

THEORIZING DISSENT

Justice *contra* Law

In its most basic enactment, dissent demands an audience. In this analysis, I endeavour to demonstrate that the act of dissent is a social act by highlighting its need to be heard (Adolf Reinach), its other-directed subjective meaning (Max Weber), its need to be shared (Hannah Arendt), its relation to consent and authority (Arendt and Weber), and its force as a justice claim *contra* state law (Jacques Derrida). To aid in the uncovering of the qualitative nuances of dissent, I anchor this theoretical exposition with specific examples of dissent (namely self-immolation, blockades, and rioting), helping to elucidate a curiosity in the manner in which legitimacy and legality are ascribed to certain acts of dissent. I suggest that the degree to which the act of dissent emerges and reflects a shared consciousness correlates to the perceived legitimacy and legality of the act itself. Ultimately, I aim to present the act of dissent as at once unifying and divisive as a collective expression of a singular intention; it is sometimes illegal, but often represents an answerability that does not fit within the parameters of state law's 'justice-as-calculable' approach.

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