

Minor

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The Minor is not a statistical minority necessarily, nor is it a public created by the majority engaged in the politics of establishing “the other.” The Minor is creative, affirmative, and becoming-public, whether it is minoritarian or majoritarian. Minor is a flow of difference which has yet to be recognized. For instance, in the early 1970s, one could see Minor in hip hop as a social movement, an “underground” culture developed by artists who used MCing (rapping), DJing, graffiti and break dancing. One can then see the Minor depopulated by a hypothetical statement like, “hip hop is the

mainstream popular music industry”, and similarly, the hip hop culture as a global social movement.

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari (1986) wrote of Kafka that “a minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (p. 16). The work of the artist, working in the minor, is a double creation. First, it is the work as a work-of-art that stands outside (often outside of many insides), and second, it is art as the social relations of deterritorialization and the territorializing of a people anew:

It may be that the sound molecules of pop music are at this very moment implanting here and there a people of a new type, singularly indifferent to the orders of the radio, to computer safeguards, to the threat of the atomic bomb. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 346)

They suggest that, perhaps, “this can be compared in another context to what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language” (1986, p. 17). The minor is an affective act that creates the possibility of new territories within already existing territories. It is a creative flow of difference within already existing flows.

The Minor has three elements: it is what creatively emerges from a minoritarian means of expression; thus everything becomes political (biopolitical) and “everything takes on a collective value” (1986, p. 17). These three elements create a flow of difference which both negates and affirms simultaneously. The negative function distances the forming Minor from the majority; it is protest. The second is the affirmative creation of a new collective political subjectivity through productive activity (O’Sullivan, 2006, pp. 77-78).

The minor is more often experienced than discussed. It is a special form of productivity Deleuze likes to call “affirmation”. It is experienced in establishing the political and socially possible, either in art or in alternative social orders “created by the event” (Deleuze, 2006). The event, seemingly always linked to the Minor, is a flow of articulations territorialized in the creation of affect and difference within space. It was experienced by the generation of Parisian post-structuralists (in which Deleuze places himself) in the events of May ‘68 - a shocking political act whereby France was effectively shut down by a cascade of events sparked by Parisian university students. But the dream of a possible new world, which led to the protests of May ‘68, had long since been rendered a political fantasy by the time they wrote *Kafka* in the mid-1970s. By then, their experience of the Minor but had been buried under the stillness and regression of recollection. As Deleuze and Guattari (1986) both learned, the Minor exists within creativity, protest and community-oriented expression, but its enunciation is not ensured: “Minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature” (p. 18).

References

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DEMYSTIFYING DELEUZE

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