

Martin Kay

The Solitary Voice of Dissent:

Using Foucault to Expose the Reasons and Giddens to Explain Them

Personal activism as a social phenomenon

VERNON SERIES ON CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

Summary

This book urges respect for solitary dissent rather than censure. It equips a wide audience to understand what previously seemed unimaginable, much less comprehensible. It shows the reader how to reach beyond those first conclusions and into the heart of the matter.

The lone voice explains that something has been hidden away, something which the individual now dissenting can no longer acquiesce in. It raises the possibility that more may be seriously wrong. Those who need to understand range from academics, to researchers, to managers, to elected representatives, to journalists. We all have an interest in knowing not just what has gone wrong but also why this person, and no other, decided they could take no more. If we are to correct a bad situation, rather than just patch it up, we need clarity at every level of the individual's deepening unease.

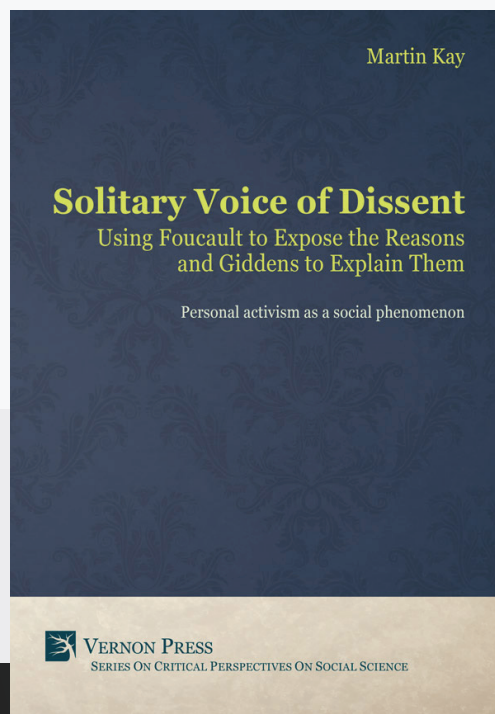
The book uses three case studies (two in Ireland and one in UK, and all on the record), to demonstrate an approach to analyzing solitary dissent. The methods used are academic but, in the way they are presented, certainly intelligible to the lay-reader. Indeed, the author (who is one of the case studies) writes with a degree of affection for his two authorities, Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens, which is engaging, anything but formal, but no less authoritative for that.

The Solitary Voice of Dissent is limited by the extent to which the author has been able to delve into the personal privacy of the case studies offered. While each was male, the author also identifies certain contemporary female dissenters. This is an area increasingly impacting upon the public's awareness but which no-one has written about before. If we are to mend our society, we need to start a conversation. A wide audience will wish to follow it.

About the author

Martin Kay was born in Ceylon and educated in Scotland, England and Ireland. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Limerick and his home is in Munster, Ireland. His first career was at sea in the British Royal Navy where he specialized as a maritime helicopter pilot. In his second career, he has specialized in coastal and rural regeneration and taken a particular interest in communities in turmoil at the interface with the State.

Between 2012 and 2014, Martin became increasingly involved with the Estuary and lower reaches of the River Shannon, particularly with Riverbank communities and their culture. In February 2014, the area known as King's Island, Limerick, a depressed part of the City, was severely flooded – and he remained closely in contact with the affected residents and the events that followed. Within the year, he published a narrative entitled *The Limerick Flood of 2014: Climate Change and a Case of Unpreparedness* which was described as “the missing link between the ‘real-life’ experience of people affected by climate change and the ‘deskbound’ reality in which plans and administrative considerations are formulated” (Prof John Sweeney, NUI Maynooth). Expressly declaring his dissent from the official version of events, Martin cast around for other topical examples and obtained the agreement of Fr Tony Flannery (Galway) and Peter Osborne (London) to his drawing upon their quite different experiences of confronting greater power. These are the three case studies analysed in *The Solitary Voice of Dissent*. Martin has written three other books on unrelated subjects.



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