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## USE OF LANGUAGE IN MINORITY LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

**M**inority discourse is a mode of ideology that is related to the sublimation and the expression of misery. In case of minority forms, the sublimation is for the preservation of the cultural identity in one form or other and political critique. The



theoretical project of minority discourse involves drawing out the solidarities in the form of similarities between various modes of repression and struggle that all the minorities experience separately due to their minority status. As a result of the economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, social

manipulation and an ideological domination on the cultural formation of minority subjects and discourses make the people from minorities to become minor.

**KEYWORDS** :Minority literature , mode of ideology , political critique.

### INTRODUCTION

To study the culture of a minority, at least, a relevant knowledge of sociology, political theory, economics and history is required; otherwise, the particulars of the struggle embodied in cultural forms remain invisible. Minority discourse refuses the assumption of the timeless universality of cultural products and the concomitant tendency to read the cultural texts exclusively for their representation of aesthetic effects and essential human values. What Susan Christopher observes that though there are gender inflected implications of the analysis, it is not the same as engaging with the knowledge claims of those working from non-dominant positions seriously.

Minority is not a stable form existing in opposition to something major, but it is transformative,

changing and relational. Minority literature is not only a theory of the margins, but a different way of working with the material. Given the transformative quality to what Deleuze and Guattari mean by the 'minor', it is more appropriate to suggest a feminist cum Marxist cum queer cum anti racist theory, each squeezed through the pores of the other so that any production of theory cascades in an endless transformative becoming. Katz considers Kafka's three impossibilities of writing as something different, i.e., the three impossibilities of a theorist. He says: "The impossibility of not being a theorist, the impossibility of being an orthodox Marxist, and the impossibility of being a feminist devoid of Marxism" (Katz, 1996: 489 - 490).

When literature entirely extends its power of being literature, it is minoritarian. Deleuze and Guattari consider minority literature as great literature. Kafka is not considered significant for he captured the unrepresented spirit of the Czech people, but because he wrote without having a standard notion of the people. He did not write as a being with an identity, but as a voice of the voiceless. Shakespeare can be called a 'minor' author as his works do not offer a unified image of a man, or even a unified image of Shakespeare. Every reading of his texts raises new questions. However, when Shakespeare becomes an industry of tourism, culture, and academia, he becomes a major author. We seek to find the real Shakespeare, the origin of his ideas and the true sense of his works. However, he becomes minor again if we recognise the potential for his work to be read as if we did not know who Shakespeare was.

Minority literary discourse inhabits a traumatized and traumatizing world in which the gap between the dominant and minority, superior and inferior, colonizer and colonized, and dictator and citizen is apparent. In a minority discourse, a major language, which negates or diminishes the minority subject, is borrowed to attack the majority or to express the plight of minorities. Minority discourse is rooted in a sociopolitical and historical context. It addresses the questions that have to do at least something with the petty self and the national identity or sovereignty and thus raises the national conscience instead of describing the details of historical events.

Minority literature arises from the minor use of a major language. Any cultural minority, which may or may not possess its language, uses the language of the surrounding majority in the rebellious ways, observe Deleuze and Guattari. This subversive variation in the dominant language is a language of the minority. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain the concepts of major and minor language within the context of linguistic theory. They find a fundamentally political purpose underlying the efforts of linguists such as Noam Chomsky to 'homogenize' language according to the standard system which reflects linguistic competence in that particular language. If one speaks the standard language, s/he equates the way of expressing her/himself with the socio-political power in that community. On the contrary, if one speaks using a dialect by deviating from the standard mode, s/he is automatically relegated to a minority position in that society.

Deleuze and Guattari consider the standard English or French or German as a constant and that any dialect is a variation. Both the constant and a variation possess the power relationship between them. The constant standard system asserts its power of authority against the forcefulness and the energy of the minor variation, which subverts the nice neat model offered for its edification and improvement. Dialect further tries to establish itself as a derivative or deviant major language. In today's world, English is a dominant language in opposition to the languages spoken by the minority subjects, but the English, as is used by the minorities can be described as a minority language in relation to the English of the Englishmen. Moreover, the constant and the variation is a continuous process of modification, codification and further modification in all languages.

As major and minor are two ways of using language, the literature written in the minor mode

will do strange things to the accepted constancy of the major mode. Deleuze and Guattari observe:

Kafka, a Czechoslovakian Jew writing in German, submits German to creative treatment as a minor language, constructing a continuum of variation, negotiating all of the variables both to constrict the constants and to expand the variables: make language stammer, or make it 'wail,' stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from P cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities. Two conjoined tendencies in so-called minor languages have often been noted: an impoverishment, a shedding of syntactical and lexical forms; but simultaneously a strange proliferation of shifting effects, a taste for overload and paraphrase. This applies to the German of Prague, Black English, and QuBbecois. (DG, 1987:104)

Deleuze and Guattari do not agree with the linguist's characteristic assessment of a consubstantial poverty and preciosity. The poverty they attribute to the effort of the writer to restrict the constants, or attack the oppressive regime of the standard language in a covert fashion, from the outside rather than within it. The overload is the writer's attempt to broaden the variations. As the writer knows his function in relation to the standard language, and his need to use it in a minor mode, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the "excess" ascribed to a minor writer is in fact "a mobile paraphrase bearing witness to the unlocalized presence of an indirect discourse at the heart of every statement" (DG, 1987:104). The 'dynamism' in Deleuze and Guattari is a key to an understanding of this writerly damage done to the major language. Mobility allows paraphrase to always recreate the standard forms in revolutionary ways. Presence is unlocalized because such writing is always a 'becoming', and cannot be pinned down to the essential structure, particularly about its relation to the standard language and its uses. Every statement is hollow, devoid of this essentiality as well, because the "indirect discourse" at its heart prevents the immediate access to the mind of the speaker. All statements in the minor literature are reportage because they strive to convey the view of a minority through the linguistic dimension of the majority's regime, are reportage. They operate in a diegetic, rather than mimetic mode, because they are always telling the story of X, not representing X directly. They do not represent directly, when the language in which they are written is only possessed by the author. "Minor authors are foreigners in their own tongue" (DG, 1987: 105).

Deterritorialization is an attempt by something to subvert or take over a territory, or to override the codings that had characterized that entity. The subverted or taken over typically engages in its destabilizing process of reterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari draw upon Nietzsche's metaphor of a universe filled with contesting wills to power in seeing 'flow' as the operative principle in the world. In a world, that is characterized by flows, everything is always being territorialized, deterritorialized and reterritorialized.

The most fundamental form of this process in human history has been the encoding of each successive species which formed the basis for a particular type of society. From the materialist perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, everything in the world which acts as a point at which flows occur is designated as a 'machine.' At the macro-social level, the abstract and diffuse points of flow between the world and the conceptions about it harboured by the individuals who live in it, constitute a 'social machine.'

The social machine is literally a machine, irrespective of any metaphor, inasmuch as it exhibits an immobile motor and undertakes a variety of interventions: flows are set apart, elements are detached from a chain, and portions of the tasks to be performed are distributed. (DG, 1983: 141)

In the beginning, there was a primitive or tribal society, involved in hunting and agriculture, in which the focus of desire and the immobile motor was the Earth. Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, refer to this society as a "primitive territorial machine." Everything is social, static, coded and rule bound in



such a society, and the great power of the Earth to bring forth the means of survival results in a veneration of the Earth which is far more extensive than a mere religious orientation towards pantheism or Nature worship.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this tribal society is deterritorialized by the 'barbarian despotic machine,' which arises "every time the categories of the new alliance and direct filiation are mobilized" (DG, 1983: 193). In the dictatorial society, desire inscribes on the body of the dictator because the flows of production and consumption have been redirected through this leader. An empire is born, or a new charismatic figure draws a portion of his society off on a different path, and that new grouping has a new alliance, informed by their leader. The direct filiation is the ubiquitous link between the despot and deity. A society coded in this way is still highly coded, and rule-bound by the divinely authorized fiat of the despot.

In a capitalist society, desire is inscribed in capital. The 'civilized capitalist machine' is the ultimate deterritorialization since it decodes all the flows. Capital has been always present in previous societies, but it was the capital of the alliance, rather than the capital of filiation. Money is connected directly to the crops in the primitive society, the despot's treasure-house in the barbaric society. By contrast, capital "becomes relative when money begets money, or value a surplus value" (DG, 1983: 227). The new prominence of the individual, who is responsible for his labour, needs the laws that previously restricted his behaviour must be jettisoned. All the flows must be decoded to create the freedom to make money. At the same time, the abstraction of this new society requires concretization through the resurgence of old systems. If primitive societies are connective and despotic societies disjunctive, then capitalist society is conjunctive, in that it maintains a partnership with feudal systems, religious powers, nation states, or whatever is necessary in order to facilitate its continued operation. A society built entirely on the principle of total deterritorialization must engage in continuing the reterritorialization to keep itself operating. Deleuze and Guattari thus suggest that capitalism is "the relative limit of every society; it effects relative breaks, because it substitutes for the codes an extremely rigorous axiomatic that maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state on the body of capital as a society that is deterritorialized..." (DG, 1983: 246). The deterritorialization of a primitive society by a capitalist one is certainly a part of the Native Indian experience of the British people.

Territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur in particular linguistic approaches in the continuous negotiation, codification and modification between major and minor language. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari utilize the tetralinguistic model that Henri Gobard proposes to account for the different types of discourse within a language community. Gobard suggests that the members of a linguistic community possess a vernacular language, "local, spoken spontaneously, made less for the purpose of communication than for communion, and which alone can be considered as a mother tongue (or native language)" (Gobard, 1976: 34, Russell's Tr.). Communion of the members of the community is possible through this local means of communication. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the spatiotemporal reference of vernacular language is "here," and that it tends to be a rural phenomenon, or "rural in its origins" (DG, 1986: 23).

Vehicular language, Gobard's second category, is "everywhere." Gobard describes it as "national or regional, learned by necessity, intended for communications on an urban scale" (Gobard, 1976: 34, Russell's Tr.). It is the language imposed by the government, business and other modes of exchange with the urban and secular world outside the rural, local community. Thus, vehicular language acts as a vehicle for necessary economic and social exchange. It is "a language of the first sort of deterritorialization" (DG, 1986: 23), as the communion of the inward-looking community is broken and power is exercised from the outside in the determination of events in the village.

Deleuze and Guattari see cultural reterritorialization happening in referential language, which exists “over there” (DG, 1986: 23). This type of language allows the community to recoup the control over its values through the inscription of these values in stories that counter the mundane tedium of vehicular language and exchange. Gobard asserts that such a language is “tied to cultural traditions, oral or written, assuring the continuity of values by systematic reference to perpetuated works of the past” (Gobard, 1976: 34, Russell’s Tr.).

Finally, there is the level of mythic language, “which functions like an ultimate recourse, verbal magic whose incomprehensibility is understood as irrefutable proof of the sacred” (Gobard, 1976: 34, Russell’s Tr.). For Deleuze and Guattari, this recovery of the values of the community, usually, in relation to a larger social unit with whom they consider themselves tied in sacred rather than secular, is the language of the “beyond” (DG, 1986: 23).

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