THE ACOUSTIC MIRROR

The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema

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Theories of Representation and Difference

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[6]
The Female Authorial Voice

IN 1968, ROLAND BARTHES proclaimed the death of the author as an individual and originating force behind the literary text.[1] within film studies, however, this very male author still seemed to be at least vaguely alive as late as 1973, when Ed Buscombe made a qualified argument on behalf of authorial intention,[2] and "he" made a spectacular comeback in the late seventies in the work of Raymond Bellour.[3] In 1978, Sandy Flitterman offered an argument which would have seemed inconceivable to the Barthes of "The Death of the Author"—the argument that Hitchcock's "assertion of his presence as producer of the look" works not to center his films ideologically, but rather to subvert the operations of dominant cinematic meaning.[4]

The author has also continued to haunt the edges of film theory, feminist cinema, political cinema, and the avant-garde as the possibility of a resistant and oppositional agency, at times in a less masculine guise. I think in all four respects of the "Laura Speaking" section of *Riddles of the Sphinx*, which presents the spectator not only with the moving images of one of the film's two directors, but with the recorded sounds of her voice talking about what she hoped to effect through the thirteen 360-degree pans ("When we were planning the central section of this film, about a mother and a child, we decided to use the voice of the Sphinx as an imaginary narrator. …").[5] This is a far more flamboyant authorial inscription than anything to be found in Hitchcock's films, and one which raises the specter of intentionality even more palpably than do any of his cameo appearances.

However, it is not my wish to reinstate the film author as punctual source or transcendent meaning. The purpose of this chapter is quite otherwise. First, I would like to determine the conditions under which

the author has lived on as a discursive category since his biographical demise in 1968, not only in film studies but within the work of Barthes, as well. Second, I would like to carve out a theoretical space from which it might be possible to hear the female voice speaking once again from the filmic "interior," but now as the point at which an authorial subject is constructed rather than as the site at which male lack is disavowed. Finally, I will attempt to trace female authorial desire and subjectivity within the films of the Italian director Liliana Cavani, films which have proved singularly intractable to other kinds of feminist analysis, and have therefore been largely neglected. My preliminary step in this triple project will be to return to the scene of the Barthesian crime, and to search there both for the murder weapon and for the corpse of the deceased author.

There is a certain ambiguity about the terms under which the author meets his unmaker in "The Death of the Author." Where—and when—did this major cultural event occur, and through what means? There is a good deal of equivocation in the way Barthes answers these questions. It is "writing," he tells us, that passed the death sentence on the author, but "writing" turns out to mean three very different things. It refers simultaneously to what Derrida has promoted under the rubric of *écriture*, to modernist literature, and to that activity of productive reading which would be elaborated by Barthes one year later in *S/Z*, a book which is forcefully anticipated in "The Death of the Author" through the quotation from "Sarrasine" with which it begins. [6]

"The Death of the Author" initially characterizes writing as a system of graphic traces cut adrift from all phenomenological moorings—as "the black-and-white where all identity is lost, beginning with the identity of the body that writes."[7] According to this account, writing automatically enacts the death of the author by virtue of its iterability—by virtue of its capacity to be reactivated as discourse in the absence of its writer.[8] Since the figure of the author as a person "behind" the text has never been more than a rationalist, empiricist, and positivist illusion, all that is necessary to dissolve that figure is to repeat the vital lesson of Jakobsonian and Benvenistian linguistics—the lesson that "the speech-act in its entirety is an 'empty' process, which functions perfectly without its being necessary to 'fill' it with the person of the interlocutors: linguistically, the author is nothing but the one who writes, just as *I* is nothing but the one who says *I*; language knows a 'subject,' not a person, and this subject, empty outside of the very speech-act which

defines it, suffices to 'hold' language. …"[9] However, it is important to note that although Barthes argues for the loss of the author's "identity," he does not entirely erase the authorial figure. The author's body remains as the support for and agency of é*criture*.

"Writing" also designates a very specific group of literary texts, conjured up somewhat paradoxically through a catalogue of talismanic names: Mallarmé, Valery, Proust, Baudelaire. Significantly, this part of Barthes's argument is hedged about with contradictions, contradictions which intimate that the modernist (or premodernist) text may not be as inimical to authorship as he would have us believe. Not only does he rely heavily upon certain proper names, but at one point he suggests that the modernist text does not so much kill the author as move him from the center to the margins of the stage.[10] At another, closely adjacent point, Barthes suggests that if the text *does* murder the author, it also presides over his rebirth. Of course, this new author bears scant resemblance to his precursor; he is voiceless, he is an impersonal scriptor rather than a psychological coherence, and his existence is absolutely coterminous with the text. However, like the author-as-individual-person, the author-as-scriptor would seem capable of assuming a corporeal form, since we are given a quick glimpse of his dismembered hand:

> The modern *scriptor* is born *at the same time* as his text; he is not furnished with a being which precedes or exceeds his writing, he is not the subject of which his book would be the predicate; there is no time other than the speech-act, and every text is written eternally *here* and *now*. … the modern *scriptor*, having buried the Author, can therefore no longer believe, according to the pathos of his predecessors, that his hand is slower than his passion … for him, on the contrary, his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin—or at least with no origin but language itself, i.e., the very thing which ceaselessly calls any origin into question.[11]

Finally, and most definitively, "writing" designates a way of reading which discloses the cluster or "braid" of quotations that make up a text. The author is here subjected to a double displacement: First, the "voices" of culture replace him as the speaking agency behind the text, and as a consequence unitary meaning gives way to discursive heterogeneity and contestation. Second, because this plurality is activated only through and "in" the reader, he or she supplants the author as the site at which the text comes together. Here again the image of (re)generation is closely linked to that of the authorial dissolution: "the birth of the reader," Barthes writes, "must be requited by the death of the Author."[12] Significantly, this newly emergent reader closely resembles the author-as-scriptor produced earlier in the essay; the former, like the

latter, has no history, biography, or psychology, but is merely "that *someone* who holds collected into one and the same field all of the traces from which writing is constituted." [13]

Why must the author be killed three times over, each time with a different murder weapon? And why does he nonetheless persist, in the proper names that herald the modernist text, the fragment of the writing hand, and the image of rebirth? Because, as I would argue, Barthes desires not so much the author's dissolution as his recovery in a new guise. This desire would surface emphatically five years after "The Death of the Author," in *The Pleasure of the Text*. That work relinquishes the author once again as a person and an institution, but reinstates him a moment later as a figure inside the text:

> Lost in the midst of the text (not *behind* it, like a *deus ex machina*) there is always the other, the author.

> As an institution, the author is dead: his civil status, his biographical person have disappeared; dispossessed, they no longer exercise over his work the formidable paternity whose account literary history, teaching, and public opinion had the responsibility of establishing and renewing; but in the text, in a way, I *desire* the author: I need his figure (which is neither his representation nor his projection), as he needs mine. … [14]

The word *figure* marks the return of the authorial body, grasped now not as biographical or corporeal profile but as the materiality of writing. The body of the author has become the (highly eroticized) body of the text.

However, a subsequent passage indicates that the body of the text has undergone in the process of substitution a quite remarkable anthropomorphization, assuming many of the attributes of the human form. This passage effects an even more dramatic reversal of the earlier essay than the passage I quoted a moment ago, since it exhumes the authorial organ— i.e., the voice—which Barthes was at most pains to bury there. Whereas "The Death of the Author" attempts to deoriginate writing by severing its connection to the voice, *The Pleasure of the Text* argues passionately on behalf of what it calls "writing aloud," or "vocal writing." And in the process it conjures up the vision not only of writing-as-voice but of the word made flesh:

> *Writing aloud* is not phonological but phonetic; its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the voice, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony; the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language. [15]

Most astonishing of all, Barthes goes on to compare "vocal writing" to the closely miked sounds of speech at the cinema, sounds which permit us to hear "the breath, the gutturals, the fleshiness of the lips, a whole

presence of the human muzzle." [16] He characterizes these sounds as an acoustic close-up, but his panegyric also evokes cinema's visual close-up, with its conventional hold on the magnified features of the face. By the conclusion of *The Pleasure of the Text*, the author "lost in the midst of the text" has thus emerged with all the corporeal and vocal palpability of the author "behind" the text, albeit without the latter's biographical and institutional supports.

By fragmenting the authorial body in the way he does—by giving it to us a section at a time (hand, mouth, breath)—Barthes attempts to hold it outside the perspectival frame of classic representation. He also attempts to sustain it outside gender. However, no discourse of the body can foreclose for very long upon sexual difference, which will at the very least function as a structuring absence. Here it is more than that. Sexual difference is the very ground and terrain of Barthes's battle against the traditional author, and of his struggle to install the "modern scriptor" in the other's place.

Although Barthes never definitively says so, the author he seeks to annihilate occupies a definitively male position. As he observes in *The Pleasure of the Text*, the traditional author's "civil status" and "biographical person" exercise a "formidable paternity" over his work, holding it to phallic rectitude and dominant meaning.[17] Barthes dreams of "dispossessing" this author—of stripping him of his paternal legacy. It is in this context that we must read the opening paragraph of "The Death of the Author":

> In his tale *Sarrasine*, Balzac, speaking of a castrato disguised as a woman, writes this sentence: "She was Woman, with her sudden fears, her inexplicable whims, her instinctive fears, her meaningless bravado, her defiance, and her delicious delicacy of feeling." Who speaks in this way? Is it the hero of the tale, who would prefer not to recognize the castrato hidden beneath the "woman"? Is it Balzac the man, whose personal experience has provided him with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author, professing certain "literary" ideas about femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Romantic philosophy? We can never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, every origin. Writing is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity into which our subject flees, the black-and-white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes.[18]

The ostensible function of this quotation from "Sarrasine" is to dramatize the way in which language can be said to write itself, even in the most "readerly" of novels, and so to drive a wedge between discourse and its ostensible author. However, that quotation also introduces the metaphor with which Barthes will subsequently characterize the body of the text, and by means of which he will attempt to exorcise the paternal author—the metaphor of a "neuter" or "composite." This

metaphor derives its representational force from the figure of Zambinella, a castrato masquerading as a woman.

What does the metaphor of the neuter tell us about the sexual identity of the author whose voice Barthes dreams of hearing through the body of the text? Let us entertain for a moment the most obvious answer to that question, and assume that Barthes's project is to replace the male author with an androgynous author. This is in many respects an exemplary dream, not least because it is self-destructive. One must not lose sight of the fact that Barthes "himself" was culturally gendered as male, and therefore qualified to occupy an author-itative position. Instead, he puts his own sexual and cultural identity under erasure. Rather than speaking "frontally," from the place of the phallus, he constructs *The Pleasure of the Text* on the model of "that uninhibited person who shows his behind to the *Political Father*."[19] "The Death of the Author" negates masculinity even more emphatically, since it presents the scriptor as a man who has not only severed his anatomical link to the phallus, but assumed a feminine persona.[20]

However, the female subject can participate in this fantasy of sexual and discursive divestiture only in a displaced and mediated way. She can assist the male subject in removing his mantle of privileges, but she herself has nothing to take off. Besides, as I attempted to indicate in chapter 2, the striptease has for too long functioned as the privileged metaphor by means of which female lack comes to be textually exposed. Once the author-as-individual-person has given way to the author-as-body-of-the-text, the crucial project with respect to the female voice is to find a place from which it can speak and be heard, not to strip it of discursive rights.

In fact, Barthes's project seems more complex than I have indicated so far, and more aware of what a feminist reader might see as the pitfalls of androgyny.[21] To begin with, there is an implicit acknowledgment in the opening paragraph of "The Death of the Author" that sexual difference can probably be suspended only by modeling both genders on the accepted logic of one of them, and an insistence that if this be the case, "woman" will be the preferred standard. Barthes thus inverts what Luce Irigaray has called the "*hom(m)osexual*" economy of dominant culture.[22]

"The Death of the Author" also facilitates a very different interpretation of Barthes's authorial dream, and one which is closer to my own. When I read the sentence from "Sarrasine" with which Barthes's essay begins, I am always struck less by the accomplished fact of the author's demise than by what would seem to be a crisis within traditional authorship. The passage in question still bears the marks of male enunciation (it is, after all, a fragment of what might be called the

Discourse of the Woman as Other), but no male voice comes decisively forward to claim it. This crisis is precipitated in part by the fact that "she" here refers not to "natural" but to "artificial"—or what I would prefer to call "constructed"—femininity. However, it is also motivated by the fact that the voice has taken up residence elsewhere, that it has migrated from a masculine to a feminine position. The castration which Zambinella undergoes not only "unmans" him, making it impossible for him to speak any longer from a masculine position, but it produces a *female* singing voice. Significantly, singing is one of the privileged tropes through which Barthes describes "vocal writing," or the author within the body of the text. The Barthesian fantasy would thus seem to turn not only upon the death of the paternal author, but upon the production of a female authorial voice, as well. It would also seem to insist upon male castration or divestiture as one of the conditions of such a production—to insist that insofar as the female voice speaks authorially, it does so at the expense of the system of projection and disavowal I discussed at the beginning of this book.

I will be talking later in this chapter about a group of films which, although more "readerly" than "writerly," nonetheless both reiterate the connection between male castration and female authorship, and enact in a mediated and displaced way the search for a sexual "neutrality" based not on a male but on a female model. At that juncture I will want to challenge the notion that a radically reconstituted authorship should be theoretically located only at the level of a text's materiality, rather than, for instance, at the level of its narrative or character system. I am in fundamental agreement, however, that the author who should be the chief object of current theoretical concern is the one who occupies the interior of the text, and I will henceforth refer to that figure as the author "inside" the text. I am less prepared than was the Barthes of 1969 to bracket the biographical author altogether, and will instead attempt to propose a new model for conceptualizing the relation between the author "inside" the text and what I will from this point forward designate the author "outside" the text.

I would now like to track a more specifically filmic author through a series of theoretical texts extending from 1962 to 1978. The itinerary I propose to follow will begin with what might be called the "monumental" view of the film author—a view from which he seems to dominate the theoretical landscape like one of the presidential profiles on Mount Rushmore, or the mountain ranges in a John Ford western. However, the road will lead very quickly away from this *auteur*, and as it does he will diminish "like a figure at the far end of the literary stage." [23] As he recedes, he will make way for the "scenery" of the text, within

which the outlines of a very different author will begin to be glimpsed. The tour will necessarily be a highly selective one, but extensive enough, I hope, to convey some sense of the terrain.

Andrew Sarris's "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962" would seem a logical place to begin our retrospective tour, since it both summarizes the "*politique des auteurs*" and defends it against Bazin's criticisms. It could also be seen to mark the beginning of the authorship debate in English, although that debate had been raging in France for more than a decade.

What is perhaps most noteworthy about Sarris's *auteur* is that he has the heroic proportions of the romantic author; he belongs to a "pantheon" of geniuses who tower over the mere "*metteurs en scène*." This author derives his preeminence from his "personality" or "elan of the soul," which he imprints on his films through "certain recurring characteristics" that provide a kind of "signature."[24] He is also the guarantee of unity and consistency; even in his humblest incarnation, as a technician, he represents "the ability to put a film together with some clarity and coherence," and his films "almost always" run "true to form."[25] Finally, Sarris envisions the *auteur* as both the origin and meaning of the cinematic text, insisting that there is a close relationship between the way an authored film "looks and moves" and the way its director "thinks and feels." Those thoughts and feelings are responsible for the film's "interior meaning."[26]

Significantly, however, the author's feelings and thoughts turn out to be inseparable from the text itself. Sarris argues that the director's personality is "imbedded in the stuff of the cinema and cannot be rendered in noncinematic terms."[27] A curiously unexplained epigraph, from Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* precedes "Notes on The Auteur Theory in 1962," and suggests even more forcefully that the author-as-originating-agency and extratextual significance can be glimpsed only in and through his films:

> I call these sketches Shadowgraphs, partly … [because] they derive from the darker side of life, partly because, like other shadowgraphs, they are not directly visible. When I take a shadowgraph in my hand, it makes no impression on me, and gives me no clear conception of it. Only when I hold it up opposite the wall, and look not directly at it, but at that which appears on the wall, am I able to see it. So also with the picture I wish to show here, an inward picture that does not become perceptible till I see it through the external. This external is perhaps not quite unobtrusive, but, not until I now look directly through it, do I discover that inner picture that I desire to show you, an inner picture too delicately drawn to be outwardly visible, woven as it is of the tenderest moods of the soul.[28]

This passage is remarkable for its unabashed idealism. Its account of shadowgraphs conforms closely to the Christian and Platonic account of the cosmos, in which the material world functions as an indirect expression of spiritual truths too ineffable to be directly viewed by fallen eyes. However, its inclusion here also has a very different discursive effect. It works to suggest that even at the farthest reaches of auteurism, the author "himself" cannot be clearly seen—that the author "outside" the text is concealed within an impenetrable shadow, and does not "figure" for all intents and purposes. The intelligence behind the cinematic text, like that behind the Biblical creation, can be deduced only from the "traces" or "signature" it leaves behind, i.e., from the author "inside" the text.

It is fully in keeping with the inaccessibility of this originating intelligence that Sarris would stress cinema's visual properties rather than its scriptural ones—its style and *mise-en-scène* rather than its themes or narrative organization. Sarris himself explains this emphasis by pointing out that most Hollywood directors, at least during the studio period, worked on assigned projects, and were consequently obliged to leave their mark on the "look" of a film rather than on its story. [29] However, the end result is once again to privilege the body of the text over the author-as-transcendental-meaning.

Our next theoretical stop is chapter 2 of the 1969 edition of Peter Wollen's *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, where authorship is grasped less as the expression of a personality or "elan of the soul" than as a series of oppositions that recur from one film to another by the same director. Wollen provides an extended discussion of what might be called the "authorial system" of John Ford films, a system which pits garden against wilderness, plowshare against saber, settler against nomad, European against Indian, civilization against savagery, marriage against the single state, and East against West.[30] The author "outside" the text nevertheless continues to haunt the margins of this discussion, and he eventually returns to center stage. Wollen is reluctant to attribute complete conscious control to that author, but he does present him as the mental agency responsible for the primary level of cinematic meaning. He dismisses all competing semantic elements as "noise," and likens the assigned script to a substance which makes a chemical reaction possible but is not itself part of that process. The extratextual author thus emerges once again both as origin and as the assurance of a fundamental coherence:

> What the *auteur* theory demonstrates is that the director is not simply in command of a performance of a pre-existing text; he is not, or need not be, only a *metteur en scène*. … Incidents and episodes in the original screenplay or novel can act as catalysts; they are the agents which are

introduced into the mind (conscious or unconscious) of the *auteur* and react there with the motifs and themes characteristic of his work. The director does not subordinate himself to another author; his source is only a pretext, which provides catalysts, scenes which fuse with his own preoccupations to produce a radically new work. [31]

The 1972 postcript to *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* shifts the terms of the analysis in a number of crucial ways. To begin with, it distinguishes firmly between the author "outside" the text and the author "inside" the text ("Fuller or Hawks or Hitchcock, the directors, are quite separate from 'Fuller' or 'Hawks' or 'Hitchcock,' the structures named after them, and should not be methodologically confused").[32] Wollen does not deny a relation between the director and the cinematic structure that manifests itself in the films that bear his name, but he gives theoretical priority to the latter rather than the former; the author "outside" the text thus becomes a kind of projection of the author "inside" the text, rather than the other way around. Moreover, even as a projected figure, the extratextual author has undergone a diminution; whereas the earlier edition of *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* describes him as the mental receptacle within which the alchemy of artistic production occurs, here he is only a catalyst within a much larger and more heterogeneous process of production. Wollen leaves no room whatever for intention, insisting several times over upon the unconscious status of the authorial contribution:

> The structure is associated with a single director, an individual, not because he has played the role of artist, expressing himself or his own vision in the film, but because it is through the force of his preoccupations that an unconscious, unintended meaning can be decoded in the film, usually to the surprise of the individual involved. The film is not a communication, but an artefact which is unconsciously structured in a certain way. *Auteur* analysis does not consist of re-tracing a film to its origins, to its creative source. It consists of tracing a structure (not a message) within the work, which can then *post factum* be assigned to an individual, the director, on empirical grounds.[33]

The 1972 postscript also reconceives the author "inside" the text. That figure is no longer identified with the primary level of cinematic meaning, nor is every other textual element considered to be "logically secondary, contingent, to be discarded." Instead, his is only one among the many and disparate voices that "speak" the text, voices that are now associated with discourse rather than "noise." With the authorial structure no longer functioning to unify the film in which it appears, the cinematic text also undergoes a theoretical transformation. It is no longer impossible to conceive of having an "integral, genuine experience" of that text, or to grasp it as a stable or essential entity, since it

becomes a different "experience" with different readings. [34] The cinematic text is not only destabilized, but dispersed; the centripetal image of a film centered around authorial meaning gives way to the centrifugal image of codes engaged in an endless dialogue with other codes, a dialogue that transgresses textual boundaries. It is probably not necessary to add that Barthes casts a long shadow over the 1972 postscript.

Psychoanalysis also plays a key role in Wollen's redefinition of authorship. Within the later account of authorship, it is not only the director who is unconscious of his contribution to a given film, but the film, as well. Like a dream, the cinematic text proffers a series of more or less plausible and coherent representations, behind which is concealed the author "inside" the text, now conceived as an organizing cluster of desires:

> What the *auteur* theory argues is that any film, certainly a Hollywood film, is a network of different statements, crossing and contradicting each other, elaborated into a final "coherent" version. Like a dream, the film the spectator sees is, so to speak, the "film facade," the end-product of "secondary revision," which hides and masks the process which remains latent in the film's "unconscious." Sometimes this "facade" is so worked over, so smoothed out, or else so clotted with disparate elements, that it is impossible to see beyond it, or rather to see anything in it except the characters, the dialogue, the plot, and so on. But in other cases, by a process of comparison with other films, it is possible to decipher, not a coherent message or world-view, but a structure which underlies the film and shapes it, gives it a certain pattern of energy cathexis. [35]

Although the notion of the film text as the site of contestation between multiple codes has much in common with *S/Z*, Wollen breaks away from Barthes in positing the authorial signature as the latent, and hence ultimate or final, level of cinematic organization (albeit not, as we are cautioned, of meaning). The 1972 postscript also differs from the Barthes of "The Death of the Author" and *The Pleasure of the Text* in the way it defines that signature; here the author resides not in the body of the text, but rather "behind" or "beneath" it.

Although the word *structure* recurs in this passage, it is overshadowed by a more general emphasis upon process, evoked both through the multiple references to the dream-work, and through the identification of authorship with a "pattern of energy cathexis." A dynamic model of authorship thus takes the place of the earlier structuralist model; [36] desire replaces binary opposition as the element that is seen to persist from work to work within any given authorial corpus. The notion of authorship as a "pattern of energy cathexis" also forces a further reconceptualization of the author "outside" the text, and of his relationship to the author "inside" the text; although the former is for all

intents and purposes a projection of the former, he is at the same time the point from which desire issues, and so a kind of absent or empty origin.

Stephen Heath's "Comment on the 'Idea of Authorship,'" also published in 1972, marks a dramatic change of direction in the *auteur* debate. That essay shifts theoretical attention not only away from the author as a creative agent or "personality," but away from the author per se. Heath begins by calling into serious doubt the possibility of any "individual" ever functioning as the source of discourse, given the social basis of all language. He then focuses for the remainder of the essay upon two closely related theoretical categories, both of which he sees as inimical to the "idea" of authorship: subjectivity and ideology.

Heath's concern with subjectivity is at least implicitly a concern with the position which the cinematic text constructs for the spectator—with that text's "subject-effects." "Comment on the 'Idea of Authorship'" thus follows the trajectory traced by Barthes, the trajectory leading away from the author to the one who reads or views the text. Like "The Death of the Author," it also insists upon the mutual exclusiveness of those terms. (Heath argues that an investigation of the ways in which subjectivity is constructed cannot be simply added to the *auteur* theory, but will necessarily function to supplant it.) However, there is a crucial difference between Barthes's reader and Heath's subject; whereas the former can be an active producer of textual meaning, the latter is him- or herself produced through textual meaning.

Within Heath's model, ideology takes the place earlier occupied by the author—the place, that is, of origin or impetus. Cinema is seen no longer as the expression of an individual vision, but rather as an "ideological formation." One of the consequences of that ideological formation, Heath explains, is precisely to account for textual meaning through the appeal to individual vision—to promote the belief that the subject gives rise to meaning rather than being spoken through it:

> The function of the author (the effect of the idea of authorship) is a function of unity; the use of the notion of the author involves the organisation of the film (as "work") and, in so doing, it avoids … the thinking of the articulation of the film text in relation to ideology. A theory of the subject represents precisely an attempt, at one level, to grasp the constructions of the subject in ideology (the modes of subject-ivity); it thus allows at once the articulation of contradictions in the film text other than in relation to an englobing consciousness, in relation now, that is, to a specific historico-social process, and the recognition of a heterogeneity of structures, codes, languages at work in the film and of the particular positions of the subject they impose. [37]

What happens to the author "inside" the text as a result of these various displacements? By emphasizing the ideological basis of the antinomies identified by Wollen in his analysis of Hawks's and Ford's films, Heath seems to efface the author "inside" the text as completely as his biological counterpart. However, that author returns on at least one occasion, albeit fleetingly. Within the context of some general remarks about the "history" of the subject, Heath stresses that "the interrogation of a group of films within that history is not the revelation of the author but the tracing in the series of texts of the insistence of the unconscious." [38] This reference to an unconscious tracing evokes Wollen's "pattern of energy cathexis," and so returns us to the notion of the author as a textual figuration. However, this brief acknowledgment that authorship might somehow persist beyond the intervention of Althusser and Lacan, Heath's primary theoretical touchstones, quickly gives way to a catalogue of the problems attending its analysis, and to a restatement of his primary concern with ideology and (spectatorial) subjectivity:

> Such an interrogation meets difficulties similar to those encountered by the attempt to place literary texts in this perspective—absence of analytical situation, associations, transference, etc.—and it seems clear that the work that needs to be done at the moment is the close analysis of the systems of particular texts … in relation to the ideological formations they reflect or articulate and the positions in which they inscribe the subject and, overall, to the whole process of subject and sense in the text. [39]

I will attempt to demonstrate later in this chapter that the categories of the author and the subject are by no means as mutually exclusive as this passage would suggest—that the necessary project is in fact somehow to grasp the author precisely as subject.

Although authorship ceased to be a central issue after 1972, the film text has come increasingly to seem a problem of discourse, and so to beg (from its theoretically reconceived vantage point) the question, "Who (or what) is speaking?" Metz's influential essay "History/Discourse: A Note on Two Voyeurisms" (1975/76) argues that since untheorized classic cinema generally works to efface all signs of its own production, to present itself as a story without a teller, the crucial project is to reconstitute that text as an utterance. [40] The distinction between discourse *(discours)* and story *(histoire)* comes, of course, from Benveniste, as do two other categories that were to prove crucial to the reconceptualization of the film text as an utterance—the categories of the speaking subject *(le subject de l'énonciation)* and the subject of speech *(le sujet de l'énoncé)*. [41]

In Benveniste's writing, the speaking subject refers to the existential person engaged in discourse, and the subject of speech to the discursive marker through which he or she assumes linguistic identity. Benveniste insists upon the interdependence of these two subjects, since it is only through concrete utterance that a speaker enters into subjectivity, and only through its connection to a speaking subject that the subject of speech comes to have signifying value:

> It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a *subject*, because language alone establishes the concept of "ego" in reality. …\
>
> The "subjectivity" we are discussing here is the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as "subject." … "Ego" is he who *says* "ego." That is where we see the foundation of "subjectivity," which is determined by the linguistic status of "person." [42]

The signifier through which subjectivity is most conventionally activated in language is of course the first-person pronoun, which can "shift" its meaning from one discursive situation to another.

Needless to say, Benveniste's model has been applied to cinema only with the greatest difficulty. To begin with, all films foreclose upon the site of their own production by simple virtue of the double absence upon which they are based. The system of suture works to occlude the process of enunciation even more radically, at least in dominant cinema, by folding "*historie*" over "*discours*." It is thus no easy matter to answer the question: "Who (or what) is speaking?" Second, since cinema is not primarily a linguistic medium—since it generally relegates language and the voice to the interior of the diegesis—the concept of "speech" usually has only a metaphoric application; film's status as discourse must consequently be accounted for in some other way than through linguistic utterance. Finally, it is by no means immediately apparent where to look in cinema for the subject of speech. What is the filmic equivalent of the first-person pronoun?

There is surprising unanimity about the kinds of answers that have been given to the first of these questions. Metz, Nowell-Smith, Baudry, Mulvey, Heath, Dayan, and Oudart have all identified cinema's discursive function with the visual axis, converting the question, "Who (or what) is speaking?" into the query, "Who (or what) is looking?"[43] This reformulated query also elicits a surprisingly uniform response—the answer that it is the camera whose look enunciates the film, and which consequently corresponds most closely to Benveniste's speaking subject. (The camera is here a synecdoche for the cinematic apparatus, albeit not an entirely "innocent" one. That it should be installed in a representative position rather than some other branch of the apparatus, such as the

technology of sound recording, attests to the privileged position recent theory has given to cinema's visual transactions.)

Most of the theoreticians listed above also insist upon the ideological implications of the camera's look, which frames, delimits, and organizes space according to monocular perspective. The process whereby a fictional gaze stands in for and covers over the camera's gaze is assumed to be an ideological one, too, since it represents discourse as "a story from nowhere, told by nobody [or at least nobody outside the fiction] but received by someone." Films are thus ideologically as well as cinematographically "spoken."

The author is conspicuously absent from this account of film-as-discourse. He is barred from any overt access to the site of enunciation, although he makes the occasional surreptitious return. Metz goes so far as to characterize the spectator's identification with the camera (i.e., primary identification) as an act of "pure" perception, thereby erecting an insuperable barrier between the speaking subject of the film text and any authorial personage, and inflecting the notion of mechanical reproduction with some very Bazinian idealism. [44] (This is, of course, a much more extreme position than that taken by the other theoreticians listed above, since it also excludes ideology from the first level of cinematic reception. In an essay that accompanied the English translation of "History/Discourse: A Note on Two Voyeurisms" in 1976, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith argues against the possibility of anything approximating Metz's innocent perception. However, he does so by pointing to the connection not between the camera's point of view and the authorial point of view, but between the camera's point of view and that of fictional characters: "the so-called secondary identifications … tend to break down the pure specularity of the screen/spectator relation in itself and to displace it onto relations which are more properly intra-textual—i.e. relations to the spectator posited from within the image and in the movement from shot to shot.")[45]

It was in keeping with this general theoretical tendency both to exclude the author from the site of cinematic enunciation and to focus new attention upon the construction of the viewing subject, that I at one point conceptualized the subject of speech in a way that now seems to me rather curious. In *The Subject of Semiotics*, I suggested that it "can best be understood as that character or group of characters most central to the fiction—that figure or cluster of figures who occupy a position within the narrative equivalent to that occupied by the first-person pronoun in a sentence."[46] Moreover, I saw this cinematic subject of speech as a discursive marker or "stand-in" for the viewing subject, rather than as a representative of the authorial subject. While I would

still maintain that certain fictional characters have the crucial function of representing and thereby structuring the viewer, it now seems important to me to consider the ways in which the Benvenistian model might help us to rethink authorship, as well.

As will be evident to the reader of earlier chapters of the present book, most particularly chapter 1, I have no intention of putting this newly reconceptualized author in the place of the cinematic apparatus. I want merely to suggest that the director may in certain situations constitute *one* of the speakers of his or her films, and that there may at times be pressing political reasons for maximizing rather than minimizing what might be said to derive from this authorial voice. Since one of the things the author must be understood to speak is precisely his or her own authorial subjectivity, the subject of speech will also prove a necessary theoretical category within my reformulation. In this context, it will figure not as the character who marks the viewer's position within the text, but as any representation or network of representations through which the author is constituted as speaking subject.

Is it necessary to add that I do not mean to resuscitate the author laid to rest by Barthes in 1969, or even the author dreamt by Wollen during the same year? That I have in mind an author who would be subordinate to all the discursive constraints emphasized by Benveniste, who would in fact *be nothing* outside cinema—an author "outside" the text who would come into existence as a dreaming, desiring, self-affirming subject only through the inscription of an author "inside" the text, and not one who could ever lay claim to a radical and self-present exteriority, even though he or she might masquerade in such a guise?

Hitchcock has posed a consistent challenge to those theories that seek to dissolve authorship, both because of his cameo appearances in his own films, and because of the sophisticated verbal apparatuses that he has put in place around those films through interviews and publicity statements. [47] It is therefore not surprising that the theory of authorship should have received fresh impetus in the late seventies through a theorist working closely with that director's films—Raymond Bellour. I would like to conclude this brief and highly selective account of the *auteur* debate with a discussion of two of his essays (or, to be more precise, with an essay and an interview, published in *Camera Obscura* in 1977 and 1979), a discussion which will bring us back emphatically to the problem of sexual difference, and which will indicate the necessity of thinking "authorship" and "subjectivity" in close relation to each other.

Bellour asks of Hitchcock's work the by now familiar question: "Who is speaking (or, to be more precise, looking)?" However, he answers the question rather differently than the theoreticians who posed it before him, showing himself quite prepared to entertain the possibility that Hitchcock "himself" might be said to speak *Marnie* or *The Birds*. I have put quotation marks around the third-person pronoun to distinguish Bellour's Hitchcock from the Hitchcock who surfaces in Sarris's writing, or even Mulvey's, because the former has neither self-presence nor existential reality. Bellour's Hitchcock has at best what Geoffrey Nowell-Smith would call a "notional coherence"; [48] he is the imaginary intersection of two subjects who are, in fact, irreducibly disjunctive—the speaking subject or "enunciator," and the subject of speech.

As enunciator, Bellour explains, Hitchcock is both the site "from which the set of representations are ordered and organized," and the site "toward which they are channelled back."[49] He puts things in discursive motion, but he derives his authorial status only from a series of masculine representations, which as a group define the subject of his speech. Bellour illustrates this account of Hitchcockian enunciation through *Marnie*, a film which begins with an overtly voyeuristic rear shot of the title character on a train platform, and which then proceeds in shots 2, 21, and 25 to align that image of woman with three quickly successive male looks—Strutt's, Rutland's, and Hitchcock's (in his guise as a character within the fiction). These intratextual looks refer back to Hitchcock the director as their point of origin, but they also function to construct that figure, who has no authorial identity apart from that which they confer upon him. The result is a structure of refractions and reflections which is sustained in the absence of any original:

> By observing Marnie, object of desire, enigma … Hitchcock becomes a sort of double of Mark and of Strutt who have just contributed to the creation of his image but who, at the same time, are caught in it. This is possible because they too are nothing but doubles, irregularly distributed on a trajectory at the origin of which there is Hitchcock, the first among all his doubles, a matrix which allows their generation, and his own representation as duplicate image of himself as pure image-power—the camerawish, of which the object choice is here the woman.[50]

As in the 1972 postscript to *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, Bellour's version of the author "outside" the text is thus both a projection of the author "inside" the text and the point from which desire flows. He is the anthropomorphization of a site which is simultaneously "productive" and "empty."

Bellour conceives of the author as both a gendered and a discursive subject—as someone who cannot speak outside sexual difference, or

aspire to identity outside image or word. The name "Hitchcock" would consequently seem to designate not so much a biographical person as a symbolic position—the position occupied by the exemplary male subject, and sustained through phallic identification, the circulation of women, and what might be called "group disavowal." This phallic identification is discursively articulated in *Marnie* through the alignment of Hitchcock's look both with the camera, a synecdoche for the cinematic apparatus, and with a series of more or less idealized fictional male looks (those of Strutt, Rutland, and Hitchcock-as-fictional-character). The agency of that identification is the image of Marnie, which is passed from the camera to Strutt, from Strutt to Rutland, and from Rutland to Hitchcock-as-fictional-character during the opening three scenes of the film. Ironically, it is only through this radically dispersed and decentered "*hom(m)osexual*" economy that Hitchcock-as-director comes to be installed as the point of apparent textual origin, and as the seemingly punctual source of meaning.

Under pressure from Janet Bergstrom, Bellour has acknowledged his own implication in this economy ("It was as the subject whose desire is the prisoner of this machinery that I tried to demonstrate its functioning"). [51] He goes on in the same interview to suggest in the strongest possible terms that reading a film is as complexly bound up with gender as is authorship, and that the very "systematicity" which preoccupies his own analysis represents an insurmountable barrier to any analysis which might seek to find a female voice or point of view because it represents the overdetermined expression of male desire and the male gaze:

> The classical American cinema is founded in a systematicity which operates very precisely at the expense of the woman … by determining her image, her images, in relation to the desire of the masculine subject who thus defines himself through this determination. Which means that the woman too finds herself involved, for herself, in relation to desire and the law, but in a perspective which always collapses the representation of the two sexes into the dominant logic of a single one. If women want to and are able to do analyses of these films and find representations between the sexes which will satisfy them, by all means let them do so: I would be very eager to see the results, even though I can't help feeling a bit skeptical. [52]

It is good of Bellour to admit women into the inner circles of segmentation, although he seems perhaps too insistent upon the impossibility of performing a transgressively feminist reading of Hollywood cinema, dwelling with undue relish upon the obstacles that would confront any such project (the "indifference" of Hollywood cinema, the female theorist's desires, her abilities, her unpleasure at the results, his own skepticism). Nevertheless, he is correct in assuming that the authorial system

of most Hollywood films forecloses upon the female voice. If we were to ask, with Foucault, "Where does [this discourse] come from; how is it circulated; who controls it?" or more precisely, "Who can fulfil these diverse functions of the subject?" the answer would resoundingly be: "The male subject." [53]

Not surprisingly, in light of this answer, feminist film theory and criticism have manifested only an intermittent and fleeting interest in the status of authorship within the classic text. One of the earliest essays to approach authorship through a critique of sexual difference was, of course, Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). Although the first half of that essay focuses on spectatorship, its second half uses the notion of the author as a mechanism for distinguishing between two very different specular regimes, regimes which exceed the "intratextual" relations of which Nowell-Smith speaks, and which it associates with Sternberg and Hitchcock. Mulvey argues that there are moments in Sternberg's films when no fictional gaze mediates the spectator's access to Dietrich's image, and where the construction of that image as a fetish cannot be explained through an ideological spillage from the look of a character onto the look of the camera, implying instead an authorial eye behind the visual apparatus:

> Sternberg plays down the illusion of screen depth; his screen tends to be one-dimensional, as light and shade, lace, steam, foliage, net, streamers, etc., reduce the visual field. There is little or no mediation through the eyes of the main protagonist. On the contrary, shadowy presences like La Bessière in *Morocco* act as surrogates for the director, detached as they are from audience identification.[54]

Mulvey also positions Hitchcock as the speaking subject of his films, attributing their voyeurism to the intensity of their author's obsessions, noting that "Hitchcock has never concealed his interest in voyeurism, cinematic and non-cinematic" (p. 15).

In an even earlier essay, "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema" (1973), Claire Johnston emphasizes the importance of the *auteur* theory for feminism, suggesting that its polemics have "challenged the entrenched view of Hollywood as monolithic," and have made it possible to see that the "image of woman" does not assume the same status in all films made within that system of production.[55] Johnston also poses the possibility of female authorship within classic cinema by juxtaposing the names of Dorothy Arzner and Ida Lupino with the ubiquitous Howard Hawkes and John Ford.

In a monograph published in 1975, Johnston elaborates more fully upon the notion that Arzner's films bear the marks of female authorship. However, although she argues that what she calls "the discourse of the woman" provides Arzner's work with its "structural coherence," she is far from attributing to that discourse the systematicity which figures so centrally within Bellour's account of male authorship, or even the binary logic which Wollen identifies with the films of certain male *auteurs*. Johnston suggests that the female authorial voice makes itself heard only through disruptions and dislocations within the textual economy of classic cinema—i.e., *through breaks within its systematicity and binary logic*. Significantly, Johnston suggests that these disruptions and dislocations may occur at the level of the *histoire*, as well as at that of the *discours*.

> In Arzner's work, the discourse of the woman, or rather her attempt to locate it and make it heard, is what gives the text its structural coherence, while at the same time rendering the dominant discourse of the male fragmented and incoherent. The central female protagonists react against and thus transgress the male discourse which entraps them. [56]

Sandy Flitterman has also suggested that feminist theory would do well to rethink authorship within the Hollywood text, which she conceptualizes in terms of discourse. In "Woman, Desire, and the Look: Feminism and the Enunciative Apparatus in Cinema" (1978), she stresses the importance of Bellour's work on enunciation in *Marnie*, and argues that any foregrounding of authorship within the classic text functions at least momentarily to subvert "the subject-effect that the apparatus is designed to produce and to conceal" by both raising and answering the question: "Who is speaking?"[57]

However, one looks in vain to the feminist work published in *Camera Obscura* for a further elaboration of this point. Although that work is heavily indebted to Metz's and Bellour's notion of film-as-discourse, it largely occludes the role of the author within dominant narrative cinema. One of the most striking examples of this occlusion is Jacqueline Suter's "Feminine Discourse in *Christopher Strong*." Published in the same issue of *Camera Obscura* as "Alternation, Segmentation, Hypnosis," that essay is in many respects a direct extension of Bellour's work on Hollywood cinema.[58] There is, however, one crucial difference: Suter makes absolutely no room in her discussion for the authorial subject. Indeed, the name "Dorothy Arzner" is mentioned only once, along with the date of *Christopher Strong*. This is surprising, and not only because it marks a point of departure from the Bellourian model. Arzner was, after all, one of only two women to direct sound films in Hollywood during the studio period, a fact that would seem of

some relevance to a feminist analysis of one of her films—especially when the stated aim of that analysis is to uncover a feminine discourse. However, instead of looking for ways in which Arzner might be said to "speak" *Christopher Strong* differently from the ways in which Hitchcock "speaks" *Marnie*, Suter focuses on two distinct and seemingly anonymous levels of the text—on what she calls the "patriarchal discourse," and on what she calls the "feminine discourse."

Because of the way she conceptualizes each of these discourses, Suter's feminist reading would have to be characterized as dystopian. In effect, she associates the "patriarchal discourse" with the film's formal and narrative articulation, and its "feminine discourse" with the voices and transgressive desires of two of its female characters, Cynthia and Monica. Because Suter assumes enunciation to be absolutely coterminous with that formal and narrative articulation, the "patriarchal discourse" emerges as a metalanguage, capable of neutralizing any disruptions at the level of character or narrative, while the "feminine discourse" is consigned in a completely unproblematical way to the inside of the diegesis. Suter at no point broaches the possibility that the latter discourse might also provide mechanisms through which an author "outside" the text could "speak" her subjectivity—the possibility, that is, that authorship might be inscribed not merely through the camera, or such an obviously reflexive diegetic indicator as the look, but through those forms of identification and textual organization which are generally assumed to be "secondary," and which hinge upon a variety of characterological and narrative devices. Her theoretical model thus closely replicates the Hollywood model, which identifies the male voice with enunciative exteriority, and the female voice with diegetic interiority.

Suter's textual analysis is extremely persuasive, and it is difficult to argue with the conclusions she draws from it. However, the presupposition that *Christopher Strong* is enunciated like any other classic Hollywood film—i.e., from an exclusively male speaking position—guides and coerces her reading. The very different reading of Arzner's work proposed by Claire Johnston is clearly made possible by the assumption that an emphatically female authorial voice at least to some degree speaks Arzner's films, and that there can never be an absolutely smooth fit between such a voice and the dominant Hollywood model. This may very well be a situation where the cinematic apparatus in its complex totality speaks the film one way, in terms of the systematicity and binary logic that Suter notes, dominating and determining what has been widely taken to be the enunciative level, but where authorial desire seeks out another kind of language, finds a way of expressing itself

through diegetic elements. The debate around *Christopher Strong* may also provide the occasion to rethink the absolute priority that recent film theory has given to cinematic specificity, particularly camera distance, angle, and movement and shot-to-shot relationships, and to consider whether there may not be enunciative elements elsewhere, as well—enunciative elements which can best be uncovered through returning to the issue of authorship, and by reposing the question: "Who (or what) is speaking?" To assume, as Suter seems to do, that the cinematic apparatus is the only conceivable "speaker" of a Hollywood film is to risk sealing over all kinds of localized resistance, which—as Foucault tells us—may well be the only form resistance can possibly take. [59]

Not surprisingly, this tendency to think of dominant cinema in monolithically phallic terms leads Suter to reject that cinema altogether:

> Undoubtedly, the fact that we can locate certain formal transgressions in a film advances our knowledge of what might constitute a feminine discourse. But we should be aware that isolated interruptions do not necessarily deconstruct the narrative discourse in any significant way. It seems that a systematic rethinking of the entire terms of narrative logic, a reformulation of its elements into an order different from what has come to be known as the classic text, may allow the feminine to express itself more forcefully.[60]

What Suter proposes in place of *Christopher Strong* is *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), a film whose formal as well as thematic operations deviate markedly from the classic paradigm. Significantly, the turn to experimental cinema marks the reemergence of the author. Chantal Akerman figures conspicuously in this part of Suter's analysis, both as the director of *Jeanne Dielman* and as its enunciator ("Akerman, in showing a woman's daily routine in all its banality, breaks with convention because these images do not necessarily function to advance the narrative.… Akerman says that she found a plot *because* she wanted to show certain gestures in women's lives that are customarily left out of films").[61]

I have dwelt at such length upon Suter's extremely interesting essay for several reasons. To begin with, it gives new force to Bellour's suggestion that the "systematicity" of classic cinema "operates very precisely at the expense of woman"—in this case, of the woman director. It may well be impossible to locate a female authorial voice within a Hollywood film by means of the strategies Bellour has devised for locating the male authorial voice. No film, after all, is entirely "spoken" by its ostensible author, and in the case of dominant cinema, there are an enormous number of other productive elements, not the least of which is a whole textual system which often persists intransigently from

one directorial corpus to another. Only a director "speaking" from a position as smoothly aligned with the cinematic apparatus as Hitchcock—i.e., from a position of phallic dominance—would be able to identify his own "vision" so fully with the textual system of Hollywood that the latter can seem the extension of the former. Other authorial subjects might well find themselves speaking against the weight of the textual system through which their films are largely articulated. What I am trying to suggest is that if authorial enunciation within the classic film text continues to be as insistently equated with that text's macrologic as it is within Bellourian segmentation, the theorist may quite simply be unable to "hear" authorial voices that speak against the operations of dominant meaning, since those voices are much likelier to manifest themselves through isolated formal and diegetic irregularities than through formal systematicity.

A second reason why I have so conspicuously featured the Suter essay is that it dramatizes certain tendencies that are indicative of much recent writing on cinema by women. To the degree that feminist theory and criticism of the late seventies and the eighties have concerned themselves centrally with authorship, they have shifted attention away from the classic text to experimental cinema, and specifically to experimental cinema made by women. The author often emerges within the context of these discussions as a largely untheorized category, placed definitively "outside" the text, and assumed to be the punctual source of its sounds and images. A certain nostalgia for an unproblematic agency permeates much of the writing to which I refer. There is no sense in which the feminist author, like her phallic counterpart, might be constructed in and through discourse—that she might be inseparable from the desire that circulates within her texts, investing itself not only in their formal articulation, but in recurring diegetic elements.

A brief essay by Janet Bergstrom on *Jeanne Dielman* is a case in point. [62] Bergstrom contends that there are two discourses in Akerman's film—one feminist, and the other deriving from a suppressed or "acculturated" femininity. The first of these discourses is that "spoken" by the director herself through the "permissive" look of the camera, and the second is that associated with the character of Jeanne Dielman. Bergstrom argues that in eschewing the logic of the shot/reverse shot, the film works both to foreground the feminist discourse and to keep it separate from the feminine discourse. There would thus seem to be no possibility of "contamination" or slippage from one side to the other. Bergstrom further isolates the author from her central female character by referring to her in quick succession as a "marked controller" and a "controlling eye."[63]

I am not nearly as certain as Bergstrom that Jeanne Dielman manages to distinguish so sharply between feminism and femininity, or that the author "outside" the text occupies the position of a transcendental seer, resting in easy detachment from the woman whose gestures are so meticulously recorded. To do Bergstrom justice, her own language ultimately works to erode the absoluteness of the division she draws, and to suggest that the feminist author is at least partially defined through her female protagonist. She characterizes the relationship between Akerman's stationary camera and Jeanne Dielman as "obsessive" and "fascinated," [64] adjectives which point to a certain psychic spillage between author and character. That spillage indicates that the ostensible object of speech is in this case also the subject of speech, and as such at least partly constitutive of the author-as-speaking-subject, even though the camera never adopts Jeanne Dielman's point of view.

As with most critiques, there is a barely concealed polemic here. I have been arguing over the last few pages for two rather contrary things—for a greater theoretical attentiveness to the ways in which authorship is both deployed and limited within the experimental text, and for the development of hermeneutic strategies capable of foregrounding rather than neutralizing female authorship within the classic film, where it is in danger of being occluded altogether. Of course, the obvious problem with respect to the second of these goals is that so few Hollywood films carry a female directorial signature. How is the feminist writer to proceed?

One possible solution to this difficulty is suggested by Tania Modleski in a chapter of her book *The Women Who Knew Too Much*. The chapter in question, "Woman and the Labyrinth," focuses on the relationship between Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the Daphne du Maurier novel on which it was based. Modleski comments upon Hitchcock's reluctance to claim that film, which was assigned to him by Selznick, as his own, and some of the subsequently deleted scenes in the script through which he attempted to "vomit out" a "whole school of feminine literature."[65] What emerges from this discussion is a sense of the way in which even a classic film might be riven by conflicting authorial systems, in this case one "male" and the other "female." But Modleski pushes her analysis even further than this, arguing that through his forced identification with du Maurier, Hitchcock found one of the great subjects of his later films—the "potential terror involved in identification itself, especially identification with a woman." This observation has important ramifications for our understanding of Hitchcock's status as *auteur*, indicating that his own authorial system may be far more heterogeneous and divided than Bellour can ever have imagined,

and that it may, in fact, contain a female voice as one of its constituent although generally submerged elements.

Modleski bases her case not only on Truffaut's interview with Hitchcock, and the exchanges around the making of *Rebecca* that took place between Selznick and Hitchcock, but on the narrative organization of the film itself, which she persuasively shows to hinge upon the whole problematic of identification with the mother. The telling detail which brings this problematic definitively around again to the question of authorship is the fact that the character who most fully represents the mother—Rebecca—figures insistently throughout the film as an "absent one" whose signature dominates the image track, but who herself escapes visibility. As such, it seems to me, she functions as a strikingly literal diegetic surrogate for the speaking subject, and hence very precisely as the subject of speech. What I am suggesting, in other words, is that Rebecca stands in for Hitchcock, in much the same way that Mark Rutland does in *Marnie*, and that in so doing she re-en-genders his authorial subjectivity.

Another strategy, deployed with very interesting results by Lea Jacobs in an article on *Now, Voyager*, is to shift the emphasis so sharply away from systematicity and textual macro-logic to disruption and contradiction as in effect to *reauthor* the classic film from the site of its (feminist) reception. This project has much in common with that Barthesian undertaking whereby the "readerly" text yields to the *writerly* one, in that it shifts productivity away from the ostensible author to the side of the reader, and places itself on the side of heterogeneity and contradiction rather than unity. However, rather than working to disclose the chorus of cultural voices within the text, it strives to install the female voice at the site of a very qualified and provisional origin (and one which, I would argue, is once again defined through the subject of speech)—the voice, that is, of the female critic or theorist.

I speak of this project as though it were an overt and conscious one, but Jacob's reauthorship of Rapper's film can be glimpsed only indirectly, through the interpretive process whereby Charlotte is shown to supplant Dr. Jacquith as the speaker of her "own" subjectivity. Her discussion focuses attention on that sequence in *Now, Voyager* where Charlotte looks at her image in the café window as the camera cuts back and forth between her and the reflected spectacle. This sequence, Jacobs argues, becomes the occasion whereby the female protagonist "takes the enunciating position with respect to herself through an identification with a man," and so becomes "a self-sufficient sexual and discursive configuration"—something which is seen as disturbing both to the shot-to-shot organization of the films, and to the constitution of the

couple which is the form of narrative closure. [66] "*Now, Voyager:* Some Problems of Enunciation and Sexual Difference" mimics this disturbance even as it in a sense creates it. Jacobs, in other words, enacts a discursive resistance to dominant cinema precisely through the resistance which she constitutes Charlotte as having. Charlotte thus functions not just as an enunciator within the diegesis, but as the subject of the speech whereby Jacobs rewrites *Now, Voyager*, and hence as a stand-in for the feminist theorist.

In a few pages, I will attempt to establish the textual status of a female author whose preoccupations are neither classically "feminine" nor overtly feminist, and whose work is perhaps as anomalous in relation to dominant cinema as it is with respect to a whole range of experimental practices, or even to what generally passes as the European art film[67] — Liliana Cavani. It is my hope that authorship not only will prove a way into her cinema, which has proved quite resistant to other theoretical and critical paradigms, and has consequently been largely neglected, but will maximize its considerable oppositional value, as well. First, however, I would like to consider some of the guises that can be assumed by the author "inside" the text.

Authorial subjectivity is inscribed into the cinematic text in two primary ways. The first kind of authorial inscription can best be described through a further elaboration of the Benvenistian model, with its distinction between the speaking subject and the subject of speech, but since it hinges upon a psychic mechanism about which linguistics has little to say—the psychic mechanism of identification—it will be necessary to supplement that model with psychoanalysis. The second kind of authorial inscription assumes a rather more dynamic and less easily localized form; it is the libidinal coherence that the films by a particular director can sometimes be said to have—the desire that circulates there, more or less perceptibly.

Insofar as a filmmaker can be said to function as one of the enunciators of the works that bear his or her name, those works will contain certain sounds, images, characterological motifs, narrative patterns, and/or formal configurations which provide the cinematic equivalent of the linguistic markers through which subjectivity is activated. However, the linguistic model is insufficient to account for the relationship which is thereby set up between the author "inside" the text and the author "outside" the text. Let us look, by way of example, at the most obvious of authorial references.

A director may turn the camera on his or her face, or the tape recorder on his or her voice, and incorporate the results into a film in the guise of a visual representation, a voice-over, a voice-off, or a synchronized sound and image "totality." Such an authorial citation would seem the closest of cinematic equivalents to the first-person pronoun. However, it also differs from that shifter in one crucial way: whereas the relation between "I" and the speaker who deploys that signifier is based upon arbitrary convention, the relation between the cinematic image of a filmmaker and the actual filmmaker is based upon similitude; it is an iconic representation, and therefore more easily confused with what it designates.

Of course, this is not to suggest that the image is an ontological extension of the material reality it mimics. This is so far from being the case that it actually facilitates something which is in no way intrinsic to the "original"—authorial subjectivity. Indeed, so far from being a mere reflection of the author "outside" the text, it could reasonably be said to constitute him or her as such, in much the same way that the mirror reflection (retroactively) installs identity in the same child.

It is by now a truism of film theory that movies construct viewing subjects through identification. It seems to me that authorial subjects can be similarly constructed, albeit through a wider variety of textual supports than have been so far adduced for their spectatorial counterparts. Identity is, after all, impossible not only outside the symbolic, but outside the imaginary. Even an image which seems self-evidently part of the individual it depicts—which seems nothing more than his or her reflection or photographic imprint—can be claimed by that individual only through identification. And identification, as the writer of the *Ecrits* cautions us, inevitably turns upon misrecognition.

Through its intimate conflation of the author "inside" the text with the author "outside" the text, this kind of directorial "appearance" often works to promote a second, much less inevitable misrecognition. It is the frequent site, that is, of a narcissistic idealization, through which the filmmaker speaks him- or herself as the point of absolute textual origin. Such is the case in *Marnie*, where Hitchcock not only makes his usual appearance on the image track, but turns to look boldly at the camera and the theater audience, as someone clearly in control of both.

Conversely, an authorial citation of this sort may also become the vehicle for an authorial diminution, a device for representing a film's director as a subject speaking from within history, ideology, and a particular social formation, as it is in *Far from Vietnam* (1967), where Godard turns the camera on himself, rather than "going" to Southeast Asia. As important an authorial critique as this film provides, though, it never really qualifies the filmmaker's ostensible responsibility for its

sounds and images, calls his masculinity into question, or suggests that his identity as a speaking subject is radically dependent upon the ways in which it is textually constituted. Although it lacks the reflexive complexity of either *Marnie* or *Far from Vietnam*, Chantal Akerman's voice-over in *News from Home* (1975) deprivileges the authorial voice much more profoundly by rendering it feminine, personal, and informal, and by stripping it of all transcendental pretense.

However, I can think of only one film—the Fassbinder section of *Germany in Autumn* (1978)—in which an authorial "appearance" works not to subordinate the camera and voice-recording apparatuses to the filmmaker, but to subordinate *him* to *them*. It does so by placing at absolute center stage the irrecuperable figure of a director who is not just suffering, desiring, politically conflicted, unjust, and domineering, but a culturally, historically, and *textually* bound subject—by showing that his authorial subjectivity is kept in place only through a compulsive and frenetic productivity. *Germany in Autumn* also hystericizes the body of its author through a veritable theater of grotesque corporeality. This last dimension of the film is as exemplary as the other, since its insistence upon Fassbinder's sagging flesh, putrid breath, and drug and alcohol dependency locates him firmly on the side of a graceless but "readable" spectacle, making it impossible ever again to conflate him with a phallic exteriority. It thus openly declares the author "outside" the text to be nothing more than an effect of discourse.

So far I have focused only on representations which so closely approximate the visual or sonorous features of the filmmaker as to be easily conflated with him or her—with representations which promote the kind of mirror recognition that Lacan associates with "primary narcissism." However, authorial subjectivity can also be brought into play through what both Lacan and Metz would call "secondary identification"—i.e., through identification with an anthropomorphic representation which is not, strictly speaking, his or her "own," but that of an other who also happens in this case to be a fictional character. This kind of psychic alignment is brilliantly dramatized in *Scénario du Passion* (1982), where Godard once again turns the (video) camera on himself as he sits in an editing suite taking apart and recombining sounds and images from the film to which the title refers. At a key moment in the tape, he reaches out to the image of Jerzy, the character of the Polish expatriate filmmaker who is clearly a stand-in for Godard-as-director, and locks him in a narcissistic embrace. With that extraordinary gesture, the author who is sitting outside the text of *Passion* looking in is shown to derive all his subjective sustenance from a character who is firmly inside.

A director's relationship with the fictional character who "stands in" for him or her textually may be predicated, as it is not only within *Marnie* but within many classic films, upon a kind of replication at the level of the fiction of those functions generally attributed to the cinematic apparatus—authoritative vision, hearing, and speech. Secondary identification can thus provide another vehicle leading to imaginary mastery and transcendence. Provided, at least, that the character who sustains this ambition is male, such an identification is completely compatible with dominant cinema. However, a filmmaker's secondary identifications may also depart from that paradigm altogether, and put in place a very different kind of authorial subjectivity—one which, for instance, is much more openly endangered and at risk. I think in this respect of Ulrike Ottinger's fascination with freaks of all sorts, or Marguerite Duras's investment in the figure of the exile. I will have much more to say about "deviant" kinds of secondary identification when I come to Cavani, whose authorial subjectivity relies heavily upon her imaginary relation to her male characters.

Finally, the author "outside" the text may find the mirror for which he or she is looking in the "body" of the text—in the way in which his or her films choreograph movement; compose objects within the frame; craft, disrupt, or multiply narrative; experiment with sound; create "atmosphere"; articulate light and shadow; encourage or inhibit identification; use actors; or work with color. The kind of identification I am talking about here is the narcissistic correlative of that "recognition" which permits a reasonably literate moviegoer to say after looking at several shots of *The Red and the White* that "it's Jancso," or after viewing three or four minutes of a Peter Greenaway film that "it's Greenaway." Although the authorial citation is in this case a formal or narrative "image," it is not any the less complexly imbricated with gender, ideology, or history.

Although directors such as Welles, Fassbinder, and Duras speak themselves through their films in virtually all of the ways in which it is possible to do so, other filmmakers may leave their signature only at random points within the diegesis. It would be a mistake to assume that there is no author "inside" a particular corpus of films simply because they have no distinguishing formal trademark. There is little or nothing about the formal operations of either Arzner's or Cavani's work to distinguish it from other contemporaneous and culturally homogeneous work—little or nothing, indeed, to indicate a particular preoccupation on the part of either director with what generally passes for the level of enunciation. However, even at the level of the fiction, there can be all kinds of authorial spoors.

Of course, tracking these spoors is no simple matter. A reasonably experienced viewer can readily understand a heavy reliance on primary colors, collage techniques, and intertextuality to be devices with which Godard identifies, and even a naive viewer would immediately understand his "appearance" in *Far from Vietnam* or *Scénario du Passion* to be an authorial trace. However, a filmmaker's imaginary relation to a given character is often much less evident, particularly so long as it is theoretically isolated from the closely related issue of desire. The moment has arrived when I must not only turn to the second of my authorial categories, but abandon the pretense that it can be so clearly separated from the first. Identification and desire are complexly imbricated with each other—so much so that it is often possible to uncover the former through the latter.

But what would the theorist be looking for if she wanted to find what gives a particular group of films their libidinal coherence? She would be searching not just for the author "inside" the text, but for the text "inside" the author—for the scenario for passion, or, to be more precise, the "scene" of authorial desire. The "scene" to which I refer is what Laplanche and Pontalis, in an inspired passage from *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, call the "fantasmatic," and which they define as that unconscious fantasy or cluster of fantasies which structures not merely dreams and other related psychic formations, but object-choice, identity, and "the subject's life as a whole." [68] The fantasmatic generates erotic tableaux or *combinatoires* in which the subject is arrestingly positioned—whose function is, in fact, precisely to display the subject in a given place. Its original cast of characters would seem to be drawn from the familial reserve, but in the endless secondary productions to which the fantasmatic gives rise, all actors but one are frequently recast. And even that one constant player may assume different roles on different occasions.

Freud has given us some idea of the kinds of fantasies that most frequently come to organize psychic life in this way. Not surprisingly, although he attempts to ground most of them in phylogenesis, all of his examples clearly derive from the Oedipus complex. The list is not, at first glance, very extensive; it includes only the fantasy of the primal scene, the fantasy of seduction, the fantasy of castration, and the fantasy of being beaten.[69] However, this list becomes extremely rich and varied once we have grasped the possible permutations of each fantasy—once all the instinctual vicissitudes have been factored in, the negative as well as the positive Oedipus complex has been taken into account,[70] and theoretical allowance has been made for the fantasizing subject to occupy more than one position in the imaginary tableau. Freud explores

the multiple forms which the beating fantasy is capable of assuming for both the male and the female subject in "A Child is Being Beaten," but we have barely begun to calibrate the textual range of any of the others. [71] And, of course, there may well be other fantasmatics than those to which Freud draws our attention.

Insofar as authorial desire manages to invade a particular corpus, it will be organized around some such structuring "scene" or group of "scenes." It seems to me, for instance, that Fassbinder's cinema revolves around the beating fantasy, and that much of Bertolucci's work is libidinally motived by the male fantasy of maternal seduction. However, these generalizations indicate very little about the actual workings of desire in either body of work, since there are so many ways in which these two fantasies can be elaborated, each with its own consequences not only for object-cathexis, but for identity.

It is at this last juncture that my earlier distinction between authorial identification and authorial desire most completely collapses, since an author's identification with a fictional character will be determined by the subject-position the latter occupies not only within the narrative, but within the fantasmatic "scene" which that narrative traces in some oblique and indirect way. This means that authorial identification and authorial desire are indeed mutually referential—that an investigation of one will sooner or later open on to the other.

Since the subject-position which the author occupies within the cinematic "*mise-en-scène* of desire"[72] may well transgress the biological gender of the author "outside" the text, the question of whether the latter speaks with a "male" or a "female" voice can be answered only through an interrogation of the sort I have been urging. At the same time, this libidinal masculinity or femininity must be read in relation to the biological gender of the biographical author, since it is clearly not the same thing, socially or politically, for a woman to speak with a female voice as it is for a man to do so, and vice versa. All sorts of cultural imperatives dictate a smooth match between biological gender and subject-position, making any deviation a site of potential resistance to sexual difference. As stage 3 of the female version of the beating fantasy would indicate, where the subject sees herself as a group of boys being treated as if they were girls (i.e., occupying an erotically passive position in relation to the father),[73] biological gender can also figure in complex ways within the fantasmatic "scene."

Although this might seem the end point for an investigation of authorial desire, it is in many ways only the beginning. Laplanche and Pontalis make the crucial point that the fantasmatic is "constantly drawing in new material" (p. 317), thereby indicating that it is far from

closed—that, on the contrary, it is always absorbing the world outside. I would go even farther, and argue that it is being continually drawn into new social and political alignments, which may even lead to important "scenic" changes. It is thus important to ask of any authorial desire: How has it assimilated history? And how might it be seen to have acted upon history?

One possible point of entry into the libidinal economy that helps to organize an authorial corpus would be through its nodal points. A nodal point might take the form of a sound, image, scene, place, or action to which that work repeatedly returns, such as Parma and its environs within the films of Bertolucci, dancing within the films of Yvonne Rainer or Sally Potter, or undressing within the films of Cavani. It might also assume the guise of a sound, image, scene, or sequence which is marked through some kind of formal "excess," indicating a psychic condition such as rapture (the revolving door shot with which Leandro Katz's *Splits* concludes),[74] fixation (the frequent close-ups of Terence Stamp's crotch in Pasolini's *Theorem*), or intoxication (the vertiginous play of camera, set, and back projection during the final kiss in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*).

The authorial fantasmatic can also be tracked at the level of the story, at least within those films where story can be said to play even a vestigial role. Like Teresa de Lauretis, I believe that there is always desire "in" narrative,[75] and that in certain cinematic instances that desire can reasonably be attributed to the author "outside" the text. (There is also narrative in desire, or, to put it slightly differently, a fundamentally narrative bent to desire, which is so fully sustained by retrospection and anticipation.) Sometimes the fantasmatic "scene" is sketched by the larger narrative trajectory which is repeatedly mapped by films with the same authorial signature. At other times, as in Duras's *India Song*, or in the films of Mark Rappaport, the fantasmatic "scene" may give rise to an insistently scenic narrative structure.

We have seen that in a film such as *Marnie*, which is in many ways emblematic of classic cinema, authorial subjectivity is constructed through an identification with mastering vision, and with those male characters who might be said to embody that vision. Cavani's films enact a very different narcissistic drama, and one which is uncannily similar to that staged in the opening paragraph of Barthes's "The Death of the Author." Authorial subjectivity is delineated through a series of

young men who renounce power and privilege—who sever their relation to the phallus.

Authorial desire, as I have already indicated, is always closely bound up with authorial subjectivity, but in Cavani's films the two are almost impossible to separate. There is no object as such, to be yearned for or to be possessed; there are only models to imitate, replicate, or incorporate, or intersubjective "spaces" to be shared. This is a cinema of "being," not of "having." In attempting to summarize Cavani's authorial desire, I am thus obliged to repeat what I have already said about her authorial subjectivity: That desire finds expression through the repeated narrative figuration of phallic divestiture—through the fantasmatic "scene" of male castration. But before embarking upon a discussion of this strangely narcissistic desire, I want to confront the difficulties which I imagine most feminist viewers would have with the films within which it is inscribed.

Cavani has to date made nine features,[76] yet not one of them overtly addresses the topic of sexual oppression, or charts any of the usual avenues of reaction against or resistance to that oppression. Nor can any of her films be said to be "about" women in any of the ways that *Riddles of the Sphinx*, Ulrike Ottinger's *Madam X*, or Sally Potter's *The Gold Diggers* might be said to be. This apparent inattentiveness to sexual difference seems all the more perverse given the sorts of female characters who inhabit Cavani's films (Antigone in *The Cannibals*, Lou-Andreas Salome in *Beyond Good and Evil*, a female concentration camp inmate in *The Night Porter*, a Japanese/German lesbian couple in *The Berlin Affair*)—characters who virtually invite feminist analysis.[77]

Moreover, instead of moving her female characters beyond masochism, Cavani demonstrates the fatal lure of that position for her *male* characters. *Francesco d'Assisi, Milarepa*, Antigone's male comrade in *The Cannibals*, Max in *The Night Porter*, and Paul Ree in *Beyond Good and Evil* all occupy subject-positions which are more classically "feminine" than "masculine"—subject-positions demanding of them passivity, suffering, and renunciation. Since the interiority of these characters is often objectified in domestic settings and rituals, and since it is privileged over action, they also seem to have appropriated the cinematic space traditionally reserved for the female subject.[78]

Cavani's cinema proves politically intractable in other respects, as well. While never for a moment relaxing her critique of the existing symbolic order, she generally makes men rather than women the vehicle of that critique. Francesco, Galileo, Milarepa, Nietzsche, and the male novelist in *The Guest* are all discursively at odds with the culture in

which they find themselves, and thus function to varying degrees as spokesmen for change. Figures such as Lou-Andreas Salome or the female patient in *The Guest*, on the other hand, seem absorbed in much more private forms of resistance (indeed, Antigone in *The Cannibals* is the only one of Cavani's women who could be said to be "politically engaged").

Men enjoy a privileged place in Cavani's extracinematic discourse, as well. She invariably talks about her films in terms of their central male actors (Lou Castel, Pierre Clementi, Lajos Belazsovits, Dirk Bogarde), actors who she insists "become" the parts they play (thus she is fond of asserting that the character of Max in *The Night Porter* "stole" Bogarde's "soul," and that Castel identified with the figure of Francesco so completely that he also gave away all his possessions). [79] These condensations point to Cavani's intense investment in the subject-positions occupied by certain of her male characters, as does another of the recurrent tropes in her extracinematic discourse—her remarkable claim that "each of my [male]actors looks a bit like me," a claim which points with startling clarity to the imaginary relation at the heart of that investment.[80]

However, it is a striking fact that the male characters who dominate Cavani's films retreat from power rather than accede to it; that they entertain a highly problematic relation to discourse; and that they interact with women in ways which defy the usual heterosexual conventions. Indeed, these figures exist on the margins or at the limits of their culture. Francesco gives away his large patrimony and embraces a life of poverty, humility, and (increasingly over the course of the film that bears his name) silence. Milarepa abandons the power-knowledge which he has mastered, and by means of which he has destroyed an entire village, for a discursive apprenticeship that demands of him the utmost self-abnegation. Galileo aligns himself with a discourse which is completely disruptive of the symbolic order within which he resides, while the Pierre Clementi figure in *The Cannibals* speaks a language which no one else knows, and which involves tokens rather than linguistic signs. The male protagonist of *The Night Porter* not only declines to have his crimes erased, and his lost privileges restored to him, but abandons the present, language, and eventually life itself.[81] Finally, one of the male characters in *Beyond Good and Evil*—Paul Ree—chooses to occupy a female subject-position, while the other—Nietzsche—lapses into madness. These figures are thus in some peculiar way simultaneously "male" and "not-male." What desire finds expression through this constant return to and preoccupation with male subjectivity? And what dream is fulfilled through the stipulation that this subjectivity be im-

paired in some radical way—that it be located at the boundaries of sexual difference, beyond the phallic pale?

The second of these questions can perhaps best be answered through a brief look at the earliest of Cavani's male characters, Francesco d'Assisi. Since the film which is named after him is structured around a series of quite literal divestitures, each of which marks a stage in Francesco's constantly intensifying cultural estrangement, it makes unusually explicit Cavani's obsession with the self-mutilating male subject, and maps out that narrative trajectory through which her authorial desire will be repeatedly inscribed in the films she directed in the sixties and early to mid-seventies.

The first of Francesco's divestitures occurs near the beginning of the film, when he gives away a rich coat of armor to a less wealthy friend, and almost immediately thereafter abandons his knightly service and his chivalric ambitions. It is quickly followed by another deliberate self-loss: Francesco goes to Rome on a religious pilgrimage, but once he arrives, he finds himself completely preoccupied with the dispossessed—with the beggars, the lepers, the orphans. Turning away from the riches of the Church, he trades clothing with one of the derelicts and sits down among the rest of them to beg. An even more extreme dislocation of Francesco from his symbolic legacy occurs in a courtroom, where he is on trial for filial disobedience (he has given large sums of money to a church in need of restoration, and his father considers the gift a theft). At a key moment in the proceedings, when his patrimony becomes an issue, he strips off his garments and hands them to his father with the words: "Your goods. Now I can say, 'My Father, who art in *heaven*.'" With this gesture, Francesco divests himself of his worldly possessions, his merchant class, and his phallic legacy. (Throughout Cavani's cinema, the removal of clothing functions as an insistent metaphor for the renunciation of power and privilege.) He also assumes a very different kind of paternal lineage, one predicated on negation and suffering.

A later scene emphasizes the *jouissance* that accompanies such voluntary sacrifices. In that scene, Francesco and two of his followers dispose of all their remaining possessions in the marketplace, handing out furniture, clothing, and gold coins. After everything has been relinquished and the townspeople have disappeared with their new wealth, the three men are almost capsized with laughter. That laughter attests to the collapse of social hierarchy and distinction, and consequently conforms in certain key respects to Bakhtin's description of medieval humor. Like the merriment generated by carnival, that induced by Francesco's deliberate self-loss attests to a dispersed subjectivity, and to a "social consciousness of all the people":

> Man experiences this flow of time in the festive marketplace, in the carnival crowd, as he comes into contact with other bodies of varying age and social caste. He is aware of being a member of a continually growing and renewed people. That is why festive folk laughter … means the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts. [82]

The final and in many ways the most important of all Francesco's divestitures takes place near the end of the film, on the occasion of a rare feast. The now-numerous Franciscans sit down at a table and begin enthusiastically demolishing a chicken. Francesco, disguised as a beggar, keeps holding out his hand to the diners, but he is given only bones and scraps of skin. Finally the others notice that he is not at the table, and begin looking around for him. When they discover the identity of the beggar, they are horrified at their previous miserliness, and lavish food upon him.

The point is that in the wake of one symbolic order, another has already sprung up—one in which priests are more important than beggars. In order to challenge that new hierarchy, Francesco has been obliged to situate himself on the side of the dispossessed, which in effect means divesting himself of himself. The speech which he makes on this occasion is central to any understanding not merely of this film, but (as I will attempt to show) of the whole of Cavani's cinema and the authorial desire that circulates within it as well: "Who do you think you are? To treat a poor person badly is like throwing a bone to Christ. … Your hand is equal to mine—look! The same with the eyes and mouth. His hunger is like yours. … There is no difference. None. No difference." During the entire last half of the film, Francesco struggles to make good that utopian assertion, to insist upon the equality between himself and those around him by steadfastly refusing power, privilege, and discursive authority.

One facet of that refusal is an absolutely literal reading of the Scriptures. The cultural regime disclosed to us at the beginning of *Francesco d'Assisi* is one in which all access to the discourse of Christianity is tightly controlled by the Church. That control takes the form of an elaborate hermeneutic mediation, whereby scriptural passages are available only as signifiers within a second order of signification, their denotative value having been almost completely effaced. In other words, an endlessly proliferating commentary intervenes between the Bible and the layperson. Cavani's film suggests that this commentary has three important effects. It functions to contain any potentially disruptive elements within the original discourse, and so to render it at all points compatible with the existing symbolic order. It also closes that discourse to all but a few select users. Finally, this interpretive scheme

provides the means by which difference—hierarchy, class, division—is introduced into the world.

Francesco adopts a radically opposed approach to the Scriptures. For him the Bible as a whole enjoys the status of the logos, and he struggles constantly to reenact that linguistic transmutation in his own life—to incarnate its words through action and gestures. Thus, he not only insists upon a purely denotative reading of scriptural passages, but he refuses to distinguish between signifieds and referents. For instance, when two of his followers come to him for guidance, he opens the Bible at random and reads: "If you want to be perfect, take all that you have and give it to the poor … take with you neither silver, nor gold, nor change of tunic, nor belt, nor sandals." Examining his own clothing, Francesco discovers it to be incompatible in several details with this recipe for perfection, and promptly removes his belt and sandals.

It is, of course, extremely significant that this passage, to which Francesco frequently returns, describes a divestiture which leads to the abolition of difference. Increasingly, as the film progresses, it becomes clear that only a discursive divestiture is really capable of effecting such an abolition. For a time Francesco attempts to forestall difference through a kind of punctilious repetition—to close the gap between discourse and the materiality of day-to-day life by conforming his physical existence to the text of the New Testament—but he is ultimately obliged to confront the fact that his everyday activities have acquired the status of signifiers to the people who surround him. The other Franciscans gravitate to him as the representative of a new discourse, the purveyor of a new form of power-knowledge; against his will, they transform his casual utterances and gestures into *exempla*. When, during a large convocation of Franciscans, he is asked to write down the rules of their order, and to supplement the Gospels with a commentary, he flees from the appeal, whispering to himself: "You will be held responsible for all vain words."

This linguistic paranoia is a constant feature of Cavani's films. In *Galileo*, for instance, discourse is grasped precisely as power-knowledge, while in *The Cannibals* and *The Night Porter*, language is virtually synonymous with dominant culture. In the second of these films, the two representatives of a failed revolution communicate without words, relying instead on a rhetoric of food, clothing, and gestures. Their silence assumes an overtly political dimension during a torture session, in which the military police attempt to extract speech from Antigone. In *The Night Porter*, language functions as a fascist tool, a mechanism for "binding" guilty and unpleasurable memories. The central characters, Max and Lucia, refuse any such solution, immersing themselves instead

in the sensory and affective intensity of their shared past. However, it is to *Beyond Good and Evil* that we must turn in order to glimpse clearly the desire which, as I will attempt to show, motivates this constantly reenacted drama of discursive divestiture—the desire, that is, to exceed sexual difference. That film focuses on a philosophically inflected *ménage à trois* whose aim is the collapse of traditional sexual boundaries. In an interview with the French press immediately before its release, Cavani described *Beyond Good and Evil* in very much the terms through which the film presents itself to me, i.e., as a story about sexual reversibility:

> This life between three people [involves] a transgression of what might be termed the "masculine" and the "feminine"; sometimes the man seems to be Lou, and Fritz and Paul the woman. … The major interest of this … enounter is finally that they come together to create a new species of three-headed creature. [83]

At least two of Cavani's other films—*The Cannibals* and *The Night Porter*—work in a similar if less overt way to erase the boundaries separating male from female subjectivity, positing highly transversal and unstable heterosexual relationships. Antigone and her male companion, for example, undergo a series of identical clothing changes, each of which affirms their mutual identity. Because the clothing is in two instances a parody of patriarchal dress (Antigone and her friend don black-and-white clerical robes on one occasion, and the uniforms of military police on another), it is disruptive of sexual difference at another level, as well. *The Night Porter* effects a parallel disruption whenever it shows Max and Lucia trading parts in their sadomasochistic drama.

In each case, the negation of difference is made possible only through the willingness of a male character—Paul Ree in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Clementi's nameless character in *The Cannibals*, Max in *The Night Porter*—to divest himself of the phallus, just as Francesco does in the courtyard scene. The recurrence of these marginal men inscribes into the narrative of Cavani's films the desire for a kind of zero-degree subjectivity, a subjectivity which escapes full symbolic structuration, and which in so doing slips through the defiles of gender.

Cavani's cinema would consequently seem to be fueled by the dream of androgyny. I believe that this is indeed ultimately the case, but as in "The Death of the Author," there is another more immediately pressing goal. Significantly, what we see enacted over and over again in that cinema is a narrative event nearly identical to that through which Barthes dramatizes the demise of the traditional (male) author, and the production of a feminine singing voice. Here, too, male castration becomes the agency not merely whereby the masculine subject is forced to

confront his own lack, and is remade in the image of woman, but whereby the female author constructs herself as a speaking subject, and emerges as a figure "inside" the text.

The preceding discussion accounts at least in part for the continuing preoccupation of Cavani's cinema with divestiture, but it does not even begin to address the first of the questions posed above—the question as to why that preoccupation requires the support of a male representation. I will pursue the answer to that question through the film in Cavani's corpus which is both most superficially resistant to a feminist reading and most explicitly concerned with the loss of difference: *Milarepa*.

Milarepa is ostensibly the story of a Tibetan yogi and his reincarnation as a British student of philosophy in the late sixties. The film is problematic in a variety of ways, most particularly in its emphasis once again upon the figure of a young man, and in its inability to confront any of its female characters in a direct or sustained manner. Indeed, the camera seems largely incapable of looking at one of those characters, the young man's sister, and at a certain juncture she simply disappears. Another of the film's women, whose meaning seems almost entirely circumscribed by her role as the grand master's wife, functions in such a subordinate and nursing capacity that I find myself barely able to look at her even when the camera does. The final female character, the mother, seems at first glance to play both a very minor and a very unsympathetic part.

At the same time, I would argue that this is the film in which Cavani's authorial subjectivity and authorial desires are most oppositionally inscribed—the film in which both work most insistently against sexual difference. Indeed, I am prepared to state the case even more forcefully: The centrality of the male protagonist works to facilitate rather than to obstruct the author's (as well as the viewer's) identification with a female subject position.

The principle of reversibility is encoded into the film at every level, working to deny the differences between mother and son, male character and author "outside" the text, and authorial and spectatorial subjectivity. The film's plot consists of two closely connected and mutually mirroring narratives, in both of which the same five actors prominently figure. There is also a marked visual similarity between mother and son, a similarity which is compounded by the rather "masculine" features and voice of the former, and the "feminine" appearance

and manner of the latter. Finally, the narrative organization works to promote on the part of the viewer the same intense identification through which the author constructs herself as speaking subject, i.e., identification with the central male character.

The first of the two narratives revolves around the shared obsession of a student, Lumley (Lajos Belazsovits), and his professor, Bennett (Paolo Bonacelli), with a book about Milarepa, a Tibetan yogi. The professor, his wife, Karin (Marcella Michelangeli), and Lumley decide to retrace the itinerary of the yogi, and set off for the Orient. On the way to the airport, they have an automobile accident. The professor's wife is sent for help, and in her absence the two men talk about Milarepa. Their conversation—or, rather, their meditation—gradually gives way to the second narrative, in which Lumley appears as Milarepa; the professor as Marpa, the grand master from whom Milarepa learns yoga; and the professor's wife as Damema, Marpa's wife. At the end of the second narrative, help arrives for the two men in the first narrative, and the critically injured professor is taken away in an ambulance. The film concludes with several brief parallel shots of Lumley walking along the side of the highway, and Mila moving in a solitary fashion through the Tibetan landscape.

The other important relationship articulated by the frame narrative is that between Lumley and his mother. There are only two exchanges between them, but both are characterized by a high degree of intimacy. The first of these exchanges occurs in the kitchen, around a table holding Lumley's translation of the book about Milarepa. Lumley makes some coffee for his mother, who has just returned from work, and the two have an emotionally charged conversation about the possibility of moving beyond difference to a condition of intersubjectivity:

> LUMLEY: You remember the story of Milarepa?
>
> MOTHER: How could I forget? I may be ignorant, but I never forget the things you tell me. Then there are all those coincidences with us. …
>
> LUMLEY: Some. Perhaps that's why I'm so fond of it.
>
> MOTHER: The episode of the farewell made me cry, do you remember?
>
> LUMLEY: You're a sentimentalist, mother. Listen: "The idea of the void generates piety/ Piety abolishes the difference between us and others/The interpenetration of the self and others achieves community. … [84]

This scene establishes not only the intense identification of Lumley and his mother with the characters of Mila and his mother, but the imaginary basis of their own relationship, a relationship which permits the transfer of his desires onto her, and later—within the second narrative—hers onto him. It unfolds through a number of the lengthy medium and medium-long shots of which Cavani is so fond, panning

rather than cutting from mother to son as the two move around the room and Lumley makes some coffee. However, seven sets of medium-close shot/reverse shots, each of very brief duration, provide the visual analogue to the conversation quoted above. This dense cluster of what is a relatively rare shot formation within Cavani's cinema effects at the formal level what the strong physical similarity between the two characters achieves at the level of the fiction—it blurs the distinctions between them, binding them in a way that affirms their fundamental unity. Moreover, the literal displacement of the camera from one face to another points to the psychic transfer at the center of Cavani's cinema: the transfer from female to male and, ultimately, back again. [85]

(This scene is followed by a shot which further underscores the importance of imaginary replication within *Milarepa's* visual and psychic economy. That shot focuses in close-up on a bronze plaque attached to the door of Bennett's apartment, so highly polished that it reflects the street in front, with its cars and trees. The camera holds on the plaque as Lumley comes into frame, mirroring his face back at him and us.)

The second of the exchanges between mother and son in the frame narrative takes place at night, after Lumley has paid a visit to the Bennetts. He walks into the bedroom where she is sleeping with his young sister, and awakens her. She lights a cigarette and talks sleepily with him about his proposed journey. He asks: "Would you like to go?" and she responds: "Go on! You know it would please me." After a moment Lumley puts out her cigarette, turns off the light, and leaves. His performance of the gestures conventionally associated with motherhood projects her into the symbolic position of a child, once again pointing to the reversibility of their relationship. This scene also relies heavily upon the shot/reverse shot formation, cutting back and forth between mother and son nine times.

Although the mother does not make the trip to the airport with the others the next day, she does reappear, as Mila's mother, in the inner narrative. She has in a sense been incorporated into Mila's fantasy, just as she will later be incorporated into his body. Thus, although she is shown to be enclosed within precisely that confined space within which classic cinema always attempts to hold woman—although she is literally left behind to wait for the hero's return as he sets out upon his journey—she at the same time makes that journey *through* him, much as the author herself does. Much more is at issue here than vicarious experience; Mila's mother is actually *reborn* narratively through the force of his imagination, which is itself based upon his extraordinary psychic community with her. We are consequently given to understand that

these two characters come to realize the intersubjectivity about which they earlier converse, and that Lumley carries his mother with him into their shared dream. (Significantly, that dream gives rise to another, into which the mother is once again transported.)

The mother's desires are much more fully foregrounded in the second narrative than in the first, as is her social and economic position. That narrative begins with the reading of her husband's will, a document which makes no mention of either her or her daughter. It bequeaths half the dead man's property to his brother, and half to his son upon maturity. The mother does not challenge the will; she asks only that it be carried out—that Mila's uncle relinquish the property which rightfully belongs to his nephew. However, her seeming compliance in her own disenfranchisement is belied by the intensity of her appeal, and by her murderous rage when the uncle ignores what she has to say. She sends Mila off to master a discourse capable of leveling their village, selling her few possessions to finance the journey. She tells him: "You must learn an oath with which you can move things."

Mila studies magic with a holy man, and eventually succeeds in destroying the uncle's house and killing everyone inside. The film makes it clear that in so doing, he opens himself up to his mother's desires—that those desires have been displaced onto him as the agent of their fulfillment. After Mila has successfully employed his destructive powers, the holy man remarks that "she alone [exercised] this power," and two sets of corroborating images lend credence to his assertion.

The first of these sets of images begins with a frontal shot of Mila sitting cross-legged in a cell with upraised fingers, meditating on the spell which will level the uncle's house. A brief medium close-up of the mother opening the door of her hut follows. She looks directly at the camera. The film cuts from her gaze to Mila in his cell, suggesting that he is what she sees. These three shots constitute an "impossible" three-way shot/reverse shot formation, denying the physical distance separating mother from son, and affirming their psychic continuity. Thus, as in the frame narrative, the mother is shown to be confined within the closed space of the home only to have that confinement denied at a more complex level of the narrative organization. Once again she in fact journeys far away from her native village, in and through Mila.

The second set of corroborating images reveals the mother jubilantly shaking her walking stick in front of the ruins of the uncle's house, while shouting: "Glory to the gods! Glory to the Holy Lama, to the Buddha, to the Darhma! I am happy, I am happy, I am happy! I've waited so many years!" The extremity of her joy, and the suggestion of a gratification long deferred, identify the mother as the diegetic point of

origin for the desire which finds fulfillment in the collapse of the village—in the collapse, that is, of a cultural order in which woman figures as lack, and from whose privileges she is entirely barred.

Mila's brief return home after the death of his uncle is the last time we see his mother alive. However, after he has mastered a much higher level of the yoga discourse, he visits the village again, and finds her decomposing skeleton. He takes away some fragments of that skeleton, worn inside his garments, against the skin. When he comes to a waterfall, he pulverizes them, pours them into a vessel of water, and drinks the mixture. Through this cannibalistic ingestion, Mila completes the condensation of himself and his mother toward which all of the earlier imaginary alignments have pointed. He eradicates the differences between them, achieving that interpenetration of self and Other about which Lumley and his mother dream in the frame narrative. This maternal incorporation stands in oppositional contrast to the literal paternal incorporation fantasized by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*, as well as to the psychic one by means of which the superego comes into existence. Through it Mila not only takes the voice and desires of his mother into himself, but he becomes the subject of Cavani's authorial speech, the one identification facilitating the other.

It is important to note that before this can happen, Mila must become in certain respects "not male"—he must divest himself of his destructive power and of the privileges which that power confers, and step into a more classically female subject position. As with Max in *The Night Porter* and Paul Ree in *Beyond Good and Evil*, this shift is effected through a ritual submission to pain. Between his two visits to his old village, Mila undergoes a lengthy and extremely severe ordeal at the hands of Marpa, the grand master of the yoga discourse. Mila seeks out Marpa in order to be educated by him in the next level of that discourse. Hoping to persuade the reluctant master that he will be a worthy apprentice, Mila employs his destructive magic a second time, toppling a nearby structure. Marpa refuses to impart any knowledge to Mila until the latter rebuilds the structure, stone by stone. Significantly, it is now the male subject who is associated with the interiority of a bound space.

During the extended restoration, Mila is denied access not only to the discourse of yoga, but to the master's tent and the various other privileges enjoyed by the elect. He works from sunrise to sunset, and the labor he performs leaves his back bruised and bleeding. He is neither clothed nor fed adequately, and Marpa frequently reviles him and forces him to begin all over. Mila is thus obliged to occupy a completely subordinate and suffering position, and one given over to repetition and closure rather than narrative movement. An exchange which occurs in

the script, although not in the film, suggests that he is in the process stripped of all the phallic attributes of male subjectivity.

This exchange takes place between Mila and his lost sister, who disappears abruptly from the film after her brother's initial departure. She has been searching for him since her mother's death, but when she finally encounters him, bathing in the waterfall where he drinks the maternal potion, she fails to recognize him. He has undergone a profound transformation since she last saw him, a transformation which seems to have involved a kind of demasculinization. Not only does she look in vain for the signifiers which would permit her to acknowledge Mila as her brother, but she is disconcerted by the seeming disjunction between his anatomy and his subject-position:

> SISTER: I'm looking for Mila, my brother. You can't be he. … My brother was powerful. … (She covers her face in embarrassment over his nakedness.)

> MILA: Sister, maiden inheriting chasteness, you blush over something which is not shameful. … if you stop to distinguish the sex of a body, do not look at it with impure eyes.

> SISTER: Don't you do great feats any more?

> MILA: I feed like the birds, I warm myself like a bear. …

> SISTER: Holy men are covered with silk … they have gold and servants.

> MILA: I am not a holy man, or anything else.

> SISTER: What are you then?

> MILA: I don't know how to define myself … Buddha has smiled on me. Renounce all the laws of this world, and let us go to Laphis on the snow. [86]

As this deleted passage makes clear, the discourse of yoga is a metaphor in *Milarepa* for the collapse of all the binary oppositions that support the present symbolic order, and that keep power and privilege in place—particularly those bearing upon sexual difference, with its "impure" or culturally coercive vision of biological distinction. These are the "laws" whose complete abolition Mila urges his sister to help him effect. But why should the appeal be delivered by him rather than by her? By a voice which, while it is no longer phallic, and perhaps no longer even "male," nevertheless issues from a biologically masculine body? Why, in other words, would the author "outside" the text speak at this critical juncture of the script through a male rather than a female character?

Let us return, for a moment, to Mila's mother. Her absence from her husband's will, her marginal existence within the village, and her confinement to the family hut are surely emblematic of female subjectivity as most women live it within the present social and cultural regime, both in the East and in the West, as are the conditions under which she

functions in her more contemporary incarnation: unskilled labor during the day, domestic labor in the evening, relegated by both to a life of what she herself characterizes as "ignorance." This exclusion from symbolic privilege can only generate, with all the force of a historical imperative, the desire for discursive power—for what the mother calls "an oath with which you can move things."

The film suggests that this is a necessary desire for the female subject, even as it dreams of a moment beyond it: of the moment when, having acceded to power, the female subject can divest herself on it. In *Milarepa*, as in *Francesco d'Assisi* and to some degree *The Cannibals*, Cavani is obliged to rely upon male characters to express this dream because they alone occupy a position from which divestiture is possible. Her constant return to male subjectivity speaks to the desire to participate in a renunciation which is not yet possible for the female subject (which indeed can be seen only as a dangerous lure at this moment in her history)—the renunciation of power, in all its many social, cultural, political, and economic guises.

The extraordinary invitation held out by Mila to his sister in the conversation quoted above contains the utopian vision of a subjective space beyond sexual difference—a space made possible not only by male, but by female divestiture. One can only guess at the psychic and political constraints which resulted in its excision. However, that vision persists at the latent level of the text, and is quite easily exhumed from what remains of the waterfall scene. Mila's cannibalistic incorporation of his mother permits her to participate in his liberating divestiture, and with him to transcend sexual difference. Together they make the journey to "the snows of Laphis," a journey that leads definitively away from both narrative and ideological closure.

The recurrence in Cavani's films of the marginal male subject constructs her authorial subjectivity at the site of that divestiture. Through its extensive use of doubles and reflecting narrative elements, *Milarepa* makes that construction unusually explicit, foregrounding the imaginary relation not only of Lumley and Mila, Bennett and Marpa, but of mother and son, and Cavani and her male protagonist. The film's equalizing drift also clarifies precisely what is at stake in this imaginary relation. However, at the same time that it points definitively beyond sexual difference, male divestiture in *Milarepa* has a quite opposite immediate effect: It allows us to hear a voice which neither originates nor defers, but which articulates a narrative and characterological system through which it constructs itself both as author and—in the most denatured sense possible—as female.

But what is the fantasmatic "scene" toward whose recovery we

have been moving, and which is at the basis of this quite remarkable authorial inscription? It seems to me that it is a variant of the fantasy Freud codified in "A Child Is Being Beaten," a variant which might be titled "A Child Is Being Castrated." What justifies me in substituting the action of castration for that of whipping is not only Freud's observation in "The Economic Problem of Masochism" that masochistic fantasies frequently signify castration, [87] but his suggestion in "A Child Is Being Beaten" that "punishments and humiliations of another kind may be substituted for the beating itself"[88] *during the transformation of the second phase into the third phase*. Let us look briefly at all three phases.

Freud transcribes the first phase of the beating fantasy told to him by his female patients with the following linguistic formula: "My father is beating the child [whom I hate]." The second phase reads: "I am being beaten by my father," and the third phase: "Some boys are being beaten [by a paternal representative. I am probably looking on]."[89] Freud explains that the first phase is really only a vague memory, and that fantasy proper begins with the second phase, which substitutes the subject herself for the anonymous child. Positive Oedipal desire intervenes between phase 1 and phase 2, with the latter functioning simultaneously to punish that desire and to satisfy it through a regression from genital to anal sexuality. Because phase 2 anchors desire to masochism, it might be said to be the most exemplary of all female fantasies. However, because it is so deeply repressed, it is recoverable only as a "construction of analysis." What takes its place as a conscious fantasy is phase 3, in which a group of boys fill in for the female subject as the targets of pleasurable parental punishment.

Freud maintains that this gender change is motivated only by the demands of censorship—that it is a simple disguise. However, as I have argued at length elsewhere,[90] the final phase of the girl's beating fantasy is capable in addition of satisfying at least three transgressive desires—the desire that it be boys rather than girls who are loved/disciplined in this way; the desire to be a boy while being so treated; and, finally, the desire to occupy a male subject-position, but one under the sign of femininity rather than of masculinity. Since the fantasmatic "scene" is constantly assimilating "new material," it is presumably possible for these desires to be historically activated, and it seems to me that this is precisely what has happened within Cavani's cinema.

For what is the exchange that occurs between Cavani as author "outside" the text and those male characters who represent her within the text if not a restaging of that fantasmatic drama whereby a girl turns herself into a group of boys only in order to position them as female subjects, i.e., to "castrate" them? Cavani's cinema not only reenacts

phase 3 of the beating fantasy, it also (as I have attempted to indicate) makes it the libidinal basis for a radical attack on sexual difference, the agency whereby the phallus is dethroned, and "femininity" made the very norm of subjectivity. A fantasy which would seem to lead inexorably to the maintenance of existing gender categories, and to a permanent investment in the present symbolic order, is thus reworked in such a way as to transform both utterly, at least within the cinematic fiction. Is it necessary to add that it is through feminism that history can be seen to have worked in this way upon the *mise-en-scène* of masochistic desire?

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault suggests that if a group of signs can be called a "statement," it is because "the position of the subject can be assigned":

> To describe a formulation *qua* statement does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he says (or wanted to say, or said without wanting to); but in determining what position can and must be occupied by an individual if he is to be the subject of it. [91]

Until now I have stressed precisely what Foucault seems prepared to dismiss here—the relations between the author and what s/he has to say, or, to put it rather differently, between the author "outside" the text and the author "inside" the text. I have attempted, in other words, to demonstrate the key role played within the libidinal economy of Cavani's films by the recurring figure of the marginal male subject, a figure who functions as a kind of nodal point for the authorial dream, and who casts onto the director "herself" the image of what she would like to be. (It is through a curious reversal of this operation that Cavani can be heard to say: "Each of my actors looks a bit like me.")

However, the structuring force of this authorial dream extends beyond the site occupied by Cavani-as-speaking-subject. Foucault is correct to suggest that there is a more crucial project than determining the relation between the author and what he or she says, and that is to establish the position which the reader or viewer will come to occupy through identifying with the subject of a given statement. That position is indeed "assignable" (or reassignable). All of this is another way of saying that the reader or viewer may be captated by the authorial system of a given text or group of texts.

My own fascination with Cavani's marginal male characters attests to precisely such a captation—suggests, that is, that I in some way participate in the desire for divestiture that circulates through *Francesco*

d'Assisi and *Milarepa*, and that my own authorial subjectivity in some way reflects or replicates the one those texts project. I have, in fact, pursued the image of a lacking or impaired male subjectivity across the breadth of this book, and through a diverse group of texts: Freud's essays on fetishism and sexual difference, Powell's *Peeping Tom*, Chion's *La voix au cinéma*, Coppola's *The Conversation*, Barthes's "The Death of the Author" and *The Pleasure of the Text*, and (finally) Cavani's *Francesco d'Assisi* and *Milarepa*. I can trace my obsession with this image back a long way, and it undoubtedly goes back much farther. However, the moment when it first imposed itself upon my consciousness was while I was watching and writing about another film by Liliana Cavani—*The Night Porter*. In some curious way, my own authorial voice is thus precisely an "assigned" one, from her to me.

But I have also found myself in a variety of more properly "acoustic" mirrors over the course of writing this book—in Helen's questioning voice in *Peeping Tom*, the loathingly self-referential voices in *Journeys from Berlin/71*, Potter's pleasure-seeking voice in *The Gold Diggers*, and the voice "apart" which narrates *Riddles of the Sphinx*, to name but a few. The preceding pages have thus been a self-analysis of sorts, and like Freud's own self-analysis, mine has led inexorably to the castration crisis and the Oedipus complex. However, both of those organizing concepts have undergone a curious metamorphosis in their displacement from the male to the female subject. Freud's anatomical castration has given way to an insistence upon the crucial importance of symbolic castration, effected through separation from the mother and the entry into a linguistic order which anticipates and exceeds the subject. And the positive Oedipus complex has yielded theoretical priority to its "feminine" counterpart, the negative Oedipus complex, site both of desire for and identification with the mother, and thus generative not only of narcissism, but—as I have attempted to demonstrate—of feminism as well. Of course I am assuming, much like Freud before me, that my self-analysis has been simultaneously an analysis of female subjectivity —that the reader of this book will also have found herself within some of the acoustic mirrors which it has placed before her.