

“I Always Watch What I Say. I Am What I Say”: Joss Whedon as Deleuzian “Minor Writer”.

Dr. Michael Starr

No recent television creator, no recent author, has acquired as devoted a cult following as Joss Whedon (Lavery and Burkhead viii). However, Whedon’s position as a cult auteur has recently been complicated by the success of *The Avengers* (2012), which has arguably sealed his reputation as major filmmaker, resulting in tensions as to whether notions of the “Whedonesque” can still exist outside of their cult origins. By means of negotiating such issues, the proposed paper positions Whedon in terms of the “Minor Writer”, a concept developed by poststructuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995). In these terms, “Minor” is not simply defined as a literature written from the perspective of an oppressed group, nor is it secondary or neglected writing. Instead, Minor writing takes the language of the dominant culture and warps it to new purposes, thus creating “lines of flight” in terms of creative new trajectories that depart from dominant identities, inventing new forms of collective life, consciousness, and affectivity. To this end, Deleuze defines a Minor Literature through three main characteristics; the deterritorialization of language, the political element, and the collective value. In accordance, the paper conceptualizes various elements of Whedon’s oeuvre and extra-curricular activities in these terms; for example, Whedon’s creativity with language in *BTVS* and *Firefly*, his social activism and self-declared Feminist agenda, and the nature of his collaborations, both in terms of his alliance with other creative partners, and the manner in which he sees his audience as “immediate partners and collaborators” (Batchelor 169). Deleuze maintains that any work of art “points a way through life, finds a way through the cracks” (Deleuze *Negotiations* 143), and how Whedon engages with this process is ultimately demonstrated, placing him as a writer who exists “in-between” spaces, hence functioning as an exemplification of the Minor Literature concept that informs Deleuzian literary theory.

Working Bibliography:

Batchelor, Bob. *Cult Pop Culture: How the Fringe Became Mainstream. Volume 1*. California: Praeger, 2012. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations: 1972-1990*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *Towards a Minor Literature*. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota, 2003. Print.

Lavery, David. *Joss Whedon, A Creative Portrait: From Buffy the Vampire Slayer to The Avengers*. London: I.B. Taurus, 2014. Print.