body of the Church: through confirmation, and communion; in other words, through express desire, and continual affirmation of membership. Such an act 'constitutes a spiritual entity which is [Christ's] Body here on earth' that results in 'the incorporation into the Body of Christ' (Grabowski, 1946: 84-85). As Kantorowicz shows, such doctrine was used as the basis for the relationship between people and k/King. Though Pope Boniface VIII intended to reassert the Papacy above secular powers, and remind them of their 'purely functional character *within* the world community of the *corpus mysticum Christi*', it was the implication of 'the Lord's two bodies' that would inform the emergent doctrine of the k/King's two bodies, to such an extent that Kantorowicz considered it to mold 'most significantly and decisively the political thinking in the high and late Middle Ages' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 194, 198-199, 206):

> To summarize, the notion of *corpus mysticum*, designating originally the Sacrament of the Altar, served after the twelfth century to describe the body politic, or *corpus iuridicum*, of the Church, which does not exclude the lingering on of some of the earlier connotations. Moreover, the classical christological distinction of the Two Natures in Christ… has been replaced by the corporational, non-christological concept of the Two Bodies of Christ.

It was in the wake of this theoretical shift that the secular powers, competing with the Church for supremacy, were able to adopt the language of the state as a body, with such phrases as *corpus Reipublicae mysticum*, which allowed the jurists to arrive 'like the theologians, at a distinction between *corpus verum* – the tangible body of an individual person – and *corpus*

fictum, the corporate collective which was intangible and existed *only as a fiction of jurisprudence* (Kantorowicz, 2016: 207-209, emphasis added). It is important to note here that the unique transformation brought about by the turn to the Christological terminology is specifically the idea of the body politic as a *mystical body*, not merely a body coterminous with the physical individuals. With this theoretical and theological background informing both the emergence of the doctrine of the k/King's two bodies, and the internal relationship between them, we shall see in Section III how such logic might be making a return in populist movements to create the idea of *corpus Populus*.

Focusing, however, on the k/King's two bodies, the synecdochical relationship between the King and the people was a fiction well-theorised in medieval theology.[10] In the mid-fifteenth century, it was generally acknowledged that 'an attack against the king's natural [physical] person was, at the same time, an attack against the body corporate of the realm', with a qualifying difference of '"one [body] descending from nature, the other from the polity"' (2016: 15, 46). Recalling Anthony Black's comments that legality relied on a certain conception of a people as both a trans-temporal entity that those laws applied to, as well as the source of the authority of laws, the relevance of a people's corporality makes sense when we observe that '"Laws, and not the person, make the king"… a statement well known to Canonists; and according to the *lex Digna* itself the emperors confess: "On authority of the Law our authority depends"'. If the King is a part committed to the whole of 'the people' as a single entity, then it must be remembered the authority of the King is derived from – whilst also being somewhat concurrent with – that entity's will. After all, as one French jurist claimed, 'the French king, like the Roman emperor, "had all the rights, especially the right pertaining to his kingdom, shut in his breast"' (2016: 150, 153). Of course, this manifested differently across

[10] As I say in the introduction to this Chapter, fiction and myth does not *de facto* mean 'wrong', merely that it is a necessary component of any political system in which a 'story' is told by a people to itself in order to reinforce its own identity.

peoples: famously, in England, 'the people' was present in specifically in the King *in Parliament*; just as 'the *comitatus* or county took visible form in the *comitatus* or county court, so the realm took *visible form* in a parliament' (Maitland, 1901: 133). This held, however, for the English jurist Henry de Bracton a paradox: 'either the king is sovereign or no; if he be sovereign then he is not legally below the law, his obligation to obey the law is at most a moral obligation; on the other hand if he is below the law, then he is not sovereign, he is below some man *or some body of men*' (Maitland, 2015: 101, emphasis added). Although this was mostly resolved by the juridical separation between king-as-person and King-as-office, as noted above, it did eventually lead to the question of where sovereignty lay, as I analyse later in this chapter.

Of course, all of this relies on the recognition that there is an entity of 'the people' that is physically separate from the king, but 'the king's body politic could be the realm as a body politic – with the king as the head and the subjects as the members – or it could be the office of kingship – the dignity' (Fortin, 2021: 5). Joseph Canning has also noted the rise in medieval political thought of the distinction between the king and the people over whom he ruled: 'notions according the kingdom an existence distinct from that of its king, organological views of society organised into a corporate body, and views of rulership as public office' created the capacity to think that 'the concept of a royal office, whose purpose was to serve the common good, involved the notion that the *regnum* or *populus* had a separate existence from that of its monarch' (2009: 64-65). This especially became emphasised in the later Middle Ages when (Kantorowicz, 2016: 193):

> the centre of gravity shifted, as it were, from the ruling personages to the ruled collectivities, the new national monarchies, and the other political aggregates of human society. In other words, the exchanges between Church and State continued; but in the field of mutual influence, expanding from individual dignitaries to *compact communities*, henceforth was determined by legal and constitutional problems concerning the structure and interpretation of the bodies politic.

This is a significant development, as it coincided 'with that moment in the history of Western thought when the doctrines of corporational and organic structure of society began to pervade anew the political theories of the West and to mold most significantly and decisively the political thinking in the high and late Middle Ages', a change capitalised on by Baldus de Ubaldis in his definition of a '*populus*, the people, as a mystical body. He held that a *populus* was not simply the sum of individuals of a community, but "men assembled into one mystical body" … a body or corporation to be grasped only intellectually, since it was not a real or material body' (2016: 199, 210). Despite the emergence, however, of the body politic as an 'intellectual body', the k/King remained the physical representation of that body politic in the world, as 'the polity itself, or the mystical body of the realm, could not exist *without its head*' (2016: 227); hence, whilst the trend developing was to admit that 'a people' was a real entity separate from the physical body of the king, it was not thought to be capable of existing or, importantly, acting without *something or someone* through which it can be *embodied*.

Interestingly, Marie-France Fortin has recently shown that Kantorowicz's analysis that whilst the power of dignity, *dignitas*, conferred upon the prince by an 'immortal polity' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 397), was concurrent with the office of kingship, it was 'the Crown, on the other hand, [that] connoted a more general, public and communal sphere' and was 'incomplete without the other members of society' (Fortin, 2021: 2). We can turn here to the second theme of Kantorowicz's analysis, that of continuity and the problem that the physicality of 'the king's two bodies' created; as Kantorowicz noted, 'the concept of the "king's two bodies" *camouflaged* a problem of continuity' and it would be a 'mistake to assume that the new philosophic tenet produced, caused or created a new belief in the perpetual continuity of political bodies' (2016: 273) – as I show in Chapter Three, this was a perennial issue in political thought, and the continuity of the king's two bodies is more of a product, than a cause, of such an issue. Indeed, 'the practical needs of kingdoms and communities led to the fiction of a quasi-

infinite continuity of public institutions' and that 'practical needs produced institutional changes presupposing, as it were, the fiction of an endless continuity of the bodies politic' (2016: 284, 291). This is not to say the k/King was the only source of continuity: as with above, and my previous comments in Chapter Three, the law was seen a particularly reliable mechanism by which 'every plurality of men collected in one body' could be treated as a 'juristic person, of distinguishing that juristic person clearly from every natural person endowed with body and soul, and yet of treating a plurality of individuals juristically as one person' (2016: 306).

However, the law could not resolve the issue of action and decision in and of itself, especially as there were increasing attempts to incorporate the 'ruler's will' in the legal system, to the extent that the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries tussled with this will when compared to the 'rights of the community', with the kingship as an office 'established with the specific purpose of securing the preservation and well-being of the communities which the ruler served' (Canning, 2009: 162-166). Whilst I turn to the normative relationship between ruler and ruled shortly, here we can focus on Kantorowicz's important observation that, as a product of the belief in the continuity of the people 'as an *universitas* "which never dies"' (2016: 314), there arose the significant question of whether the corporate realm existed between the death of one king and the coronation of another. Whilst the earlier Middle Ages imagined that, due to the intertwining between Church and State, 'the continuity of a realm during an interregnum had been sometimes preserved by a fiction: Christ stepped into the gap as *interrex* and secured, through his own eternity, the continuity of kingship', the increasing tendency of Popes to claim authority as *interrex* made the fiction politically dangerous. Instead, the fiction arose of the sempiternity of the Crown (2016: 334-335, 341-342):

> In the phrase "head and Crown" the word Crown served to add something to the purely physical body of the king and to emphasise that more than the king's "body natural" was meant;

> and in the phrase "realm and Crown" the word Crown served to eliminate the purely geographic-territorial aspect of *regnum* and to emphasise unambiguously the political character of *regnum*… *b*riefly, as opposed to pure *physis* of the king and the pure *physis* of the territory, the word "Crown," when added, indicated the political *metaphysis* in which both *rex* and *regnum* shared, or the body politic (to which both belonged) in its sovereign rights.

As Fortin observes, the melding of the two symbols of King and Crown allowed elements of that perpetual community that the King ought to have embodied – the people – to pass into the Crown, such as the eternity of the office, and the corporate realm of the body politic (2021: 8). As a result, 'in the later Middle Ages the idea was current that in the Crown the whole body politic was present… in this respect indeed the Crown and the "mystical body of the realm" were comparable entities. Neither one nor the other existed all by itself "in the abstract" and *separate from the constituents*' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 363). We see here, then, a similarity to the Aristotelian notion of the *polis* as an embodied corporeal people, as well as a comparison to Ma's 'social memory'; a reliance on a physical presence, be it king, king-in-parliament, or so on, meant the continuity of a people's acting body had to be reflected in an equally continuous physical presence. In this respect, this was part of the conflation of Crown and King that Fortin analyses, in that each symbol acted complementary to the other: whilst the Crown was the eternal symbol, the King could be embodied in the king. This theoretical move was reflected most clearly in the emergence of the phrase 'The king is dead! Long live the king!' which, whilst deceptively simple, 'powerfully demonstrated the perpetuity of kingship' by suggesting an unbroken embodiment of the King that did not 'end' with one king's death (or, 'demise') and another king's accession (2016: 412). Regardless, 'the Crown… could hardly be severed from the king as King…. It remained possible, for example, to personify the Crown which, representing something that touched all, stood in many respects for the whole body politic' (2016: 372, 383).

This brings us to the third theme of Kantorowicz's work, that of the normative relationship between ruler and ruled. We can see clearly the synecdochical relationship that arose out of the organological, 'corporate realm' thought, as well as the use of the office of kingship to reflect a theorisation of the ruled people as a continuous entity, but this has not really answered the question of *why* an embodiment of that people is necessary. Whereas Aristotle's theory of the *polis* as necessary for the *bios* and therefore the highest expression of the common good, the concomitant principle to the theorisation of a continuous people was one in which 'the idea of a state existing only for its own sake was foreign… the very belief in a divine Law of Nature as opposed to Positive Law, a belief then shared by every thinker, almost necessitated the ruler's position both above and below the Law' (Kantorowicz, 2016: 144). Though the concept of popular sovereignty was historically distant, the awareness of the separability between the ruler and the ruled, at least on a practical level, had to be balanced with the necessity of the people's capability to act as a political body. The Divine Right of Kings was certainly one answer, as 'the king acts for the people which has been committed to his care by God and which cannot act for itself' (Canning, 2009: 21). Just as the idea of Christ as the *interrex* declined, so too did the religious foundation for kingship, but the organological concept still posited that the King was the head of the body of the people. To justify the capacity for the King to act, not on behalf of the people, but *as* the people, there arose a particular conception of the *universitas*, the body corporate, as a legal minor. Largely a product of rediscovered Roman law, the conflation of 'madmen, children and cities' under an edict meant that (Kantorowicz, 2016: 374, emphasis added):

> when, in the course of the thirteenth century, the corporational doctrines were developed, the notion of "city", *civitas*, was logically transferred to any *universitas* or any body corporate, and it became a stock-in-trade expression to say that the *universitas* was *ever an infant and under age because it needed a curator*.

Importantly, as this idea matured, it was transferred to the symbolic entity of the Crown, to the effect that 'as a perpetual minor, the Crown itself had corporational character – with the king as its guardian, though again not with the king alone, but with that composite body of king and magnates' (2016: 381). What matters here is the relationship given between ruler and ruled that allows for the concentration of political action in the king; the corporeal embodiment of a people in the political world in a single person in such a way that *allowed* the people to act was due to that people's *inability* to act for itself, owing to its legal immaturity as a single corporate body, and not merely because of its physical disaggregation as a multitude of individuals. As a result, 'the king appeared as the animate instrument of a fictitious, and therefore immortal, person called Dignity', meaning 'the dogma of a political Incarnation, a noetic incarnation of the *Dignitas* or of the Body politic' (2016: 445). To compare this to the *polis*, then, whereas the people could act as a political community through a deliberation with consideration for the common good, under kingship the people were incapable of doing so, under the prevailing legal fiction, resulting in a concentration of decisionist power in the office of King. As I show in Section II of this chapter, this was developed into the sleeping sovereign thesis by early theorists of popular sovereignty, but prior to the emergence of popular sovereignty as a concept, the necessity of an acting person required the existence of the office of King and the concept of Crown.

The Present People form of corporality is one that clearly relies on an imagination of the people as an entity, but seeks to express that entity in a concrete physical form in the political world; whether that is the undying office of kingship and the Crown, variations of the fictional entity of the people was given form in a corporational metaphor, an *universitas*. The organological metaphor of 'the body' (*corpus*) of the people acted to both signify a legal entity *as well as* the normative relationship 'between members (*membra*; limbs) as that of parts having separate functions within a single unit,' the consequence being that 'society was a

structure with a common interest, and perhaps a common motive, purpose and will'. Importantly, perhaps more so, the terms used (*corpus, civitas, universitas*, etc.) 'referred to the political community in whatever form this was currently perceived to exist' (Black, 2012: 15-18). But part of this organological metaphor, and the implication of a common will, led to the development of the juridical reasoning behind the people's inability to act; rather than place such inability on practical limitations, such as a diasporic circumstance, the emphasis was placed on a normative duty of the ruler or government to pursue the common good and ensure those who did not value the common good did not disrupt the lives of those who do (Black, 2012: 27-28). Consequently, the inability to act was depicted in the people's (in)capacity as a juridical legal minority.

It should be noted that the Present People form of corporality relies on the existence of a disembodied community, rather than rejects it; indeed, it was the political community as an *intellectual entity*, a product of the intellect, upon which the *persona ficta* was premised and which was said to be acting in the embodied form it took. In this sense, the Present People form shares the same premise as the Absent People form, which I analyse below, that of a fictional political community which must, in some capacity, be *brought into* the political world as a single entity capable of acting; it is not, therefore, a separate 'tradition' to the Absent People form, but remains a distinct alternative answer to the question of how that entity is incorporated. However, the Present People form, as I have termed it, is the tradition in which the political community is *thought* to be 'literally present' in the entity through which it acts, *when that entity is acting*. Even, therefore, the semi-representational structure of the councils of the Italian city-states presumed 'the people' to be 'rendered present' in their actions; this, combined with organological medieval thought, creates a fiction in which the acting entity, the corporality of the people, is not merely one part of the political entity acting 'on behalf of' the rest of that

entity, but is acting *as if it was the whole people*. Consequentially, the synecdochical element of the King is mirrored in the conciliar government of the city-states.

The Absent People

As I have made clear, all political thinking imagines some capacity for a people to act in the political world, and therefore will rely on some concrete entity capable of acting and deciding. In this section, then, I do not claim that a metaphorical depiction of peoplehood does not, in some sense, rely on a physical person or assemblage of persons to make these actions and decisions, such as a President, a council, a parliament, and so on. However, where Absent People Corporality differs from Present People Corporality is the relationship between that actor and the people to whom he is related; indeed, there are different ontological presumptions to consider, as I state above, and how they affect the imagination of corporality, both between and within the two major approaches. There are, consequentially, several significant thinkers I analyse in this section; first, Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, and the emergence of the distinction between government and sovereign; second, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the most developed form of Absent People corporality, the General Will; and third, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, and the turn to representation in modern political thought.

Of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, Hobbes' thought is more pertinent to our enquiry here, but his work becomes particularly relevant when framed against the backdrop of an important innovation brought forward by Bodin. After all, Hobbes is well known for his reflections in *Leviathan* on the Sovereign and the compact from which it is created, but such an idea can only be appreciated for corporality in the light of Bodin's careful distinction between government and sovereignty. Government, as a question of administration, was distinguished from sovereign power by Bodin in that sovereign power 'consisted in the *right to choose* magistrates and other members of a government' (Tuck, 2016: 18). In this, Bodin emphasises not authority

per se, but from where authority originates and on whose behalf it might be exercised: ‘in every state one ought to investigate who can give authority to magistrates, who can take it away, who can make or repeal laws… when this has been ascertained, *the type of government is easily understood*’ (Bodin, 1945: 178-179). Whilst Richard Tuck asserts that Bodin was ‘distinguishing between the state in a modern sense – the abstract entity behind or above the government – and the government itself’ (2016: 20-21), I think Bodin’s distinction is more adequately understood as a particular answer to the corporality question, namely what is the process by which a people moves from a mere intellectual entity in the imaginary to the realm of action. This can be seen when Bodin very shortly after comments that ‘whether the prince is unjust or worthy, nevertheless the state is still a monarchy. The same thing must be said about oligarchy and the rule of the people, who, while they have no powers by the creation of magistrates, still have the sovereignty, and on them the form of government necessarily depends’ (Bodin, 1945: 179). Moreover, upon the distinction between government and sovereignty rested the ‘critical feature of his concept of sovereignty, its *perpetual* character… he was concerned to define it as *perpetual*, and consequently to distinguish between the underlying location of sovereignty and the form that governmental power might take at any particular moment’ (Tuck, 2016: 22-23). This emphasis on the distinction between sovereignty as a disembodied power that still must take a form of some kind to be exercised is an important shift from the medieval and scholastic, organological vision from which the Presentist Corporality derived; as Tuck rightly shows, the medieval thinkers imagined that governmental institutions might still be a product of the people, ‘so that a king or an aristocracy [as the sovereign power] could not lurk underneath the government in the way Bodin conceived’ (2016: 49-50). What is perhaps more important, is such a distinction laid the groundwork for Thomas Hobbes.

Hobbes, as the first modern thinker this chapter has considered, is in many ways in debt to the organological current of the medievalists, and could easily be mistaken for being sympathetic to the Kingship view of peoplehood laid out above. It is due to his individualism, however, that he departs from the organological Present People Corporality and offers a radical alternative. In *De Cive*, Hobbes describes the foundations of legitimate civil government in the process of moving from the natural state of radical disaggregation where fear and danger are the primary motives to action, to the aggregation of individuals that they might secure their own safety, but with the important caveat that the *absence* of a common good and the prevalence of a plurality of desires, meaning that there still is not a condition of *peace* amongst them. Consequently, 'since therefore the conspiring of many wills to the same end doth *not suffice to preserve peace*, and to make a lasting defence, it is requisite that, in those necessary matters which concern peace and self-defence, there by but one will of all men'. Importantly, it is here that Hobbes' individualism is most evident in his emphasis on the will: 'this cannot be done, unless every man will so subject his will to some other one, to wit, either man or council, that whatsoever his will is in those things which are necessary to the common peace, it be received for the wills of all men in general, and of every one in particular', arguing that 'this submission of the wills of all those men to the will of one man or one council, is then made, when each one of them obligeth himself by contract' (1991: 166-169, emphasis added). This is a distinctly alternative ontology to that presumed by the organological thinkers who considered, in the vein of Aristotle, a person's full nature was only achievable in the community; instead, whilst Hobbes never claimed the historical validity of his thought experiment, his emphasis on the will as the manner through which individuals come to determine their political interests *distinct from community*, is revealing for the normative relationship between individuals, the community they form, and the corporality of that community. After all, in Chapter VI of *De Cive*, Hobbes remarks that 'we must consider, first

of all, what a multitude of men, gathering themselves *of their own free wills into society*, is' whilst maintaining that 'the city… is one person'. We have here, then, the issue which Canovan identifies as the central problem; a simultaneous recognition of the free will of the individual, and the corporality created by their association, and the consequential problem of action. At the base of Hobbes' corporality, in terms of how the political community forms, is the capacity of the individuals, through their will, to consent to the compact; 'every one of the multitude, by whose means there may be a beginning to make up the city, must agree with the rest, that in those matters which shall be propounded by any one assembly, that be received for the will of all' (1991: 174-175, emphasis added).

This does not, however, do away with the tension of action between 'a multitude of individuals' and 'a city'. Famously, Hobbes lays out at length the conditions that drive individuals into compact in Part One of *Leviathan*, expanding on the issue of a lack of safety he examines in *De Cive*, whilst retaining the specification that the difference between Men and other 'Politicall creatures', such as bees and ants, is that 'amongst these creatures, the Common good differeth not from the Prrvate… but man, whose Joy consisteth in comparing himselfe with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent'. What, then, is Hobbes' answer to the specific question of action? Two key statements are necessary to answer this question, the first coming from *Leviathan*: 'the only way to erect such a Common Power' to prevent internal strife and allow the political community to act as one single entity, 'is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by a plurality of voices, unto one Will: which is as much as to say, *to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person*' (2017: 138-140, emphasis added). In addition to this, is Hobbes' repudiation of the typical medieval organological metaphor's depiction of the ruling power as the head of the political association, arguing instead that 'he who is endued with such [supreme] power, whether it be a man or a court, hath a relation to the city, not as

that of the head, but *of the soul to the body.* For it is the soul by which a man hath a will, that is, can either will or nill' (1991: 188).

Consequently, Hobbes' emphasis on the power of the will in action becomes central to determining how the political community acts; just as an assembly of individuals unites their bodies to form a multitude as a single group, so they also unite their wills into a single will that the group may be able to act *as if it were a single person*. Thus, we see Hobbes' understanding of corporality; indeed, this *is* the process of creating a single people (1991: 250):

> It is a great hindrance to civil government, especially monarchical, that men distinguish not enough between a *people* and a *multitude*. The *people* is somewhat that is *one*, having *one will*, and to whom *one action* may be attributed; none of these can properly be said of a multitude. The *people* rules in all governments. For even in *monarchies* the *people* commands; for the *people* wills by the will of *one man*; but the multitude are citizens, that is to say, subjects. In a *democracy* and *aristocracy*, the citizens are the *multitude*, but the *court* is the *people*. And in a *monarchy*, the subjects are the *multitude*, and (however it seem a paradox) the king is the *people*.

This might seem contrary to Hobbes' insistence on the absolute power conferred to the Sovereign, when the Sovereign is thought of as a physical, *embodied* person. Instead, as Tuck explains, we find in Hobbes 'an insistence that the people have no existence separate from the sovereign' (2016: 104). Thus, whilst Hobbes does not use the same stylistic language as Bodin, we see a very similar principle: that sovereign power exists prior to, and lurks behind, the government as the actual acting body, and it is from the unitary existence of the sovereign power that the power to act derives. As a result, that which Bodin sets up as an analytical distinction between sovereign and government, Hobbes uses to make a significant move forward in the Absent People version of corporality: that there is a people *distinct from the actual individuals* that compose it, and this people is *represented*, as he states in Chapter XVIII of *Leviathan*, 'A Common-wealth is said to be Instituted, when a Multitude of men do Agree,

and Covenant, every one, with evert one, that to whatsoever Man, or Assembly of Men, shall be given by the major part, the Right to Present the Person of them all, (that is to say, to be their Representative;)' (2017: 141). I explore further the logic of representation in Absent People Corporality, but here it is important to note that Hobbes does not see the acting power in the government as *part of* the political community, but as *a direct product of*, therefore acting *as if* it were the people, not *as* the people.

The continuity, however, between Hobbes and the medieval thinkers, is the fragmentary nature of the pre-political people whose uniformity – in action, if not in opinion – is conferred to the Sovereign in the surrendering of the exercise of the will. As Nadia Urbinati puts it, 'delegation presumed an inegalitarian society made up of prepolitical communities that were unified under the monarch, The unity of the whole nation did not originate from it but was superimposed by and contained in the person of the sovereign' (2006: 67). There is, of course, a form of unity in Hobbes' pre-political community, in each member's desire to escape the state of nature and ensure his own security as detailed in Chapter XIV of *Leviathan*, but this is what we might call a 'negative unity'. Indeed, as I show above, Hobbes' concern in *De Cive* and more comprehensively laid out in *Leviathan* is how that negative unity is to be ensured given the unchangeable reality of man's nature and his eternal pursuit of pride that will, inevitably, lead to civil war (Ryan, 2012: 426-428). 'Unity', understood in the Hobbesian sense, cannot be truly derived from the laws of nature but only, as Urbinati recognised, superimposed from the monarch.

It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's challenge to overcome this absence of a pre-political uniformity. In this regard, there are two key components: the force that drives men together, and the mythical Legislator who 'invents the machine' and 'dares undertake to give a people institutions' (Rousseau, 2012: 42). In terms of the forces that drive men together, Rousseau made a clear effort to demarcate himself from Hobbes whilst working on the same ontological

presumptions: taking seriously the idea of a state of nature, more seriously than Hobbes was prepared to, Rousseau agreed that the foundational unit of analysis was the individual, which is perhaps his most consistent philosophical assumption throughout his entire oeuvre, who in the state of nature 'agreed that henceforward their particular will would be subsumed in a collective or general will' (Tuck, 2016: 128). What differs, is *why* they agreed to do so: in the first of Rousseau's two discourses on inequality, he objects to Hobbes' assumption that 'man is naturally evil just because he has no idea of goodness, that he is vicious for want of any knowledge of virtue' and so on, for the reason that (1984: 98):

> Hobbes saw very clearly the defects of all modern definitions of natural right, but the conclusions he drew from his own definition show that his own concept of natural right is equally defective. Reasoning on his own principles, that writer ought to have said that the state of nature, being the state where man's care for his own preservation is least prejudicial to that of others, is the one most conducive to peace and the most suited to mankind.

Famously, Rousseau diagnoses civilisation as the source of man's ills, but his state of nature is so radically different from Hobbes' that it is there that the pre-political unity begins, if not necessarily can be found. For instance, he remarks that 'pity is a natural sentiment which, by moderating in each individual the activity of self-love, contributes to the mutual preservation of the whole species'; such mutual preservation extends, in the state of nature, to physical love only, with Rousseau dismissing moral love as an artificial construction of civilisation, in order to establish both political and sexual subjugation (1984: 101-103). Of course, it is this emergence of enduring relationships between people that led to *amour-propre*. The associations at the heart of human relationships were of two kinds: those 'which lasted only as long as the passing need which had brought it into being' or those that existed through force as a result of one man trying to 'grasp his own advantage, ether by sheer force… or by cunning and subtlety'. And, the natural development of history debases man into the fallen condition in

which Rousseau was writing, 'who was formerly free and independent, diminished as a consequence of a multitude of new wants into subjection, one might say, to the whole of nature *and especially to his fellow men*, men of whom he has become the slave, in a sense, even in becoming their master' (1984: 111, 119 emphasis added).

By consequence, Rousseau considers that there are only few societies capable of receiving good laws (in fact, he goes so far as in Book III of the *Social Contract* to identify Corsica only in the entirety of Europe as being so capable). What matters, however, is there is a pre-political unity that exists as a natural consequence of human sociability; the fallen nature of that sociability might be an obstacle, but Rousseau does not believe it is possible to return to the state of nature. Instead, good laws must be made in light of this fallen nature; consequently, we can confidently say that Rousseau's idea of the pre-political unity is an incomplete one. As Judith Shklar notes of Rousseau's thought, 'without a Legislator to guide men, they will never acquire a character or become aware of themselves as a people, who 'collectively' are citizens subject only to laws they have made for themselves. Like Emile at adolescence the people needs instruction and examples. Interest brings men together, but to become *all that they might be* as a people requires more' (1985: 170, emphasis added). This is where the role of the Legislator becomes essential; it is important to note here, however, that the Legislator is *not* Rousseau's answer to the question of corporality, but is central, in a parallel with Hobbes, on how the people moves from being an incomplete version of itself, to a more complete and satisfactory form.

The Legislator, whilst central to Rousseau's thought, is only explored briefly in the *Social Contract*. He refers to the Legislator as a 'superior intelligence', that stands in relation to the State as someone who, as noted above, 'invents the machine' and prepares the institutions for good governance; but, as part of Rousseau's commitment to the unified and indivisible sovereignty enjoyed by the people, the Legislator does not retain the final decision over

whether the institutions are adopted by the people. Instead, they hold the final say (2012: 42-44):

> The man who draws up the laws thus has, or should have, no legislative right; and the very people, even should it wish to, cannot strip itself of that incommunicable right. Because, according to the fundamental pact, it is the general will alone that puts individuals under an obligation… for a nascent people to be able to fully appreciate healthy maxims of political thought and follow the fundamental rules of *raison d'Etat*, effect would have to succeed in becoming cause; the social spirit that must be the work of institutions would have to preside over the institutions themselves; and prior to laws men would have to be what they must become through them.

This seemingly paradoxical section of Book II, Chapter 7 of the *Social Contract* has been explored by Kevin Inston and, significantly for discussion on populism to which I turn shortly, Inston has drawn parallels between Rousseau's unconstituted people, and Ernesto Laclau's populism; this shall be examined further in Section III, but here what matters is the role the Legislator plays in allowing the people to move from a multitude of individuals to a people as a singular entity. 'For a people to act as the source of authority for the contract, it would have to be before the contract, what only the contract can make it', says Inston, citing Rousseau's comment that the 'cause would have become the effect'. 'The name of the people legitimising the contact names a lack. Rousseau supplements the lack of popular identity with a unique kind of political representative: the legislator' (2010: 394). As I show below, it is not accurate to describe the Legislator as a *representative* as he does not play the role required by corporality to be a representative in any true sense. Regardless, 'before the contract, there is a gap between the plurality of particular interests and the wholeness named by the general will. The gap needs to be bridged to *transform the multitude into the democratic agent the contract presupposes*. There is no natural link between the particular and the general, the bridge has to be constructed politically'. This is the role the Legislator plays: 'He is a particular agent which seeks to

generalise private wills by articulating them into a common project of social change… the lawgiver represents the universal by embodying multiple interests and desires through his legislation' (2010: 397-398, emphasis added). In other words, the Legislator plays a transitory role: he, recognising the emergence of a 'nascent' people, undertakes the role of constitution-framer, before passing final judgement back to a people, newly-awakened of their identity and prepared to defend it – after the deciding if the Legislator's constitution is suitable for their general will (Shklar, 1985: 179). As Theodore Waldman puts it, 'the legislator sets the ground by which a people may express themselves according to laws which they have adopted for purposes with which they are concerned' (1960: 228).

This brings us, however, to the crux of the matter: now that a people has been constituted, how does it act? What is the corporal form it takes in the political world in order to decide collectively and effectively? As Tuck explains, 'What Rousseau profoundly disagreed with was the idea that a *sovereign*, once constituted, could be represented *in its sovereignty* through deputies; his rejection of the idea was simply part of his general rejection of the standard eighteenth-century view that a people could have an identity as a sovereign and autonomous body, but would be unable to act unless represented by an omnicompetent institution such as a king or Parliament (2016: 138). Given, then, that Rousseau sees the Sovereign, synonymous with the people, as unrepresentable, his answer to the question of corporality is particularly dependent on the concept of the general will. As gestured towards thus far, his idea of the general will is one that arises from the process of the constitution of the people to whom it belongs, with the Legislator responsible for the people achieving consciousness of their own general will. As he famously remarks in Book II, Chapter 1, 'sovereignty, being merely the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and that the sovereign, which is merely a collective being, can be represented *only by itself*; power can indeed be transferred, *but not will*' and by consequence, 'for the same reason that sovereignty is inalienable, it is indivisible.

For will is general, or it is not; it is the will of the people *as a body*, or merely of one part' (2012: 29-30, emphasis added). As Waldman puts it, 'we can say that the expression of the general will at least ought not to exclude any of those who are members of the association, and that that expression must be in the public interest rather than the interests of a few' (1960: 222). Moreover, it is the general will that not only sustains the life of the political association through inclusivity, but one that guides the decision-making power of that association: 'if the State or the City is *simply a corporate person*, whose life consists in the union of its members, and if the most important of its concerns is its own preservation, it must have a *universal and coercive force to move and dispose each part* in the manner most beneficial to the whole' (Rousseau, 2012: 33, emphasis added). 'According to the philosopher, "every act of Sovereignty" demands "the simple right" to vote by every citizen be respected and the whole of the citizen-body be consulted to create a law' (Putterman, 2010: 110).

As a result, as Urbinati puts it, Rousseau's vision is of a fundamentally unrepresentable sovereign (2006: 63-65):

> Representation defined a reallocation of sovereignty… In Rousseau's mind, representation would rekindle the logic of natural law because it claims, absurdly, that sovereignty can be alienated like any other property and that its alienation would not alter the identity of its owner. Since "popular sovereignty," "the general will" and "political freedom" are synonymous, it would be paradoxical to attribute to two different institutions – the sovereign and the representatives – the task of performing the same political activity while pretending they are different. The fact that delegates deliberate *and* ratify proves that a transfer of freedom and power has occurred such that the delegates are no longer delegates but sovereign… the general will *and* the people were one and the same thing because they had "one and the same interest" and were born together.

In short, because the capacity for final decision-making is the ultimate marker of sovereignty, to Rousseau the people cannot surrender their decisionist powers. There are two important caveats here: first, Rousseau considers that *all* members of people must vote for a law to carry

legitimacy; but second, there are only *some* votes that are necessary for laws properly understood. As Ethan Putterman explains, 'only an act that is ratified by the people as a whole has the authority of a sovereign Law (with a capital "L") and any measure that is issued by the government is subordinate to it'. So, it is not a requirement of Rousseau's that the people convene to vote on every single political matter, in a form of permanent assembly, but instead they are only called upon to vote where the Law is considered fundamental – a distinction that can be made when considering that 'every sovereign law [Law] has to be *general in its object* but it is permissible for a decree [an ancillary governmental law] to apply to *only a part of the population*' (2010: 25-26, emphasis added).

There are a number of points raised thus far regarding Rousseau's conception of the corporality of the people that need to be addressed before it can be understood fully. The first is that distinction made between government and the people that, in an echo of Bodin, identifies the operation of governance as subordinate to the decisionist power of the people as Sovereign; consequently, the claim made by Rousseau that Sovereignty cannot be represented because it cannot be alienated or divided does not mean that it is impossible for a government to exist that does not require permanent mobilisation of the people. Instead, as I say above, Rousseau is careful to distinguish between those laws necessary for the whole body politic, and those ancillary laws that are either not fundamental, or applicable only to parts of the body politic (what Rousseau calls 'decrees'). Moreover, as noted above, Rousseau's related concern that power can be transferred but the will cannot, is that to which Urbinati refers in the synonymity of the people, the sovereign, and the general will; hence his twin claims that, first, that 'the body politic' has two 'motive forces. Strength and will are similarly to be discerned there: the latter designated as "legislative power", the former as "executive power". Nothing is done there, nor must be, without their contribution. We have seen how legislative power belongs to the people, and can belong to the people alone.' Second, that 'public force needs a specific

agent to unite actuate it as directed by the general will; to enable the State and Sovereign to communicate; to do in the public realm, in a way, what the union of soul and body does in a man. This is the reason for Government in a State, improperly confused with the Sovereign of which it is only a minister' (2012: 57-58). The third point, then, is that for Rousseau the 'will' is the possession of the people alone: 'Rousseau transferred to the people the qualities modern theorists of monarchical absolutism had given to the king: the will as possession and as the mark of power; the will as physical presence in space; and the present as the time dimension of the will' (Urbinati, 2006: 72)[11].

It is here that we can move on fully to Rousseau's idea of the corporality of the people. Once constituted by the process of moving from the state of nature to a pre-political incomplete unity, to then a body corporate guided by the Legislator, the people have become a singular entity with a recognisably shared general will; after all, the general will can 'come to men only when they acquire that *moi commun* which arises out of close and exclusive association with their fellow-citizens' (Shklar, 1985: 169). The decisionist act, however, is made by the people in an assembly in, as Urbinati points out, a single physical space. 'The need for the direct presence of the sovereign (spatial configuration) in the legislature was indicative at once of the sterility of judgement and its representability' (2006: 73); in this regard, Rousseau shows a clear indebtedness to Present People Corporality, in that for his sovereign to decide it must be brought together in a single place, but it also reveals his departure from it. This is because, once assembled, Rousseau identified strict rules on the behaviour of the sovereign, such as his famous stipulation that it must deliberate in silence; 'sight and sound never occur simultaneously In his republic (the sovereign is *visible* but *silent*). This is because any form of debate or deliberation 'might easily induce the citizens to associate their sovereignty with simply a restless movement of ideas, rather than definite authoritative decisions', thus

[11] Note here the overlap with the temporality chapter.

complicating the decisionist power of the sovereign people who otherwise 'instinctively know the difference between right and wrong' (2006: 78-83). The silence is necessary for the natural inclination of a citizen – which is a political individual as part of his collective, not merely a law-abiding person – to the general will to reach that conclusion peacefully and without force. As a result, Rousseau's general will *is* the people, and it is the metaphorical unity of the body politic in the decisionism of that general will that is his answer to the question of corporality: 'so long as several men together consider themselves a single body, they have but a single will, which is directed towards their common preservation and general welfare' (Rousseau, 2012: 99).

Given that Rousseau's view of the people's sovereignty is that it is fundamentally unrepresentable, in that Rousseau saw representation as a moment of splitting the decisionist capability of sovereignty, thus rendering it impotent and therefore *not* sovereign, there were major practical limitations to the adoption of his theory. The primary limit was that of space – as I explore, spatiality has not always meant literal space, but in this circumstance, and indeed in many theorists' writings, the size of a political community was a foundational factor in the manner of government it adopted. Unfortunately for Rousseau, as Elden notes, 'Rousseau comes too late: the genie is out of the bottle… he is writing at time, in the mid-eighteen century, when politics was fundamentally conceived as operating with discrete, bounded spaces under the control of a group of people, usually the state… it had become the static background behind the actions of political struggles' (2013: 238). He is, of course, aware of this: 'in general a small State is proportionately stronger than a large one' (2012: 47), but the point here is that, for Rousseau, many political communities were simply too large to make his proposed social contract workable. Instead, the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries were turning towards representation as a feasible mode of government and – importantly – reflecting the acting capability of the people. This is not to say that representation was a new concept: as

Hannah Pitkin shows, theorists as early as Hobbes were concerned with representation as the relation between a natural person, and an artificial person whose actions or words are of another person (1967: 20-21). This view, which Pitkin terms the 'authorisation view', is one in which (1967: 38-39):

> A representative is someone who has been authorised to act. This means that he has been given a right to act which he did not have before, while the represented has become responsible for the consequences of that action as if he had done it himself. It is a view strongly skewed in favour of the representative. His rights have been enlarged and his responsibilities have (if anything) decreased. The represented, in contrast, has acquired new responsibilities and (if anything) given up some of his rights.

Indeed, early debates on representative government centred around the idea that any representative body 'be so selected that its composition corresponds accurately to that of the whole nation' and be 'the most exact possible image of the country' and 'correspond in composition with the community'. As Pitkin summarises, 'the metaphors of portrait, map, and mirror have this in common: all are renderings of an "original" in a medium different from it' (1967: 60-62, 72-73). Whilst this is true, I believe it only holds where there are *pre-existing* parties. In the question of peoplehood, however, the act of creating a representative is both necessary for the people to act, and in itself constitutive of the people whose desire to act must be expressed. In other words, whilst Rousseau's schema did not create conditions that required representation, it did recognise that the act of authorisation is co-constitutive: there must be something or someone to confer authorisation, just as there is now something or someone who receives that authorisation. Can we say, then, that something did not exist prior to the act of authorisation has had its rights reduced?

This is not pedantry, but central to the point of representation: even the term, 'representation', means 'the making present of something that is nevertheless absent' (Pitkin,

1967: 237). The consequence, however, is an ontological gap between those being represented and the field of representation: this 'prevents collapsing one into the other and therefore *distinguishes representation from self-government*'. Moreover, and this cannot be ignored, 'the task of "rendering present" introduces a differential element that modifies the absent presence of the people, for otherwise, instead of representation we would have the simultaneous presence of the people and their delegates. The main point here is that the presence of "the people" is at once indirect and constitutively impure"' (Arditi, 2007: 81). Arditi has undertaken important work in the study of populism and representation, and so we shall return to his work, but here I ask a major question: in what way was representation meant to address the corporality question, of allowing a people to act in the political world?

As Urbinati shows, there were three major theorists of the representation 'turn' in corporality: Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, Thomas Paine and Nicolas de marquis de Condercet. I have examined Paine's thoughts in Chapter Three on Temporality, so in this chapter I focus on Sieyès and Condercet. Sieyès, like Rousseau, but much less systematically and much more abridged, argues in 'What is the Third Estate?' that there were three epochs in the emergence of government: the first was one in which isolated individuals sought to unite, and therefore was characterised by 'the activity of *individual* wills. The association is their work. They are the origin of all power'; thereafter, the second epoch is 'characterised by the action of a *common* will… power belongs to the public. Individual wills still lie at its origin and still make up its essential underlying elements. But taken separately, their power would be null. Power resides solely in the whole' (Sieyès, 2003: 134). We see here a similar ontological beginning to both Rousseau and Hobbes, in which there are individuals capable of recognising, and acting in accordance with, their will – in other words, a rationalist conception of the human person – in order to associate and create a greater, artificial entity that reflects their will as a single body (Pitkin, 1967; Skinner, 1999; Urbinati, 2006). Sieyès' comment, that power resides 'solely in

the whole', is of course consistent with other theorists' that a) power is indivisible, and b) is a possession of the *whole*, not merely *the constituent members*. From this beginning, however, epoch three is Sieyès' move away from Rousseau's theory of sovereignty that commits him against representation, and towards representation as a *necessary* component of democracy: put simply, in the third epoch, members eventually become too numerous and too widespread for coherent and effective political decision making. 'Distinguished from the second inasmuch as it is no longer a real common will that acts, but a representative common will' (2003: 134-135).

There are two principles for the need for representation, and they are both pragmatic and normative. The first, pragmatic principle is that which I remarked on above, and which Sieyès builds into the third epoch, which is of dispersed populations and geographical limitations. This principle is simple enough to understand: modern polities, as I show in the chapter On Spatiality, had a complex relationship with geography that allowed for both the dispersed nature of populations and the direct association between the peripheries and the centres. Therefore, size as an impediment to good governance was more practical. The second, normative principle however, is Sieyès' major contribution to political theory, as he attempted to show why representation was necessary to good governance and not merely an expedient in the face of practical constraints. In this regard, Sieyès' turn to representation rested on both the recognition of representation as a 'fundamental fact of modern society' (Hont, 2004: 198) and his two-fold theory of liberty. First, that representation was a 'fundamental fact' came from Sieyès' theory that 'all human relations… are basically contractual services provided in exchange for remuneration… human actions are all interconnected and every action reflects and is a reflection of the action of others', based largely on his socio-economic studies, thus making 'the paradigm of exchange into the norm for the creation of legitimate value'. In other words, the dual phenomena of money and labour had created a society in which exchange and

inter-personal relations were not undertaken or created for the purpose of the immediate act, but *represented* a delayed, deferred or absent thing – thus Urbinati could talk of Sieyès as having given Montesquieu's 'commercial republic' phrase a robust philosophical underpinning (2006: 141-143).

This recognition, moreover, feeds into Sieyès' more important two-fold theory of liberty. In this theory, Sieyès depicted liberty as, first, freedom as independence, and second, freedom of empowerment. With reference to the concept of peoplehood, 'freedom as independence' is taken to mean that the people is only free when it is not acted upon by a force external to it, and 'freedom of empowerment' is taken to mean that the people is free when it is not required to deliberate on the day-to-day of politics: 'liberty is only guaranteed when individuals have the time and resources necessary to pursue their aims. This can be achieved through the social differentiation of labour' (Rubinelli, 2019: 52). As a result, representation is actually a manner in which *greater* liberty can be achieved, as it removes the demands placed by politics on both individuals and the people, by allowing for a deferred presence via representatives. Therefore, elections established to choose representatives, if done correctly, could maximise the exercise if liberty; as Urbinati puts it (2006: 146):

> Election creates and separates the domains of individual liberty and political liberty by defining their respective recipients/practitioners as well as their reciprocal independence. But it also creates a dualism within the very domain of political liberty, or between a minimal and in theory equally distributed liberty (the right to vote for) and a maximum and unequally distributed one (the legislative power or autonomy in Rousseau's sense).

Thus, we see the necessity in Sieyès' thought for the institution of representation: it allows for the maximisation of liberty by freeing the people from the immediate demands of politics, thus satisfying the second condition of liberty: freedom as empowerment, or specifically the freedom to pursue their own lives independent of 'politics'. What Sieyès leaves unanswered,

it must be noted, is whether the causal link between geography and representation is really as he conceives it, and not the inverse; in other words, was it geographical dispersion that required representation, or was it the 'virtual representation' of medieval kingship and the deferral of decision-making to such a body that *allowed* for the geographical dispersion of the people? Regardless, the practical and normative conditions for representation laid out by Sieyès reflect the question at the heart of corporality, of how the people are to act in the political world. What they do *not* do, however, is answer *who* the people is to be represented, and what that relationship might look like. After all, whereas Rousseau's theory possessed a Legislator, Sieyès' does not, and in fact his comment that members of the association will 'entrust the exercise of that right [of sovereignty] to someone else' reflects that yawning gap.

The answer to this question can be found in understanding Sieyès' role for the people in determining the *fundamental identity* of the political community by acting as the authorising power of that community's constitution (2003: 135):

> It is impossible to create a body for an end without giving it the organisation, forms, and laws it needs in order to fulfil the functions for which it has been established. This is what is meant by the constitution of that body. It is obvious that it could not exist without one. It is equally obvious that any delegated government must have its constitution and that is what is true of government is also true of each of its component parts. Thus the body of representatives entrusted with the legislative power, or the exercise of the common will, exists only by way of the mode of being which the nation decided to give it. It is nothing without its constitutive forms; it acts, proceeds, or commands only by way of those forms.

This turn to constitutionalism was reinforced by Condorcet, as I show below, but with Sieyès we see an important, specifically Enlightenment-style rationalisation of the two-fold theory of statehood of Bodin: whilst the idea of representatives taking care of actual 'politics' maps roughly onto Bodin's category of the government, so does Sieyès' idea of the people acting to authorise the existence of such 'politics' via the constitution map onto the category

of the sovereign. Whereas for Bodin, the sovereign was an abstract entity, Sieyès' constitution is the more concrete expression of such an abstraction: 'according to Sieyès, the nation [as the people] was a prepolitical reality and the origin of legitimacy: "its will is always legal" because nothing can limit it besides its own will… Before the nation exists, there are single, not associated individuals' but, as ever, 'the problem is it cannot act or will in the absence of some given forms, which are therefore consubstantial with its existence although ontologically exogenous to it and, in theory, operational.' Therefore 'Sieyès saw the assembly [of representatives] as a body in which the common interest was created or recognised rather than the repository of an existing sovereignty' (Urbinati, 2006: 150-153, 161).

How, then, does the people authorise the constitution? In a move reminiscent of Rousseau's idea of the Legislator, but consistent with Sieyès' first principle of freedom (as independence), the people elect their own *extraordinary* representatives, who must then formulate the constitution, before returning it to the people for their final decision. However, Lucia Rubinelli argues against the rather simple view of Sieyès as a 'practical Rousseauian' to propose that Sieyès' view of political authority was markedly different, distinguished by his rejection of 'sovereignty' in favour of 'constituent power'; 'since sovereignty was originally used to describe the monarch's absolute power, it implicitly entailed an absolute and unlimited understanding of political authority.' By rejecting the terminology of sovereignty in favour of constituent power, Sieyès 'conceptualised people's power as the original authority to constitute the state' through the election of 'extraordinary representatives' to create the constitution, and then return that constitution to the people for ratification (much like Rousseau, but without the semi-mythical Legislator). 'Although the writing of the Constitution is carried out by representatives of the nation's constituent power, representative activity is not itself the core of the constituent power which lies with the people's authorisation of the result of that activity: the constitutional text'. Therefore 'once the people have authorised the constitution, and

constituted order is created as the logical and necessary counter-part of the nation's constituent power', the people may retreat from the immediate necessity of political decisionism, and experience that freedom as empowerment discussed above (Rubinelli, 2019: 53-54).

The consequence of Sieyès' arguments is what we might consider a two-fold corporality, in which the *will* of the people is present indirectly through the constitution, providing the unified ground on which the institutions of state could be built – or in Sieyès' words, the 'delegated government' – and the *authority* of the people could be exercised. Sieyès' theory and the move towards constitutionalism, then, allowed for a dual recognition of the two principles of the corporality of peoplehood: will and authority. It was in response to this, and as part of the direction that the French Revolution took, that the Marquis de Condorcet developed his theory of the constitution as the basic law of the political community, but in such a way that it remained responsive to the people. This was because Condorcet 'translated sovereignty into the language of "rights" and conceived the constitution as the *founding process* of a legal, political, and ethical order'. The first of these points, that of rights and sovereignty, found unity in Condorcet's idea of the 'right of sovereignty' which encompassed the right to choose candidates and elect representatives, as well as *revise the constitution every twenty years* and *propose constitutional amendments at any time*. This was because (Urbinati, 2006: 180-182, emphasis added):

> The right to ratify the constitution was the basic sovereign right… it belonged to the "university of the citizens" and could not be delegated since "the right to determine the general rules to which the actions that are not abandoned to the individual will are to be subjected cannot be held in the name of the society and by its agent." This meant that "redactors", not representatives, set in the constitutional assembly. *Once the citizens had approved the constitution (by direct ratification)*, the legislative function split in two: legislation properly defined, or promulgation, and reclamation.

For Condorcet, much like Sieyès, the constitution as the basic legal form of the political community, was what allowed that community to exist; outside the legal form, there was no legitimate sovereign, even the 'will of the people' which, without a constitution, 'was nothing more than the utterance of a multitude of individuals'. Therefore, 'Condorcet's plan entailed thinking of constitutionalism as the end of an era in which political stability was achieved by *binding popular wall to undisputable foundations*' (Urbinati, 2006: 184, 186, emphasis added).

This system of thought makes more sense when we consider Condorcet's writings on freedom and 'free peoples'. A free people, Condorcet argued, can be identified as one in which *all its members* enjoyed 'social freedom', which he defined as 'the ability to act in ways not always subject to the will of an outside force, to do all those things that your instinct as a free individual tells you should not be subject to [common] rules' (Condorcet, 2012: 184-185). From this, Condorcet's constitution is understood as fulfilling that function identified by Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau and Sieyès: that a people ought to act upon itself to provide itself with the basic laws of its existence. It was the continual right of revision, however, that allowed for the constitution to be considered a 'living' document in such a way that the people never considered it to be beyond their possession; representation, meanwhile, acted to mitigate what Condorcet thought of as the danger in identifying the 'sovereign will' with hasty decisions, which threatened the generality of the law because it subjected decisions to the unreflective mood of the moment[12]. Instead, representation allowed for immediate issues to be resolved whilst ensuring that the general will was grounded in a people's true (because reflected-upon) desires. The complexity of Condorcet's constitution is not necessarily salient here, but what remains significant is the recognition that, regardless of the functions of the internal elements of the constitution, there remained 'at the bottom… a superior will [to subordinate institutions]

[12] In this regard, Condorcet can be considered to fall in line with the trans-temporal approach to Temporality that I outline in Chapter Three, in that he considered a *true* political community to be one that was reflective and constructive across generations.

that cannot be further limited if it is to bind the will of the elected' (Urbinati, 2006: 183, 214). In other words, just as the constitution acts as the bedrock upon which rests the political structure, there must be a foundational will upon which the constitution must rest – the people itself. From here, we can conclude that a constitution was intended to act as one of two 'parts' of the corporality of the people, as expressing the will of the people, whilst the administrative state could be endowed with the authority of the people.

Populism and the Acting Body

As with each chapter, having established these two major approaches to corporality in the history of political ideas, we can turn to the question of how populism addresses the question of corporality, specifically how a people can be an acting body in the political world. Before we do so, however, it is worth drawing together the chapter thus far, and making some important clarificatory notes. First of all, the two sections appear sequential, but this is not intentional; rather, it is because the theories examined have been more sequentially influential, if not necessarily sequential historically. It is important to recognise, for instance, that the use of the term 'body politic' as a normative concept persisted beyond the seventeenth century, especially amongst those Quentin Skinner refers to as the 'neo-Roman theorists' of liberty (1998: 24). In fact, as Frederick Beiser shows, such organicism was present in Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel's theory of the state (2005: 239-243).

Second, one subtle, nearly imperceptible shift in the terminology of the thinkers I am considering is over the use of the word 'body' itself. Indeed, bequeathed from Christian theology and St. Augustine's philosophy, as I have shown, is the image of the 'body politic' as both a mystical entity and simultaneously akin to a natural, physical body, which required a head to direct it, and was a unity in which each part played a role. In contrast to this, we begin to see the use of the term 'body' as in the 'body of citizens' in the same way we might see

someone refer to ‘a body of water’, for instance. In this regard, ‘body’ is still loaded with a ‘natural’ meaning, but it is, significantly, *without a priori form*. As Gian Giacomo Fusco shows, in relation to Carl Schmitt’s work, ‘the “unformed” people (composed by those who are not officials or holder of public functions) stands above the constitutional framework, as the bearer of the *constitution-making power*’ and therefore ‘the constitution is, in this perspective, the “form” of the political union that a determinate people… decide to assume.’ Most importantly, ‘the existential dimension of the people as the bearer of the constitution-making power is the one that pertain to a formless entity’ (2019: 105-106, emphasis added). Indeed, as Schmitt writes in *Constitutional Theory*, ‘constitution in the positive sense means the formation of this political unity by conscious act, through which the unity receives its particular form of existence’ (2008: 97). What matters here is the emergence of a semi-organological language that deals with ‘the people’ in its pre-institutional form as a body-as-mass, rather than as a prescriptive entity that predetermines the relationship between members.

Moreover, we have to consider the implications of such a shift for pluralism. Inevitably, the organicism of the Kingship and ‘neo-Roman’ approaches not only admit, but *require*, a certain degree of pluralism, due to the plurality of ‘roles’ such an analogy generates (Skinner, 1998: 53-54). Such pluralism was also what forced Sieyès into the representative turn, in an attempt to balance both self-government of the whole, and the liberty of the parts (Urbinati, 2006: 150-153). By contrast, the ‘body as mass’ analogy requires a certain denial of pluralism. I do not want to push this too far, as no theorist consciously endorsed this attitude, and almost all made caveats in their writings in order to avoid the conclusion, but it is undeniable that a certain presumption of homogeneity in the form of *equality at the political level* involves a move to undifferentiation amongst the body-as-mass. This is not to say that pluralism is impossible, but perhaps the point is made clearer if we speak in terms of causality: on the one hand, the Kingship analogy *arrives* at the body politic image *as a result* of pluralism; on the

other hand, the body-as-mass analogy begins with undifferentiation in order to *move towards* plurality in the form of liberty as the free exercise of choice, rather than liberty as the realisation of one's telos as part of the body politic.

Third, and bringing these two points together, the subtle distinction within the theorisation of the 'body politic' is why it is difficult to draw demarcations between theorists simply over whether they use the term 'body' or not. For instance, Rousseau's use of 'body' does not cohere with, say, Ubaldis' use, as Ubaldis' was considering the body politic in the mystical sense with an *a priori* form, whereas Rousseau's efforts were directed at how an undifferentiated political mass might *become* a body politic. Similarly, as Eric Nelson details, the post-Civil War period in England involved both monarchists and parliamentarians using the term 'body' to reflect their own understandings of the representational office to the people, be it monarch or parliament, with parliamentarians mostly arguing that 'likeness' and 'image' ought to be the standard against which the legitimacy of parliament can be judged, whereas monarchists urged that 'authority' be such a standard for monarchy (2014: 69-72). With this in mind, we can begin to understand populism's corporality more fully beyond a simple individualism-communitarian divide, and instead start to unpick what is specific about the way in which populism responds to the corporality question. There are, in this regard, three key elements to the populist corporality: the centrality of the leader; the (return of) the General Will; and the simplification of society.

As I mention in the introduction, it is a common point of analysis that populism almost always relies on the presence of a leader to become an acting body in the political world. Indeed, as Urbinati shows, 'all populist regimes that the name of their leader' (2019a: 117). The highly personalist politics that populism exhibits is an agreed-upon trope, though the reasons for this are contested; Laclau argues as part of his post-structuralist analysis that, 'as their [populist symbols] function is to bring to equivalential homogeneity a highly

heterogenous reality, they can only do so on the basis of reducing to a minimum their particularistic content. At the limit, this process reads a point where the homogenising function is carried out by a pure name: the name of the leader' (Laclau, 2005b: 40). As I show in the Literature Review, however, Laclau's collapsing down of populism into politics remains unsatisfactory for understanding what is unique to the populist expression of corporality. Instead, the aforementioned intervention by Moffittt on the strict unity between the leader's body and the people's body is significant in placing populism within the wider context of the history of ideas in two manners: first, he suggests a return to the organological ontology of the Present People form of corporality; so much so that Moffittt explicitly mentions Kantorowicz and the King's two bodies thesis in attempting to understand populism, writing that:

> Talk of the body politic has largely disappeared from our political vocabulary following the rise of liberal democratic politics. While under monarchy, the king had 'two bodies' that were inseparable from each other – the 'body natural', which was his physical body, and the 'body politic', which was the invisible and divine body that symbolised the unity of the people; under democracy, the body politic is ostensibly 'disembodied', as democracy is conceptualised as an 'empty place' of power.

In response, argues Moffittt, populism 'can be read as an attempt to 're-embody' the body politic, to suture the head back on the corpse, and provide unity in the name of 'the people' through the leader' (2016: 64). This suggests that populism moves closer to the Present People form of corporality detailed in Section I, however Moffittt also remarks that the populist leader is a 'performer' of populism who 'renders-present 'the people'' and is, therefore, 'the figure who unites an unorganised mass of followers through noninstitutional means' (2016: 51-53). On a conventional reading, if we follow historical thinking about 'the people', then such an 'unorganised mass' is *not* a people, and instead the act of rendering present 'the people' *is* the process of embodying the people. However, as I show above, simply referring to 'the people' is not enough to determine the categories into which populism falls; instead, we need to

recognise that Moffittt's insight shows populism to appeal specifically to an *unorganised mass*, which is distinctly different from a corporational body politic that has some kind of *a priori* form. This helps to explain why populism considers the leader to be synonymous with the people, in that he is *the key ontological feature* of their existence. As a result, this first manner is a focus on *characteristics*: populists use behaviour seen as being antonymous with institutional politics to assert their position as 'outside' politics (2016: 60-62).

The second manner in which Moffittt contributes is that he shows populism's normative relationship between the leader and the people is reminiscent of the Present People form. Again, this would suggest that populism is closer to the first of the two approaches to corporality, but also shows the difficulty in squaring the circle of representational politics with unity/direct presence in political thought. However, if we recall the linguistic shift from a body politic to a body-as-mass metaphor, we can begin to understand the populist shift: Moffittt's comment that populism relies on a tighter unity of the body politic reminiscent of the Kingship model is helpful and a major development, but does not go far enough: it recognises that populism utilises a body metaphor more seriously than, say, liberalism, but it does not explain why or what differentiates this *normatively* from Kingship itself. Moreover, the consequence of the attempt to produce a tighter association between people and leader, is that populism seems to break down or subvert the representative gap which rests upon the development of Bodin and Hobbes in distinguishing between 'sovereign' and 'government'. In this regard, the literature on populism sometimes goes astray: for instance, Urbinati spends a lot of time talking about populism's transformative influence on democracy *as a form of government*. She claims that (2019a: 114-117):

> Political representation through elections is a process of unity and plurality, not only unity; it is thus a process of partial unification, not holistic majorities… populist democracy is its opposite, and the core of its opposition lies in its proclamation of representation as embodiment over mandate representation… '[The leaders'] monoarchic stance has inspired Canovan and

> Laclau to connect them to Thomas Hobbes' artificial unifier of the dissociated individuals into the state. Their choice speaks to the unsolved ambiguity of populism. The populist leader does not create the state, as Hobbes' representative agent does – and Laclau states this quite clearly… the populist leader is emotionally and propagandistically active in his daily effort to reconquer the people.

Urbinati's claim that a populism requires a 'daily reconquest' of the people is significant, and one to which I shall return below, but here the presumption of the continual gap between 'sovereign' and 'government' is evident in Urbinati's insistence that populism still operates within the democratic horizon, which it might do practically but does not do normatively. What this fails to do, however, is recognise that representative gap established by Hobbes (with reference to Bodin). Likewise, Arditi's comment that populism is seen by liberals as 'Caesarism with a democratic dressing' that simultaneously undoes democratic mechanisms whilst claiming democratic credentials, is significant as it reveals the presumption of the democratic ontology (2005: 76-77). Hence Arditi's comment that 'a similar ambiguity surrounds the gap between the absent presence of the people and the action of representing them. The gap is bridged by a 'presentation' that forgets the iterability at work in the 're-' of representation,' and that populism 'is a mode of representation arising from a crossover between the standard 'acting for others' of political representation in liberal democracies, the re-entry of a Hobbesian authorisation of sorts under the guise of trust for the leader, and a strong symbolic dimension' (2005: 82-84).

Urbinati continues that the populist leader 'emerges in times of social distress, which see the decomposition of traditional representation', and the leader '"absorbs" the collective body in his person and acts "as" the people, which is the condition for him to act "for" the people'. Whilst Urbinati argues that populism emerges in conditions that 'decompose' traditional representation, it is not the 'representation' that Urbinati believes is decomposed, but the 'traditional', and argues instead that populism creates 'direct representation', in which 'like a

prophet in relation to God, the leader has no will of his or her own but is rather a vessel of the sovereign will – the mouth from which the vox populi manifests itself' (2019a: 118, 125). Again, the claim that populism sees the leader as merely a vessel through which the people acts is accurate, but the inability to move beyond the horizon of representative politics hampers the analysis, and whilst it goes someway towards explaining the relationship between people and leader, it does not go far enough. We can see here that the literature on populism and representation agrees on the significance of the leader and the breakdown of the represented/representative gap, what we might call representativity; however, conventional analyses that emphasise the people-elite distinction *implicitly recognise the continual existence of this gap for the notion of elites to even exist*. The people-elite distinction as a mode of understanding populism fails to appreciate (as Urbinati does) that populism is opposed to political elites because they are seen as constitutively outside the boundary of the people. This is in part determined by the populist temporality that I explored in the previous chapter but is due also to the semi-organic ontology from which populism draws, that I explained above.

For this reason, populism does not just endorse 'Caesarism', personalism, leader-centric representation, or any other terms used thus far, but centres its permutations on a *specific leader*. This moves populism away from the Kingship model of corporality in two significant ways: first, the office of the King was presumed to be temporally persistent on the basis of both practicality, and the Christological understanding of power; the office and the juridical construct were more significant than the individual occupant, because the public realm, the *universitas*, was presumed to be perpetual. Second, and more significantly, populism rejects the constitutional gap of the government-sovereign distinction that makes representativity a possibility but – due to the democratic revolution – remains trapped within the internal conditions that *allow* for the transference of will and authority, which is consent. This is why populism relies on constant mobilisation to ensure that the people do not withdraw their support

for the leader; the authoritative, creative force of politics is recognised as the people, but the formalism of the transference of authority via elections and institutions are both obfuscatory and predicated on the constitutive gap of representativity. Populism seeks to elide the sovereign and the government once more. This is a point at which populism defies neat categorisation, as there are elements of Condorcet here, and his 'renegotiated constitutionalism'. Both Condorcet and Laclau recognised that 'the people' is a renegotiable constituency, though each offered different expressions of corporality: Condorcet's constitutionalism was juristic, Laclau's hegemony is ontic. In this regard, a distinction between populism and Kingship is that Kingship rests on the permanent office of the King, whereas there is no such permanent office in any populist movement. By consequence, the populist leader has to constantly secure this consent; this introduces a time element to populism that does not exist in the Kingship model which, because the people is present *in the body of the King*, can defer the authorising moment of consent. Populism cannot do so; the collapsing down of the representative gap due to the attempt to fuse will and authority into a single decisionist power, means that no significant decision can be made without explicit reference to the people. Of course, this is not to say that the leader consults the people; he has no need to do so, because the semi-organic ontology of the people as a body-as-mass means he is coterminous with the people.

Consequently, no analysis on populism has gone far enough when discussing the populist corporality. Populism is not 'ambivalent' towards constitutionalism but *denies the conditions for constitutionalism to even exist*. This is because there is no settled, temporally-extended people but a consistently mobilised, immediate people that is expressed only in the body of the leader. For instance, even though Blokker attempts to construct a framework for understanding the 'populist constitution', even he concedes that the instrumentalism of the populist constitution reveals that the authorising decisionism of the people is a higher-order power, noting that 'populists tend to engage on a frequent basis with constitutional revision, not least

because they understand the existing order as tainted with legacies from the past' with reference to the Law and Justice Party in Poland and the 'new Hungarian Fundamental Law, which, since its adoption in 2012, has already been amended six times (anno 2017)' (2019: 456). This constitutional revisionism cuts across ideological lines to become a central component of populist corporality: Hugo Chávez's constitutional revisionism with consistent recourse to the people is a well-documented example of Latin American populism, which has been emulated across the region (Vergara, 2019; Landau, 2020). Significantly, if the will and authority cannot be separated, there can be no constitution (as the expression of will) upon which the state can be built (as the expression of authority). This is part of the collapsing down of representativity; however, this element of populist corporality in itself does not fully explain the normative relationship between the people and the leader, especially as it raises the question, why is the creative authorising power 'in' the people?

In this regard, we can turn to the revival of the concept of the General Will in an attempt to understand populism. As I show in the Literature Review, the use of 'General Will' to explain populism is particularly prevalent amongst theorists who are critical of populism, and the Manichean implications of the General Will; however, this is not necessarily a true reflection of the populist understanding of the people's authoritative power, nor is it a fair representation of the Rousseauian conception of the General Will. Instead, to understand populism and the 'return of' the General Will properly, we need to remember that in populism there is something of a return to an organic metaphor in the use of 'healthy' terminology: 'contrary to Mudde's claim that populists "do not want to change the people themselves, but rather their status within the political system," the populist goal of preserving the good people… from contaminations by external folk or by domestic elites is a perfectionist project' (Urbinati, 2019a: 46). This is a reasonable assertion given the populist embrace of that semi-organic body-as-mass metaphor explained above, but I disagree with Urbinati on one key point:

the populist project is not perfectionist, but *purificatory*, because Urbinati's phrase is mistaken: 'perfection' implies a specific teleology, whereas purification captures the populist claim to be the 'real' people more accurately.

Still, we are left with the question, why does populism embrace the General Will, and how does it differ to Rousseau's summary? First, the concept of a will being 'general' is only possible if we presume that there is *a mystical body distinct from the individual members*. This is where the semi-organicism of populism is significant: whilst populism does not necessarily endorse the strict 'body politic' analogy because of its lack of an *a priori* image of the body, and therefore embraces the 'body-as-mass' analogy, this body-analogy retains at least the notion that the body of the people is *distinct* from its constituent parts. As a result, only with this presumption is there is the conceptual capacity to distinguish between a 'general' (true) will, and 'particular' wills. As Canovan puts it, 'a vision of `the people' as a united body implies impatience with party strife and can encourage support for strong leadership where a charismatic individual is available to personify the interests of the nation' (1999: 5). This is because parties (both in the formal and factional senses) can frustrate the generality of the people's will (Urbinati, 2014: 136-149). Moreover, Mudde claims that the term is used to refer to the people's purity versus the elite's corrupted nature, and therefore as a source of legitimacy and authority. Whilst I agree that the 'purity' of the general will, as the unique possession of the people, is a significant element, Urbinati refutes the Manichean presumption of Mudde's claim (2019a: 50):

> the root of populism is the nonelite people, or the masses minus the elite… populism's first battle cry is directed not against elites in general but rather against the political elite in particular. Morality per se is not the issue; the issue is a kind of morality (or immorality) that is associated with the exercise (or the nonexercise) of political power.

Consequently, the General Will in populism differs slightly from Rousseau's General Will when considering Inston's observation that the Rousseauian general will is *arrived at* from crossing the gap between multitude and people, whereas populism endorses the pre-Rousseauian vision of the people as an organic entity.

This brings us to the second reason for the embrace of the General Will in populism, in that it is part of the rise of popular sovereignty that complicates the simple return to the Present People form of corporality. This is because we need to also consider the normative relationship between ruler and ruled: the major theme of the shift examined in this chapter is the emergence of 'popular sovereignty' as the moral basis for the need for governance combined with the spatial limits that informed the need for representation, compared (very importantly) to the 'minority thesis' of the high medieval period. Populism is not a simple 'going back' to a pre-democratic logic, even if it might challenge democracy's formalism and proceduralism. Canovan was right when she said that populism exalts 'popular sovereignty'; but it takes this principle and applies it in non-democratic forms. In this sense, populism appeals to the distinctions drawn by Bodin and Hobbes, that a political community can be democratic 'in character' but monarchical 'in form', whilst simultaneously collapsing down the distinction this entails between sovereign and government. Such an example of the simultaneous recognition and collapsing down of this gap comes from Arditi: a perception of the leader as a 'vehicle for the expression of the popular will' results in a preference for presence rather than representation because the latter involves a 'corruption of the general will' (2005: 82).[13]

As I say, the idea of the General Will as a possession of the people prevents a full return to the medieval 'minority thesis' of the people as a legal minor. Instead, the democratic revolution subverted the presumption of the minority thesis by creating the perception of the

[13] It is important to note that this is a significant tension within populism that it might be fundamentally unresolvable; this is not my concern here, merely an attempt to understand the way 'populism' thinks.

people – either as a single entity, or as individuals in their concrete existence – as mature, or as Kant put it, 'man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage' (Kant, 2009). Taking this development, in combination with the semi-organicism of populism, we can understand the relationship between 'the people' and leader to be *a full inversion of the minority thesis*, and the development of a relationship in which the leader is nothing more than the *vox populi*, the voice of the people, in the strictest terms possible: the people, if anything, are the mature entity in the relationship, and the leader is the minor. Consequently, with populism, the leader does not act *for* the people, but *as* the people, who are unable to act for themselves because of the disappearance of the political world they inhabited – as I explain in the previous chapter – and because of the semi-organic body-as-mass analogy upon which it rests. This is a typical trope amongst populist leaders, who claim to not simply be acting for the people but acting as the people in the political world; for instance, Chávez's repeated insistence that 'I am not myself, I am the people' and 'this is not about Hugo Chávez, this is about a people' (de la Torre, 2013: 10). Likewise, Donald Trump famously declared in his inaugural speech that 'this is your day. This is your celebration… January 20th, 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and woman of our country will be forgotten no longer' (Rowland, 2010: 367).

However, the term 'general will' remains overloaded with historical weight and connotations (mostly from Rousseau), and so I think we ought to understand populism's construction of the general will as in practice more akin to 'common sense', meaning we need to understand the nature 'common sense' plays in populism. For instance, Mudde has placed significant emphasis on the concept of the 'General Will' in populism, but rather than relying on a purely Rousseauian conception instead notes that 'the notion of the general will employed by populist actors and constituencies is based on the notion of 'common sense'. This means that the general will is framed in a particular way, which is useful for both aggregating different

demands and identifying a common enemy' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013: 505). In this, populist actors (and populism by extension) rely on the incoherence of common sense to bind together a loose alliance of disaggregated groups possessing different views and goals, but all of whom consider their own knowledge as 'common sense'. This centrality of 'common sense' to populism can be best understood through Laclau's work on the centrality of empty signifiers to a popular identity, the presence of which 'both expresses and constitutes an equivalential chain'. By this, Laclau (2005a: 70, 129) means the circumstance in which the recognition of a multitude of difference (a plurality of groups) results in the closing of a differential space through expulsion of (at least) one of these different groups, but resulting in an 'irretrievable fullness' by virtue of the fact that those included groups share equivalence in their difference to the excluded group and simultaneously an unresolvable internal tension due to their difference to one another. In order to overcome this tension, the empty signifier acts as a term that each of these different groups can identify with, but engage in contest to signify as their own values or identity, and act as the hegemon (Laclau, 1996: 43).

The term 'common sense' in populism, therefore, draws on its own incoherence to mean a multitude of things to a multitude of groups simultaneously, and is never articulated clearly, because 'common sense' is drawn from the experience of a heterogeneous 'common people' who are identifiable only by virtue of what they are not: the powerful (Scott, 2022). 'Common sense' is also a rhetorical flourish designed to loosely constitute a 'people', not to provide any coherence to this 'people' (for to do so would risk the incoherence of 'common sense') but to delineate the boundaries between those thought to be the people and those thought not to be (the elite). Furthermore, by asserting the commonsensical as akin to the General Will, 'common sense' can present certain assumptions and cultural constructs as inviolable and unquestionable, by virtue of their very commonsensical nature (Rosenfeld, 2011).

In conjunction with these two elements – of the leader, and the General Will as common sense – is populism's third element of corporality, that of the simplification of society. As Carlos de la Torre argues, populist rhetoric 'assembles all social, economic, cultural, and ethnic differentiations and oppressions into two irreconcilable poles: the pure people versus evil and rotten elites' (de la Torre, 2013: 10). But whilst many analyses of populism are concerned with the implications of simplification, two scholars have been particularly perceptive in helping to understand *why* this simplification occurs in the first instance, and its intrinsic nature to populism, specifically Laclau and Urbinati, though I believe that a return to Carl Schmitt's political theory can elaborate this development further. Laclau's recognition that simplification is a necessary moment in the realisation of subject-positions has provided a useful conceptual tool in explaining why conflictual frontiers are drawn between peoples, which Urbinati has expanded upon, though seems to reduce simplification to a materialist reading, arguing that 'demagoguery emerges when social pluralism and a squeezed middle class intertwine – polarisation (well-off/the poor) and the erosion of the middle class were, and still are today, at the origin of political simplification'. Importantly (Urbinati, 2014: 139, 151):

> Ideological simplification, which Laclau makes the core of populism, is a crucial component, but not in and of itself a sufficient one for populist politics to become populist power. Populist ideology contains some themes that are detectable in all populist movements: a) the exaltation of the purity of the people as a condition of sincerity against the quotidian practice of compromise and bargaining that politicians pursue; b) the appeal to, or affirmation of, the correctness and even the right of the majority against any minority, political or otherwise… c) the idea that political entails oppositional identity or the construction of a "we" against a "them"; and d) the sanctification of the unity and homogeneity of the people versus any parts of it.

Therefore, whereas Laclau's simplification is bound by the necessity of constant renegotiation, the simplification of populism moves in a more Schmittian direction, as the other is existential, because *it is outside the body-as-mass boundary of the people.* Whilst Laclau's

simplification is addressed to the drawing of conflictual boundaries *within* a constituted space, Schmitt's concept of the political as being between the fighting collectivities of friends-and-enemies is closer to the populist conception of the internal relationship of those 'collectivities' (Schmitt, 2007); considering the semi-organic body-as-mass analogy of populism, the Laclauian differentiation between parts of a whole is alien to this ontology, as it would suggest that the organicism that makes populist corporality possible disintegrates. Instead, the Schmittian distinction results in a situation in which 'populism wants to make the entire people into one large party or identify it with one vision and one leader, while the minority is no longer honoured as partisan-friend but treated as partisan-enemy' (Urbinati, 2014: 143).

Thus we see, with a Schmittian turn on the populist corporality, that talk of populism as relying on majoritarianism (see the Literature Review) is misguided because, when one considers the creative decionism that the General Will endows the people with, in tandem with a semi-organic ontology, a 'majority' is not possible because *there is no possibility for political minorities to exist* (Hirst, 1999: 9). They exist *outside* of the true people, the people-as-sovereign, who ought to be coterminous with the government through the figure of the leader, who acts as the authority of the people in the political world, and is submissive to their will.

Conclusion

Populism is, by no means, a new phenomenon; but neither is the study of it. Rather, the study of populism has becoming increasingly important to political scientists in the last fifty years, taking on a particular urgency with the (apparently) surprising burst of populism in Europe in the later years of the first decade of the twenty-first century; until this time, 'populism' was thought of as a fringe phenomenon, either theoretically – as the shadowy underside of democracy – or geographically – as relegated to the developing world, most notably Latin America. Yet it is only *more* recently that populism has become the focus of political theorists' concerns; and even then, political theorists have taken very few, very tentative steps towards bringing the question of populism into contact with the boundary question, with the notable exception of Ernesto Laclau. This thesis has sought to do just that; by bringing the political theory of the boundary problem into contact, and dialogue, with the political theory of populism, I have opened up an avenue thus far under-explored in the study of populism. In order to this, I have focused on two principal questions: first, how does populism understand the identity of 'the people'? And second, what are the intellectual conditions that make populism conceivable?

The urgency of these two questions is, as I say above, determined by the misunderstandings that persist in the current literature produced in the study of populism. It was my argument, in the Literature Review, that the major theoretical interventions in the literature have reflected, and thus been organised into, a false dichotomy, which is a product of both the normative commitments of the writers involved, and the prevailing presumptions within the literature that 'populism' can be understood as an ideology, discourse, strategy, and so on. Despite these presumed differences, there has been an increasing recognition of the similarities between both the two broad approaches to the study of populism (principally from Simon Tormey and Benjamin Moffittt), as well as the methodological principles that underpin

each (as Aletta Norval's comments on Michael Freeden and Ernesto Laclau show). Likewise, the Literature Review focused on the similarities between the two approaches to the study of populism that centre around the recognition of the importance of 'the people', whilst failing to engage with the populist understanding of what that means in reality; consequently, no study of populism has attempted to go to the heart of the question, which is 'what is populism's understanding of the identity of the people?'. The only exception, as I say, is Laclau; but, the criticisms made by Tormey, and Benjamin Arditi, as detailed in the Literature Review, reveal that the collapse of the distinction between 'populism', 'politics' and 'democracy' is unsatisfactory, especially as it fails to recognise the existence of a unique phenomenon called 'populism'. There is a need, therefore, to recentre the (widely recognised) primary component of populism – the people – in an attempt to understand the populist interpretation of that component.

This runs into difficulty, however, when we bring the study of populism into contact with the study of the boundary problem; specifically, there is no agreement on what 'the people' actually is. As I show in the introductory chapter, just as there is unity on what 'populism' means, there is a vast proliferation of what 'the people' is, and what its relationship to democracy ought to be; just as similarly, however, is an implicit consensus of the *component parts* of a people, specifically its relation to space, time, and as an acting body. In recognising this consensus, and explicating a working framework from it, it is my contention in this thesis that we can unravel the populist understanding of 'the people', thus allowing us to address the first of the two questions. This framework, of recognising that 'the people' exists in the history of political thought in relation to three component parts – space (spatiality), time (temporality) and acting body (corporality) – provides us with a broad structure for both understanding the 'populist people', and, perhaps more importantly, how the populist people *differentiates itself* from other configurations of 'the people'.

This first question, however, can only be addressed through an engagement with the second question; what are the intellectual conditions for making populism a conceivable phenomenon? This requires an exploration of the history of political thought, through a genealogical approach that takes those three component parts of peoplehood and considers how each has been theorised in the works of major political thinkers, and how that has created a condition for the conceivability of populism. In this conclusion, therefore, I will bring together the observations made in each preceding chapter, in order to then arrive at a final judgement of what the 'populist people' is and looks like.

A History of the People

Here, I will retrace the arguments laid out in each chapter, in order of appearance in the thesis; it is important to note, however, that this is not a sequential ordering. As I comment throughout the thesis, and as I explain in depth in the next section, the order of chapters does not reflect any normative or historical weight, merely a practical authorial choice.

Beginning with spatiality, I examined the conceptual history of the relationship between the people and the space they occupy, and how (if at all) that relationship is determinative of identity. From a consideration of the development of political thought regarding spatiality, especially in considering the two major perspectives – the incidental, in which the relationship is conceptually loose, and the intrinsic, in which the relationship is conceptually tight – I concluded that the populist interpretation of spatiality is dependent on four points: first, that 'territory' is important for self-determination. This is due to the historical weight afforded to bounded spaces as a significant component of a political community's capacity for self-governance and identity, creating a sense of *control* over that space. As the historical rise of the theorisation of territorially-bounded political spaces privileged the neat alignment between space and law – even as that historical emergence was never fully complete, and likely never

can be, as Wendy Brown shows – it is the promise of *self-governance* that the alignment carries with it that populism leans heavily on; for populism, 'space' must be the property of the people that lives there, and subject to the law that the people creates. 'The law', however, is understand in a uniquely temporal sense, which I return to below, and explain the relationship with in further detail in the next section, but here it is paramount to recognise that populism sees a complete alignment between space and law.

Second, there is a strict interior-exterior delineation in the populist spatiality that is dependent upon two parts: first, that the space-law alignment means the presence of non-legal persons is a compromise of spatial integrity, and therefore the people's identity; and second, that those whose lives are not wholly connected to the space in which the people resides are *morally* excluded. These two points can help to explain instances such as when the populist people rejects immigrants, as well as individuals whose spatial identities are thought of as being of 'dual loyalty' – whether these are 'international capital', 'liberal metropolitans', or 'distant, foreign elites'. It is important to note, however, that the 'limits' to the populist space is not predetermined; indeed, it may well be national, but it might also be subnational (the Scottish National Party), post-national (Yanis Varoufakis' Democracy in Europe Movement 25 (DiEM25)), or simply national (as explored by Eatwell and Goodwin) – and this is essential in understanding why some 'populists' are not hostile to immigrants, but are hostile to non-national predatory capitalists, for instance. It is in relation to this that the third point of populist spatiality is salient; there is a specifically *moralisation* of space that is connected to the space-law alignment, in which the power to shape the law, which ought to belong to 'the people', is discursively constructed as being *outside and beyond it*, belonging to that telling phrase, 'distant elites'. As I say in the Spatiality chapter, this leads to something of a feedback loop, in which:

a) the people are moral because of their externality to power

b) the sites of power are then ‘outside the people’, and

c) the ‘true people’ are to be found in the spaces ‘outside’ the ‘corrupt places’

We arrive, consequently, at populism’s exaltation of the audience to which political institutions ought to be responsible, but are thought of as not being; the reasons for this, I argue, are a product of the populist temporality, but what matters in the populist spatiality, is that they are not considered to be responsible to the people to whom they *should* be responsible.

However, as I say in the Spatiality chapter, there is a significant alteration that prevents the complete elision between populism and the ‘traditional’ form of the Intrinsic perspective on spatiality, which is the importance afforded to the direct relationship between the people and the leader. This is where the spatiality of populism becomes more complicated, as one might reasonably assume that the direct connection between the people, and the space they inhabit, should prevent such a deferral of sovereignty; however, as I explain in the subsequent section, it is actually a *necessity* of populist spatiality that a singular figure is the form of corporality that populism takes.

Turning to temporality, this is the point at which the aforementioned populist interpretation of law and institutions can be best understood. This is because populist temporality is the primary source from which the exclusion of *political* elements – laws, institutions, and so on – is derived, and this exclusion is predicated on those external elements being on the opposite side of the *rupture*. To explain populist temporality, I introduced the concept of the rupture as a manner of understanding from where populism’s antipathy to political institutions is derived; prior to this, I recounted the two most significant conceptualisations of a political community’s existence in relation to time in the history of political thought, that of the intergenerational community, and of the presentist vision, each of which identifies a different limit to the temporal character of a people, with the former seeing ‘the people’ as a temporally persistent identity, whilst the latter considers the limits of a people to be the immediacy of living

individuals. With these two conceptualisations in mind, the populist temporality can be understood through the rupture, as a moment of crisis that, significantly, has *not been addressed*. To do this, the populist rupture corresponds to three main points: first, that the crisis is both historical *and* contemporaneous; by this, I mean that populism identifies a crisis as having occurred at some point in the past, yet the resolution of that crisis has not been attempted, and indeed cannot be attempted in the 'current state'. Second, populists claim a unique knowledge of the cause and consequences of that rupture; the significance of this claim is that populists can insert the narrative of a crisis that is both urgent and ignored, and the populists are the only actors capable of seeing the 'true' state of affairs. Third and finally, the rupture creates an urgency that allows for populist mobilisation to be framed as reasserting control over a destiny; but this is not a simple return to reactionary politics. Indeed, the benefit of understanding populist temporality in this way is that whilst it can and often does lead to a reactionary backlash, this is not a necessary outcome: as I show in the Temporality chapter, whilst populists who move in a reactionary direction see the rupture as the interruption of an otherwise unbroken trajectory – such as Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, Marine le Pen and the *narodniki* and Peoples' Party of the 1880s, and so on – those populists who adopt a progressive politics do so because the rupture is a *chance* to change the direction of travel, and challenge that previous 'unbroken trajectory' – such as Bernie Sanders, Hugo Chavez, Inigo Errejón, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and so on.

This temporality creates the conditions for seeing the law and political institutions as being created by a *different* people, as the rupture is so significant and deep that it utterly sunders the connection that previously was the condition of a political world existing. In order to explain this, I turned to the nascent populism of Hannah Arendt's writing, explored best by Canovan, who recognises that in Arendt's theory, there must be a shared political world to which individuals can claim membership, in order for a 'people' to exist; importantly, this shared

political world expresses itself best through *institutions*, as they are both concrete expressions of an historical identity, and the mechanisms of continual 'reanimation' of that political world that re-legitimises its existence and conditions. When this disappears, however, the people becomes a 'mass' as it is set adrift from a concrete political world; this is where the rupture's salience in populist temporality is revealed. After all, the rupture does not end the existence of the concrete individuals that compose the people, but it does sever their connection to the political world in which they lived. Populists, therefore, see that the political world to which they *should* belong is still standing, yet their claim to membership is frustrated by an historical event that prevents the necessary and continual re-legitimisation from occurring: consequently, the clearest expressions of that political world – institutions – are seen as belonging to one side of a radical break, and 'the people', now understood as a generation separated from its historical inheritance, on the other. What is most important about this is that, not only are the institutions seen as belonging to 'another people' (temporally defined), but they are also the still-existing mechanisms of power and reanimation understood by Arendt, meaning the ability to affect change, and therefore *address the crisis of the rupture*, remains entirely with the institutions; yet the institutions will not do so, as the occupants, wielders or beneficiaries do not agree with the populists that a crisis has occurred, and therefore do not see the need for a fundamental reconfiguration of institutional politics that populism demands. Unable to affect change via the institutions that exist, and unable to alter the institutions themselves, the populist temporality, centred on the rupture, takes populism in an inevitably anti-institutional direction, and creates an antagonistic relation between them.

This being said, the political world requires the ability to act; and institutions, understood as the concretisation of popular action, arose as the typical term to mean the powers of affectual change in the political world, encompassing monarchy, *polis*, law and others. Populism, however, rejects the institutions that exist; is it fair to say populism rejects institutional*ism*?

Not so; as politics requires at least the ability for a people to act in some capacity, there must be *an* institution to which populism gravitates. This requires us to look at the populist corporality and address the apparently paradoxical nature of populism's reliance on a leader-figure. In this chapter, I explored the contemporary discussions on 'populist constitutionalism', spurred on by the constitutional entrenchment of populists in Venezuela and Hungary, and whether this is compatible with Benjamin Moffittt's proposed understanding of populism as return to a form of Kingship in which a single political figure represents the entire political community. My contention here was that Moffittt's observation is significant but limited, and required a full contextualisation of populism in relation to the history of political thought relating to Kingship and the emergence of democracy, which is especially salient given the oft-repeated claim that populism and democracy are inextricably linked. To do so, I considered the work of Ernst Kantorowicz, and his analysis of Kingship in medieval political theology, to assess exactly whether Moffittt's claim is accurate, before turning to the works of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Joseph Sieyès, alongside the contemporary work of Richard Tuck and Nadia Urbinati, who have examined these thinkers and their contributions to the emergence of 'popular sovereignty' as an historical phenomenon.

From this examination, I concluded three main points of populist corporality: first, the Kingship model has some applicability, but requires a nuancing beyond a return to such an embodied form of corporality; second, the general will, as a mainstay of studies on populism, has the same level of applicability but cannot be understood outside of a specific ontology to which the usually liberal approaches of Mudde et al. cannot be applied; and third, populism involves a simplification of society. Before doing so, however, it is important to revisit the linguistic shift in how 'body' was used in political thought, from being an organological metaphor – as an anthropological tool to describe the internal configuration of a people with a natural hierarchy and cohesive relationship between parts – to an undifferentiated mass in the

style of a body of water, or other like-material, that has no such predetermined internal relationship yet is a way of retaining the 'mysticality' of a 'greater whole' of which the body-as-mass is only a part. With this in mind, we can turn to populism's corporality proper. The first point of populist corporality was, of course, the primary focus of the chapter, and revealed that populism, similarly to the Kingship model of corporality, revives the language of the 'body politic', in that, in Moffittt's words, it attempts to 'suture the head back on the corpse' by embodying the people as a mystical entity in the physical entity of its leader. Importantly, however, this re-embodying is dependent not on an *a priori* form but on an 'unorganised' mass, which is why the aforementioned linguistic development of the body-as-mass image is so significant: the leader is not simply a consequence of the populist people, but the necessary feature of its existence. And this is where the second point becomes salient, as populism sees the representative gap upon which democratic politics is premised as something to be overcome and broken down, as it inevitably requires a separation of will and authority, which is antithetical to the populist claim that the people are sovereign and, in conjunction with its temporality, is unacceptable due to the obfuscatory nature of institutions. The populist corporality, however, avoids a simple return to Kingship corporality due to an important change: it inverts the normative relationship between people and leader. Whereas in Kingship, the leader is the superior of the two, acting as the guardian of the 'legal minor' of the people, in populism the relationship is completely switched, and the 'leader' is presented as entirely subservient to the people.

But this relationship does not explain in itself why populism sees the creative authority as belonging to the people; indeed, part of this can be explained, as I show in the next section, through understanding the relationship *between* corporality, temporality and spatiality, but it is the belief in the general will that, with regards to corporality, inheres the legitimating force of creative authorisation in the people. By depending on the 'body politic' language, but

specifically the body-as-mass and the implications of an undifferentiated multitude, populism revives the depiction of the people as possessing both a physical and mystical presence; the significant consequence of this is that, in returning to a language around the 'body' in politics, so too can there be a return to questions of 'health' and 'constitution' (in the medical sense). The general will in populism performs two roles: first, the assumption in the Kingship model of corporality that 'the people' is a 'legal minor' is replaced with the democratic logic that the people is sovereign, thus preventing the subordination of the people to the leader; and second, the insertion of a normative depiction of the people as a morally superior actor, one that is distinct from the concrete individuals that compose it, and superior both to the factional interests of those individuals, and the corrupted elites against which the people are arrayed. It is from these parts of the populist corporality that we arrive at the well-recognised simplification of society in which populism engages, but with a fuller understanding of exactly *why* that takes place, in that the people is morally pure, the only creative authority, and superior to whomever embodies it. Most importantly, this is a simplification that Laclau correctly diagnoses as being dependent on power and the frustration of demands, but moves beyond Laclau's theory and in a more Schmittian direction. This is because Laclau's theory relies on the necessary exclusion of a social identity whilst retaining that identity within the grounds of the social, whereas populism's reliance on a semi-organic ontology cannot tolerate a part of the body politic being at odds with another part of it, requiring the populist people to not even recognise that 'part' as belonging to the body politic; instead, it must be externalised, as it is corrupting and at odd with the purity of the people.

We have, by now, a comprehensive history of the key components of peoplehood and how populism fits into this genealogy, thus completely answering the second of our two questions, as to what the intellectual conditions for thinking of populism are, and answering the first – but only in part. As I have indicated throughout this thesis, and occasionally through this

conclusion, there are both overlaps between the different elements that must be accounted for, as well as seemingly-incomplete parts of those elements; for example, why does populist spatiality value a complete law-space alignment, yet populist temporality question the legitimacy of institutions, amongst which 'legality' can be counted? How does populist corporality interfere with the semi-intrinsic perspective of spatiality that it also seem to hold onto? Can these apparent contradictions be overcome or reconciled? Moreover, as detailed in the introduction, the state of political theory of the boundary problem all recognise, in some form, the presence of the three different elements of peoplehood discussed, but privilege one over the other two, or neglect the relationship between them entirely. Clearly, that is not a possibility here: populist spatiality cannot be subordinated to its corporality, and likewise with temporality. The answer has to be some kind of methodology that respects the equal weight between the elements whilst also allowing for a recognition of the plurality of different expressions of populism that exist in the world.

A New Framework

It is for this reason that I propose a new framework based on the morphology of Michael Freeden. As I have said, we cannot understand 'populism' through one element of peoplehood alone, as each tells only *part* of the story of populism, and likewise we cannot subordinate one element to the others without avoiding normative presumptions; privileging spatiality, for instance, might lead us to make the same mistake that others have of thinking of populism as predicated on a resistance to immigration, when there are obviously populists who do not make that a significant part of their composition, whilst retaining a spatialised ontology. Instead, morphology can help us to construct such a framework, by respecting the shifting composition *between* different 'populisms' whilst respecting the continuity between them. As I have explained Freeden's theory of morphological ideology in the Literature Review, I will not

retrace too much of it here, except to say that I make an important departure from Freeden in that I am not analysing populism *as an ideology*, which in many ways is simply an applied version of the three core principles of morphology, polysemy and decontestation; as a result, this is not a wholesale adoption of Freeden's morphological ideology theory, but simply a recognition that his language and theoretical structure best captures the internal configuration of a process in its multiple permutations, just as Aletta Norval details, and whose argument I have retraced in the Literature Review. In this regard, then, we are not talking of morphological ideology, but of 'morphological peoplehood'.

Morphological peoplehood is inspired by the work that Freeden undertook in his 1996 work, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, but even more so by his later work, *The Political Theory of Political Thinking* (2013b), which in many ways is an elaboration of the work begun in *Ideologies*, but with an expanded focus to non-ideological political thinking. This style of approach helps us to understand that 'populism' is not an ideology, or a discourse, or a strategy, or any of the worthwhile but ultimately lacking analyses presented by other theorists of populism: it is instead a *particular expression of the concept of the people*. In this work, for instance, Freeden writes that 'political thinking is fluid both at any moment in time and across space, and we constantly have to follow its permutations in order to account for it persuasively' and it 'exhibits a morphology of patterned internal relationships through which such fluidity can be understood, even though the *precise* shapes of its conceptual interrelationships cannot be described, let alone predicted'. Consequently, Freeden's work is an attempt to strike 'the balance between universality and particularity', and in doing so recognise that 'the fundamental categories of thinking politically, which involve issues such as collectively derived support, ranking, or deciding, are indeed shared by all societies' (2013b: 5, 9-10). These are observations perfectly appropriate to the study of peoplehood, as it captures that permutability of the concept whilst recognising that there are points of continuity between the different

permutations of a particular configuration; in other words, 'the people' may be a concept that any ideology can include, and yet be configured differently between the different ideologies of that 'family', as Freeden puts it in *Ideologies*. What is most relevant to our study here, is that Freeden identifies 'mobilising or withdrawing public support' as a particular feature of thinking politically, arguing that political thinking – significantly for understanding peoplehood – 'affirms or aspires to the creation of ultimate and antecedent superior systemic control and jurisdiction in social affairs and overrides and limits the competences of other social spheres and agents by constructing a symbolic sovereign collective identity' and 'accepts, justifies, criticises, or rejects collective entities, and their procedures and activities', among others (2013b: 34-35). This helps to capture both the essential nature of peoplehood to the practice of politics generally, as well as the specificity of peoplehood within the nature of political thinking, as it recognises that peoplehood cannot be dispensed with in *any* system of thinking about politics, but the weight, significance and normative role of peoplehood can vary from system to system.

With this in mind, Freeden retains his focus on language to argue for a linguistic-centric study of thinking politically; for instance, and continuing the work begun in *Ideologies*, he writes that 'among the linguistic and semantic features that guide the operation of political concepts… three are of central significance: ambiguity, indeterminacy, and vagueness, while a fourth feature – inconclusiveness – affects the narrational staying power of an argument' (2013b: 69). These four features all reflect plurality of the political world and can exhibit themselves in subconscious ways or be used consciously to appeal to a multitude of constituencies without collapsing into emptiness; but it is here that we, ourselves, need to be conscious of the language that Freeden uses. Across his work, Freeden makes careful categorical distinctions, relying on Ludwig Wittgenstein, between words, concepts, cluster concepts and super-concepts. Words are the molecular constant, the smallest sensible level of

information; concepts are groups of words that mutually reinforce one another; cluster concepts are concepts that usually move in association with one another (1996: 50-60, and see the Literature Review for more detail); and super concepts, his latest categorisation, are not ordinally superior, but a super concept is simply 'one that embraces a number of otherwise separately identifiable constitutive concepts, each of which has an important historical and contemporary existence on its own, but each of which can be decontested in multiple ways' (2013b: 70). This approach to the decontestion of terms, as Norval noted, bears similarity to Laclau and Mouffe's theories of empty and floating signifiers, discourses and articulations, but offers a more 'three dimensional' understanding of the relationship between those categories that Freeden makes, noted above; but if we take both of Freeden's points here – that all forms of thinking politically require the construction of 'symbolic sovereign collective identities' that must be accepted, justified, and so on, and that there is a variegated categorisation within the theory of political thinking – and follow them through to a logical conclusion, I believe we can reasonably term the concept of 'the people' as a *meta concept*, by which I mean it is a concept to which all political thinking must make reference.

If this is the case, there are two conclusions to be drawn at this stage: first, the three thematic elements to peoplehood, through which I have examined populism in this thesis and upon which it has been structured, are the necessary dimensions through which 'the people' is thought, and in some way must be made intelligible; second, 'peoplehood' exists as the product of a morphological relationship between those elements of spatiality, temporality and corporality. Taking this morphological structure seriously, in the next and final section, I consider populism's configuration of the meta concept of the people.

The Populist People

We now have a framework and methodology for understanding the ways in which the political meta concept of 'the people' can be constructed by varying manners of thought, be they ideologies or otherwise. This means, specifically, that we have a conceptual tool for understanding populist formations of 'the people': but a problem presents itself. Does this mean there is only *one* populist formation, or – as Freeden himself suggests – that there are multiple?

Quite simply, the methodological framework of morphological peoplehood offers the answers: the useful conceptual reflexivity of a morphological framework is that it allows for a multitude of expressions to remain within the same 'family' of expressions. In the application of morphology to ideology that Freeden has pioneered, the 'family resemblance' allows for an understanding of different liberalisms, for instance, without losing the central organising features; carrying this through to the application of morphology to political thinking, the same logic holds that different ways of thinking of 'the people' does not undo the 'family resemblance' between populisms. In fact, it is by recognising that these different ways of thinking of 'the people' are still different permutations of a consistently populist thought that we can differentiate populism from other systems of thinking about the people, thus avoiding the mistake that any attempt to invoke 'the people' is populist, whilst admitting variations between them. With regards to ideologies, as I explain fully in the introduction, Freeden makes this allowance by structuring the morphology of ideologies on the basis of a core-adjacency-periphery matrix; I do not claim however, that in the meta concept of the people, there is such a matrix, merely that there are three core elements to thinking about peoplehood. By shifting to understanding populism as a form of thinking about the people, whilst retaining the morphological approach to political thought, we can now understand that the relationship between these elements of peoplehood is flexible, and can be ordered and interpreted by political actors and traditions of thought. Therefore, the previous chapters can be synthesised

into *a definition of the populist people* that makes room for varying 'populisms' that Freeden suggests is a possibility. Here, then, I outline a series of conclusions that explain the relationship between those elements of spatiality, temporality and corporality, whilst not attempting an exhaustive set of relationships between them.

To begin with, we can consider how the spatiality and temporality of populism can co-determine from a vague polysemy into a decontested, concrete term, by looking at their points of overlap. To revisit these elements: populist spatiality sees 'territory' as important for self-determination, a strict interior-exterior delineation that aligns law with territory, a moralisation of space, and an exaltation of the 'audience' as the source of political legitimacy; and populist temporality, centred on the belief in the 'rupture', sees a crisis as having broken the connection between the 'living people' and their historical identity, yet has not been addressed, and as the populists are the only ones capable of identifying the crisis at all, only they have the knowledge to correct it, which generates a sense of urgency that creates a narrative of 'reasserting control'.

With these points in mind, the spatio-temporality of the populist people can be understood through the relatively neat alignment of two parts: the rupture, and the discursive spatialisation of power. At the heart of each of these parts, is the presumption of self-government, with the 'voice of the living people' as the locus of legitimacy and authorisation, combined with the historic and normatively-loaded territorialisation of self-government; but the spatial boundaries of *where* that territory lies is connected to an interrupted history that the 'living people' make claim to and yet are disconnected from, through the rupture. However, the actual spatial boundaries are of second-order importance, and are determined by how the rupture is constructed, and which historical past it has separated the living people from; for instance, Brexit may have been predicated over a rupture based on the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Union, whilst the populist Scottish National Party claims a similarly ruptured historical inheritance, interrupted by the Union of the Crowns in 1604. What matters, however,

is that populist movements discursively construct spaces as sites of *power*, where the people exist and ought to be able to govern themselves; connecting this to the rupture, populist thought claims that the site of power must cohere with where 'their space' is, as either a past-claim *or* as a future-claim. Regardless, the sense that an unresolved crisis is preventing the correct alignment between the people and the space they inhabit is consistent across different populisms and, importantly, creates the perception of spaces of elite power as producing the same obfuscation as the institutions that the rupture separates from the real people, usually because these sites of power and institutions are one and the same, such as parliaments, presidencies, courts, regulatory bodies, financial districts, border agencies, non-governmental organisations, refugee camps, and so on.

This also produces an important populist alteration to the concept of 'law'. Drawing from *both* the historical visions of temporality, populism simultaneously understands the animating power of the law to be 'in' the people, just as St. Thomas Aquinas considered that 'custom', as the shared daily habits of a people, was of a higher-order power than the law as written; however, when the link between generations necessary for understanding the law as a concretisation of a continuous identity is broken, populism drifts into the logic of the presentist vision by seeing the law as being created by an *other* people. Connecting this view of the law with a moralisation of space, opens up a number of different routes that the populist movement may take, one of the most obvious of which is an opposition to immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, as these individuals and groups are considered to be 'outside' of the law, but 'inside' the place to which that law pertains; consequently, there is a violation of the populist people's self-determination through simple presence. Just as this may apply to those groups, however, it may also apply to international businesses, for much the same reason, in that they are 'present' in the space of the people, yet beholden to 'another' law, whether that be

international law, a foreign nation's law, or myriad other factors – what matters is that the businesses are not under the direct control of the law and, therefore, the people.

This is part of the reason that populists rely so heavily on the figure of the leader. As far as the corporality chapter explained why populists see the leader as an incarnation of the people, there is not much to explain why it is *this* corporality that attracts populism and not others. However, taking the observations made in the corporality chapter and bringing them in line with the temporality of populism, we can begin to see why this is the case. For instance, we can ask the question, if populism understands the existing institutions of the political world to which it ought to belong as obfuscatory and under the control of an other people, why do populists not simply seek the establishment of their own institutions? Perhaps one particularly revealing observation comes from Simon Tormey, who notes that populists 'seek instant solutions to complex problems, whether it be immigration or resource depletion. The rise of populism and populist figures is in this sense less a panacea for the decline of representative politics than a symptom of crisis'. Part of this rejection of representation by populist actors is the perception of representation as mediation (2015: 59-62). It is here we can start to understand the unification of populist temporality and corporality.

The central point of populist temporality is the rupture – the perception of a crisis as having undone a connection to the political world to which the people belongs, but also having not been addressed by any power in an attempt to recreate or rediscover that connection. Consequently, the people are denied access to that world, and that denial is enforced by the institutions that ought to facilitate their access, as the authorising power. I noted above and in the temporality chapter that this leads to an anti-institutionalism in populism and an antagonistic relation, and it is in this turn that populism seeks an *outsider*, one who is yet to be 'tainted' by the corrupted political world. Bringing this into contact with populism's semi-organological understanding of the people, which involves an attempt to 'reattach the head of

the king to the corpse of the people', it becomes clear the populism gravitates to a leader who is in immediate communication with the people through a) his lack of mediation, and b) his lack of corruption. As I say above, however, this is not a 'return' to the Kingship model of corporality, because the very temporality of populism that understands the authorising power of legitimacy to be inhered in the people refuses to accept a normative relationship in which the leader is 'the head' and the people is 'just the body'; instead, populism inverts the relationship. This is where the immediacy of populist temporality becomes so important to the populist corporality; the leader is not a representative, and never can be, because to work on the logic of representation is to presume a gap between the people and whomever represents them, a logic which is predicated on the Bodinian sovereign-government distinction, and therefore denying the people (the sovereign) a presence in the political world (via the government) once more. Instead, populism relies on the leader for all the reasons summarised above in its corporality, but also in the perception that the ongoing and unresolved crisis must be solved immediately, but institutional and representative politics is mediative; the leader, then, is a mouthpiece, a physical manifestation of the mystical body of the people, incarnated to resolve a crisis in the here and now. It is worth noting as well, this is part of the reason populist leaders begin to see themselves as a messianic figure, imbued with a moral cause and the concurrent authority to go with it (de la Torre, 2010; Finchelstein and Urbinati, 2018; Urbinati, 2019a).

Coming to the relationship between populist corporality and spatiality, we are struck with what might seem a contradiction: as I noted at the end of the spatiality chapter, populism's moralisation of space and rejection of sites of interference in the popular community owing to its closer alignment with the Intrinsic perspective on spatiality may, at first glance, clash with the populist corporality and its inherence of the people in a singular leader, because, first, the leader may be 'of those spaces' and second, the Incidental perspective on spatiality that relies

on a people-leader immediacy is at odds with the main sense of populism's spatiality. This seeming clash, however, can be overcome if we consider that specification made above in the relationship between populist temporality and corporality, that the leader is intended to act as an *incarnation* of the people, rather than as its representative, and bring this into line with the antagonism generated through the relationship between populist temporality and spatiality, that of the sites of power as the presence of an externalised other. As populism does not exalt the leader *in himself*, but rather as a vocalisation of the people, the actual person of the leader is not important, but is a subordinate feature of his person as long as he 'speaks for the people' and resists those sites of power. It may not matter if he himself is not an example of moral purity that populism sees the people as possessing, because he is only their manifestation in the political world. In this regard, it does not particularly matter if the leader is, factually speaking, 'of those spaces' that populism excludes, such as the Westminster Bubble or *la casta*; what matters is if he 'says what the people is thinking'.

Yet this still does not resolve the tension between populism's tendency towards the Intrinsic perspective on spatiality and the implied rejection of leader-centric community that perspective suggests; how can a spatiality dependent on the moralisation of space and an alignment between law-as-custom and territory possibly engender itself to a corporality of a single person? I believe this tension can be resolved if we consider the *negative* elements of the populist spatiality, and how this arrives at a negatively-determined alignment with populist corporality. To briefly revisit the populist spatiality, we noted that populism rejects, through its spatialisation of power, 'distant elites', who are not responsible to the audience that they ought to be (by virtue of their presence within the space of the community); this spatialisation of power and the concurrent rejection of external and 'distant' elites discursively requires that power be *immediate* to the people. If we take these points, and consider them in tandem with populist corporality, we can begin to see that the elements of populist corporality acts as

counterweights to the negative elements of populist spatiality: by breaking down the representative gap, populism undoes a *discursive* distance between the people and the leader, and – with the inversion of the major-minor relationship in Kingship that I noted above – makes the leader *de facto* responsible to the people, as he is simply its 'voice'. And building on from this, the final point of alignment here is that the exaltation of the audience, and the overcoming of the 'factual' difference between the people and the leader is that *value-simplification* that populism pursues; as I say above, it may not matter that the leader is not an example of the people's purity, all that matters is that he stands on one side of a simplification divide, with the excluded elites on the other.

I shall finish this thesis with a reflection on the relationship between populism and democracy; I have, thus far, operated at a high level of generality, with only the occasional reference to democracy. This has not been unintentional; my concern in this thesis has been to analyse populism via its construction of the people, rather than through its relationship with institutional politics – at least, directly, the rejection of institutionalism inherent in populist temporality notwithstanding. This has been for two main reasons: first, as I show in the introduction and literature review, analyses of populism have struggled to fully conceptualise how exactly 'the people' is constructed in the populist imaginary; and second, the impacts of populism on democracy is one of the most contested areas of the field. As I show in the literature review, the broad division into Critical and Sympathetic Approaches to the study of populism is typically due to normative attachments to democracy *preceding* an analysis; and since beginning this study, this field has only proliferated. Tormey's argument (2018) that populism be seen as democracy's *Pharmakon* is only one such example; Urbinati has dedicated an entire book to the question of 'how populism transforms democracy' (2019a); Canovan has provided invaluable analyses (1999, 2002a, 2005) with Arditi's commentary (2005, 2010) into populism as the spectral underside of democracy; and – of course – Laclau's attempt to elide

populism and democracy (2005a, 2005b, 2006) is often the touchstone for many radical attempts to transform democracy.

Only the last of these, however, has brought 'the people' into sharp focus when discussing populism but, as I have shown throughout, has paradoxically lost that focus by collapsing all forms of popular identity formation into populism. Moreover, as I say above, analyses of populism's impact on democracy tend to begin from a normative stance on democracy's value, and examine populism from that vantage point, thus limiting from the outset any attempt to understand populism phenomenologically. Instead, my proposed framework understands populism as an expression of peoplehood, and from there can draw the following conclusion regarding its relationship to democracy.

Populism, quite simply, makes democracy *as we understand it* impossible, for two main reasons. The first, and perhaps most commonly recognised, is that representative politics cannot be sustained when the necessary sovereign-government distinction is collapsed down, but what I have shown in this thesis is *why*, rather than ascribing that collapsing down to contemporary or contingent factors (Tormey, 2015), and rather have revealed it to be an inherent condition of populism's peoplehood. Rather than representative politics having 'failed' to deliver the promises of democracy (Fink-Hafner, 2016; Canovan, 1999), the populist temporality means institutional politics are externalised from the people *in toto*, and instead of being a mechanism of transferring the will of the people into action, become obstacles to that transference. As I detail above, populism then cannot tolerate the mediating power of institutions and, especially, the processes that institutionalism requires, as this risks a dilution, division or otherwise obfuscation of the will of the people and, importantly, risks a continuation of the crisis that is yet to be resolved. As Urbinati puts it, 'representative politics entails a government of temporality and distance – a *deferred* politics… Populism, on the other hand, is a politics of *presentism and vicinity*… populism blurs the things that interpose between the

people and the marker of the people's representation' (2019a: 181). From this, populism turns to the leader figure, but not in the typical sense of representation, nor even what Urbinati has called 'direct representation' (2019a), but through the necessity of embodying the otherwise-mystical *corpus Populus* and acting as the 'minor' in the relationship, with the people as the 'major'.

The less-commented on consequence of populism's impact on democracy is its repudiation of formal constitutionalism, but for much the same reasons as those detailed above: populism imagines that the people is a temporally-immediate entity, with very tight exclusionary boundaries, in such a way that no temporally-extended identity can exist, either now *or in the future*. As a result, the necessary temporality for seeing a constitution as binding future generations to a substantive identity in the style of Sieyès (2003) or Condorcet (2012) is entirely absent in the populist temporality; moreover, this combines with the populist corporality to create a condition of permanent mobilisation and constant re-authorisation of power expressed in the body of the leader, dependent on that which I noted above, the erasure of the sovereign-government distinction, as well as the inability to separate will and authority, both residing in the people alone. Moreover, we have to consider the consequences of populist mobilisation: the narrowing down of the time-horizon to one of immediacy means a successful populist movement is likely to beget further populist movements, as the ability to think of a political community as existing across and through time is erased in favour of a 'sovereignised' immediate action.

Does this mean populism is not democratic? It is almost impossible to say, because our answer depends on what we mean by democratic. For instance, is it undemocratic to see custom as possessing a higher-order power than formalised or written rules, as St. Thomas Aquinas argued? If not, what makes populism's similar exaltation of common sense, in a narrow temporal horizon, undemocratic? I believe we can agree with Urbinati that populism certainly

transforms democracy *as we understand it*, but I also consider Tormey's cautioning that populism may be neither positive nor negative, to be helpful. It depends, as he says, 'on the dose'.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to bring the two fields of populism studies and theories of the boundary problem into contact, in order to offer a new, comprehensive and innovative framework for understanding the populist conception of the people. To do so, I propose a new understanding of peoplehood, that does not seek to 'answer' the question of the people's identity, but cast new light on how we, as theorists, discuss the people. By understanding 'the people' as a concept with the necessary internal elements of spatiality, temporality, and corporality, we can chart a middle way between Laclau's important recognition that all forms of politics invoke 'the people', and Freeden's formalistic understanding of how political concepts are constructed and thought, in order to see that populism is simply one way of expressing 'the people'.

As a result, I have brought the 'populist people' sharply into focus by understanding its relationship to space, time and action, with a brief reflection toward the end on the impact this expression of the people has on democracy. Populism sees the people as defined by, to quote Urbinati, presentism and vicinity, closing the identity of the people around a narrow temporality, but not necessarily doing the same with spatiality; populism's spatiality is determined by where it understands the spatial limits to the people to be, but once those limits are defined, it becomes highly exclusionary. Consequently, populism acts in the world through the corporality of a singular leader, whose 'leadership' is actually an inversion of the major-minor relation of Kingship to the extent that he is the mouthpiece, embodiment and instrument of the people's will. I have shown in this thesis that all analyses of populism get some things

right, and other things wrong, but importantly I have shown *why* this is the case and have offered a new framework to understand this more deeply. Moreover, future research can make use of this innovative framework to analyse how other 'isms' construct the people, and the consequences such constructions may have on democracy, legitimacy, and other normative claims in politics.

Populism is unlikely to disappear in the near future; indeed, populism may well be the defining peoplehood of the 21st century. In that sense, Cas Mudde got at least one thing right: we are living in the populist *zeitgeist*.

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