14. This motif was initially described by a prominent American philologist Eugene Watson Burlingame as "a piece of magic." See Burlingame, "The Act of Truth (Saccakiriya): A Hindu Spell and Its Employment as a Psychic Motif in Hindu Fiction," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (July 1917): 436.
15. W. Norman Brown, "Duty as Truth in Ancient India," *Proceedings of American Philosophy Society* 116, no. 3 (1972): 252.
16. Ibid., 255.
17. Ibid., 261–62.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid," 259.
20. Gandhi, "Speech at Bombay," in *Collected Works*, vol. 33, 127.
21. "I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India . . . ? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial—only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process." Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 112.
22. Iyer, *Moral and Political Thought,* 175.
23. Ghandi, "Talk with Congress Workers," in *Collected Works*, vol. 94, 322.
24. Gandhi, "My Followers," in *Collected Works*, vol. 27, 276.
25. George Thompson comments that in the Vedic literature it appears to be monopolized by "the authoritative ritual specialist, in particular the Brahmin." He also sees the connection between *satyāgraha* and *satyakriyā* as "immediately apparent and unobjectionable." See Thompson, "On Truth-Acts in Vedic," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 41 (1998): 125, 129.
26. Gandhi clarifies his views on *ahiṃsā* in a 1940 interview with B.G. Kher (a former prime minister of Bombay) who visited Gandhi with a party from Poona. *Collected Works*, vol. 79, 121–29.
27. Gandhi, "What Is Truth?" in *Collected Works*, vol. 25, 138.
28. Gandhi, "Speech at Prayer Meeting, Sabarmati Ashram" in *Collected Works*, vol. 48, 416–17.
29. Denis Dalton, *Gandhi's Power: Nonviolence in Action* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 108.
30. Ibid., 109.
31. Stephen Hugh-Jones, ed., "Gandhi, Salt and Freedom," *The Economist*, December 23, 1999, http://www.economist.com/node/347107.

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# *The Concept of Minjung: Inventing "a People to Come"*

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What was once called minjung art, which emerged in the 1980s and which criticized authoritarian government, capitalism, and Americanization, has now become part of private galleries' collections in the fancy part of town. A former minjung poet, who fought against the military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s, announced last year that he would vote for the daughter of the former dictator. We also see that some of the leaders of the democratization movement of the 1970s and 1980s have become key politicians. On a popular right-wing politics website ("*Ilbe*"[1]), young people are mocking the victims of the Kwangju Uprising on May 18, 1980, comparing their dead bodies to a stinky fermented fish dish from the region. If the people who engaged in the minjung movement cannot call themselves by that name anymore, what then does the concept mean? Are there still minjung?

"Minjung" is a term used to designate generally a group of people who recognized themselves (individually and collectively) as political subjects in late twentieth-century Korea. The term is often translated into "people" or "multitude," although neither term fully expresses the meaning of the Korean. In this paper, I first explore the possibilities as well as difficulties of defining the concept of minjung. I then hope to show how the concept of minjung can be understood differently with reference to Gilles Deleuze's idea of "a people to come (*un peuple* à venir)."

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE THE CONCEPT OF MINJUNG

The term minjung consists of two Chinese characters, *min* (民) as in "people" or "the ruled," and *jung* (衆) as in "the mass" or "crowd." The first character has been widely used to designate the ruled as a social class in general since ancient China. Combined with the second character, the term appears in late nineteenth-century Korea in Donghak-related documents, where the term was used to name the resistance force against the Japanese occupation.[2] From the late 1960s, people began to use the concept commonly to refer to the social class of the oppressed under the military dictatorship, and the subjects/agents of political change in the context of the democratization movement. It seems that people deployed the concept to organize themselves. However, there was hardly a consensus regarding the definition of the term. Within the context of this paper, I will consider two different ways of understanding the concept of minjung, as presented by several major scholars.[3]

Some regard the distinction between the ruler and the ruled as essential to defining minjung. Han Wan-sang, who takes a sociological approach, claims that the existence of minjung is necessitated by the mechanisms of power.[4] The possession of power, according to Han, determines not only the characteristics of social classes but also the inequalities among them. Thus, he defines minjung as those who are deprived of power in society. In other words, he defines minjung in terms of the "politically, economically and culturally ruled people."[5] For Han, the significance of minjung lies in its political implications, since the definition concerns the inequalities between the ruler and the ruled. Han's characterization of minjung differs from others in that he divides minjung into two types: "sleeping minjung (minjung in itself)" and "awakened minjung (minjung for itself)."[6] The latter are those who can see themselves as subjects, who can be critical about the ruling class, and, finally, who can act on their political beliefs, whereas the former lack self-awareness of themselves as oppressed. What is also important to note is that Han categorizes intellectuals as the awakened minjung.

Others have defined minjung in terms of economic variables. For instance, Park Hyun-chae, who adopted the Marxist distinction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, viewed minjung as a product of proletarianization in Korea. He notes that in early capitalist society, the lower strata of the middle class all sink gradually into the proletariat class due to the introduction of new methods of production. Unlike Han, Park limits the minjung to the economically oppressed, that is, the social classes of laborers, laboring farmers, and the urban poor. He also notes that the class strata of Confucian societies have facilitated the formation of the proletariat in the case of industrialization in Korea.[7]

If what defines minjung is political and economic oppression as argued above, the notion may seem to be less appealing today. Apparently, the Korean people are liberated from both forms of oppression: politically, the dictatorship is no longer present, although whether democracy has been successfully achieved or not is a different question; economic inequality is also no longer conceived as a form of oppression, even though it is questionable if people actually have more freedom in a free market economy. In addition to the social structure, the people are also in flux. As noted earlier, the status of those who called themselves minjung has changed over the last thirty years. Thus, we may be able to agree with Kim Hyung-A's claim that the notion of minjung characterized as such is "putative"; that is, it applies effectively only to a particular period in Korean history. Kim argues that "it attempted to define what was essentially a non-definable entity and struggled to encapsulate notions of a suppressed people, striving to rise above their condition characterized by economic hardship and a lack of personal freedom."[8] According to him, the concept of minjung relied heavily on "emotional responses under such banners as nationalism, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism" and was mostly drawn from Western thought (mainly Marx and Weber).[9]

I agree with Kim that the concept of minjung cannot be grasped as a static entity. Since the way in which power is exercised over the people has become much more subtle in a neo-capitalist society, there is no one single "enemy" or "oppressor" against which minjung, as the alienated and oppressed, can define themselves. However, this doesn't mean that the concept itself is to be "rejected by today's subjects of history," as Kim concludes.[10] The concept needs to be redefined in accordance with changes in the mechanisms of power.

## MINJUNG IN THE POST-MINJUNG ERA: DELEUZE'S NOTION OF FABULATION

In an attempt to redefine the concept of minjung, I would like to show how it can be linked to Deleuze's idea of "a people to come" (*un peuple* à venir).[11] In his second book on cinema, Deleuze introduces the term in the chapter on "minor cinema," where he talks about the difference between classical political cinema and modern political cinema.[12] He notes that in classical films, the people are already present, although they are oppressed, tricked, subject to suppression, and perhaps unconscious of their situation as oppressed. The cinema makes the people an explicit subject simply by representing them in a collective image. In the modern cinema, however, mechanisms of power as well as the distinction between oppressor and oppressed become much less conspicuous. Deleuze writes, "if there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet . . . *the people are missing*."[13] This is clearly shown in the third world and postcolonial cinema, where the oppressed are perpetually "in a collective identity crisis."[14] Thus, there emerge the filmmakers who attempt to show this *absence* of the people. On the one hand, where the colonizer proclaims "there have never been people here," the people may need to (re)invent themselves.[15] On the other hand, they acknowledge that it is not sufficient to assert an identity formed as a counterpart to that of the colonizer; that is, the people question the idea of unified people and their supposed identity. This acknowledgment of the missing people does not entail that "a people" as political subjects can no longer be constituted. As Deleuze continues, "this recognition is no reason for a renunciation of political cinema, but on the contrary the new basis on which it is founded."[16] The new forms of political art base themselves on "contributing to *the invention of a people*" rather than "addressing a people which is presupposed already there."[17]

I would argue that the concept of minjung is also going through such a crisis. When there were obvious "enemies," the minjung could easily be represented by setting up an identity distinct from the enemy. Since the unity of the will of people had been put forward, the differences within the minjung group were supposed to be disregarded for a "greater good." Also the oppression of minorities within minjung—on the basis of gender, age, sexual orientation, and so forth—was often justified since it could be considered a small sacrifice for achieving the liberation of the minjung as a whole. Under the banner of a "unified people" anything that could cause internal conflict was regarded as a threat to the overall power of the people; thus, no one could even report sexual harassment cases in the minjung group until the late 1990s. The concept of minjung, laden with these problems, might well be

rejected by subjects who are sensitive to micropolitical power today. Indeed, the notion of minjung associated with these former practices may not represent the people in the present. Nonetheless, the absence of "the people" altogether speaks to the continued significance of minjung.

Similar to Deleuze's belief in the possibility of modern political cinema, I think that the concept of minjung can also go beyond the representation of the people who existed at one time. Whereas "*the* people" repeats the logic of colonizer/ruling class, "*a* people" forms a new collectivity:

A people isn't something already there. A people, in a way, is what's missing, as Paul Klee used to say. Was there ever a Palestinian people? Israel says no. Of course there was, but that's not the point. The thing is, that once the Palestinians have been thrown out of their territory, then to the extent that they resist they enter the process of constituting a people.[18]

When the filmmakers create characters that are not categorized by the preexisting people, this movement of constituting a people can be called "fabulation," according to Deleuze. He adopted the term from Henri Bergson and added a political meaning to it. It is through fabulation that "a people," which does not yet exist, invents itself. However, this is not limited to the characters in cinema. In a sense, all the attempts to define the concept of minjung can be regarded as practices of fabulation in that the definitions of minjung discussed earlier suggest different conceptions of the minjung subject: for some, minjung was a people who would be liberated from political oppression; for others, it was a people who would be free from capitalism. Throughout its history, the concept of minjung has addressed the need to invent "a people to come," a people who emerge as the new, thus, who lack a name. The concept is the act by which "a people" is invented, rather than a concept that names those people in advance. This is, I argue, why providing a definition of minjung was one of the most controversial issues in the 1970s and 1980s. It is, in fact, the very impossibility of defining the concept that opens up the possibilities for reinventing it; the concept of minjung, as a tool for the creation of "a people," should not be understood merely as a reaction to an "enemy" in a particular period of history. Rather, it can be defined in its affirmative dimension. This is why we reject the easy path, where we simply reject the idea of minjung altogether and come up with some new term to avoid carrying the weight of the concept's past.

## MINORITY DISCOURSE

In the examples given at the beginning of this paper, what we once believed to be a creation turned out to be the repetition of the old form of power. I also briefly mentioned the internal problems brought about in the minjung group in the 1980s. Thus, the question arises: How do we evaluate fabulation, the creation of a people? Is any "people to come" worth inventing?

I would suggest that a redefined minjung be based on "minority ethics" rather than the "majority ethics" by which the notion has been understood in the past. When seen in terms of the ruled or the oppressed, minjung was often defined as a majority of people opposed to the minority group of rulers, the rich, and sometimes the intellectuals.[19] But as Deleuze claims in an interview with Antonio Negri, the difference between minorities and majorities is not their size. A minority can be bigger than a majority. The difference, according to him, lies in the fact that "what defines the majority is a model you have to conform to: the average European adult male city-dweller, for example. . . . A minority, on the other hand, has no model, it's a becoming, a process."[20] He further notes that when minorities create models for themselves, it is because they want to become a majority. Hence, based on this idea of a minority *without* models, the definition of minjung avoids the trap of creating a "new old" model to replace the majority, or of setting up a static model for an "ideal" people to come (i.e., a utopia).

### NOTES

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IIbe_Storehouse.
2. Jung Gu Kang, "How Was Minjung Imagined?" [민중은 어떻게 상상되었나?]. *The 15th Korean Poetics Society Conference* (2005): 51.
3. There are a few other characterizations of the term that are worth noting. As Kang (ibid.) notes, Paik Nak-chung defines minjung as the subjects of revolution. He believes that the concept is not limited to a particular era but is found in any moment of history. Thus, he links minjung not only with Donghak thought and the 3.1 Movement but also with the French revolution. Kim Ji-ha, like many others, situates minjung in terms of the dichotomy between the oppressor and the oppressed, but also equates it with a nationalist ideology (Minjok). Shin Kyung-rim points out that the self-consciousness of minjung themselves is presupposed in the minjung practices and notes its close relationship to the ideology of various intellectuals.
4. Wansang Han, *Minjung sahoehak* (Seoul: Chongno Sôjôk, 1981), 64.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Hyun Chae Park, "Examination of the Characteristics of Minjung in Terms of Social Class," [민중의 계급적 성격]. In *Study of Social Classes in Korea*, vol. I (Seoul: Hanul Press, 1985), 50.
8. Hyung-A Kim, "Minjung Socioeconomic Responses to State-Led Industrialization," in *South Korea's Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, ed. Kenneth M. Well (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 58.
9. Ibid., 59.
10. Ibid.
11. There is a temporal implication of the term "a people to come" that I will not discuss in this paper. The French term "*un peuple* à venir" has a sense of futurity ("*avenir*" = future); Deleuze writes about how the modern political cinema calls on a people who belong not to the present but to the future.
12. In this chapter, Deleuze writes about such directors as Glauber Rocha (a Brazilian), Ousmene Sembene (an African), and Pierre Perrault (a French Canadian).
13. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 216.
14. Ibid., 217.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid. My emphasis.
18. Gilles Deleuze, "Control and Becoming: Interview with Antonio Negri," *Generation Online*, http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze3.htm, accessed February 14, 2014.

19. Shin Chae-Ho was one of those who hold this position. He viewed the minjung as the majority of the Koreans who needs to realize themselves as potential agents of revolution under Japanese occupation. (Lee, 37)
20. Deleuze, "Control and Becoming," http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze3.htm.

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# *Populism, Pueblos, and Plutocracy: Notes on Radical Democracy from Latin America*

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Shortly after the reelection of President Obama, the Filipino undocumented immigrant, journalist, and founder of *Define American* (an immigrant-awareness campaign), Jose Antonio Vargas, wrote:

> The Nov. 6 election signaled a demographic tipping point: a record number of Latino and Asian voters, the country's fastest-growing voting blocs, formed a coalition with black and white Democratic voters to re-elect the country's first African-American President. A new American majority—a multiethnic majority—has not only arrived but is in fact reordering the political landscape.[1]

A multiethnic majority is something the United States has not seen before. Whereas most civil rights and social movements assumed that they stood for *minorities*, how will the call for social justice change once it is understood to be a demand from a coalition of seemingly disparate voices (and allies) now constituting the majority? How will this demographic shift affect our collective attitude and commitment toward the democratic process and the practice of politics in the United States? What divisive mechanisms will be concocted so as to dissipate the power of this fledgling group?[2]

In order to answer these questions, this project explores the nature of democracy in the twenty-first century in the wake of shifting racial and ethnic demographics and popular social movements situated against oppressive political arrangements. Skeptics will suggest that a multiethnic majority will not necessarily vote unanimously, fail to achieve consensus, and perhaps even lack the ability to constitute change (especially in the wake of the repeal of parts of the 1965 Voting Rights Act).[3] Probably the most poignant reason to be skeptical reminds us that women have constituted a demographic majority in several countries throughout the globe for years, yet do not dominate elections as a women's movement.[4] These concerns are right to view the birth of this new majority with caution. Below, I mention one other reason for concern stemming from the history of nonwhite majorities in Latin America.

Amidst these worries, within the recent political works of Ernesto Laclau and Enrique Dussel, two Argentines by birth, one can find ample support for the possibility and importance of a multiethnic majority. These thinkers inspire new life in democratic theory in ways that are attuned to the reality of social movements and the workings of popular political coalitions throughout the globe. Laclau offers the theoretical mechanisms for "equivocating" or translating competing justice claims into strategic alliances seeking to overcome shared antagonisms. Rather than dissipate, these strategic popular movements provide an adequate *form* through which popular sovereignty becomes possible. While Laclau admits that it is no easy task to maintain populism, his work offers a starting point for the birth of political practices situated in the hands of those who are frequently quieted by oligarchical and plutocratic systems. Dussel provides an alternative global history of political philosophy that departs from Hellenistic and subsequently Western narratives, thus providing the opportunity for diverse political futures that make sense of recent popular movements and eliminating the sentiment that the Latin American or Arab Spring "came out of nowhere."[5] Dussel also highlights the material orientation underpinning all political thought and brings to light the inherent victimization of political institutions, which includes the eventual victims of democracy. Both thinkers fuse democratic practice with popular social movements in ways that give some reason to continue thinking about the possibilities of a multiethnic majority.

## "THE REVOLT OF THE NONWHITE MASSES"

Historically, nonwhite majorities connected to the idea of popular democracy have not fared well, especially in places like Latin America.[6] Time and time again, various social movements consisting of demographic majorities have attempted to wrest political power out of the hands of oligarchs and plutocrats to no avail. For a variety of reasons, white minorities have balked at the idea of "majority rule," especially when they control substantial amounts of economic, cultural, and political capital.[7] Through the pressure exerted by social movements and the