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## "The People Are Missing"

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## "The People Are Missing"

Maryvonne Saison

### Abstract

It is through the ideal of a *sensus communis* that Aesthetics has offered to Philosophy an articulation to Politics. I will question the idea of an "aesthetic sociability" through the concept of "régime esthétique" (aesthetic regime) proposed by Jacques Rancière to define the 18th century fundamental change carried by Aesthetics in order to think art and sensibility together.

One question will be the central core of my essay, which is how to understand nowadays Deleuze's assertion that art should be "contributing to the invention of a people."

Consensus and dissensus are two reefs between which art and philosophy navigate at sight, two sources of attraction of which probably none should be favoured.

### Key Words

Art, Aesthetics, people, *sensus communis*, aesthetic sociability, public, minorisation, dissensus, fictionalisation

### 1. Aesthetic Sociability, the "Aesthetic Regime of Art" and the "New Distribution of the Sensible"

It is useful to keep in mind that aesthetics, this philosophical discipline born of philosophy, is one link in a system, and that this system itself forms part of a history. If aesthetics was born in the 18th century, some have celebrated its death since the end of the 20th, and its life has been only a series of challenges, which, for better and for worse, it has survived. While stating his desire to go "against the grain of the arguments of contemporary anti-aesthetic discourse," Jacques Rancière continues the tradition and gives new life to the "aesthetic malaise," which he considers to be "as old as aesthetics itself." His aim is to identify what he calls here the "aesthetic regime:"<sup>[1]</sup> a "new and paradoxical regime of identifying what belongs to art," born in the 18th century. What the philosophers achieved, according to him, was the elaboration of a regime of intelligibility within which a whole series of reconfigurations became thinkable. "Under the name of aesthetics," he writes, "they firstly grasped and thought the fundamental displacement: what belonged to art from now on was less and less identified according to the pragmatic criteria of 'ways of doing'. It was more and more identified in terms of 'modes of sensibility'."<sup>[2]</sup> Art, as the single identifier for multiple practices as well as sensibility, receives a new visibility and new powers under this regime. Because of this very fact it arouses expectations and engenders disappointments. An unstable and precarious equilibrium is the price paid by this new regime for its foundational paradox when it refers to the mystery that binds human nature and social life without being able to explain it. At the heart of the mystery, at the origin of all the fantasies, is the idea of a common sense.

From Baumgarten to Kant to the last works of classical

aesthetics (I am thinking, for example, of Mikel Dufrenne's *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique* [*Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*], just to mention this swan song in the exact middle of the 20th century), thus from the 18th century to the 21st, this is effectively the shadowy question at the heart of these endeavors. Is there any more recurrent illusion than that of a fortunate encounter with a work, artistic or natural, and with a look? Dufrenne constantly celebrates this happy and reciprocal affinity, this free fellowship, this harmony without any discernible cause which manifests itself in a pure perceptual experience. Kant's regulative idea of a *sensus communis* is the pivot of those systems conceived under the jurisdiction of the aesthetic. It is via the utopia of a common sense that aesthetics becomes necessary to philosophy as a way of articulating its political dimension. If aesthetic experience testifies to a "commonality" in the realm of feeling, the spectator that Dufrenne describes, this witness to the work, plays *ipso facto* the role of a general public without sacrificing its singularity. Constituting a virtual public by assembling spectators testifies to a possible universality, one that founds a united world and human community. This "aesthetic sociability," an indispensable ingredient of classical aesthetic thought and the pivot of Dufrenne's phenomenology,<sup>[3]</sup> has been violently contested from various angles, converging in the denunciation of a utopia linked to the aesthetic status of artistic activity.

Also inaugurated in effect by the aesthetic regime is a new "distribution of the sensible," to use Jacques Rancière's terms again. The accord between human nature and social nature is broken, that accord which, after making the connection between art and sensibility, opposed the sensibility of the man of taste to that of his fall-guy, who Voltaire<sup>[4]</sup> referred to as the "coarse" man: "The nature," Rancière writes, "that partnered works of art with sensibilities, attached them to a distribution of the sensible that put artists in their place and separated those concerned with art and those not concerned with it." The new state of affairs is one where "the hierarchy of subjects and publics" becomes muddled, where works of art are related to popular "genius" and offer themselves to the unqualified gaze. This suspension of the previous accord is the reason according to Rancière for the development of two tendencies that generate the aesthetic malaise: the flourishing of an art with no standards [*normes*] or criteria, more or less deprofessionalised or showing no specific skill, and the effacement of the boundaries separating life and art—"the scandal," Rancière writes, "of an art whose forms and places welcome the "whatever" of functional objects and images of profane life; exorbitant and deceptive promises of an aesthetic revolution that sought to transform the forms of art into the forms of a new life." Aesthetic questions are no longer posed within the limits imposed by these boundaries and mobilise the idea of "the people."

The sociability that Dufrenne inscribes at the heart of the aesthetic corresponds well to this new distribution of the sensible. With the universalisation of the aesthetic relation, we can see in it the sign of a globalisation of its inherent paradoxes. At the centre of this apparatus is the concept of the spectator and that of the public, hinging around a form of reception that is conceived in terms of availability. There is an

accord between individual and assembled spectators such that they are, before the art work, witnesses and accomplices. To raise oneself to the level of "what is universal in the human," as Dufrenne writes in *La phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*,<sup>[5]</sup> is both to invoke the universality of the judgment of taste or aesthetic pleasure and to declare its existence, via the existence of a public who testifies for a "we" beyond singularities and differences. But in Dufrenne, the "real community" of the public is entirely subordinated to the "eminent objectivity of the art work": works of art have a precedence over the experience they call forth. It's for this reason that he concludes: "the objectivity of the work and the demands it implies both imposes and guarantees the reality of the social bond."

It is not my intention here to draw attention to the complexity and fraughtness of a thought torn between the respect for masterpieces and the utopia of a society in which artistic creation would be within everybody's reach. It is rather to highlight the ambiguities of the ideal of aesthetic sociability in classical aesthetics—newly illuminated by Rancière's analysis—an ideal founded on both the universality of human nature and the quality of certain works, regardless of the political conception that this idea invokes. A political reflection on the way in which aesthetics, as Rancière<sup>[6]</sup> says, conceives the "paradoxical sensorium which henceforth allows us to define what belongs to art," is nevertheless required in order to demand reflect on the moments of differentiated by this philosopher: a representative regime prior to the 18th century, then, called forth by the aesthetic regime, the reign of an ethics that dissolves the specificity of artistic and political practices, erases any distinction between fact and right, and identifies "all forms of discourse and practice from the same indiscriminate point of view."

What can we make of the *sensus communis* today, and what shall we think about aesthetic sociability. These are the questions guiding a reflection in which I will focus on the idea of the "people."

## **2. From the Aesthetic Community to the People Who Are Missing**

Let's start with this community that both philosophers and statesmen have hoped to realize via art and the aesthetic: an abstract or at the very least a virtual community. This only acquires meaning from the perspective of its lamented absence. It is not so much the empirical details of disagreements that are the focus of attention as the meaning given to its invocation using the term "the people." Paul Klee provides an echo of this when he speaks about the difficulty of creating in the absence of a community that carries him. In a paper given at Lena in 1924, he dreams of "a work of vast scope," of a "Great Work" and confesses. "We have found its parts, but not yet the whole. This last force is lacking for want of a people that carries us."<sup>[7]</sup>

Gilles Deleuze, in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, makes a connection between Klee, Kafka and Carmelo Bene around the theme of "the missing people." Cinema is the starting point of his politically-focused reflection: "Resnais and the Straubs are probably the greatest political film-makers in the West in

modern cinema. But, oddly, this is not through the presence of the people. On the contrary, it is because they know how to show how the people are what is missing, what is not there."<sup>[8]</sup> The absence of the people is even, in this philosopher's eyes, "the first big difference between classical and modern cinema." In the first case, "the people are there, even though they are oppressed, tricked, subject, even though blind or unconscious"—the same illusion "which calls different peoples into the same melting-pot from which the future emerges" can be found, before the war, from the Soviet empire to the United States. Since this time, history has ruined the hope that cinema can become "the revolutionary or democratic art, which will convert the masses into a genuine subject." After the subjection of the masses under Hitler, the tyrannical unity of Stalinism and the break-up of the American people, Deleuze concludes, "if there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet. . . ." In 1985 Deleuze connects the theme of minority that he elaborated with Félix Guattari in *Kafka*<sup>[9]</sup> in 1975 with his thoughts on cinema in order to set art the task of "contributing to the invention of a people." "The moment the master, or the colonizer proclaims 'there have never been people here,' the missing people are a becoming, they invent themselves, in shanty towns and camps, or in ghettos, in new conditions of struggle to which a necessarily political art must contribute."

It is worth noting here, in parallel to these philosophical thoughts, that the people entered the historical stage in 1789 when it was constituted as a political body by the French Revolution.<sup>[10]</sup> Would art be a by-product or echo of that Revolution in its invention or reinvention of "the people"? Does not Deleuze assign to art (and thus to aesthetics) a political vocation, one that is based on the resistance and inventive abilities of minorities, but is related less to the people's constitution as a political body than to the utopia of a virtual community, of an audience-people on which art and culture are founded? Is it therefore necessary to refer to a political regime of art?

The response to these questions proceeds via an examination of the articulation of the public and the private. Deleuze makes a return to Kafka, opposing the maintenance of a boundary between the political and the private in major literatures, and its suppression in minor ones. The same phenomena occurs in cinema. While classical cinema, the philosopher suggests, has constantly "maintained this boundary which marked the correlation of the political and the private, and which allowed, via a consciousness-raising process, passage from one social force to another, from one political position to another,"<sup>[11]</sup> in modern political cinema, "the private affair merges with the social—or political—immediate." In the arrangement that separates the political and the private, the only echo from one sphere to another proceeds via a raising of consciousness, which can only grasp "the juxtaposition of two violences and the continuation of one by the other." Michel Foucault arrived at similar conclusions in his reflections on biopolitics, or when he highlighted in his seminars the numerous historical reversals that had the effect of inverting the dominated-dominant positions—this led him *ipso facto* to relativize any absolute judgment. By also definitively challenging the

demand to raise one's consciousness, a whole conception of the writer, the artist, and the intellectual in general is swept away and reconceived. The model of the universal intellectual is long deceased. Deleuze and Foucault promoted the figure of the specific intellectual, who engages in regional struggles, concrete and timely actions in the field. It is in this new context that the articulation of the political and the private is posed anew.

The context of regional struggles leads however to the contradiction that one actually encounters between the plurality of minorities and the utopian unity of a fraternal community, between the multiplication of peoples and the idea of a missing people as a regulative political idea of the value of the minority. We can see this difficulty in a comment by Deleuze that follows the moment he envisions the consequences of abandoning the "consciousness, evolution, revolution" sequence, this essential schema of reversal in the context of the classical cinema: "The death knell for consciousness-raising was precisely the consciousness that there was no people, but always several peoples, an infinity of peoples, who remained to be united, or should not be united, in order for the problem to change. It is in this way that third-world cinema is a cinema of minorities, because the people exist only in the condition of minority, which is why they are missing. It is in minorities that private business is immediately political." The identification of the private with the political is to do with its localisation within minorities and the prospect of passing from the plurality of peoples to the singularity of a people no longer seems self-evident. How can we reconcile the idea that the people only exist in a state of minority, the plurality of minorities and peoples, and the value attached to the invention of an absent people?

The sharpness of the question paves the way for responses from the field of sociology, which contributes to sounding the death-knell of the aesthetic regime and the values of universality and consensus associated with it. Some [\[12\]](#) go further than this rupture with the fantasy of a harmonious community by referring to the quarrel over contemporary art that broke out in the 1990s, in which they see the weight of all forms of dissensus, aesthetic and artistic. It would however be a weak interpretation of Deleuze's thought if we understood its invocation of minorities in this way. If consensus belongs to the majority, and if the minor artist goes through a state of crisis, dissensus is never the object of a new unanimity. It concerns neither the unavoidable nor the desirable. If the private realm has a political value, it is only to the extent that a new culture is invented, immediately valid for everyone. It is a matter of substituting a new modality for the representative regime of art, one that is centered on the relationship to the world, open to transformation, a regime that is in some way inventive. We must no longer see fiction as a fable inscribed in an unreal domain but a power that is able to be exercised on the same level as the real, whether this 'real' is that of the artistic medium or the political field. Thus, according to Deleuze, Kafka and modern political cinema, faced with a people who are colonised from a cultural point of view, whether by "stories that have come from elsewhere" or by the recuperation of its own myths by the colonisers, can only give themselves "intercessors," which is to say a choice of

personae, "real and not fictional," who will set about "fictioning." Fabulation, then, Deleuze concludes, "is speech in action, a speech-act through which the persona continually crosses the boundary which would separate his private business from politics, and which *itself produces collective utterances*."<sup>[13]</sup> I will examine these collective utterances more closely below; my intention here is simply to bring out a new configuration. It is not the same thing to sociologize and instigate dissensus or to appeal to the differentials that are still inhabited by a concern for the common. It is only in this latter case, through the plurality of minorities or peoples, that we can say: "the people are missing."

### 3. The Artist Between Power and Resistance

We must from now on try to think the opposition between the major and the minor, or between the private and the collective, without sacrificing too much to the dualism that is so dear to Western culture. If we return to *Kafka*, we can see that there is no question of opposing the minor and the major by using marginal or popular artistic forms on the one hand and the recognised forms of masterpieces on the other.

Art is said to be minor when it carries out an operation of 'minorization'. Minor literature is thus defined as a minor use of language: "a minor literature," the authors warn, "doesn't come from a minor language. It is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language."<sup>[14]</sup> They describe the position of the Jewish writer in Prague: "Kafka marks the impasse that bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague and turns their literature into something impossible—the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise." The important point thus becomes that of deterritorialisation: to write in German "is for the Prague Jews the feeling of an irreducible distance from their primitive Czech territoriality." But German is the language spoken by an "oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses." "In short," the authors conclude, "Prague German is a deterritorialized language." It is precisely this, however, that makes it "appropriate for strange and minor uses" and Deleuze and Guattari open a parenthesis referring, "in another context" to "what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language." It is thus the operation of minorization that must be focused on and not an abstract opposition between minor and major.

The same chapter, "What is a minor literature?," enumerates three features of minor literatures that must all be thought through the process of minorization. The first concerns language, which we have just mentioned, the second concerns the immediate connection of the business of the individual matter to politics, which we started with, and the third is that "everything takes on a collective value," the individual enunciation has the value of a collective enunciation. Deleuze and Guattari quote Kafka's *Diary*, dated 25 December 1911: "Literature is less the concern of literary history than the concern of the people." Literature (or one could just as well say art in general) is what is liable to create this overlap between the private and the collective, this coalescence or even transmutation of the private into the collective, via an artistic gesture in which the autonomy of art or the

prerogative of the author is no longer valid. The space of art becomes the place where a revolution capable of constituting a people in the name of culture is prefigured. To "minorize" is in a certain way to harness the forces, effect variations in the use of the major. The authors summarize their thought in these terms: "The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual with a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. We might as well say that "minor" no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature." It is indeed via "the possibility of setting up a minor practice of major language from within" that one can define "popular literature, marginal literature, and so on." This possibility makes the artist a transformer whose action is less concerned with critique than an incongruous use of reality, which changes it.

It is, in fact, important to bring out the way in which minorization is like a "machine of expression" that minorizes the major in a positive way, enriching it and thus does not really rely on any opposition between two states that could be absolutely distinguished as the major and minor registers. On the level of its own medium, language, literary expression activates the social field's immanent lines of force, which it has been able to detect and amplify: its aim is not an imaginary representation, without however claiming to be a substitute for real struggles.<sup>[15]</sup> On the other hand it embodies the very idea of struggle and revolution, testifying in this way to an irrevocable political dimension for an art removed from any immediate political message or goal. Other media would implement other modes of minorization: it is a matter of thinking minorization as a singular method with political value, one that identifies the individual with the collective without dreaming of suppressing singularities, and without seeking to produce a single, abstract plan of action, being content with outlining the always deferred horizon of the intolerable connected with a line of flight. The operation of minorisation thus conceived is inseparably related to its inverted form, majorisation: minorisation and majorisation are the two possible modalities of any "machine of enunciation."

Staying in the area of language, the knowledge that unifies it and fixes its model and norm is carrying out, whatever it may think, a political act, as expressed by Deleuze and Guattari in the following terms in a *Thousand Plateaux*: "the scientific model taking language as an object of study is one with the political model by which language is homogenized, centralized, standardized, becoming a language of power, a major or dominant language."<sup>[16]</sup> But language by itself does not for its part involve being major nor minor: "The major and minor mode are two different treatments of language, one of which consists in extracting constants from it, the other in placing it in continuous variation." No use of language can be definitively fixed as an object, any language can give rise to multiple and conflictual practices, whether recognised and encouraged, only tolerated or forbidden. The relationships of those for whom expressing themselves is a profession with power are thus particularly unstable. But the notion of "power" also demands to be reconsidered: Deleuze and Guattari rail against the illusory simplification that would identify power as a coherent,



unitary and stable entity.<sup>[17]</sup> Only "power relations" exist, which come into play in any context and in particular with language-use.

Every power relation is, as Michel Foucault showed during the same period, both repressive and productive and one must not obliterate the positive aspects which allow its truth effects to be grasped. Knowledge is to be understood within the truth games deployed in power relations. Major and minor refer to modes of domination and resistance inscribed in all power, corresponding to practices of minorization or majorization. The Deleuzian and Foucauldian conceptions of power are close and, in fact, in *Kafka*<sup>[18]</sup>, after having signalled the closeness of Foucault and Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari add, "Michel Foucault has provided an analysis of power that reworks all of today's economic and political questions. Although his method is completely different, his analysis is not without a certain Kafkaesque resonance. Foucault insists on the segmentarity character of power, its contiguity, its immanence in the social field (which does not mean an interiority of a soul or of a subject along the lines of a superego). He shows that power doesn't work at all by the classical alternative of violence or ideology, persuasion or constraint." Foucault and Deleuze meet in the idea that resistance is inscribed within the very figure of power or domination, as one of its dimensions. To take up Foucault's words in 1982, "( . . . ) resistance is an element of this strategic relationship that power consists in. Resistance always in fact draws strength from the situation that it fights."<sup>[19]</sup> We are getting a clearer outline of the place of art: art is neither on the side of power nor on the side of resistance; it is not capable of occupying an absolute position. It is one of power's stakes, by turns its place of celebration or contestation, project of majorization or minorization. If it is partly connected to resistance, it cannot be coextensive with it. It is political without being compromised by an absolute position as ally or enemy of the existing power. It is for this reason in fact that the notion of "recuperation" is indispensable for examining the relations between art and power. When we consider precise local historical analyses, it seems that the same work, depending on the era and circumstance, can function as a support of the Prince or the State and as a radical challenge to the existing power.

#### **4. The Potential Community: A Value for Art and Aesthetics?**

In the artistic, theoretical or political domain, dissensus thus refers to the factual state of affairs we encounter empirically, what we each experience every day, and which refers to real minorities in their diversity. But the idea of a people, which has no content and is never filled, is not located at this level. It accompanies the revolt of minoritarian practices, it is their necessary invocation. This in no way saves a minoritarian practice, whether artistic or cultural, when it succeeds in inscribing its revolt on the terrain of reality, from the tendency to impose itself in a practice of majorization: on the factual level we see a constant inversion of the dominant/resistant relationship, whereas resistance in its empty form demands to be posited as a universal dimension. Foucault interprets the way Kant speaks about revolution in these terms: "the revolution, in any case, will risk falling back into its previous

rut, but as an event that is important in its very content, it testifies by its existence to a permanent virtuality which cannot be forgotten."<sup>[20]</sup> The content alone refers to the will to revolution, "the revolution being simultaneously event, rupture and historical upheaval, failure, but also value, sign of the human species."

The philosopher doesn't go back on his position even when he becomes aware that his engagement on the side of the Ayatollah Khomeini poses a problem, given the development of what he believed to be the occasion for introducing a spiritual dimension into political life."<sup>[21]</sup> Faced with his detractors, he maintains: "none of the disenchantments of history will make any difference."<sup>[22]</sup> Outside of the political sphere, he sees in certain revolts, even when they turn out badly, a reality that brings with it a truth deserving support and thought: "one must always oppose to power incontrovertible laws and unlimited rights." Foucault takes on the paradoxical role of maintaining both his initial support of Khomeini after the fact and also his later reproach: "there is certainly no shame," he writes, "in changing one's opinion; but there is no reason to say that one has changed one's opinion because today one is against hands being cut off, when yesterday one was against Sawak's tortures." The "theoretical morality" of the philosopher is thus "anti-strategic": "to be respectful," Foucault asks, "when a singularity emerges, but intransigent as soon as power infringes on the universal. Simple and difficult choice: because one must at the same time be on the lookout, a bit above history, for what pierces and moves it, and watch over, a little behind politics, what must limit it unconditionally." We can well understand him: the writer Kafka, the artist who minorises, or the specific intellectual, maintain the tension between empirical singularities and a universality that no longer has the face of a utopia.

Can such a theoretical morality still help us think concretely today? Let's try: I'll use the simple example of the way that André Rouillé, in the online journal *PARISart*<sup>[23]</sup> pleads the case of the "pocket films," which he presents as a minor cinema. The question is whether "faced with the major cinema of the huge film industry," the "minor cinema" of mobile telephone videos effectively opens a path for the birth of a minor cinema. On the one side, we feel respect for the singularities able to make a film; he leads us to look sympathetically on a nomad cinema that is intimate and spontaneous, which even allows each individual to be simultaneously director, spectator and distributor of his or her own films, "in relation to the enormous technological, professional, economic and social logistics of major cinema." But don't we also see in this, by contrast, the possible disappearance not only of all publically gathered communities, but also any invocation of a virtual people? Rouillé writes: "the social group, the professions and activities implied in the cinematic spectacle are effaced in an intersecting process of desocialization and individualization." Is this desocialization and individualization balanced by "the broadly generalized posture of exchanges and dialogues via networked apparatuses"? It's the whole notion of audience which demands to be rethought, but I remain mistrustful in the face of anything that substitutes a hypothetical generalised exchange on the level of the individual for the demand of the

dimension of the people.

The network is formed from the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of individuals who are not bodily present. Their empirical reality, which is no longer founded on a *sensus communis*, has not found a political foundation either. The individual gesture which cuts corners on artistic requirements deprives the individual enunciation of political value. Let us return to Kafka: in Kafka there is a renunciation of the principle of the narrator as also on the polarity between narrator and character. Kafka takes writing to a threshold of desubjectivation where the subject of enunciation [*sujet d'enonciation*] and the subject of the statement [*sujet d'enoncé*] disappear. The 'I' is multiple and the assemblage of enunciation is collective, constituting a sort of fourth person singular. The dimension of a people to come is linked to the desubjectification of the writer who has become an impersonal "one" [*on*] in a position to express a *potential* community. When Deleuze and Guattari pose questions regarding the collective character of the statement, "even when it seems to be emitted by a solitary singularity like that of the artist,"<sup>[24]</sup> they reply that "the statement never refers back to a subject." The singular and the universal fuse in a way in new statements which are not to be referred to the singularity of the artist. The authors speak of the Bachelor [*Celibataire*]: "the most individual literary enunciation is a particular case of collective enunciation. This is even a definition: a statement is literary when it is "taken up" by a Bachelor who precedes the collective conditions of enunciation."

In *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>[25]</sup> they base the universality of the singular, the collective value of the "bachelor" name, in their manifest disposition to be open to multiplicities. ". . . The proper name (*le nom propre*) does not designate an individual: it is on the contrary when the individual opens up to multiplicities pervading him or her, at the outcome of the most severe operation of depersonalization, that he or she acquires his or her true proper name. The proper name is the instantaneous apprehension of a multiplicity. The proper name is the subject of a pure infinitive comprehended as such in a field of intensity." Even if the artist signs the work with his proper name, this name as an artist no longer belongs to him or her: it serves as an intercessor in the invention of a fictional process open to everyone. The people is no longer invoked through the sole figure of an audience/receiver of the work, it forms the necessary presupposition of any artistic process. If I read *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk,<sup>[26]</sup> I hear multiple voices, sometimes dissolved. The town of Kars by itself is like a character, serving as a witness for the hero and the narrator. In the profusion of the novel, it becomes difficult to tell who is speaking, it is as if the author is divested of his identity, making a gift of fictionalization to his intercessors. This phenomenon is all the more noticeable when the writing approaches autobiography, as in *Istanbul: memories of a city*.<sup>[27]</sup> The writer's Istanbul absorbs the individual and transforms the private into the collective. *Hüzün*, this feeling close to spleen, is a shared humour. It is, according to the author, "not melancholy, which is felt by a single person, but . . . this black feeling felt jointly by millions of people;" a people that becomes the public he addresses. Real people, missing people? It is difficult to decide without reading the text in his

language, and impossible to make a ruling without taking the context of the work's reception into account. Recent events lead us, I think, to see in Pamuk an operation of minorization.

Deleuze and Guattari oppose to the widespread desire to be on the side of the majority and power, the decision to take on what they call in *Kafka* a "becoming-minor". "How many styles," they lament, "or genres, or literary movements, even very small ones, have only one single dream: to assume a major function in language, to tender their services as language of the State, official language (. . .) have the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor."<sup>[28]</sup> Deleuze by himself in *Critique et clinique*<sup>[29]</sup> reprises the same themes of the depersonalization of the artist and the missing people: "Health as literature, as writing, consists in inventing a people who are missing. It is the task of the fabulating function to invent a people. We do not write with memories, unless it is to make them the collective origin or destination of a people to come still ensconced in betrayals and repudiations." Whether it is a matter of Kafka or Melville, under Deleuze's pen literature appears as this delirium that passes via peoples, the "races and tribes," and haunts universal history: "all delirium is world-historical." The fiction of the missing people is the mark of the inscription of politics within art. It is through this, without appealing to the concepts of the subject or the nation, that Gilles Deleuze situates art and culture in their collective dimension and on a global scale.

We must now conclude regarding the potential displacement that is effected by this idea of the missing people in relation to the *sensus communis* and to the hope, at the heart of the aesthetic, of instigating a new sociability by means of art. The sociability specific to the aesthetic regime refers to a consensual community: the public which itself is linked to the double figure of a gathering of individuals and the indistinct mass that they constitute. Such a public is marked with the seal of consensuality. With the idea of the people who are missing, by contrast, dissensus and consensus are linked in a tension that is not able to be resolved. Art intervenes as resistance and dissenting energy founded on a visceral refusal of the consensus. However it is paradoxically animated by the just as visceral affirmation of a necessary foundation played by the role of the public but which can only be invoked under the name of the people, and moreover in its absence. It is from the angle of minorization that art acquires its political dimension and not through a given engagement that is claimed to be political: art carries with it the absence and the call of a people. The cry "the people are missing" is only heard after mourning the *sensus communis*.

There is an artist who has been able to provide a precise image of what I have just laboriously presented. Romeo Castellucci, for the third episode of his *Tragedia Endogonidia*,<sup>[30]</sup> condemning the absence of the people, installed in the orchestra seats large, black, human-sized rabbits, identical like clones and without expression. These chair-fillers were read as signifying "the great precariousness of humanization."<sup>[31]</sup> This inert non-public, that we can imagine being cooperative and consensual, is the one that fills the theatres and takes part in an operation of majorization. The installation of this stage director appeals, through this

image taken from a terrible nightmare, to a political regime of art, pointing out in turn the observation that serves as the foundation of art and culture: "the people are missing."

Translated by Melissa McMahon and revised by Richard Woodfield.

### Endnotes

[1] Rancière, Jacques, *Malaise dans l'esthétique*, Galilée 2004, p.22 and p.15 respectively. The following quotes are from pages 17 and 20.

[2] As he spells out in a footnote (*ibid.*, p.21), "aesthetics" in his writing refers to two things: "a general regime of visibility and intelligibility of art and a mode of interpretative discourse itself belonging to the forms of this regime."

[3] Dufrenne, Mikel, *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*, PUF 1953, p.107.

[4] Jacques Rancière, *op. cit.* p.22. The following citation is from pages 145-146.

[5] Dufrenne, Mikel, *op. cit.* p.101. The following citations are from page 104.

[6] Voltaire, article on "Taste," *Dictionnaire philosophique*, cited par Jacques Rancière, *op. cit.* p. 23. The two following citations are from pages 23 and 25.

[7] Klee, Paul, *Théorie de l'art moderne*, edited and translated by Pierre-Henri Gonthier, Editions Denoël/Gonthier 1980, p.33.

[8] Deleuze, Gilles, *Cinéma 2. L'image-temps*, Ed. de Minuit, 1985, The quotes are from 281-282-283. [English: *Cinema 2: the time-image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, London, Athlone, 1989. Quotes pages pp. 215-216; p. 216; p. 217].

[9] Deleuze, Gilles et Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure*. Ed. de Minuit, 1975. [English: *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, trans. Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press, 1986].

[10] As recalled in a recent work by the historian Arlette Farge who worked with Foucault, in *Effusion et tourment, le récit des corps. Histoire du peuple au XVIIIème siècle*, Odile Jacob, 2007.

[11] This quote and the two following ones are from pages 284 (218), 285 (218) and 286 (219) of *L'image-temps, op. cit.* [English: p. 218 (trans. modified); p. 218; p. 219; p. 220 (trans. modified)].

[12] Ruby, Christian, *Devenir contemporain?*, Le Félin, 2007, p.11.

[13] *L'image-temps, op. cit.* p. 289 [English, p. 222 (trans. modified)].

[14] *Kafka, op. cit.* p.29. We will also quote from pages 29, 30, 31, 33 and 34. [English: p. 16; p. 17, p. 18].

[15] I agree on the whole with the way these questions are

developed by Anne Sauvagnargues in *Deleuze et l'art*, PUF, 2005.

[16] Deleuze, Gilles et Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, Editions de Minuit, 1980, p.127. The following quote is from page 135. [English: *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Athlone Press, 1987. Quotes p. 101; p. 106].

[17] Cf. Revel, Judith, *Le vocabulaire de Foucault*, Ellipses 2002, p.46

[18] *Kafka, op. cit.* Footnote page 103 [English: endnote to p. 56 on p. 97 (trans. modified)].

[19] Foucault, Michel, *Dits et écrits*, texte n358, Gallimard, vol. IV, p. 741.

[20] Foucault, Michel, *Dits et écrits*, texte n351, Gallimard, vol. IV, p. 686 , then 687.

[21] Foucault, Michel, *Dits et écrits*, texte n245: "A quoi rêvent les iraniens," Gallimard, vol. III, p. 693.

[22] Foucault, Michel, *Dits et écrits*, texte n269 , Gallimard, vol. III, p. 793 and 794.

[23] *PARISart* [www.paris-art.com](http://www.paris-art.com), editorial dated 7 June 2007.

[24] *Kafka, op. cit.* p.149 and 150 for this quote and those following. [English, p. 83, p. 84, trans. modified].

[25] Deleuze, G. et F. Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, Ed. de Minuit, 1980, p. 51 [English, p. 37].

[26] Pamuk, Orhan, *Neige*, translated from Turkish by Jean-François Pérouse, Gallimard, 2005.

[27] Pamuk, Orhan, *Istanbul: souvenirs d'une ville*, translated from Turkish by Savas Demirel, Valérie Gay-Aksay and Jean-François Pérouse, Gallimard, 2007.

[28] *Kafka, op. cit.* p.50 [English: p. 27, trans. modified].


[29] Deleuze, Gilles, *Critique et clinique*, Editions de minuit, 1993, p.14 then 15 [English, p. 4].

[30] Castellucci, Romeo, for B.#03, episode 3 of the *Tragedia Endogonia*, installed large rabbits in the orchestra seats of Berlin's Hebbel Theatre in 2003 and in those of Avignon's Municipal Theatre during the festival of July 2005. I owe this discovery to Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux's book: *Figurations du spectateur. Un reflexion par l'image sur le théâtre et sur sa théorie*. (Ed. L'Harmattan, 2006),p. .38 and 206.

[31] Mervant-Roux, Marie-Madeleine, *Figurations du spectateur. Un reflexion par l'image sur le théâtre et sur sa théorie*, p.206. The author also comments on Castellucci's installation on p. 38.

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