

Chapter 1



Theorizing Acts of Citizenship

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Citizenship in Flux: Subjects, Sites, Scales

It is now widely recognized that the social and political struggles over citizenship have acquired a new intensity (Isin and Turner 2002, 2007). What has become apparent more recently is that while citizens everywhere may be contained legally within state boundaries that enact rights and obligations, their own states are not subject to such containment. All states, through multilateral arrangements and international accords, implicate (or fail to implicate) their citizens involuntarily in a web of rights and responsibilities concerning the environment (wildlife, pollution), trade (copyright, protection), security, refugees, crime, minorities, war, children and many other issues. While the enforceability of these accords is a contested matter, every state exists in social, political or economic integration and is implicated in varying degrees of influence and autonomy. These complex webs of rights and responsibilities implicating citizens in various ethical, political and social decisions are important to keep in mind when thinking about citizenship today. What complicates this image further is that many citizens and non-citizens (illegal aliens, immigrants, migrants) of states have become increasingly mobile, carrying these webs of rights and obligations with them and further entangling them with other webs of rights and obligations. The status and habitus (ways of thought and conduct that are internalized over a relatively long period of time) of the subject we call the citizen is made infinitely more complex by its entanglements with these overflowing webs of rights and responsibilities.

Much has been debated concerning these matters in the past two decades, especially in the field of citizenship studies. By taking stock of these debates and suggesting that much of the focus has been on the status and habitus of citizenship, this chapter aims to outline a different perspective on the question of how subjects of the new overflowing rights and responsibilities enact themselves as citizens. It aims to constitute acts of citizenship as an object of investigation that is distinct from (but related to) the status and habitus of citizenship. After further defining the new context of global movements and flows, and articulating the need to focus on the concept of the act itself, I draw from several interdisciplinary thinkers who have investigated the concept of the act and outline a set of principles for theorizing acts of citizenship that indicates the approach to citizenship we are building.

There is no doubt that the new intensity of struggles over citizenship is associated with global movements and flows of capital, labour and people. The movements of capital have created new sites of production and exchange of commodities across various boundaries and stretched limits of regulation. The creation of various zones, regions and territories to enable competitive production and exchange has created new sites of domination, exploitation and resistance. Similarly, global movements of labour across nations and states have generated new sites of struggle for both redistribution and recognition. As well as major movements into European, Anglo-American and Australian labour markets, there have been population movements within major states such as China and India. Meanwhile, within Anglo-American states, the post-war consensus on the welfare state and social citizenship has ended in a morass of vague disavowal, while neo-liberalization of the provision of social services has created new injustices and inequalities (Clarke 2004). This intensification of social relations through movements and flows has generated new affinities, identifications, loyalties, animosities and hostilities across borders.

Thus, whatever names are given to these processes of 'globalization', 'neo-liberalization' and 'post-modernization', and one can certainly question the adequacy of all or any of these names, various processes have combined to produce new, if not paradoxical, subjects of law and action, new subjectivities and identities, new sites of struggle and new scales of identification. Through these new subjects, sites and scales of struggle, citizenship, while typically understood as a legal status of membership in the state, if not the nation-state, became increasingly defined as practices of becoming claim-making subjects in and through various sites and scales (Isin 2008, forthcoming). These debates have illustrated that when combined with various adjectives such as 'intimate citizenship', 'multicultural citizen-

ship', 'sexual citizenship', 'transgendered citizenship', 'consumer citizenship', 'cosmopolitan citizenship', or 'ecological citizenship', new identities could be investigated as the formation of new subjects, sites and scales of claim making (Clarke *et al.* 2007; Isin and Wood 1999; Kymlicka 1995; Kymlicka and Norman 2000; Lister 2002). This is not to say that there has been less emphasis on status but, rather, to suggest that most critical studies on citizenship focus on how status becomes contested by investigating practices through which claims are articulated and subjectivities are formed (Benhabib 2004; Soysal 1994). The effect of this shift to practices has been the production of studies concerning routines, rituals, customs, norms and habits of the everyday through which subjects become citizens. We can suggest that the impact of this body of work has been to include habitus (internalized or embodied ways of thought and conduct) alongside status within studies of citizenship (Bourdieu 1994; Schatzki 1997). This body of research has demonstrated effectively that virtues are cultivated, that citizenship is not inherited but learned, and that cultivating citizenship requires establishing supportive and relatively enduring practices and institutions (Allman and Beaty 2002).

Theorizing Citizenship: Status, Habitus, Acts

To put it another way, critical studies of citizenship over the last two decades have taught us that what is important is not only that citizenship is a legal status but that it also involves practices of making citizens – social, political, cultural and symbolic. Many scholars now differentiate formal citizenship from substantive citizenship and consider the latter to be the condition of possibility of the former. Not only has this been a productive development but it also corresponds and responds to the broad transformations mentioned earlier.

While this body of work has been useful and effective in demonstrating how citizenship involves habitus that is formed over a relatively long period of time, the question of how subjects become claimants under surprising conditions or within a relatively short period of time has remained unexplored. We know virtually nothing about how subjects become claimants when they are least expected or anticipated to do so. Granted, for subjects to become claimants they must have been embodying certain practices. Take, for example, the civil rights or feminist movements. Both developed over a relatively long period of time various resistance practices ranging from folklore, theatre or music to social and political networks. But both movements transformed subjects into claimants of rights over a relatively short period of time through various acts that were symbolically

and materially constitutive. Who can forget the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, when those named as ‘negroes’ claimed they could sit anywhere they wanted on the bus (Burns 1997)? Who can forget the hunger strike staged by British suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop in Holloway prison in 1909, in protest against being refused the status of political prisoner (Fulford 1976)? These momentous acts required the summoning of courage, bravery, indignation, or righteousness to break with habitus. Without such creative breaks it is impossible to imagine social transformation or to understand how subjects become citizens as claimants of justice, rights and responsibilities. Thus, the difference between habitus and acts is not merely one of temporality but is also a qualitative difference that breaks habitus creatively.

The importance of making this difference cannot be overstated. Under what conditions do subjects act as citizens? How do subjects transform themselves into actors? How do subjects become claimants of rights, entitlements and responsibilities? If acts of citizenship cannot be reduced to status (for those who do not have status also demonstrate that they are capable of acting as claimants, while those who do have status may not be able to act as citizens), how do we name these acts without inferring them from the status of actors already named? Furthermore, acts cannot be reduced to practices because to enact oneself as a citizen involves transforming oneself from a subject into a claimant, which inevitably involves a break from habitus (Farnell 2000). Yet acts are necessary but not sufficient conditions of the social transformation of subjects into citizens. If this is so, how do we investigate acts through which subjects transform themselves into citizens?

It is now vitally important to expand our investigations to enable us to understand the decisions involved in making subjects into citizens. To investigate acts of citizenship in a way that is irreducible to either status or habitus, while still valuing this distinction, requires a focus on those moments when, regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens – or, better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due (Arendt 1951; Balibar 2004; Rancière 2004). To investigate acts of citizenship is to draw attention to acts that may not be considered as political and demonstrate that their enactment does indeed instantiate constituents (which may mean being part of a whole as well as being a member of a constituency). The enactment of citizenship is paradoxical because it is dialogical. The moment of the enactment of citizenship, which instantiates constituents, also instantiates other subjects from whom the subject of a claim is differentiated. So an enactment inevitably creates a scene where there are selves and others defined in relation to each other.

These are not fixed identities but fluid subject positions in and out of which subjects move. In other words, being always involves being with others. These subject positions can be analytically identified on a spectrum of intensity ranging from hospitality to hostility: citizens, strangers, outsiders and aliens. Becoming a subject involves being implicated in this spectrum (Isin 2002, 2005). The dialogical principle of citizenship always involves otherness. Several questions thus arise regarding theorizing acts of citizenship. How do subjects such as citizens and others such as strangers, outsiders or aliens break away from these positions? If indeed acts of citizenship are fundamental ways of being with others, how do beings *decide* between solidaristic (generous, magnanimous, beneficent, hospitable, accommodating, understanding, loving), agonistic (competitive, resistant, combative, adverse) and alienating (vengeful, revengeful, malevolent, malicious, hostile, hateful) acts towards others? What actualizes those acts? Could theorizing acts of citizenship provide the means through which to differentiate acts that are worth resisting and those that are worth cultivating? These questions cannot be answered without constituting acts as an object of investigation. Only then can we begin to understand what makes certain acts 'acts of citizenship'. There are acts of violence, hospitality, hostility, indifference, love, friendship and so on, and, while they can be intertwined with acts of citizenship, these different kinds of acts are not reducible to each other. They must remain distinct and distinguishable for our investigations. To investigate these questions, however, requires going beyond the field of citizenship studies. It requires working through some of the crucial issues of social and political thought. What theoretical sources can we draw on from social and political thought for investigating acts? We now turn our attention to that question by using concepts developed by Adolf Reinach, Martin Heidegger and Mikhail Bakhtin, and then taken up by Jacques Lacan, Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida: all these thinkers, I argue, have investigated the nature of acts implicitly and partially, albeit in different – and yet congruent – ways. (The notable exceptions are Reinach and Bakhtin, who argued that acts should be an object of investigation.) Then we shift our focus to address acts of citizenship specifically and discuss how they might be investigated.

Orders, Practices, Acts

How does social and political thought constitute acts as an object of investigation? This is a more complex question than it first appears, for two reasons. First, social and political thought has not given much attention to acts as an object of analysis. Searching scrutiny has been devoted to the

concept of 'action' but very little to the concept of 'the act'. We shall articulate a difference between the concepts of 'act' and 'action' later; suffice it for now to say that analysis of the former remains fragmented, varied and mostly contained within the concept of speech acts (Austin 1962; Searle 1969; Smith 1990). Second, it would be fair to suggest that modern social and political thought, at least, has been dominated by a concern with order rather than disruption. This is despite a voluminous literature on revolutions, which really investigates them as different kinds of order – as Žižek (1999) illustrates. Both reasons are provocative, so let us briefly discuss them before we turn our attention to theorizing acts.

If we survey the state of social and political thought today there are a number of concepts that are dominant but the concept of the 'act' is not one of them. We are concerned about 'practices', 'conduct', 'discipline', 'rule', 'governance' and 'action', to describe what agents do and how they behave, but not 'acts'. This state of affairs often values routine over rupture, order over disorder, and habit over deviation. When the second concepts in these pairs come into focus they are often considered as 'distortion' of the first concepts. It appears that to describe, explain or account for those routines by which humans order their social and political relations is more important than their ruptures or breaks. The predominant focus has become the way in which people conduct themselves and routinize certain habits in their bodies, develop certain behaviours, and follow certain rules. It seems that social sciences in general and social and political thought are oriented towards understanding orders and practices and their conditions of possibility. Consider, for example, the enormous influence of the concept of habitus popularized by Pierre Bourdieu (1972; 1980; 1994), or the critical influence Foucault has had with his studies on 'discipline' (1975), 'care of the self' (1984) or 'conduct of conduct' (1988). These concepts are oriented towards how subjects constitute themselves through relatively enduring modes of conduct. There is a sense in which social and political thought is really oriented towards the way in which humans conduct themselves in routinized and ritualized ways. It seems as if social and political thought is fascinated by how bodies, habits and practices, are intertwined to produce conduct. Admittedly, certain issues and controversies emerge from this focus: for example, the problem of the relationship between structure and agency, the problem of the agent, the problem of the universal and the singular, the problem of the individual and society, and problem of continuity versus discontinuity. What is the relationship between structures of action and the patterns of action? How do people conduct themselves? What do disciplines accomplish? Do

disciplines produce bodies? If so, how? If it is through routines, how do those routines become practices? How are subjects enabled to act upon the actions of other subjects? Do subjects follow rules? Does following a rule involve routinized habits or is it a rational process? How does governing the actions of others work as conduct of conduct?

These examples are not exhaustive but they are sampled from nearly a century of social and political thought. I am inclined to suggest that social and political thought has been dealing with a cluster of problems that we can define as problems of orders and practices. Theodore Schatzki has given a good account of how orders and practices have become objects of social thought (2002, 2003). It is fair to say that it is this dominant focus on orders and practices that undergirds modern social and political thought. To insist on investigating acts is to call into question this dominant cluster of problems itself.

If indeed orders and practices have become the dominant objects of thought, finding theoretical sources that can help us investigate acts is a major problem. All the same, it is possible to assemble together those concepts that will enable us to investigate acts, or constitute acts as objects of analysis. There are segments of social and political thought that either explicitly or implicitly address the question of acts separately from (but in relation to) other objects such as conduct, practice, routine, habit, and so forth. We have as many fragments as we need to mould from them a certain style of thought. That work still needs to be done and is beyond the scope of this chapter. Meanwhile, we can begin with the core question.

What does an act mean? Strangely, while both as verb and noun 'act' is one of the most provocative and affective words in the English language, it is also not easily neutralized by being absorbed into or flattened as 'action'. As Ware (1973, p. 403) illustrates, at least in the English language, replacement of 'act' by 'action' either is impossible or changes the meaning of everyday phrases. We have expressions such as acts of courage, acts of generosity, acts of terror as well as court actions, social actions, affirmative actions but these will not work by exchanging 'act' with 'action' and vice versa. A brief digression into the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) illustrates this. As a verb, to act primarily assembles meanings such as 'to put in motion', 'move to action', 'impel, actuate, influence and animate', 'to bring into action, bring about, produce, perform, or make', or 'to carry out a project, command or purpose'. To act implies simultaneously being *directed* and *oriented* towards something. But it also implies to perform an action either as genuine (a play) or counterfeit (simulation). To act embodies actions that can produce both genuine and counterfeit effects. Moreover, it can be coupled with

phrases to assemble meanings such as to 'act out', which means to represent unconscious impulses, desires, instincts and drives. Being directed or oriented towards does not only or necessarily involve consciousness but also the unconscious. To 'act up' can imply conducting oneself disgracefully or anti-socially. To act can also mean to act or enact a character, or to impersonate or assume a character by mimicking or mocking. To act may also mean 'to perform on the stage of existence' or 'to do things in the widest sense' or 'to conduct oneself' or to serve or stand in for something or somebody. To act on or upon implies regulating conduct according to certain norms or imperatives. Finally, to act, when used in conjunction with things, can mean to produce effects, fulfil functions or exert influence. As a verb, then, what is remarkably missing from the English usage is to begin, create or disrupt. It is defined by rather neutral verbs such as make, move and animate, but there is no sense in which an act actualizes.

As a noun, an act is equally non-interchangeable with action. Most significantly, an act stands for a deed or a performance but not for a thing done. In the same vein, it also stands for any operation of the mind such as desiring and willing. An act can be opposed to intention or possibility and can mean actuality of a condition, state or quality. An act can refer to the process of doing, action or operation ('act of God') as well as a moment of the process ('in the act'). Equally significantly, an act refers to anything transacted by a political body such as a council or deliberative assembly. It is therefore – as a decree passed by a legislative, judicial or other body – the most fundamental declarative political and legal instrument. By extension, it also refers to the instrument itself as a record of this transaction and declaration. As such, its genealogy shares the same origins as the Acts of the Apostles. Finally, and equally interestingly, an act refers to parts or divisions of a drama in which a definite segment of the whole action is performed. By extension, it also evokes communion, collaboration, affiliation and fraternization by 'getting into the act'.

Obviously, both as verb and noun, the word 'act' implies and evokes an impressive range of conduct and outcomes that are related to but irreducible to action. Yet 'action' has long been a concern of modern social and political thought. By contrast, 'acts' has never been a consistent and persistent object of thought. When Stout says, 'Being an agent is being something that acts, something that does actions', it sounds promising (2005, p. 3). But when he continues to say that 'in the philosophy of action we are dealing with two types of entities: agents and actions', acts disappear from analysis. Similarly, Bennett simply assumes that acts can be called actions (1995, p. 29). The fact that acts can refer to deeds as well as

to performance, to process as well as to outcomes, and to conduct as well as to enactment already confuses the ground for developing a concept that focuses on the passage between a performance and its outcomes, or between an act and its actualization.

In contemporary social and political thought, Robert Ware (1973) remains, as far as I am aware, the sole figure to have argued for a distinction between acts and actions. Ware argues that while both acts and actions concern doings rather than happenings, acts are different kinds of doings than actions (p. 404). As mentioned above, this distinction can already be found in our common use of the expressions 'act' and 'action', but Ware thinks it has been curiously neglected. By noting that many things can be called acts or actions, the fact they cannot be substituted for each other should be taken to illustrate that these are different entities (p. 403). Ware proposes six necessary conditions for something to be called an act. (I will state these in my own words as Ware's specification of acts and their difference from actions is not always consistent with mine.) First, to specify an act is to indicate a doing. While actions also involve a doing, it is necessary that they involve movement, change, and motion of objects and bodies. 'What is important for actions is that there be action. Actions and motions are rather alike. They both involve action or motion' (p. 408). The kind of doing that acts indicate does not need to involve such objects and bodies. Second, acts are doings of actors. Actions can happen without actors. Thus, acts are either human or humanized (acts of God or acts of nature). There are actions of non-human beings just as there are actions of human beings, but there are acts only of human beings (p. 406). Third, acts happen because of a decision to perform the act. The decision can be intentional or non-intentional but an act will always involve a decision. Fourth, while acts take time and space for doing, they do not have spatio-temporal coordinates: 'acts do not have a place or position in the world and thus cannot be seen [or observed]' (p. 414). Fifth, acts must have completion. They involve accomplishments. 'The accomplishing of something is not an action although it may take action to accomplish something, and doing something will usually involve action' (p. 407). That is to say, acts exist as entities whose absence or presence can, in equal measure, specify an accomplishment. 'Doings that go on for a period of time and that can be continued or broken off might be action or activities [routines or practices], but they are not acts' (p. 413). Sixth, acts build upon acts. Acts involve accomplishments, with moments when they start and end, but they also have continuity within themselves. They accrete over time.

While Ware's is a welcome argument for making a distinction between

and acts and action, it falls short of articulating this distinction as ontological difference. Thus, he also conflates acts and action by interchanging them several times with contradictory results. How, for example, can acts take time and space but lack spatio-temporal coordinates?

An act is neither a practice nor a conduct nor an action, and yet it implies or perhaps makes all those possible. When theorizing acts we are dealing with three types of entities (and not two, as Stout thought): acts, actions and actors. When I use the term 'theorizing acts' I have in mind an approach that focuses on an assemblage of acts, actions and actors in a historically and geographically concrete situation, creating a scene or state of affairs. Yet, if investigating acts is impossible without focusing on acts *themselves* that exist independently of actors, it is also important to recognize that acts cannot be actualized without actions. In this I follow Reinach (1983). It was he who argued that acts should be distinguished from action and that they should be accorded ontological existence that is prior to both actors and actions. He interpreted the essence of an act as an expression of the need to be heard. He investigated various acts such as willing, promising, commanding, requesting and contemplating, and concluded that for an act to be a social act it must enact (via linguistic or non-linguistic means) a need felt by one party to be heard by another (p. 19). As he put it, '[t]he turning to another subject and the need of being heard is absolutely essential for every social act' (p. 20). This made acts for Reinach inescapably dialogical. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss how Reinach then used his concept of social acts to demonstrate the foundations of law, or to show how his conception can be said to have anticipated speech act theories and can perhaps be used to critique them (Crosby 1990; DuBois 1995; Smith 1990).

The importance of Reinach is that he belonged to a milieu at the turn of the twentieth century that included Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hildebrand. This milieu was both familiar to and influential for Martin Heidegger and Mikhail Bakhtin. It is interesting that despite their familiarity with this milieu Max Weber (1978), Talcott Parsons (1968) and Hannah Arendt (1958) often reduced 'acts' into 'action'. Thus, both Weber and Parsons conflated acts and action, albeit in different ways. Similarly, Habermas (1998), also despite the aforementioned milieu, takes Parsons as his starting point and develops, with the speech act theories of Austin and Searle and Mead's pragmatism, his concept of communicative action as 'reaching understanding'. As Habermas states, the interest in social action is oriented towards what he calls 'the classical question of how social order is possible' (1998, p. 234). Yet, it is possible to argue that in certain moments Weber, Parsons, Arendt

and Habermas indeed implicitly indicate that they have an intuitive understanding that there are differences between acts and action. It is possible to find the uses of 'act' to indicate a general class of deeds and 'action' as a concrete behaviour bound by a place and time.

If there is one conclusion that one can draw from the work of the milieu discussed above it is that acts are a class of phenomena that indicate transcendent qualities (this is called ontological) of an action, whereas an action indicates a deed, a performance, something that is done (this is called ontic). To begin theorizing acts there does not need to be an action at all. We can investigate, for example, 'acts of forgiveness' and consider under what conditions certain actors may come into being by becoming implicated in acts that we can identify as 'acts of forgiveness'. Thus, it can be said that acts have a virtual existence that may be actualized under certain conditions. They are actualized, that is, made actual, by action. We can argue, as Derrida does (2001), that for an act of forgiveness to be an act of forgiveness it needs to be unconditional, and that there can be no conditional act of forgiveness. To be able to develop this argument we don't need to make reference to actions that actualize an act of forgiveness. By contrast, investigating actions would always involve the assemblage of action, actors and acts in a concrete scene. Thus, we can say that Greek aristocrats in 594 BCE committed an act of forgiveness when (via Solon) they cancelled all debts owed by peasants. Known as *seisachtheia*, this action belongs to a class of acts that we call forgiveness. Thus, actualization of an act of forgiveness involved an action, *seisachtheia*, in 594 BCE in Athens by aristocrats in their response to peasants. For the reason that there is a difference between ontological and ontic, and virtual and actual, an act should not be reduced to a deed or an action.

Now that I have asserted an ontological difference between acts and actions, how do we theorize acts? I would suggest that the essence of an act, as distinct from conduct, practice, behaviour and habit, is that an act is a rupture in the given. This is very close to what Ware (1973) had in mind when he considered that acts must be accomplishments. I have already mentioned how much attention is paid to orders or to what Bourdieu (1994) eventually called habitus, relatively enduring dispositions in contemporary social and political thought. But we can suggest this was the case for a long while rather than being a contemporary phenomenon. When we consider other major concepts of social and political thought in the twentieth century such as discipline (Foucault 1975), practice (Bourdieu 1980), society (Giddens 1984), identity (Rajchman 1995), citizenship (Turner 1986), government (Dean 1999), state (Tilly 1992), nation (Anderson 1983), sovereignty (Hinsley 1986), globalization (Hirst

and Thompson 1999) and cosmopolitanism (Held 1995) it is almost as if social and political thought is exclusively focused on given orders. Or, rather, it is the givenness of orders that becomes an object of investigation. Accounts are provided of orders either found, diagnosed or anticipated. It seems almost as if social and political thought is fascinated by how an order holds and aims to give an account of it. When we consider the disagreements that were prominent in the 1950s and 1960s over habit versus 'following a rule' as the object of explanation in social sciences, for example, we observe how much concern there was about 'behaviour'. It is instructive to read Winch (1958) again today to realize how much he worried about establishing habit or routine behaviour as the exclusive object of social science. We may as well recall, too, that it was in the twentieth century that social sciences were almost absorbed into what was then called and persists today as 'the behavioural sciences'. While social sciences or social and political thought may concern themselves with ruptures and breaks, as did Foucault (1969), the focus almost always remains the difference between orders. This is ironic because modern social and political thought was born in the age of revolutions and its main concern can be said to have focused on giving an account of change, even revolutionary change. Marx (1848) and Freud (1964) perhaps represent the beginning and end, respectively, of that concern. I do not mean to suggest that there has been no concern with 'disorder'. Rather, acts are contrasted with habitus and other concepts that stand for relatively enduring dispositions of men and women that account for the persistence and stability of an order or the grounds of the emergence of another order.

I have already mentioned some thinkers whose work will be essential for theorizing acts. But I want to sharpen the difference between acts and action before I proceed with outlining some principles of theorizing acts. Lacan illustrates an interesting way to wrestle acts from action. He begins with a distinction between mere behaviour and acts (Lacan 1977, p. 50). He says that all animals engage in mere behaviour but only humans act. He goes on to suggest that 'acting out' and 'passage to the act' are not acts at all. (The passage to the act is a psychoanalytical concept that designates impulsive acts that are often violent and are a response to the intense pressure of anxiety to be resolved.) Lacan discusses both kinds of acts and appears to make a distinction between authentic or proper acts and acting out or passage to the act. Consider acts in terms of their scene of enactment. Acting out presupposes a scene that is already formed, in which the actor performs a script. By contrast, the passage to the act assumes that the actor actually flees or departs the scene (Evans 1996, pp. 136–7). But if an

act is neither a mere behaviour nor acting, nor passage to the act, then what is the essence of the act? While some Lacanian commentators argue that what makes an act proper is responsibility, others suggest that indeed the act proper is passage to the act, which is a violent rupture. The issue remains unresolved. Like Lacan, Arendt also defines the act as a fundamental human capacity. Arendt often argues that being political means the capacity to act (Arendt 1969, p. 179). But if to act is no mere behaviour, what is its essence? She ascribes particular importance to the ancient Greek conception of act, which means both *governing* and *beginning* (Arendt 1958, p. 177). To act means to set something in motion, to begin not just something new but oneself as the being that acts to begin itself (p. 177). Since we are beings endowed with the capacity to act (or, as Sartre would say, since 'to be is to act'), and because to act is to realize a rupture in the given, 'to act' always means to enact the unexpected, unpredictable and the unknown (Sartre 1957, p. 613). As Arendt puts it rather evocatively, '[T]he human heart is the only thing in the world that will take upon itself the burden that the divine gift of action, of being a beginning and therefore being able to make a beginning, has placed upon us' (Arendt 2005, p. 322). To act, then, is neither arriving at a scene nor fleeing from it, but actually engaging in its creation. With that creative act the actor also creates herself/himself as the agent responsible for the scene created.

To maintain a distinction between acts and action and acts and habitus requires isolating acts as those entities that create a scene by involving actors who remain at the scene. Acts are ruptures or beginnings but not impulsive and violent reactions to a scene. By theorizing acts, or attempting to constitute acts as an object of analysis, we must focus not only on rupture rather than order, but also on a rupture that enables the actor (that the act creates) to remain at the scene rather than fleeing it. If an act is understood against habitus, practice, conduct, discipline and routine as ordered and ordering qualities of how humans conduct themselves, we can then perhaps understand why the question of acts would remain minor and fragmented within social and political thought and the social sciences.

We can now turn to a close reading of the young Bakhtin's incomplete manuscript, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. The reason we focus on this text is twofold. First, being aware of the Husserl circle and especially Max Scheler's work on ethics, the young Bakhtin makes the distinction between acts and action an ontological difference. Since the text is incomplete, some might say incoherent, it is useful for understanding what he finds at stake in making an ontological difference between acts and action. Second, in making this distinction Bakhtin introduces another distinction: between responsibility and answerability. So far we have left the issue of decision in

the background but if it is a condition of acts then we need to anchor the decision in relation to something. Bakhtin's distinction is between what he calls two sides of answerability. I will reinterpret the two sides of answerability as responsibility (ontic and action-oriented) and answerability (ontological and acts-oriented). The question reacts to a tradition of understanding acts that reduces them to theoretical categories by orienting these acts towards their calculability, responsibility and intentionality. For this tradition acts enacted by beings such as we ourselves are intelligible only in so far as they are calculable, responsible and intentional. These terms bring about an understanding of the subject of the act as a calculating, responsible and intentional being. Of course, acts have calculable, responsible and intentional moments, but they are not reducible to them. How do we understand and interpret acts beyond calculability, responsibility and intentionality?

Theorizing Ethical Acts: Responsibility and Answerability

Bakhtin's *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* was written in the 1920s but was not published until the 1990s (Bakhtin 1993). By and large cast as an attempt at creating a first philosophy from an ethics, and in the process joining a critique of Kantian and neo-Kantian categorical imperatives, the manuscript produces vital insights on theorizing acts and crystallizes its genuine object of critique, of which Kantianism is only a special case (Nielsen 2002).

Bakhtin critiques three styles of thought that, he says, are inadequate for theorizing acts. He does not designate them clearly. Nor does he name anyone. I shall call these aestheticism, theoreticism and historicism. The two essential distinctions that Bakhtin introduces, again in my own words, are between acts and action and responsibility and answerability. The problem that Bakhtin sets out is the one that we have already emphasized. There is a world in which people perform actions and have their reasons and motives for doing so – or, as Weber would say, they attach subjective meanings to their actions. But can these actions be explained by giving an account of these meanings, motives and reasons? According to Bakhtin aestheticism would account for these actions in so far as they make sense within an order. Aestheticism would turn the focus away from the unique and once-occurrent aspect of these actions. Aestheticism reduces actions to acts. By contrast, theoreticism would account for them by interpreting them as an instance of something abstract. Theoreticism reduces acts into actions. Historicism sees both acts and actions but fails to write the actor into the act and the scene. Historicism lets the actor flee the scene that it

creates. To investigate acts, Bakhtin seems to be saying, we need to fashion a style of thought that does not split the acts and actions but sees them as two aspects of events and places the actor at the scene. To put it another way, the beginning point for Bakhtin is that acts and action ought to be kept apart but considered together, along with our act of investigating as part of the scene, if we are to make sense of acts at all. Bakhtin urges us to see how acts create actors that decide to remain at the scene.

The concept that becomes decisive for Bakhtin is answerability to the Other. An act constitutes its unity (acts and action) via what Bakhtin calls a two-sided answerability. The content and occurrence of an act are answerable in different ways. These two sides of answerability are not reducible to each other and they cannot be understood without each other. When these two sides are understood together the split between acts and action can be surmounted in theorizing acts (Bakhtin 1993, p. 3). Bakhtin criticizes aestheticism and theoreticism for attempting to derive the content of an act from its moral law: both reduce the unique occurrence of the act to its interpretation, or, in Bakhtin's words, its special answerability to its general answerability. This, Bakhtin says, happens when the normative content of an act is understood to derive from a categorical imperative. By contrast, theoreticism constitutes the actor as a transcendental or theoretical actor rather than a concrete, historical performance. 'Thus, in so far as we detach a judgment from the unity constituted by the historical act/deed of its actualization and assign it to some theoretical unity there *is* no way of getting out from within its content/sense aspect and into the ought and the actual once-occurrent event of Being' (p. 7). What Bakhtin seems to be getting at is the difficulty of interpreting what actors do when they act: if interpreted with already existing concepts (by assuming calculable, responsible and intentional actors) the act is already folded into an event and thus into an order. Yet, if one resists the temptation of this kind of interpretation, one may have nothing at all to say about the act. This is the paradox of acts.

If it is impossible to investigate an act through abstracting its content from its occurrence, how does one investigate it as a unified act? If we fail to overcome these three styles of thought, we are thrown back into a split between what is and what ought to be (p. 20). Yet Bakhtin recognizes that overcoming aestheticism, theoreticism and historicism is not as easy as it sounds:

My participative and demanding consciousness can see that the world of modern philosophy, the theoretical and theoreticized world of culture, is in a certain sense actual, that it possesses validity. But what it can also see is that this world is not the once-occurrent world in which I live and in which I answer-

ably perform my deeds. And these two worlds do not intercommunicate; there is no principle for including and actively involving the valid world of theory and theoreticized culture in the once-occurrent Being-event of life. (p. 20)

But modern ethics – understood as either content ethics, construing the act from universal or categorical norms, or formal ethics, construing an act by deriving its ought from the concrete act itself – cannot bridge these two worlds (pp. 24–5). Neither form of ethics can capture the fact that ‘the actually performed act – not from the aspect of its content, but in its performance – somehow knows, somehow possesses the unitary and once-occurrent being of life; it orients itself within that being, and it does so, moreover, in its entirety – both in its content-aspect and in its actual, unique factuality’ (p. 28). Thus, the answerable act must be investigated as the ‘actualization of a decision – inescapably, irremediably, and irrevocably’ (p. 28).

What an act actualizes or performs is a decision that is answerable to the Other. Bakhtin seems to reach the conclusion that once we understand an act as the actualization or performance of a decision in its unity, neither objectivism nor subjectivism, and neither rationalism nor voluntarism, can provide adequate grounds for theorizing acts. For the act itself unites both objective and subjective, both rational and volitional, as constitutive moments of the act. Bakhtin suggests, in fact, that language is historically structured in a way that captures participative thinking and performed acts (p. 31). To investigate an act would articulate not the world produced by the act ‘but the world in which that act becomes answerably aware of itself and is actually performed’ (p. 31). That moment of becoming aware of itself is the unfolding of the actor to her being in the world – a world that does not contain already given objects and subjects (thus a given scene), but in which those subjects and objects unfold in their relations to each other in that world (thus creating the scene). It is not a world of objects that theorizing acts creates but relations amongst those objects and subjects as they unfold to each other and the investigator.

This is one of the most interesting aspects of Bakhtin’s thoughts on acts, as he attempts to write the investigator into the act as an actor. Bakhtin says when investigating an act that ‘the mere fact that I have begun speaking about it means that I have already assumed a certain attitude towards it – not an indifferent attitude, but an interested-effective attitude’ (p. 32). Bakhtin will designate this aspect of theorizing as ‘emotional-volitional intonation’. By this concept Bakhtin attempts to surmount both the subjectivism–objectivism and emotionalism–rationalism dichotomies. An act embodies both individual consciousness and cultural consciousness,

but the decisions enacted by an act are beyond the bounds of individual consciousness (p. 35). The concept 'emotional-volitional intonation' designates 'precisely the moment constituted by my self-activity in a lived experience – the experiencing of an experience as *mine*: I think – perform a deed by thinking' (p. 36). To investigate an act is to understand that this 'moment constituted by the performance of thoughts, feelings, words, practical deeds is an actively answerable attitude that I myself assume – an emotional-volitional attitude towards a state of affairs in its entirety, in the context of actual unitary and once-occurrent life' (p. 37). An act therefore constitutes that moment when an actor enacts not merely the content of an act, but also its sense. As Bakhtin says 'What we shall find everywhere is a constant unity of answerability, that is, *not* a constancy in content and *not* a constant law of the performed act (all content is only a constituent moment), but a certain actual fact of acknowledgement, an acknowledgement that is once-occurrent and never-repeatable, emotional-volitional and concretely individual' (p. 39). Thus, we can argue, the two sides of answerability correspond roughly to responsibility and answerability. To act or actualize an act, which is a decision, on the one hand produces an actor within the concrete, calculable, immediate conditions of the act that result in responsibilities towards others; on the other hand, the act reveals an actor to herself in her answerability to the Other. The paradox of the act is that responsibility and answerability may well contradict one another. Being immediately responsible towards others may well go against being answerable to the Other. It is this paradox that Derrida explores as two forms of responsibility (Derrida 1991, 1992). Thus, we have two sides of answerability in Bakhtin and two forms of responsibility in Derrida. I suggest using responsibility to specify the calculable (ontic) orientation towards others and answerability to specify the incalculable (ontological) orientation towards the Other.

While it is fruitful to see how the young Bakhtin struggled to make a distinction between acts and action, responsibility and answerability, and content and sense of acts, a question that remains is the essence of answerability to the Other. It is this question, I think, that Heidegger (1927) and Levinas (1978) struggled with and to which Derrida (1992) returned. The question can be rephrased as: who is the Other? As we have seen, as there are several references in the young Bakhtin to Being and beings and Being-as-event it would be simplistic to assume that answerability answers other beings. We have already specified that as responsibility and we do not wish to reduce answerability to responsibility. We have seen above that when Bakhtin emphasizes a difference between two forms of answerability, he is on the verge of developing a difference between

responsibility (ethical relations of obligation between given beings in a given scene) and answerability (ethical relations between beings and Being). Answerability is not a commitment or promise that one pledges to another being. If answerability is not towards another being, whom does it answer and who calls?

This is where Heidegger's ontological analysis of conscience is significant. As is well known, in *Being and Time*, after demonstrating how 'beings such as we ourselves are' are constituted by attunement, understanding, fallenness and discourse, Heidegger says that it is conscience that discloses ourselves in our potentiality-as-being. As beings whose existence is a concern for ourselves, we disclose our being to ourselves through our potentialities and possibilities. Heidegger says that his existential analysis of conscience reveals the character of this disclosure as a 'call' (Heidegger 1927, p. 249 SZ 269). It is possible to see the resonance between 'call' and 'answer', between Heidegger and Bakhtin. The call of conscience appears as summoning the being such as we ourselves are into its own unique possibilities. Can we interpret Bakhtinian answerability as an answer to the call of conscience? In order to move in that direction, we need an understanding of conscience that is beyond its everyday meaning of guilt as debt (Nietzsche 1887, pp. 41–5).

That is what Heidegger does in roughly the following way. The call of conscience discloses our being to ourselves. The call of conscience appears precisely because we fall prey to others, or lose ourselves in them. How do we lose ourselves in others? We flee from our own thrownness into the ostensible freedom of others by being responsible towards them. But this also becomes a flight from the uncanniness of our thrown being (Heidegger 1927, p. 255 SZ 276). Conscience reveals itself as the concern over our own thrownness. The caller is our own being concerned about its thrownness. The summoned is also our own being called forth to its potentialities. The call comes from and is directed towards the being that I am. Yet, the call is something that I have neither planned nor willed. It calls (p. 254 SZ 275). The call of conscience directs the being that I myself am out of uncanniness. The call of conscience discloses my potentiality-as-being. Can we not consider this as a possible reading of the distinction between responsibility and answerability in Bakhtin?

To inflect answerability with Heidegger's analysis of conscience, we need to focus briefly on the character of the summons. Heidegger insists on interpreting conscience existentially and ontologically, which means to wrest it from the everyday notion of conscience as guilt or debt. Instead, Heidegger moves towards being guilty about something other than the immediately present. He says '[t]he idea of guilt must not only be removed

from the area of calculating and taking care of things, but must also be separated from relationship to an ought and a law such that failing to comply with it one burdens himself with guilt' (p. 261 SZ 283). Thus Heidegger recognizes that the call of conscience is a response to guilt, but he refuses to interpret that guilt in its everyday understanding of debt as owing something, that is responsibility. The everyday understands guilt as the absence of what ought to be and conscience as that which makes guilt present. While the quality of the 'not' is present in the idea of guilty, it is not lack understood as absence. Heidegger articulates guilt ontologically as follows. In our thrownness beings such as we ourselves always lag behind our possibilities. We understand ourselves as these possibilities. We ground ourselves, or our ground of being discloses itself as those possibilities – not only those we can pursue but also those we cannot. The ground discloses itself as the 'not' of being (pp. 262–3 SZ 284–5). This nothingness means being free for our possibilities and yet, at the same, it is the ground for being guilty. The existential guilt, then is not about this or that debt that can be calculated, but about the fact that I exist as such. It is this existential guilt that makes us answerable to our being. Beings such as we ourselves are, who concern ourselves with our being (care), will not only concern ourselves with everyday guilt as owing something (responsibility) but will also be guilty in the very ground of our being (answerability). What makes conscience possible is the existential fact that we are guilty in the ground of our being and close ourselves off from our thrownness and flee from uncanniness (p. 264 SZ 286). It is this fleeing that the call of conscience makes us understand. The call of conscience as care gives us an understanding of existential guilt. It is through the call of conscience as care that uncanniness brings us face to face with our nothingness, which belongs to our own potentiality-of-being. If that is the case, Heidegger reflects, then the call, as that which makes us answerable, is tantamount to understanding ourselves in our own potentialities – and hence not fleeing. Moreover, we recognize our own potentiality-of-being as potentiality of becoming guilty. When we constitute ourselves in our answerability we make ourselves ready for the call of conscience as care. This readiness includes our becoming free for the call. By understanding the call we have listened to our own possibility of existence (p. 265 SZ 287). We can suggest with Heidegger that answerability answers the call of conscience as care from the uncanniness of being-in-the-world that summons beings such as we ourselves are to our own potentiality-for-being-guilty (p. 266 SZ 289).

Heidegger illuminates Bakhtin's analysis of the act from the perspective of answerability. The affinities between *Being and Time* and Bakhtin's style of thought in *Toward Philosophy of the Act* are prodigious. After all, both

shared a deep interest in Scheler (1916) and Kierkegaard (1983), and aimed to develop an ontological conception of the ethical act by calling Kantian ethics into question. Heidegger grounds Bakhtin's investigation of the answerability of acts by his existential analysis of conscience. The two share an insistence on the irreducibility of the act to its immediate responsibility, calculability and intentionality (acting out) and a refusal to interpret acts as absolute ruptures (passage to the act).

The answerability of an act is irreducible to calculation, responsibility and intentionality. An ethical act precedes and indeed makes possible any action. An act is always oriented towards its objects before calculation, responsibility or intention. These terms (calculation, responsibility, intention) arrive at the scene (action) too late to understand or interpret it. An ethical act also precedes and indeed makes possible any actors. The actor is produced through the scene and is constituted by the act itself. It would be questionable then to assume that the answerability of the act is to another actor. An act acknowledges its answerability to Being. This is where there are significant affinities between Heidegger and Bakhtin. Or, to put it more modestly, Bakhtin's concept of answerability is best elaborated, enlarged and refined with Heidegger, especially with his concept of 'conscience as the call of care'. Again, Heidegger provides guidance in answering the question of who this being that acts actually is (p. 107 SZ 114). He has fundamental reservations about assuming that that being is the 'simple perceiving reflection of the I of acts' (p. 109 SZ 115). The whole point of thinking through being-in-the-world is the conclusion that a mere actor without a social world is impossible. The world in which we exist is a with-world: 'Being-in is being-with others' (p. 112 SZ 119). Being-with is an existential concept and it does not assume objective presence or absence of other beings; even in their objective absence being still has the character of being-with. As being-with we essentially exist as beings concerned with others and the Other. Whether this concern expresses itself as tolerance or intolerance, difference or indifference, it is still being-with. The being that acts, therefore, is already a being-towards-others and has an understanding of others because it is a being whose essence is being-with. Thus being-with-one-another cannot be understood as the presence of several actors together (p. 118 SZ 125).

An ethical act in the way in which we articulated it – as answerability – perhaps prepares the ground for understanding other acts, but cannot explain them. As we are interested in acts of citizenship, the question that presents itself is that of political acts. That citizenship and the political are related concepts does not require elaboration, merely a reminder. But how do we investigate the passage from ethical acts (answerability and

responsibility) to political acts? How do ethical acts articulate themselves into political acts? When Heidegger elaborates upon being-with, he insists that 'others' are those from whom one mostly does not distinguish oneself, or that others are always others with their kind (p. 111, 113 SZ 118, 120). I find this both troubling and confusing. Disagreeing with Heidegger, while still remaining within ontological and existential analysis, we can observe that beings are also being-with others other than those beings that they understand as their kind. Beings are always being-with their kind as well as with those whom they constitute another kind of other. This is the question of the political to which Heidegger's thought remains a stranger. To put it another way, the question of the stranger as the essence of the political eludes Heidegger. It is this question of the political as the question of the third party that Levinas and Derrida introduce.

Theorizing Political Acts: Law and Justice

Acts involve others and the Other, but if others are not an undifferentiated mass then what differentiates them? Theorizing political acts raises the question of a third party, as political acts cannot always take place amongst beings of the same kind. A political act will always involve a third party. When a third party is present, the two parties will constitute themselves in their answerability towards being political, which constitutes the essence of the political. The issue of the third party was introduced by Levinas to address the question of justice and politics rather than a question involving relations between enemy and friend or self and the Other (Critchley 1999, pp. 214–15). For Levinas an act proper is enacted when a third party enters into it (Levinas 1978, pp. 157–9). When Levinas says, 'The third party is other than the neighbour, but also another neighbour, and also a neighbour of the other, and not simply his fellow', he is emphasizing that an act always brings into assemblage more than those who are immediately caught in the scene that the act creates (p. 157). A scene of an act therefore always involves a spectrum of others, rather than two others facing each other. With the introduction of a third party, there will be a breach between the other, the third party and the 'I'. The third party is the birth of the question of justice. Being gathered together through space, with a breach but proximity, there will be a question of comparison, coexistence, visibility, difference and all that stands for justice. But here justice itself does not stand on law: 'justice is not legality regulating human masses, from which a technique of social equilibrium is drawn, harmonizing antagonistic forces' (p. 159). Thus, 'It is important to recover all these forms beginning with proximity, in which being, totality,

State, politics, techniques, work are at every moment on the point of having their centre of gravitation in themselves, and weighing on their own account' (p. 159).

For Levinas 'justice remains justice only in a society where there is no distinction between those close and those far off, but in which there also remains the impossibility of passing by the closest. The equality of all is borne by my inequality, the surplus of my duties over my rights' (p. 159). Thus, because justice is 'an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity' (p. 158), seeking it will involve answerability. Levinas says that the answerability of an act is what institutes the original locus of justice, 'a terrain common to me and the others where I am counted among them, that is, where subjectivity is a citizen with all the duties and rights measured and measurable which the equilibrated ego involves, or equilibrating itself by the concourse of duties and the concurrence of rights' (p. 160). Justice seeks answerability when one makes a claim upon the other in the presence of another. If the ethical act arises as answerability in the absence of a third party (surplus of obligations over rights), then the political act arises as justice (surplus of rights over obligations) in its presence. The distinction Derrida (2002) insists on between justice as incalculable and law as calculating aspects of order is intimately connected with the difference between responsibility and answerability as regards theorizing acts.

Theorizing political acts must then mean investigating these ways as expressed in the everyday that are ordinarily called politics. In other words, the political is irreducibly different from politics but cannot be investigated and delineated without investigating politics. How to proceed from theorizing politics to the political is complicated, which exemplifies how everyday politics can be mapped onto the acts of the political and interpreted as ways of being political. This way of theorizing acts can be called transcendental empiricism (Deleuze 1994). The upshot is that politics constitutes relatively enduring and routinized ways of being that can only be investigated through the political when it ruptures these ways of being. If these ways of being (*habitus*) constitute the existential conditions of possibility of politics, acts constitute the conditions of possibility of the political, a rupture of politics.

We can summarize our initial findings as follows: (1) Acts and action are distinct and separate (but related) classes of phenomena. While acts have a virtual existence, action is always actual. (2) Acts rupture or break given orders, practices and *habitus*. Creative ruptures and breaks take different forms that are irreducible. They can, for example, take forms of resistance or subservience. What actualizes an act is not determinable in advance. (3) Acts produce actors and actors do not produce acts; actors actualize acts

and themselves through action. (4) Actualization of acts provokes both responsibility and answerability. Acts always concern others and the Other. The tension between responsibility and answerability produces acts as ruptures in the given. (5) Answerability and responsibility are distinct and separate (but related) classes of phenomena. While responsibility invokes the given, immediate and calculable, answerability orients acts towards the Other. (6) Ethics and the ethical, politics and the political are distinct and irreducible (but related) aspects of acts that one must investigate separately while keeping them together.

Investigating Acts of Citizenship: Becoming Activist Citizens

If each act is simultaneously both ethical and political (because it is not merely calculable, responsible and intentional), is every act an act of citizenship? If not, when is an act an act of citizenship? The insistence on acts as the object of investigation rather than the status and habitus of subjects already breaks new ground. Citizenship studies often proceeds with a focus on the three ontic aspects of citizenship: extent (rules and norms of exclusion and inclusion), content (rights and responsibilities) and depth (thickness or thinness of belonging). We can suggest that these aspects of citizenship arrive at the scene too late and provide too little for interpreting acts of citizenship. They arrive too late because the actors of extent, content and depth are already produced; for acts produce actors that do not exist before acts. They provide too little because the scene has already been created. If acts produce actors (or actors are produced through acts) then initially we can define acts of citizenship as those acts that produce citizens and their others.

Theorizing acts is part of a larger body of work that proposes a way of investigating genealogies of citizenship as a generalized question of otherness that includes strangers but also outsiders and aliens. It draws upon Heidegger and Levinas on the question of the political (Isin 2002). Briefly, this analysis regards the formation of social groups as a fundamental but dynamic process through which beings such as we ourselves come into being. Through orientations (intentions, motives, purposes), strategies (reasons, manoeuvres, programmes) and technologies (tactics, techniques, methods) as forms of being political, beings enact solidaristic, agonistic and alienating modes of being with each other. These forms and modes constitute ways of being political in the sense that being implicated in them is not necessarily calculable and rational but may also be unintentional or affective. It is in these ways that we become political: that is to say, we enact ourselves as citizens, strangers, outsiders and aliens rather than identi-

ties or differences that are already there. For this reason, it is impossible to investigate 'citizenship' – the name that citizens, as distinguished from strangers, outsiders and aliens, have given themselves – without investigating the specific constellation of orientations, strategies and technologies that are available for enacting solidaristic, agonistic or alienating modes of being with each other. The question of acts emerges from this analysis precisely because it raises the question as to what accounts for subjects refusing, resisting or subverting the orientations, strategies and technologies in which they find themselves implicated, and the solidaristic, agonistic and alienating relationships in which they are caught. While we are implicated or caught in these forms and modes, they guide but do not determine our enactments. It is important to investigate these forms and modes of being political, and acts enable us to investigate the transformation of these ways: how do subjects become actors by finding ways into or out of them? If we always find our ways into forms and modes of being political, we also find ways out of them.

How should we approach theorizing acts of citizenship? Are acts of citizenship inherently (or always) exclusive or inclusive, homogenizing or diversifying, positive or negative? Or do these meanings that we attribute to acts only arise after the fact? Following our discussion of acts, we cannot define acts of citizenship as already inherently exclusive or inclusive, homogenizing or diversifying, or positive or negative. These qualities arise after or, more appropriately, through the act. In fact, we as interpreters ascribe these qualities to those acts. That means that acts produce such qualities only as their effects, not causes. Moreover, those acts that are explicitly intended for certain effects (inclusion, diversity, tolerance) may well produce others (exclusion, homogeneity, intolerance). *The first principle of investigating acts of citizenship is to interpret them through their grounds and consequences, which includes subjects becoming activist citizens through scenes created.* Thus, we contrast 'activist citizens' with 'active citizens' who act out already written scripts. While activist citizens engage in writing scripts and creating the scene, active citizens follow scripts and participate in scenes that are already created. While activist citizens are creative, active citizens are not.

Can acts of citizenship be enacted without an explicit motive, purpose or reason? Do those beings that act as citizens, strangers, outsiders or aliens necessarily (or always) attribute reasons to their acts? Acts cannot happen without motives, purposes, or reasons, but those cannot be the only grounds of interpreting acts of citizenship. While acts of citizenship involve decisions, those decisions cannot be reduced to calculability, intentionality and responsibility. But because they are irreducible to those qualities they can be enacted without subjects being able to articulate reasons for

becoming activist citizens. Acts of citizenship do not need to originate in the name of anything though we as interpreters will always interpret how acts of citizenship orient themselves towards justice. *The second principle of theorizing acts of citizenship recognizes that acts produce actors that become answerable to justice against injustice.*

Can acts of citizenship happen without being founded in law or responsibility? Do those beings that act as citizens, strangers, outsiders or aliens necessarily (or always) act in the name of the law and responsibility? Are acts of citizenship only legitimate when founded in law and responsibility? Acts of citizenship are not necessarily founded in law or responsibility. In fact, for acts of citizenship to be acts at all they must call the law into question and, sometimes, break it. Similarly, for acts of citizenship to be acts at all they must call established forms of responsibility into question and, sometimes, be irresponsible. Those activist citizens that acts produce are not *a priori* beings recognized in law, but by enacting themselves through acts they affect the law that recognizes them. *The third principle of theorizing acts is to recognize that acts of citizenship do not need to be founded in law or enacted in the name of the law.*

Acts constitute actors who claim and assert rights and obligations, enact themselves as activist citizens and, in the process, differentiate others as those who are not (strangers, outsiders, aliens). Acts of citizenship are those acts through which citizens, strangers, outsiders and aliens emerge not as beings already defined but as beings acting and reacting with others. We have considered acts of citizenship as political in so far as these acts constitute constituents (beings with claims). But they are also ethical (as when answerable and responsible), cultural (as in the carnivalesque), sexual (as when pleasurable) and social (as in acts of affiliation, solidarity or hostility): in these ways they actualize or perform ways of becoming political. We define acts of citizenship as those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle.

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