

the process of this diagnosis, the very notion of the 'symptom' has undergone a major change in meaning, and with it, the fundamental assumption of psychoanalysis, namely that of an unconscious, somehow hidden beneath or behind consciousness.

Žižek posits the necessity of the 'symptom' as the condition of the subject to be able to live social reality at all. Politically, he argues that liberalism, love of freedom, or the hype of virtual reality are so many signs of a new authoritarianism (the obscene Father/superego, the Big Other reinvested with 'enjoyment') whom we are more and more exposed to: The new authoritarianism which lacks authority. In a sense, Žižek picks up the old Hegelian dialectic, according to which the more we think we are free, the more we are in chains (Kojève–Sartre–Althusser: the dialectic of freedom and necessity). In which case, Žižek wears his 'Lacan' as a kind of disguise (a madcap-jester gesture, rather like the persona of Hitchcock, his favourite director), in order to 'pass' as postmodern. To politicize psychoanalysis and give it a new ethical dimension, Kant is reread after deconstruction, and Hegel after Freud. For if Lacan argued that Freud added the unconscious to Hegelian philosophy, then Žižek, in the guise of the New Lacanian, gives a Hegelian reinterpretation of the role of the unconscious.

Strange as it may seem, the New Hollywood, according to Žižek, is Lacanian, insofar as it struggles to reinvent a tragic view of life at the very moment when the experience economy of unlimited fun reigns supreme. While American technological supremacy is unchallenged, and biogenetics has reached a new stage of 'can do' pragmatism, the artefacts of the US dream machine quiver with anxiety about history, suggesting that without a symbolic order, without Oedipal identity and an ego, America is lost to the Real and the Superego. It can be seen as a very 'conservative' message. Yet insofar as they seem impelled to invent a new ethical imperative out of postmodern subjectivity and post-colonial identity, films such as *Back to the Future* are remarkably alert to the 'perversely paradoxical' travels and travails enjoined upon those who have to dream the past in order to remember the future.

9 Feminism, Foucault, and Deleuze (*The Silence of the Lambs*)

Introduction

Critics of psychoanalysis and psychosemiotics in film studies may well argue that 'apparatus theory' separates the eye as vision from the I of grammar and speech; that it divides the eye as mind from the eye as body, and that it cuts the eye of perception off from the other organs of embodied sensation. These objections could be summarized by saying that the emphasis on specular or ocular perception in classical film theory and Lacanian film analysis has systematically ignored the importance of the spectator's body as a continuous perceptual surface and an organizing principle of spatial and temporal orientation. When theorizing the film experience, in other words, psychoanalytic film studies treat the spectator–screen relationship as if it were based on a perceptual 'illusion' (by suggesting that objects which move on the screen are really there), which in turn assumes that vision is always transitive, i.e. a matter of 'seeing something', when it could just as well be aspect seeing, or 'seeing-as' (Wittgenstein). At the same time, apparatus theory unwittingly reinforces (bourgeois) ideology's disembodied, decontextualized, dematerialized version of watching movies, while also critiquing (with its call for 'anti-illusionism') mainstream cinema for producing such alienated forms of human experience. The change in emphasis implicit in apparatus theory from Freud to Lacan, from narrative emplotment (the Oedipal trajectory of structuralist analysis) to the dynamics of intersubjectivity (where viewer-identity is suspended and deferred in the mirror-stage) can only, according to such a line of argument, perpetuate this impoverished or indeed erroneous idea of cinematic spectatorship. Even the New Lacanians, whose shift of attention from the (optical) look to the (discursive) gaze, from the Imaginary/Symbolic to the Real, and from image to the sound-and-image field elaborates a different understanding of the interplay of perception,

cognition, and sensation, could be charged with not having mitigated this state of affairs but merely – or needlessly – complicated it.

These and similar constructions of the cinema as psychic, perceptual, or projective illusion have been the point of attack of cognitivists and analytical philosophers, who question the notion that in the cinema one is dealing with either illusion/simulation or with alienation/reification. They argue that the perception, recognition, and apprehension of objects, people, or places in the moving image need involve neither deception nor suspension of disbelief (Carroll 1988b: 89ff.). Apprehension and comprehension in the cinema call upon the same cognitive faculties and perceptual activities as ordinary seeing and knowing: 'The theory that [moving] pictures are cognitive or epistemic illusions ... has been thoroughly debunked and can be laid to rest' (Allen 1997: 78–9.)

Yet many film scholars not persuaded by the debunking efforts of cognitivists but equally dissatisfied with psychoanalytic or Marxist accounts have in recent years turned to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his two cinema books (*The Movement Image*, 1986, and *The Time Image*, 1989) when looking for an alternative conceptualization of the film experience as an embodied, spatio-temporal event. Deleuze is not a film theorist in the commonly accepted sense. As has often been pointed out, he theorizes *with* rather than *about* the cinema (Stam 2000: 258; Pisters 2001: 17). What seems to have drawn him to the cinema is the relation of bodies, matter, and perception, seen as a traditional philosophical problem, and in the twentieth century most vigorously explored by phenomenology. Although it is Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1991) that he cites for such key concepts of his cinema books as the crystal image, rather than Husserl or Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze is as much a philosopher of being, becoming, and time as they are. Where he is innovative is that for him the moving image (and thus the cinema) is the most philosophically rich instance of the inseparability of matter, temporality, and consciousness, which in his view is as decisively indicative of our modernity as, say, binoculars or the *camera obscura* were for Cartesian philosophy. According to Deleuze, the problem with traditional film theory is twofold:

- First, it conceives of the cinema as (static, photographic) images that move, rather than as movement-images and time-images. These for Deleuze are not bound to a specific material support (whether retinal, photographic, or digital) but are realities in their own right, part of the energies, the flux and intensities that embed thought and the material world in what might be called the 'supermedium' of multi-layered durations and coextensive temporalities (Deleuze's 'sheets of time').
- The second problem Deleuze has with film theory is that it tries to model

moving images and their time-based articulations on literary narrative and the language analogy (as was the case with the structuralist semiotics of Christian Metz), thereby either ignoring or misconstruing that which is distinctive about cinema, namely the kinetic modulations of movement and the potential infinity of images, their rhythms and plasticity. The cinema experience for Deleuze is an unmediated and enveloping reality, at once actual and virtual, at once mental, somatic, and physiological, made up of 'optical sound situations' rather than visual perceptions, a succession of open events rather than culturally or linguistically coded representations.

However one judges the arguments Deleuze offers for considering the cinema as an experience in which matter thinks and thinking matters – there are many for whom his lyrical-metaphoric discourse is 'a mere curiosity' – it is easy to see why his work has attracted scholars who are either trying to think about the cinema experience differently or are concerned with theorizing post-photographic imaging modes and 'virtual reality'.

To make these rather large questions a little less unwieldy, this chapter will begin by reviewing the transformations and internal developments of the psychoanalytic approach to film and the cinematic apparatus, as it became reflexive in respect to gender and sexual preference (under the names of feminist film theory/gender theory/queer theory), often by turning away from both Freud and Lacan, and towards Foucault and Deleuze, in search of a politically equally responsible theory of embodied perception. Thus, the problematics of gender will be the main reason why this chapter also takes a detour via Foucault and queer theory, in order to finally see how valuable Deleuze might be for such a film analysis. In the second part, therefore, both theorists will help us to indicate how, starting from the notion of bodily boundaries, gender, and embodied perception, film analysis might take on board the shifts of interests and assumptions signalled generally by the move from psychoanalysis to anti-psychoanalysis in film studies and cultural theory.

As our film example we have chosen *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991; directed by Jonathan Demme, screenplay by Ted Tally, after the novel by Thomas Harris). The choice is motivated not least because the film proved both controversial and popular with critics working on gender and sexual preference but – to our knowledge – has not yet been exposed to a Deleuzian reading. *The Silence of the Lambs* gave rise to a major debate among feminists, and between feminists and gay rights activists. At issue was its 'sexual politics', revolving in large part around the significance of the central character, Clarice Starling, played by Jodie Foster. Put very briefly, the film created contradictory reception positions: some women's groups thought of it as exploitative and sexist, others – more positively – detected a feminist horror

film, with a strong, active female character who slays the monster. The ones accusing Demme of sexism merely saw the classic male fantasy of the woman put at risk by men and then sadistically punished for taking these risks. Gay activists, on the other hand, perceived *The Silence of the Lambs* as homophobic because it pathologizes homosexuality, notably in the figure of James Gumb (or 'Buffalo Bill'), the serial killer and transvestite/trans-gender psychopath. Ironically, the third central character, Hannibal Lecter, did not divide opinion anywhere near as much. Thanks to an astonishing performance by Anthony Hopkins, 'Hannibal the Cannibal' was recognized as an unusual kind of monster in the horror film: superhumanly intelligent, attractively seductive, amiably lethal. His ancestors are perhaps better known from decadent literature (and maybe even surrealism): the dandy-aesthete-connoisseur, for whom murder is a fine art. In the subsequent decade, it was this character that has enjoyed a folk-hero media afterlife and has become an instantly appreciated icon. As will be seen, it is partly around Hannibal Lecter that our reading will change gear and paradigm, and not only because he obliged some critics to ponder the divide between the monstrous and the human, being caught by the film between their feelings about two kinds of monster: the visible evil of Buffalo Bill's gender-and-body horror, and the invisible and almost unthinkable evil of Hannibal Lecter's mind-and-brain horror.

9.1. Feminism and film: theory

While the psychoanalytic film theory of Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry, and Stephen Heath had initially concentrated on questions of 'primary identification', on the 'reality-effect' and 'subject construction' as the conditions of the classical Hollywood cinema's legibility and textual coherence, feminist film theory began with the realization that this classical cinema was also a system of visual representation implicated and complicit in maintaining sexual difference, i.e. the uneven distribution of power between men and women: 'In this debate [about sexuality and representation], the cinematic image is taken as both the model of and term for a process of representation through which sexual difference is constructed and maintained' (Rose 1986: 199). At least since Laura Mulvey's essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), feminist film theory concentrated on deconstructing the terms of this complicity, eventually focusing on the question why female spectators can take pleasure in watching movies at all, given their sexist ideological import.

This is not just a matter of story material or role modelling. What Mulvey implied about the functioning of narrative and spectacle in classical cinema was that the subject addressed by the Hollywood text is gendered and male by

virtue not only of the dominant forms of visual pleasure – voyeurism and fetishism, traditionally analysed as male perversions – but also by the close formal convergence of narrative progress (the desire to see and to know) with the filmic process itself as exemplified in the workings of the cinematic apparatus or 'dispositif' (see Rosen 1986). As Mary Ann Doane put it, reviewing the debate some ten years later: 'With respect to a narrativization of the woman, the apparatus strains; but the transformation of the woman into spectacle is easy. Through her forced affinity with the iconic, imagistic aspects of cinema, the woman is constituted as a resistance or impedance to narrativization' (Doane 1987: 5–6). The conditions of female spectatorship in narrative cinema are therefore either submission to the regime of the gaze, the perversion of a perversion so to speak, or involve taking pleasure in the subject effects of a sexual identity not her own: 'Confronted with the classical Hollywood text with a male address, the female spectator has basically two modes of entry: a narcissistic identification with the female figure as spectacle, and a "transvestite" identification with the active male hero in his mastery' (Doane 1987: 9). The very concept of female spectatorship thus names a theoretical impossibility, and in practice produces 'a mixed sexual body, . . . a hermaphrodite'. While the institution cinema has always courted women as an audience, its textual system works to deprive the woman 'of a gaze . . . of subjectivity and repeatedly [transforms her] into the object of a masculine scopophilic desire' (p. 2).

We can see how this might be immediately relevant to *The Silence of the Lambs*, and not only to the relationship between the female heroine and female audiences, but as a description of the identity-confusion of one of the characters, namely Buffalo Bill, as if he was the very embodiment of the dilemma of Doane's (and Mulvey's) female film spectator.

9.2. Feminism and film: method

What is a feminist reading of a classical/post-classical Hollywood film? The most widely imitated model is that inaugurated by Mulvey's 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (also in Mulvey 1989: 14–26). This complex and polemical piece has often been reproduced, and in the process also been reduced to a checklist of psychoanalytic concepts, such as fetishism, voyeurism, castration anxiety, phallus, and disavowal. Generations of undergraduate and graduate essays have winnowed her argument down to such core statements as 'the gaze is male' (or: 'the man looks, women are to be looked at'), 'sadism demands a story', 'desire is lack'. These were applied to the canon of classical films as well as to more recent mainstream cinema (though it is now also common to find post-classical films being used to

critique Mulvey's assumptions). For the subtler narratological and ideological implications of Mulvey's arguments around cinema and sexual difference, there are abundant commentaries published on the topic. Those interested in 'doing' a feminist film analysis may nonetheless – depending on the particular theoretical framework chosen – wish to consider the paradigmatic moves listed below, or look out for common points of critique, when discussing the representation of women in the classical Hollywood text:

- the role model thesis: negative/positive stereotyping (Rosen 1973; Haskell 1973);
- the repression thesis: women generate a contradiction that the text seeks to repress (Cook and Johnston 1988);
- the disturbance thesis: woman is 'trouble' in the system, generating the core dynamics of the male-centred narrative trajectory;
- the containment thesis: classical film needs the woman-as-trouble to function at all, but then has to 'contain' her in order to come to an ideologically acceptable closure (Bellour 2000; Heath 1981);
- the excess/lack thesis: melodrama (Mulvey 1989: 39–44), woman's film (Doane 1987).

Some of the chief points of criticism of Mulvey can also be itemized:

- Her argument is heterosexist (Doane and Bergstrom 1990).
- She (initially at least) makes no room for lesbian identification.
- She devalorizes masochism as an 'originary' subject position of the cinematic experience (Studlar 1988).
- Finally, she posits the ideological construction of gendered identity as a successful, hegemonic activity, whereas it is possible to argue that patriarchal identity-formation via the cinema is only partly successful; hence her theory might be seen as actually assisting ideology in its attempt to construct, via popular culture, gendered identities (see also the quotation from David Rodowick in Chapter 8 above).

In the wake of the intense engagement with Mulvey's theses there have been many exemplary feminist analyses of individual films: those of Mary Ann Doane (1987), Teresa de Lauretis (1984), Kaja Silverman (1988), Barbara Klinger (1994), or Tania Modleski (1988) come to mind.

9.3. Analysis: a feminist reading of *The Silence of the Lambs*

In several respects, *The Silence of the Lambs* lends itself to an analysis within the categories of the 'classical' or canonical story format: the screenplay shows

a clear three-act division, with introduction and coda (the first act ends with Clarice's discovery at the Baltimore warehouse; the second with the trick offer made to Hannibal by the FBI; and the third with the showdown in Buffalo Bill's house); the narrative moves are based on repetition/resolution (the successive encounters between Clarice and Hannibal Lecter, the introduction of past, present, and future victims of Buffalo Bill); the character constellations play permutations on triadic relationships (Clarice Starling–Hannibal Lecter–Buffalo Bill), with overt mirroring and more covert echoes linking the characters. A Proppian analysis would similarly reveal the layeredness of the actants' functions around injunctions (rules and their infringement), senders, envoys and antagonists, magic objects, helpers and villains. The film also has a deadline structure to 'contain' the narrative and steer it in a linear direction, which even leads to the (albeit unconsummated) formation of a (heterosexual) couple, once the threat to traditional categories of sexual difference (in the person of Buffalo Bill) is eliminated. In its dynamics of suspense and spectator involvement, *The Silence of the Lambs* is also quite classical: powered by a detection plot, the action moves inexorably towards a final cathartic showdown and finishes with the heroine's victory, followed by a coda, in which closure is neatly balanced by the possibility of an opening towards a sequel (an indication of the film's post-classical 'knowingness', but also of its cleverly perverse negotiation of a traditional if not 'reactionary' version of heterosexuality).

The story concerns a young policewoman at an FBI training academy who is given the assignment to befriend a very dangerous criminal, Hannibal Lecter, a former psychiatrist, now imprisoned for multiple murder and cannibalism, but who may be able to help the police identify a serial killer on the loose who murders young women and then skins them. Clarice Starling becomes deeper and deeper involved in the world of Hannibal Lecter, who helps her but extracts his own price, by psychoanalyzing her and penetrating her personal psychic secret, the trauma of the lambs, whom she tried but failed to rescue as a young girl, and the obscure link this incident may have with the death of her father, the nonexistence of a mother, and her escape from a (sexually abusive) guardian-uncle. Guided by Lecter, she eventually tracks down the serial killer and, in a gruesomely protracted showdown, is able to kill him. The film ends with Clarice's graduation ceremony at the police academy, and a phone call from Lecter, who managed to escape and is now once more at large, somewhere in the Caribbean, 'rewarding' her by promising to desist from any further unwanted attention.

The Silence of the Lambs is interesting for feminist film theory because it makes the site of gender/sexuality the explicit focus for questioning the relation between seeing and knowing. Buffalo Bill's victims are strangely overwritten texts: he cuts shapes out of their skins and leaves an insect in their throats, so

that detection becomes not only the usual inventory of clues as to time, place, or cause of death, but immediately a matter of interpreting and 'reading' the body (of the victim) in order to read the mind (of the murderer). But so horrific are these bodies, so overpowering the marks of violence inflicted upon them, that close examination, proximity of vision, and detailed observation become almost impossible. In one memorable scene in a funeral parlour, where Clarice has to overcome this ocular revulsion as well as the stench of decomposition, in order to train her sights at the most minute detail, such as glitter nail polish and triple ear-piercings, she is herself the object of the gaze: before the autopsy, a serried row of policemen and detectives stand around observing her observing, and during the autopsy, her boss Crawford continues to observe her. Already in the credit sequence, when entering a lift on her way to her superior, Jodie Foster's size and femininity is contrasted with the tall males surrounding her at the FBI academy, an emphasis on body- and gender-based difference that is repeated several times over. In another scene, when interviewing Hannibal Lecter she strains to scrutinize his face, but due to the lighting in his cell and the perspex pane that separates them, it is he who seems to be observing her, from behind her back, trying to observe him. This shot of mirror-like superimposition is often featured in the film's publicity material, suggesting the ubiquitous gaze of Hannibal Lecter enveloping Clarice. In the final showdown, it is Buffalo Bill who, equipped with night-vision goggles, can see Clarice groping her way through his pitch-dark lair, unaware that he is watching her, and we with him, complicit in this sadistic spectacle that makes a mockery of her having a loaded gun but not the sight to aim it. Thus, while in one sense Clarice is in possession of the traditionally male look of scrutiny and detection, this look is frequently undermined as a symbol of mastery and the possession/position of knowledge.

Another point of interest for feminist film criticism is the question of gender and genre, notably feminist readings of the thriller/slasher/horror film. At one extreme, *The Silence of the Lambs* can be regarded as a classical thriller film in the Hitchcock mode, following on from *Psycho* and *The Birds*, revived and radicalized in films such as Brian de Palma's *Dressed to Kill* or John Carpenter's *Halloween*: a female heroine is being asked or forced to play detective, to enter dangerous territory, which exposes her extreme vulnerability as spectacle. The gendered architecture made up of looking and being looked at, which after Mulvey is said to determine spectator-screen relations (both on-screen and between screen and audience) is here redefined with respect to what constitutes a horror film for women: knowing one is observed without seeing (cf. Williams 1984). As indicated, feminist critics of *The Silence of the Lambs* were split between arguing that the woman's look functioned partly as it does in Hitchcock – for the sadistic pleasure of the male – but partly also as a signifier of the empowered female: Clarice/Foster not

only embodies a positive (female) role model, showing courage and determination, she is also a woman operating in an all-male world as a 'professional'. Demme's film, along with those of Wes Craven, Tobe Hooper, and other contemporary horror films made by male directors, would then be 'deconstructing' the Hitchcock slasher/horror film, by opening it up to the ambiguities of female visual pleasure and to a more complex play of cross-gender identifications. One model for such readings is provided by Carol Clover and her analyses of what is at stake for female spectators (1992): 'Clover believes that in slasher movies identification seems to alter during the course of the picture from sympathizing with the killer to identifying with the woman-hero. Clover also argues that the (apparently male) monster is usually characterized as bisexual while the woman-hero is not simply a "woman." She is often "unfeminine," even tracking the killer into "his underground labyrinth"' (Staiger 1993: 147). In fact, Clover also argues that the female heroine or 'final girl' is often a stand-in for the adolescent male, allowing identification and projection to fasten on a 'safe' substitute, in order to explore homoerotic desires.

Another type of reading might invoke Barbara Creed's theory about the modern horror film. She argues that the ambiguous gender of the monster and the attraction/repulsion which the genre holds for female spectators symbolizes the 'monstrous feminine', the 'phallic mother', and the female subject position of 'abjection' vis-à-vis the primary, abandoned love-object (Creed 1986; 1993). The absent mother in Clarice's life seems to 'return' in all these bloated, disfigured, or lacerated female bodies she is called upon to inspect and to investigate.

Finally, a more mythological interpretation of Clarice Starling would point to her as a kind of latter-day Ariadne, who tracks down two kinds of man-beasts, two incarnations of the Minotaur – that of the bisexual Buffalo Bill in his dungeon, or earthworks labyrinth, and Hannibal Lecter as the master at the centre of a mental labyrinth (Jim Hoberman, cited in Staiger 1993: 150). There are, of course, other mythological echoes, relating to the Judeo-Christian iconographic traditions that could be identified and even given explicitly readings: Salome and the severed head of St John the Baptist, for instance, or the role of the sacrificial lamb in the Christian Easter mythology, probably adapted from pagan rituals of redemption and renewal.

In these generic, metapsychological, and mythological readings, the film challenges classical feminist film theory in that female spectatorship and heterosexuality no longer line up as mutually sustaining categories. For instance, the reason Hannibal Lecter's sexuality remains unmarked is that he is so severely heterosexual (the way he 'defends' Clarice Starling's honour in prison against the lewd Midge, his next-door cellmate). At the other extreme, Buffalo Bill puts the binary system of sexual difference into crisis, in the way

he explicitly and compulsively restages the Lacanian mirror phase, which leaves the question of sexual identity disturbingly unresolved for spectators of either gender. The knowing reference to the mirror as unstable conferral of identity highlights Buffalo Bill's confusion as to his own gender, but the invitation 'Fuck me' which he narcissistically addresses to his own mirror image is also typical of the post-classical text taunting the spectator, who now has to decide whether this is a man speaking to his own female psyche, a woman 'trapped' in a male body perversely self-fashioned in a woman's dress, a gay addressing another man, or a transsexual idealizing his self-image as the object of another's desire, regardless of gender.

By staging these possibilities, and simultaneously suspending them, *The Silence of the Lambs* also became the occasion for feminists to examine some of the limits of the constructivist argument around female masquerade and the performativity of gender, once essentialist positions have been deconstructed. On the other hand, the film leaves space for the motif of cross-dressing traditional gender roles also to transfer itself metaphorically to another character: as already suggested, Clarice herself can be read – even before Jodie Foster was 'outed' as a lesbian – as a trans-gender figure in relation to the traditionally male occupations of police work, homicide investigation, and the detection of criminal pathology.

When filtering the film through the issues of (classical) feminist film studies, one's reading of *The Silence of the Lambs* is centred on Clarice and her 'problem'. This would be how to 'make it' in a man's world, when the markers of sexual difference and gender identity have come under pressure intersubjectively, through the pathology of figures like Buffalo Bill and, socially, by the improved career opportunities open to college-educated women. In addition, the film excessively elaborates its Oedipal initiation story, though this time centred on a female, occupying the structural position of the male: surrounded by overpoweringly present good father figures that turn out to be bad (Crawford/Chilton) and bad father figures that are also good (Hannibal Lecter), Clarice has to cope with the violent death of her biological father, a policeman shot on duty, and the trauma of real or imagined childhood abuse. However, once attention shifts to Buffalo Bill, who in spite of being a serial killer of young women is also a figure of pity (in his desperate desire to change his gender) and of provocation (besides being a misfit, he is clearly a rebel, surrounded by the paraphernalia of a heavy metal rocker, a psychedelic drop-out, and a deranged Vietnam veteran), one may wonder whether his attacks on women are not, symbolically speaking, a form of cross-dressing: as a transsexual, he literalizes male anxieties about sexual identity in the wake of 'feminism'. For given his unconventional identifications and object choices, and a verbal-visual discourse that splits him between stereotypically homosexual behaviour and Lecter's prevarication

around identifying him as either transsexual or transvestite ('he's tried a lot of things, I suspect'), Buffalo Bill undermines traditional notions of phallic masculinity more effectively than he threatens the cultural codes of femininity, which he copies with his needlework and travesties in his dress.

We can now understand more clearly why *The Silence of the Lambs* divided the activist gender community. The film offers entry-points to several kinds of transgressive, non-normative fantasies of negotiating gendered identity, on either side of sexual difference and on both sides of the law, but for all that no less troubling: Buffalo Bills kills his women not for sexual gratification but in order to dress himself in their skin, and Clarice kills Buffalo Bill in self-defence as an officer of the law, but not without thereby also re-establishing the dividing lines of gender roles and sexual difference that she herself is challenging. If feminists thought the film progressive and empowering, where gays saw homophobic and criminalizing portrayals of sexual 'deviance', does this mean that their positions were symmetrically related – around the implicit 'norm' of heterosexuality? Such a stance would remind us of the objections voiced against Mulvey's purported 'heterosexism' underlying her feminist position. It would seem that the boycotts and protests against *The Silence of the Lambs* were also indicative of a rift in the 'rainbow coalition' of gender, obliging feminists, lesbians, and gays to discover that they had divergent interests and stakes when it came to the identity politics of cinematic representation.

Arguing along similar lines when reviewing the debate on women's right to pornography (rather than *The Silence of the Lambs*), Stephen Heath has pointed out the fallacy of what he calls 'equal opportunity subject positions' (Heath 1999: 37–8), meaning thereby the notion that each group has a right to its own sexual fantasy material, without this impinging on the self-image or social recognition of other groups. Citing Slavoj Žižek, Heath notes that fantasy scenarios are at once highly specific and intimately connected with one's sense of reality, since it is fantasy which 'anchors' social reality. But if, as Žižek claims, one has to have a fantasy (a 'symptom') in order to function at all in everyday reality and not be overwhelmed by the Real, then it follows that one does not have a choice in one's fantasies, be they violent, racist, or sexist. The split between feminists and gays around the reception of *The Silence of the Lambs* would thus be inherent in the politics of representation, rather than a contingent feature of the ideological construction of this particular film. A parallel argument has been made by Judith Halberstam, from a more 'postmodern' perspective:

I resist the temptation to submit Demme's film to a feminist analysis that would identify the danger of showing mass audiences an aestheticized version of the serial killing of women. I resist the temptation to brand the

film as homophobic because gender confusion becomes the guilty secret of the madman in the basement. I resist indeed the readings that want to puncture the surface and enter the misogynist and homophobic unconscious of Buffalo Bill, Hannibal the Cannibal and Clarice Starling. . . . Gender trouble is not the movie's secret, it is a confession that both Starling and Buffalo Bill are all too willing to make. . . . It seems to me that *The Silence of the Lambs* emphasizes that we are at a peculiar time in history, a time when it is becoming impossible to tell the difference between prejudice and its representations, between, then, homophobia and the representations of homophobia.

(Halberstam 1991: 40–41)

Both the fallacy indicated by Heath and the impossibility pointed out by Halberstam would suggest that we may have reached a deadlock in our interpretation, and that a move to another conceptual level is needed if we are to resolve it. One may have to deconstruct the key idea of feminist film theory, namely that the cinematic image is a gendered representation, as well as a central tenet of cultural studies, which sees filmic texts as sites of contested 'representations' (mostly of class, race, and sexual orientation). At the same time, the deadlock implies a theoretical move from 'sexual difference' to 'gender': 'every society has a sex/gender system – a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention, and satisfied in a conventional manner, no matter how bizarre some of the conventions may be' (Gayle Rubin, in Reiter 1974: 165). Put differently, one could say that while gender, being culturally constructed, needs to be 'articulated' (or 'performed'), sex needs to be 'shown' (on the body as physiological absence/presence of, for instance, breasts, penis), implying that while sex is of the order of sight and the specular (involving the psychoanalytic paradigms of fetishism and disavowal, voyeurism and castration anxiety), gender belongs to the register of the discursive and the performative, and thus necessitates a different kind of 'sexual politics' (see Butler 1989, and also Rubin's notion of the 'theatricalization' of a sexual practice as distinct from the role this practice might play in identity politics). An emphasis on gender, one might say, once more underlines that tendency in film studies which sees the various 'regimes of visibility' in crisis, in that gender challenges the visually confirmed self-evidence of sexual identity.

To sum up our feminist reading so far, and linking it to our previous chapter, we might say that whereas Robert Zemeckis's *Back to the Future* showed an unworkable patriarchal order from the perspective of the adolescent male, Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* shows the unworkable patriarchal order from the perspective of the young professional female.

Instead of the failing father or the incompetent/impotent fathers confronting Marty McFly, Clarice Starling encounters in her FBI bosses and Hannibal Lecter a succession of potent and powerfully destructive/abusive super-fathers, dangling crucial clues and rewards in front of her, while seeming to own the outcome in advance. Yet there is, as in *Back to the Future*, also an almost textbook knowingness about the elements of identity formation that need to be lined up, in order to work out the (still heavily – or happily) Oedipal trajectory of Clarice's initiation as a professional 'special agent'. Nonetheless, if the 'problem' in the two films is similar, the 'solutions' are different: this time it does not involve sci-fi gadgets and time-travel, but a special kind of body horror, where the boundaries of inside and outside, of skin and flesh, of seeing and knowing, of bodies and minds are transgressed and traversed. But this merely underscores another ironic twist that all along lay in store for our psychoanalytic-feminist reading: the horror at the heart of the film is not Buffalo Bill's 'severe criminal pathology' or sexual perversion, but psychoanalysis itself, in the figure of Hannibal Lecter, whose patient Buffalo Bill once was. Lecter penetrates Clarice's mind and gets under her skin in ways that turn out to be as brutal and almost as much of a violation of her personhood as Buffalo Bill's violation of the young women's bodies in order to get (at) their skins.

As such, *The Silence of the Lambs* once more raises the question, discussed also in the previous chapter: What does the (film) analyst do when the theory s/he wishes to apply in order to position a film critically is not just openly on display, but stands accused of the ultimate evil? The dilemma leads her to look for another type of interpretation, preferably anti-psychoanalytic: this, then, is the point where one would turn to Michel Foucault, to find there a different account of vision, a political reading of sexuality and the body, and a deconstruction of the power relationships inherent in the discourse of psychoanalysis. Foucault's critique takes us to Deleuze, where questions of the visible and the knowable, of the look and 'body politics' receive further redefinition, while also introducing a set of new concepts.

9.4. Foucault and Deleuze: theory

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze are thinkers in the tradition of Friedrich Nietzsche. This means that they are critical of the Enlightenment project of the progress of pure reason, of truth and moral self-improvement. These values and ideals were regarded by Nietzsche as the ruses of the 'will to power', as rationalizations of a particular class, race, religion, or gender, in the struggle to arrogate dominance over others. Thinkers in the Nietzschean mould are sceptics, especially with regards to epistemology, i.e. the claims of philosophy

to be able to establish the foundations of universally valid knowledge or 'truth'. Foucault and Deleuze are also sometimes known as anti-humanists, because they regard 'man' to be a recent 'invention', dating from post-Renaissance humanism, in which a particular version of individualism began to reign supreme. Humanism manifests its supremacy by drawing various strict lines of division and exclusion: mind vs body, reason vs madness, male vs female, subject vs object, observer vs observed. Our two philosophers are intent on breaking down, opening up and re-organizing these binaries. Both Foucault and Deleuze are thus in some sense concerned with new classification systems, new taxonomies, and they salute each other as 'topographers' or 'cartographers'. Where Foucault regards himself self-consciously as an 'archaeologist' and a 'genealogist', Deleuze, for instance, called his cinema books neither a theory nor a history, but a 'natural history' of the cinema, as if he was arranging specimens, or defining class, type, and genus (1997: 46). Both are profoundly 'spatial' philosophers, even if their spatiality is often directed towards analysing multiple temporalities.

9.4.1. Foucault

More specifically, Foucault has presented a trenchant critique of the association of light and vision with reason and truth in what he calls 'the classical age' (roughly from Descartes to Hegel, or from the Sun King to Napoleon). While this critique is elaborated around three great discursive formations – the 'invention of madness', the 'birth of the clinic', and the 'history of sexuality' – each of which goes well beyond the problematics of the cinema, Foucault's extrapolation and examination of the various 'scopic regimes' that according to him characterize modernity do, albeit implicitly, address issues also pertinent to film studies. In particular, his thematization of the 'panoptic gaze' (of which more below) has been widely taken up by film scholars and in visual culture studies.

Secondly, Foucault offered a critique of psychoanalysis, and in particular of Freud's theory of repression. For him the nexus power–prison–pleasure was central to the modern state, and therefore had to be redefined, if one was to engage in progressive politics at all. At the same time, it was important to understand why psychoanalysis emerged at a particular point in history, and what kinds of complicity might have favoured its official establishment (for instance, he notes the coincidence of Freud's treatment of the Oedipus complex with the criminalization of incest in Western societies). Foucault also remarked upon the reliance of psychoanalysis on speech and silence, and its alignment of therapy with (religious) confession, including the elevation of the doctor/therapist to a priest-like figure: 'It would be fairer to say that psychoanalysis doubled the absolute observation of the watcher with the

endless monologue of the person watched – thus preserving the old asylum structure of non-reciprocal observation but balancing it, in a non-symmetrical reciprocity, by the new structure of language without response' (Foucault 1988: 250–1, cited in Jay 1993: 292). From it, Foucault concluded that Freud's method could not but assist the state, religion, and other discourses of power in maintaining the status quo and keeping the subject in thrall. Rather than safeguarding an 'interiority' inaccessible to control and discipline, the modern 'subject' (political as well as psychic) was the effect of the discourses that the different 'regimes' of power inscribed on 'the body' – an entity/category that neither Enlightenment philosophy nor bourgeois society, neither Marxism nor psychoanalysis had a place for other than as criminalized, medicalized, subordinate, or symptomatic. Again, taking his cue from Nietzsche, Foucault saw the body as having its own history, at once matrix for and site of the great discursive formations he described. Whether 'madness', 'sexuality', 'discipline', 'punishment', 'surveillance', or 'love and friendship' – in each case, the task was to restore to the human body the dignity and legibility denied to it by philosophy, theology, and psychoanalysis. Such a different appreciation of the body also appealed to post-feminist film theory and gender studies, and was to have an impact on the way the film experience began to be analysed.

Finally, Foucault was a forceful critic of normativity of any kind, and an advocate of transgressive action and limit-experiences. He has therefore been a valuable ally to be invoked by minority groups of very different kinds. His key insights regarding the questions of sexuality and gender can be found in his *History of Sexuality* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. In both works, Foucault thinks of sexuality in terms of the institutions that define it, and not in the first instance as bodies with specific sexual preferences. The latter are only of interest to him insofar as they are connected with and articulated through discourses, which via compulsive heterosexuality try to regulate bodies and identities across the flows of power and pleasure mobilized by these practices: 'Sex was, in Christian societies, that which had to be examined, watched over, confessed and transformed into discourse' (Foucault 1989: 138). As a homosexual who militated for gay rights, he has been a valuable figurehead in the struggle for recognition and redefinition of non-normative forms of masculinity; as a victim of AIDS he furthermore played an important part – beyond his death – in the various awareness-raising campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s. More recently, lesbian critics, too, have enlisted his anti-essentialist and non-normative positions for sophisticated arguments around same-sex identity formation and radically constructivist accounts of gender: '[Repetition] becomes the non-place of subversion, the possibility of a re-embodiment of the subjectivating norm that can redirect its normativity. Consider the inversion of "woman" and "woman", depending on the staging

and address of their performance, of “queer” and “queer”, depending on pathologizing or contestatory modes’ (Butler 1997: 99–100).

Thus, if Freudian psychoanalysis (and the feminist film theory influenced by it) was concerned with *sexuality*, and was often (even if only by default) normatively heterosexual, then Foucault in our context is above all the theorist of *gender*, where gay and lesbian identities are not implicitly regarded under the aspects of deviancy or ‘otherness’, but as part of the overall dynamics of power and pleasure that link the individual to the social formation, to practice and to politics.

Adapting these concerns to the issues of film theory is not without its problems, and while Foucault has been enormously influential in the humanities across a broad front, there are few film theorists who would see themselves directly as his disciples. If anything, Foucault has had a more demonstrable effect on the rethinking of film history – with his notion of ‘archaeology of knowledge’, ‘history as genealogy’, and the ‘archive’, as well as his way of thinking about institutions and power – than on film theory. Nonetheless, as already indicated, there are a number of issues in film analysis where Foucault’s insights are relevant. On one topic, for instance, which has taken up much space in previous chapters, namely the cultural ‘crisis of masculinity’, one might say that for Foucault, masculinity was not in crisis, or rather, only insofar as Oedipal, i.e. normatively heterosexual masculinity within bourgeois society and patriarchy has always been an untenable proposition. Several of Foucault’s followers (e.g. Leo Bersani) have raised the question of phallic identity vs Oedipal identity, which in turn, has inspired film scholars such as Kaja Silverman and Steven Shaviro to apply these insights to specific films (Silverman 1992; Shaviro, 1994). The other, more broadly Foucaultian field of film analysis might be what is known as ‘queer theory’.

9.4.2. Deleuze

Especially in the books co-authored with Felix Guattari, Deleuze has taken up much of the agenda of Foucault’s project, notably his anti-Freudianism and his concern with the micro-politics of power, in view of promoting more open (i.e. non-family based) communities and an egalitarian, non-repressive society. Foucault once famously said that ‘perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian’ (Foucault 1977: 165), arguing that Deleuze

causes us to reflect on matters that philosophy has neglected through centuries: the event (assimilated in a concept from which we vainly attempted to extract it in the form of a *fact*, verifying a proposition, of *actual experience*, a modality of the subject, of *concreteness*, the empirical content of history); and the phantasm (reduced in the name of reality and situated at

the extremity, the pathological pole of a normative sequence: perception-image-memory-illusion).

(Foucault 1977: 180)

Redistributing oppositions such as truth/illusion, fact/experience, history/pathology across such terms as ‘event’ and ‘phantasm’ may seem very tempting when thinking about the cinematic experience as a spatio-temporal event that can engage the viewer with heightened perceptual-sensory intensity. But before trying to do so, some broader considerations are in order. Like Foucault, Deleuze is an anti-foundational, post-structuralist thinker, which for those hostile to so-called ‘Continental philosophy’ merely connotes neo-Romantic anti-rationalism and a typically postmodern relativism. In fact, not that different from Anglo-American philosophy, Deleuze is against totalizing theories or systems (e.g. those of Hegel, Marx, Freud), and favours a piecemeal (‘micro’) approach to political as well as theoretical problems. Also not unlike analytic philosophers, Deleuze is anti-Saussurean (preferring the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce) and anti-psychoanalytic (though his theory of the brain might not find favour with cognitivists).

In line with most French thinkers of the past 50 years, Deleuze has had to come to terms with the political failure of socialism in general and May 1968 in particular. This is why some commentators have accused him (and Guattari) of having opted in their politics for a pre-Marxist version of anarcho-communism, with a utopian but also dangerous penchant for, on the one hand, a Maoist-style ultra-radicalism and, on the other, a primitive/tribal view of political economy, revolving around the gift and potlatch, around symbolic exchange and communitarian reciprocity, while violently opposed to market capitalism, representational democracy, and the institutionalization of laissez-faire liberalism (see Richard Barbrook, ‘The Holy Fools’, in *Pisters* 2001: 159–76).

If Deleuze, too, draws his basic thinking from Nietzsche, one could argue that it is from the affirmative ‘gay science’ side of Nietzsche that he takes his cue, rather than by embracing the relentlessly negative, acerbic critique of bourgeois society and Christian morality that appealed to Foucault.

Also unlike Foucault, Deleuze did pronounce on the cinema in two major books. These, as already mentioned, are primarily concerned with countering the linguistic-semiotic turn in film theory. They recast the phenomenological realism of the previous generation of French film scholars around André Bazin in a language of sensory immediacy and bodily perception. Deleuze also seeks to define a historical break between classical and modern cinema, by dividing the cinema between what he calls the movement-image and the time-image. Perhaps paradoxically, it seemed to us that only some of the concepts elaborated in the cinema books are relevant to the issues discussed in this

chapter, while others we are introducing originate from Deleuze's more generally philosophical or literary texts.

Thus, thinking with Deleuze about cinema raises a delicate issue: which Deleuze are we talking about? Foucault, in the passage cited above, was reviewing *The Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990), but there is also the Deleuze of *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1985) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) (both co-written with Felix Guattari), who develops challenging concepts that have been applied to the cinema, besides the two cinema books themselves (*The Movement Image* and *The Time Image*). Still others prefer Deleuze's writings on Foucault, Kafka, Proust, and Francis Bacon, or *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Deleuze 1992) as a source for ideas about the cinema. For instance, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* already in the title makes clear that Deleuze and Guattari's thinking is anti-psychoanalytical. There, they reject Lacan's notion of desire as lack, claiming that it is a move that colludes with the dominant bourgeois ideology in much the same way that Foucault accused Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex as extending the regime of confession and self-monitoring, instituted by the church and the bourgeois state.

Second, Deleuze has argued that, for his own film theory, the look (or gaze theory as it is sometimes called) is far less relevant than the almost constitutive place it occupies for psychoanalytic and feminist film theory:

I'm not sure the notion of the look is absolutely necessary. The eye is already there in things, it's part of the image, the image's visibility. . . . The eye isn't the camera, it's the screen. As for the camera, with all its propositional functions, it's a sort of third eye, the mind's eye. You cite Hitchcock: he does, it is true, bring the viewer into the film. But that's nothing to do with the look. It's rather because he frames the action in a whole network of relations. . . . The frame for him is like a tapestry frame: it holds within it the network of relations, while the action is just a thread moving in and out of the network. What Hitchcock thus brings into the cinema, then, is the mental image . . . he goes beyond the action-image to something deeper, mental relations, a kind of vision.

(Deleuze 1997: 54–5)

Third, unlike Foucault, Deleuze has said little explicitly about gender and sexuality. In fact, he seems to have avoided any direct engagement with the discussion around sexual difference, feminism, gay politics, or queer theory. But on some of the questions that stand behind these debates – 'seeing' (vision) vs 'saying' (discourse), biological vs constructivist identity, psyche vs body – Deleuze does hold decisive views and has developed strong concepts (mostly elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus*, e.g. 'deterritorialization' and the 'body-without-organs', 'becoming . . . woman' and 'body, brain, thought',

'desiring machines', and the 'rhizome' i.e. non-hierarchical, multiform, reversible relations and connections with respect to 'identity politics'). These offer a rich conceptual vocabulary or network of metaphors with which to think about 'body matters' also in the cinema (see Pisters 2001).

Finally, Deleuze's idea of the 'fold' has been transferred from the Baroque to the cinema, in order to differentiate between classical and modern cinema (possibly including post-classical cinema as well). Defined as a paratactic series, as a permeable surface at once inside and out, or a fan-like proliferation of segments, the fold becomes a key feature of 'the event' as a mode appropriate for describing the contemporary cinematic experience.

9.5. Method: Foucault and Deleuze

9.5.1. Foucault

As indicated, Foucault has only rarely expressed himself on the cinema, mostly in relation to its uses and misuse as popular memory (Foucault, in Wilson 2000: 159–72, 181–5). But he did contribute at least one term that is frequently cited when deconstructing the cinematic apparatus: this is his reference to Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, an architectural ensemble that permits the surveillance of prisoners through vision and self-observation. This opens up two lines of 'application': one would be to treat the panopticon as an institution and a discourse, and the other is to see it as a sort of cinematic apparatus and a dispositif. In the first case, we would be looking further into the idea that institutions are, for Foucault, not so much buildings that house a bureaucracy with a history and a tradition, but something that reproduces itself in certain internalized practices and actively produces discourses. These discourses are the 'positive', generative manifestations of power, and thus 'penetrate' the individual in ways that are not visible. They cannot be simply 'resisted' or 'opposed', which is why classical political debate and struggle has to be replaced by a 'micro-politics'.

Foucault's work can therefore enable us to rethink and reanalyse the cinema using the following concepts:

- *Institution as discourse.* For something as both material and immaterial as the cinema, the notion of 'institution as discourse' is not without interest. It might give one an instrument for understanding the complex interaction in the cinema of economics and emotions, of film production as an industry and spectatorship/reception as a psychic and somatic event. At the same time, films – and especially genre films – often involve institutions-as-discourses in the fabric of the action: 'the police' for instance (in a detective film), or 'the military' (in a war film), or

stereotypical figures that embody institutions/discourses, such as the sheriff in a Western, or the mad scientist in a sci-fi film. More recently, questions of race and ethnicity in the cinema have often been treated in a Foucaultian manner, across an analysis of the discursive regime of power/knowledge/pleasure.

- *Power and discipline.* As a structure that emphasizes 'being looked at' over 'looking', the panoptic gaze can be invoked to rethink the cinema as a dispositif of power and discipline, rather than as one that generates or inscribes sexual difference. For instance, as if responding to feminist film theory's distinction between narrative and spectacle, and their definition of woman in the cinema as a 'spectacle, to be looked at', Foucault once famously remarked: 'our society is not one of the spectacle but of surveillance . . . We are neither in an amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves, since we are part of its mechanism' (Foucault 1979: 217).
- *Planes of vision, scopic regimes, enfolding gazes.* When deconstructing vision and the look in a given film in Foucaultian terms, we would be looking not only for the gendered imbalance and asymmetry, but for the mutual implication of looks and speech, the possibly even more complex geometry of planes of vision, scopic regimes, enfolding gazes, and self-surveillance mechanisms than those proposed by feminist readings. Deleuze once described what he called Foucault's 'folds of vision' as 'an ontological visibility, forever twisting itself into a self-seeing entity, on to a different dimension from that of the gaze and its objects' (Deleuze, cited in Jay 1993: 398). In other words, the panoptic gaze of surveillance is, unlike that of spectacle (with its neat division and tidy hierarchy between seeing and being seen), both interiorized and external, both invested with someone looking and marking an empty space, both a model of malevolent visual discipline and of human conscience as 'self-surveillance' (see also quote from interview in Foucault 1981: 152–5).
- *Madness and pathology.* A special instance of vision and the gaze might be the question of madness and pathology. In Foucault, the history of madness points to different scopic regimes in history. As Martin Jay sums up this point: '*Madness and Civilization* showed the extent of Foucault's appreciation of the role of vision, or more precisely, specific visual regimes in constituting cultural categories. . . . The modern category of insanity, Foucault contended, was predicated on the dissolution of the medieval and Renaissance unity of word and image, which liberated a multitude of images of madness and deprived them of any eschatological significance. As a result, madness became pure spectacle, a theatre of unreason' (Jay 1993: 390, citing Foucault 1988: 70). Such a conception could be usefully tested in the horror film, and the figure of the monster,

or in the thriller genre, where the villain is often pathological – a psychopath, or emotionally unstable – and where suspense and drama revolve around the question: How can one tell what are the symptoms or traces of this pathology, and how different, finally, is such a character from us and our idea of normality?

- *Persecution.* Foucault's thinking on madness, medicine, and the clinic in Western societies since the Enlightenment profoundly affected his stance on gender matters, and homosexuality in particular as a practice that has been persecuted, prohibited, and minoritized: 'My problem is essentially the definition of the implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners; what I would like to grasp is the system of limits and exclusion which we practice without knowing it; I would like to make the cultural unconscious apparent' (Foucault 1989: 71).
- *Sensory, tactile, sonorous surface.* But perhaps more important for understanding the role of gender in relation to the cinema is that the sensory, tactile, sonorous surface and envelope of the screen/skin/body makes it possible to regard the film experience as something other than the Oedipalized identity machine. It is in this respect that same-sex love and homosexuality, that is, non-reproductive, socially 'useless' sexuality, might be regarded, beyond questions of 'representation' and 'role models', as an alternative metaphor for the cinema experience as an embodied event: 'Another thing to distrust is to relate the question of homosexuality to the problem of "Who am I?" and "What is the secret of my desire?" Perhaps it would be better to ask oneself, "What relations, through homosexuality, can be established, invented, multiplied and modulated?" The problem is not to discover in oneself the truth of sex, but rather to use sexuality henceforth to arrive at a multiplicity of relationships. And no doubt that's the real reason why homosexuality is not a form of desire but something desirable. Therefore we have to work at becoming homosexuals and not be obstinate in recognizing that we are' (Foucault 1989: 203–4).

The direction of this quotation, its emphasis on multiplicity, its reference to 'becoming' and on desire as separate from subjectivity all strike a very Deleuzian note, outlining a programme in some ways quite distinct from the Anglo-American project of gender politics in cultural studies.

9.5.2. Deleuze

More generally, with regard to Deleuze's method, his philosophy as a whole could be said to be designed to forestall what we have set ourselves as our goal: to distil from a body of theory a set of procedures that can be deployed in the day-to-day business of generating film analyses. 'While one can dialogue with

Deleuze, try to philosophize like Deleuze, or do with other philosophers something analogous to what Deleuze does with Bergson, it seems somewhat more problematic to “apply” Deleuze, to simply “translate” analysis into a Deleuzian language’ (Stam 2000: 262).

Consequently, there have been precious few Deleuzian analyses of individual films, beyond adumbrating or extending those he himself has given in the cinema books, which often enough are non-systematic, aphoristic reformulations of the reviews and auteurist views of the *Cahiers du cinéma* critics from the 1950s and 1960s. In particular, apart from a few bold attempts (Buchanan 2000; Pisters 2001), examples of Deleuzian analyses of contemporary Hollywood films (especially when compared to Žižek’s many New Lacanian analyses) are as yet hard to find. However, as we hope to show, a Deleuzian reading can produce new insights, without wholly travestying the ideas from which they derive. Of the concepts named above, we shall be selecting only a small number for special consideration, chosen in part in view of our film example, and partly because these seem to us fruitful, even though they may not come from the ‘cinema books’ (see above). However, we shall begin with one key concept that does come from the cinema books, namely the distinction between the ‘movement image’ (action, affection, perception image) and the ‘time image’ (recollection, crystal image), because of the question – often posed – whether post-classical American mainstream cinema can actually be fitted into Deleuze’s schema, given that he hardly discusses Hollywood films from the 1970s or beyond, and that many of the most challenging films were made in the 1990s, i.e. after the publication of the cinema books. There is, furthermore, evidence to suggest that Deleuze himself would not have particularly cared for this new brand of cult, blockbuster, or genre films.

The seductive – but also unsettling – experience when encountering Deleuze’s cinema books is that one all too easily loses one’s bearings. Thrown in at the deep end of his thought, there is no outside leading to an inside, so that reading Deleuze is a wholly immersive experience. As such, it resembles nothing so much as a contemporary Hollywood spectacular, where the images and sounds surround one, where one is taken on as roller coaster ride, where the sheer somatic impact makes the pulse race before the mind has caught up. So violently does Deleuze discard the categories of conventional film analysis and disregard the niceties of reasoned argument that one either learns how to float on his prose or soon drowns in it. In other words, the most empathetic-mimetic relationship his books establish is with certain of the films he discusses, and with many he does not mention at all.

The concept we want to highlight first (although in the subsequent analysis it will appear at a later point) is the very general distinction which Deleuze makes in the history of the cinema, between the movement (or ‘action’) image and the time (or ‘crystal’) image. As explained above, it serves both as a

chronological divide (roughly, before and after the Second World War) as well as an almost ontological divide (between two kinds of ‘being’ in the cinema), while, for the impatient reader, it may also signal a continental divide (between Hollywood and European cinema). What concerns us here is to decide which of his two broad types of image might apply to contemporary Hollywood movies, and there, we propose to highlight a line of argument he pursues at the end of his first cinema book, where Deleuze speaks of:

- *The crisis of the action image.* After identifying what we have been calling the classical Hollywood cinema with the movement (action–affection) image, and relating its dominance to the sensory–motor schema of goal orientation, purposive action, and a causal nexus between seeing, feeling, doing, Deleuze discovers in the late work of Hitchcock, but also in John Cassavetes or Robert Altman, a crisis in the action image: ‘If one of Hitchcock’s innovations was to implicate the spectator in the film, did not the characters themselves have to be capable of being assimilated to spectators? But then . . . the mental image would be less a bringing to completion of the action-image, than a re-examination [of] the whole movement-image . . . through the rupture of the sensory–motor links in a particular character’ (Deleuze 1986: 205). This, as we shall see, applies rather well to one of the characters of *The Silence of the Lambs*, though, one would argue that this ‘rupture’ of which Deleuze speaks finds itself compensated in the contemporary American cinema by a kind of psychotic hyperactivity, in which the movement and action *come at* the characters, rather than *emanating from* them. The consequence are either what could be called the ‘new thinking image’ of characters being inside each others’ minds, or the kind of hysterical action scenario where the natural world (*Twister*), a vehicle (*Speed*), or a creature-person (*Terminator*) are ‘out of control’ and the protagonists can only react, parry, or otherwise shield themselves from being attacked, assailed, or annihilated.

A concept frequently invoked by Deleuze (and Guattari), when trying to think beyond individualism, identity and traditional notions of personhood is the:

- *Body without organs (BwO).* ‘A BwO is made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only by intensities. Only intensities pass and circulate. Still, the BwO is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass. It has nothing to do with fantasy, there is nothing to interpret. . . . It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree – to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced. It is non-stratified, unformed, intense matter, the matrix of intensity’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 153). When applied to

the cinema, BwO can help resituate such perennial issues of film theory as 'identification' (i.e., the affective or cognitive link between the spectator and the protagonists) and the communication or relation (non-dramatized and non-verbalized, but thematized and intuited) that exists between characters in a film. BwO may also allow us to understand how in much contemporary cinema the dividing line between inside and out, but also the boundaries between bodies, have become difficult to draw, and in any case no longer refer to a (psychic) interiority and a (physical) externality, but to two sides of the same surface or extension.

In a universe such as Deleuze's which is in constant flux, and where identities are neither fixed nor intersubjectively determined, a character's mode of being is a permanent

- *Becoming* . . . But whereas a certain Heraclitean becoming would imply a constant movement in order to stay the same, for Deleuze the issue is more complex. Instead of being unique and individual, we are all bad or imperfect copies, simulacra or automata, so that our most ethical state of being in the world is neither 'being true to oneself' nor 'becoming the same', but a 'becoming-other', in which one's encounter with the world develops along different 'segmental lines' – hard line, molecular line, and line of flight – indicative of the difficulties of having such an encounter at all. In terms of contemporary cinema, one might immediately point to the prevalence of mutants, shape-shifters, cyborgs, or other man-machine combinations as indications of Deleuzian 'becoming-other' in the wake of new special effects technologies such as morphing. But this would be to short-change the concept and instrumentalize it. Nor does it directly correlate with the discussion in cultural studies on 'recognizing otherness' and post-colonial theory's contested territory of 'othering'. As we shall indicate below, when 'applying' the term to *The Silence of the Lambs*, Deleuze sees the process as at once physical and bodily, rather than metaphoric or semiotic, and it is political, violent, affecting minorities whose state of oppression, suffering, and abjection bars them from most other forms of action and communication.

A final concept from the Deleuze arsenal that might prove fruitful for film analysis addresses neither character interaction nor identity politics, but concerns the film experience considered as 'event'. This concept is that of

- *The fold*. For Deleuze, the opposite of the sensory-motor scheme of the action image is the 'purely optical and aural situation', in which perception itself is what happens and what constitutes the cinematic event. But as with certain cognitivists cited at the beginning of the chapter, this perception is less a (transitive) seeing of something, a

specular structure separating subject from object, or a voyeuristic seeing/being seen. Rather, it is an enveloped perception, at once continuous and plural, active and passive, directional and surrounding. The semiotic interval and the presence/absence of illusionism find themselves replaced by the interstice, the recto and verso, the inverse and the obverse, in short: the fold. Thus, one crucial feature of the modern media event, which the cinema paradigmatically embodies, is that such an event only exists in order to be seen, while the spectators' sense of 'being there' already exhausts the event's meaning. In this sense, Deleuze's fold, as a structure of 'total visibility', joins Foucault's panoptic gaze as an alternative to the theories of the look/gaze as propounded by psychoanalytic film studies.

9.6. Analysis

9.6.1. A Foucault reading

In a Foucault-inspired reading of *The Silence of the Lambs*, a central place would be occupied by the FBI as an institution externally dedicated to law enforcement and internally to disciplining its members and recruits. What is interesting about the figure of Clarice in this context is that her Oedipal trajectory masks a more fundamental and more paradoxical journey, namely one that signifies Agent Starling's successes (killing Buffalo Bill, graduating from the FBI academy) as also her failures. She now finds herself inscribed in the official, male power-desire-domination machine, but – one may ask – at what cost to her personhood?

The reason why Clarice's triumph is also her failure is that, when gauged by this trajectory, she in fact undergoes a series of 'tests' which are not so much concerned with her individual suitability for the job as devised around the trope of 'professional' and 'woman'. This is to some extent also an 'initiation', but one that would be more accurately described as interpellation (the first word heard in the film is the call 'Starling!') and as a 'staging' of her femaleness (highlighting her as sexed, via body size and bodily manifestations): besides the voyeuristic/fetishist looked-at-ness that surrounds Agent Starling/Jodie Foster, the most startling thing is the extent to which other markers, mostly body-based and connoting 'femininity' are deployed: body fluids, body odours, swallowing, ingestion, excretion, secretion – all potentially coded as transgressive (Hannibal comments on her perfume, he makes her repeat Midge's words about her body odour, we see underarm perspiration on her sweat-shirt in the lift after her morning training session in the woods, Midge throws his semen at her, and we note the white smelling salts applied to her upper lip when inspecting the corpse).

The whole journey from being the object of the look (and exposed to male possessors of the look) to becoming herself possessor of the look, described above, could in fact be seen as a ruse, a lure: precisely the one that feminist critics found themselves caught up in. Consider the opening scene: the setting, the music, and the sound effects conjure up the atmosphere of a horror film with a hidden stalker lurking in the woods, but these turn out to be a 'false' set of anticipations because the stalker is a fellow FBI employee, calling her by her name to tell her she has to present herself to the chief of her section, where she is subsequently rewarded with an assignment. In other words, the 'trick' suspense has revealed another kind of truth: that she has been trapped by the promise of preferment, and that there is, at this level of interpellation, no difference between a stalker and a messenger: either role suits her FBI boss, himself a test-and-surveillance machine.

Empowerment for a female, the film suggests, is an ambiguous gift: thanks to Foucault's concept of power, the empowered female (one side of the opposition of the feminist reception of the film) now emerges as both alienated from and constituted by her subjectivity. The contested reception of *The Silence of the Lambs* by different groups of feminists can thus be seen to be inscribed into the film from the beginning. For the trajectory that she actually undergoes is the transformation from a body-and-gender being, with various (and, as Lecter sadistically points out, still contradictory) class ambitions and personal histories, into an odourless, sexless bureaucratic 'agent'. In this sense, her body is the 'price' she has to pay for participating in the 'equal opportunity capitalism' of the corporate-military-forensic-criminal-justice complex which here is the FBI. Agent Starling/Hannibal Lecter connect along the heterosexual axis, and their eyes communicate along perception as sensation, but even more so they are joined along the line of knowledge-power-confession as described by Foucault, and cited by him in his critique of the psychoanalytic paradigm.

In this perspective Hannibal Lecter becomes not the opponent but merely the 'excessive' embodiment or supplement of the incorporeality of this corporate system, doubled in the intrusiveness and ubiquity of the information society, supported by forensic science, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis. The FBI not only 'needs' Hannibal to help them solve a series of crimes in which he is obscurely implicated; rather, Hannibal is part of the FBI machinery, he and they work hand in hand. In a way, he is the 'obscene enjoyment' (as Žižek would say) of the system, the uncanny database intelligence of the modern administrative government, figured in a quasi-mythological but also palpably contemporary monster. If characters like Charles Foster Kane in *Citizen Kane* were the human face of capitalist America during the era of 'primitive accumulation', of the robber barons, the tycoons, and the press tsars, then Hannibal Lecter proves that today's corporate

capitalism in collusion with the federal government no longer needs a 'human face' but a leather-faced grimace, attached to a 'super-brain', ubiquitously penetrating minds and feasting, gourmet-fashion, on human flesh and brain-matter.

By contrast, Buffalo Bill, the 'Gumb/dumb' character, would in this light attain a more positive reading. Indeterminate as far as sexual difference is concerned (and hence a source of contention in the reception of the film by gays), he becomes an 'authentic' figure precisely to the degree that he shows the contradictory workings of the 'history of sexuality' on his own body. But he also literalizes the invitation to self-improvement and 'self-storage' which contemporary society addresses to its subjects as consumers. Not only does Buffalo Bill contest all definitions of gender and elude its categorizations, his performativity of sexual allure can have a perversely liberating, even 'resisting' dimension, insofar as it executes one kind of logic of the system. If in the Lacanian paradigm mentioned above he seems to be comprehensible as a being caught within the Imaginary of the mirror-stage, and slave to the most alienated of self-images, in the Foucaultian paradigm Buffalo Bill becomes a subversive, because wholly dedicated, worker at the site of body- and self-commodification. By taking the system more seriously than it takes itself, he is in the vanguard of a particular form of consumption, that of self-expression turned 'self-fashioning', engaged in the permanent bricolage art of identity formation.

A body-artist and avant-gardist of constructed gender, Buffalo Bill and his makeover identity is reminiscent, because rendered parodic-pathological, of the periodic self-invention of pop performers and music-video icons such as Madonna, Prince, or Michael Jackson. The line between the criminal (the extreme embodiment of the system itself, which takes the system at its word) and the resister/contester of the system (Buffalo Bill as the one who refuses to have his body/self 'written' by the dominant binary divides) becomes a fine one indeed, and in a sense he is Agent Starling's double, his ethics of transgression the inverse of her law enforcement: the meticulous skin-and-needlework is testimony to his dedication and professionalism, which is why one could say that, unlike Clarice, his failure is in fact his triumph, making his death a heroic self-sacrifice, in that it vindicates his refusal of normative heterosexuality. Perhaps this is how one might explain his enigmatic gesture of tenderly stroking Clarice's hair before letting himself be killed, by a panicky Clarice firing in his general direction, after hearing the clicking of his gun's safety catch. What if the lamb that Clarice 'saves' is not Catherine Marshall, but Gumb/lamb, by granting him a sacrificial death and salvation?

Such a slightly perverse conclusion might already indicate the general direction that a Foucault reading could take. For instance, one might ask: in what 'discursive space' do these three protagonists come together? First of all, the institutional/discursive sites of the federal justice system, of medical and

criminal pathology: who is mad and who is sane, where to draw the line? What do we make of figures such as Dr Chilton, who may not be criminally insane but who is certainly shown to be dangerously stupid? Foucault's point that madness in the pre-classical period had its own spaces within and at the margins of society – as in the Ship of Fools – and only in the classical period became the spectacle and 'theatre' of the asylum, marked off from the sane by framing, separating and encasing them in ways that accentuated their visibility while silencing their words, could be said to be held up for (post-classical) renegotiation in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

Then, there is the discursive space of the body, once we think of these bodies differently. The 'quid pro quo' trading of knowledge between Clarice and Lecter, heavily eroticized and pleasurable to both, opens up an exchange, a deal that puts Clarice level with Buffalo Bill regarding the secrets of their respective pathologies (childhood trauma/childhood abuse), but it also pits Clarice against Hannibal Lecter, because of the offer she makes him which turns out to have been a ruse for which he nearly falls ("Anthrax Island" – nice touch, Clarice'). This cat-and-mouse game (not just a 'ping-pong game', as Klaus Theweleit calls it (1994: 37), because of the additional dimension that includes Buffalo Bill, who is intercut as the third player, with his own cat-and-moth game), enfolds the characters in a self-monitoring, self-surveillance system ('Look deep into yourself,' Hannibal mockingly and riddlingly tells Clarice), yet one that is not primarily based on vision.

More directly panoptic is the gaze relayed between the three men on the 'inside' – Dr Chilton, Crawford, Hannibal – and the(ir political masters) outside: Krendler, from the Justice Department, and Senator Marshall, going live on TV. What makes it different from the male gaze of feminist film theory is not only that its 'sexual difference' import is either directly thematized (by Lecter, for instance, regarding Crawford and others: 'Don't you feel eyes moving over your body, Clarice?') or not relevant (in the case of Chilton, Krendler, and Senator Marshall), but also that each of the characters is both looking and knowing him/herself observed, by the internalized gaze of the respective institution or their own self-scrutinizing ambition/conscience. They all, at a certain point, make a spectacle of themselves, in the knowledge that they are being watched: from Senator Marshall, pleading for her daughter in front of the national TV audience, to Hannibal Lecter, fully aware, of course, that his interviews/conversations with Clarice are being recorded and monitored.

On the other hand, the Foucaultian reading also reaches its limits, in that it does not adequately account for the eccentric position and personality of Hannibal Lecter, when mostly seeing him as part of the 'system'. The refusal embodied in his dandyism, but also in his excessive heterosexuality, would not be fully valorized, although there is a line of argument which would say

that Hannibal is in fact a 'homosexual' who wears his verbal and social heterosexuality as a disguise, a mask and masquerade. It is here that Deleuze may offer a way forward, because neither sexual difference nor the gaze, panoptic or otherwise, are for him the most salient categories.

9.6.2. A Deleuze reading

There is, first of all, something very Deleuze–Guattarian about the world of *The Silence of The Lambs*: what is striking is the outrageously indecorous mingling of bodies and minds between the three central characters, the seeping, bleeding, and conflating of their discrete and otherwise contrasting psychic profiles. The way their particular somatic selves, kinetic traits, and peculiar intensities are taken apart, mixed up, and reassigned is a good example of what Deleuze and Guattari mean by 'de-territorializing', the movement away from established limits and boundaries, towards new or even archaic forms of psychic, as well as bodily organization.

Thus, a Deleuzian anti-psychoanalytic reading might start with one feature of Hannibal Lecter not yet commented upon here but crucial to the fascination emanating from this figure: his cannibalism, the fact that he eats his victims. His is a taboo-breaking figure of a special kind, in one sense disrespectful of the most fundamental and basic boundaries between bodies and within bodies, but in another sense an 'incorporator', whose strength and perspicacity comes precisely from his ability to redraw these boundaries between inside and outside. Quite clearly, the totemic behaviour of Buffalo Bill (dressing himself in his victims' skins like a suit of armour) and the atavistic-tribal power politics of Hannibal Lecter (eating people's livers, biting off their faces, or otherwise ingesting their body parts) are symmetrically related: their most fundamental body schemata are different from those of other mortals, and could be described more accurately in Deleuzian terms of the 'body-without-organs', as 'matter that occupies space . . . to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced'. Especially Hannibal Lecter would probably have appealed to Deleuze's gnomonic sense of humour, in that he pastiches by literalizing the 'body-without-organs', seeking radically to deform in order to transform the power relations that make up the social bond, by exposing it to quite different yet no less 'actual' intensities and desires than those which normally regulates how people interact. Here the 'devouring eye' is no mere metaphor of love or covetous possessiveness, and the fundamental body schemata of container and contained are 'flattened' into sheets of skin, with only a recto and a verso, but no volume or depth.

The psychic violence and erotic desires usually domesticated in the family unit of 'Oedipus' and the incest prohibition are in these characters translated into a micro-schizo-politics of body and skin, and a materialist-immanent

commerce of brain, thought, and flesh. Taken together with Clarice and the haunting image of the bleating lambs, the three protagonists come together under the primitive but sacred rituals of sacrifice and slaughter, emphasizing the fact that, in many respects, the film works with icons, with images readable only at the threshold where actions trace out emblematic designs and where – in Foucault's terms – the preclassical unity of word and image resurfaces with traumatic force.

From the 'body-without-organs' and the deterritorializations practised by Hannibal, it is easy to see how consistently the film is presenting us with partial objects and multiply articulated levels of existence, with 'altered states' and their successive stages. They can best be gathered together under the denominator 'metamorphosis', a process graphically represented in Buffalo Bill's trade mark of an exotic moth which he lodges in his victims' throats.

This motif (which, as we shall see, is much more pervasive than the term indicates) is perhaps the most directly Deleuzian aspect of the film, because it refers us to his concept of 'becoming', briefly described above, and extensively treated in Deleuze and Guattari's book on Franz Kafka, not only because Kafka's most famous story is called *Metamorphosis*, but because here was an individual whose many forms of marginalization made him take action. In his case, he developed a style of writing that was as physical, literal, referential as any mode of action can be, because it 'creates through the real without representing it': this would be the meaning of 'becoming' in Kafka, whose 'becoming-animal' or 'becoming-insect' was the most authentic encounter with the world.

Translating the Deleuzian paradigm into the character constellation of *The Silence of the Lambs*, the figure of Buffalo Bill would again not be identified with his mirror-image – as in the feminist-Lacanian reading – but with the moth, the cocoon, which he painstakingly feeds with honey. As one of the entomologists at the Smithsonian remarks: 'Somebody loved him.' He feeds the moth in order to help the butterfly/moth out of the cocoon, while at the same time he starves the women to 'help' them out of their skins. Feeding honey to a death's-head moth, fasting 'size 14' women, or feasting on human liver – with these bodily features the film introduces us (and initiates Clarice) to a different lifecycle, that of insects, perhaps, rather than humans. For Buffalo Bill's behaviour is only the most obvious example of what is going on in all the main characters, namely their perpetual transformation, depicted as an unfolding, a divesting and attiring, a transmutation and metamorphosis.

This, as indicated, Deleuze would call 'becoming ... animal, insect, woman'. It is signalled by repeated movements towards breaking out: of a skin, a carapace, a phantasm, or a cage. It has to do with flight and liberation: the moth as James Gumb's totem animal, but also Hannibal, crucifying and

eviscerating the policeman, as if to graphically depict his own escape as an act of voiding a body and shedding a carapace at the same time, while Clarice tries to leave behind the phantasm of the lambs to clothe herself in the insignia of office, uniform and badge, investiture and diploma.

In order thus to reinterpret Hannibal Lecter, and indicate to what extent he is at the heart of the passive-active network that the film weaves around the trope of metamorphosis, we might quote Deleuze on a key distinction made in his cinema books, namely the shift from the movement image (or action image) to the time image (or crystal image):

The cinema of action depicts sensory-motor situations: there are characters, in a certain situation, who act, perhaps very violently, according to how they perceive the situation. Actions are linked to perceptions and perceptions develop into actions. Now, suppose a character finds himself in a situation, however ordinary or extraordinary, that's beyond any possible action, or to which he can't react. It's too powerful, or too painful, too beautiful. The sensory-motor link is broken. He is no longer in a sensory-motor situation, but in a purely optical and aural situation.

(Deleuze 1997: 51)

In this sense Hannibal Lecter, too, is a Deleuzian figure, now not so much in relation to 'becoming other' as insofar as he is 'brain' and 'screen', while his incarceration cuts the link with the sensorimotor scheme. We never quite see him eliminate Midge, nor learn exactly how he manages to escape his cage, hoist one policeman, and skin the other's face to put it on as a mask: crucial parts of the action are always missing, the film cuts from one temporal event to another, without the intermediary steps. The fact that he cannot move is the locus of his power and it is the power of making mental constructions, inferences – he elicits from Clarice her past and colonizes her future. While he seems to encourage the linear investigative drive, he actually deflects it, turns it inward, makes it mental. One could think of the immobility of a character from the 'classical cinema', such as Jeffries (James Stewart) in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, who is normally read in Lacanian terms as the epitome of voyeurism, and contrast his confinement with that of Hannibal Lecter. The difference is striking, even though Lecter, too, expresses his desire for a 'view' ('Belvedere'). But his voyeurism is of an entirely different nature: once we see him as a brain, it is Lecter's cannibalism that becomes crucial, because it is in some sense proof of his ability to ingest a mental world, his facility to be 'inside' someone's mind in no time at all.

Early on in the film, just after he has explained to Clarice the nature of her assignment, Crawford says to her: 'Believe me, you don't want Hannibal Lecter inside your head.' This remark can be understood in a Foucaultian sense as warning her of the insinuating cannibalism of psychoanalysis and

other technologies of discursive penetration. But since he only warns of what he knows will come to pass, Crawford's advice can also be seen as laying out the topology of the two characters' engagement with each other, also captured in a sentence of Deleuze, cited by Žižek: 'If you are caught up in another person's dream, you are lost' (Žižek 1994: 212). At the same time, Deleuze might well have agreed with Alphonse Bertillon, the founding father of criminology, when he said: 'One only sees that which one observes, and one observes only things which are in the mind' – a sentence that Thomas Harris, author of *The Silence of the Lambs*, used as his epigraph in *Red Dragon*, the first of the Hannibal Lecter novels.

But in another sense, this feeling of being inside someone else's head, dream, or fantasy is perhaps the most striking feature of contemporary mainstream cinema. Hollywood goes to enormous lengths to blur the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective', often telling its stories as if they were taking place in a world diegetically independent from the characters within it, only then to reveal that – either wholly or in crucial respects – this world is one which depends on being seen, observed, sensed, or imagined by someone, or – more complicated still – only exists in the spaces of overlap between two characters' mutually intersecting fantasy or memory spaces (*The Truman Show*, *Nurse Betty*, *American Beauty*, *eXistenZ*, *The Matrix*, *Memento*). It brings us back to the nature of Deleuze's (and Guattari's) mode of thinking, which earlier on I called 'immersive'. One could also describe it – more polemically – as hermetically sealed against the 'outside', sustaining itself only by virtue of its own self-defined concepts and modes of thinking, which mutually refine but also confine each other in a seemingly seamless web or cloth or skin/skein that knows only extension and inversion, an enveloping undulation apparently without beginning or end.

This *mise-en-abyme* of mental worlds in the service of sustaining the impression of/immersion in a diegetic world which is also a mental universe is called by Deleuze 'the fold', and he connects it to seriality and series, to the manifold in Leibniz's thinking, and to the involuted successiveness of vistas without prospect known from the Baroque. For Deleuze, the fact that the characters seems to be constantly in each others' minds or trying to encase them in their worlds is a consequence of the 'sheets of time' into which human beings are always already enfolded.

'The fold' thus defines the nature of Deleuze's argumentative strategy which – with reference to the cinema – might be called a mimetic embrace of his subject, describing in what sense Deleuze does indeed think *with* the cinema rather than *about* it. For 'the fold' serves to redefine the nature of the cinematic fascination, or at least, that exerted by the contemporary (though not exclusively) Hollywood cinema – now examined and explained not through the psychoanalytic paradigm of absence, fetishism, and disavowal,

nor through the cinematic apparatus and its structure of interpellation and suture, but rather, by trying to make Deleuze's notion of the fold productive in conjunction with his definition of the 'event', as described by Foucault in the quotation above, and allowing us to re-situate the problem with which we began: how to redefine and reinterpret the cinematic experience.

Conclusion

What we have done in this chapter is to conduct our three readings of *The Silence of the Lambs* around each of the three main characters: for the feminist case, it is Clarice Starling and her 'problem' that occupies centre stage; in our Foucaultian analysis we gave a privileged place to Buffalo Bill as the pathologized target of state power and the 'victim' of abuse from childhood on, seeking violently as well as tenderly to transgender and trans-dress/gress an identity imposed on him by societal norms of strict gender separation. Finally, the third analysis thematized Hannibal Lecter, as the figure that appeared to us to embody some intriguingly Deleuzian concepts, such as the radical 'deterritorialization' of conventional body schemata in his special kind of 'cannibalism' that refuses to distinguish between brain, mind, and flesh. Each reading thereby necessarily realigns the other characters, ascribing to them different values or even inverting their ethical identities. At the same time, the general conceptual focus has remained constant, insofar as sexual difference and gender; the Lacanian look and the panoptic gaze; the crossing and recrossing of boundaries between bodies, sensations, and successive stages of a deployment/development have in each reading served as the argumentative thread and metaphoric quilting.

However, such a tripartite division has above all schematic-didactic value: it should not disguise another intended movement of the analysis, which was concerned with transitions or gradations not only of sexed, gazed-upon, and gendered bodies but of concepts:

- from sexual difference to notions of performed gender and the multiform encounters of mind, matter, and sensuous perception;
- from 'subject' and 'subjectivity' to 'body' (as a site of discourses, images, and intensities, rather than a sexed material entity) providing the theoretical fields of negotiating identities, identifications, and corporeal experience in the cinema;
- from thinking progress, initiation and closure, to thinking metamorphosis, repetition, seriality;
- from thinking narrative and trajectory (initiation) to 'event' and 'phantasm', i.e. to new taxonomies of the audiovisual situation of the cinematic experience.

It is our contention that the two approaches – feminist film theory's (broadly structuralist) gendering of apparatus theory, alongside the post-structuralist articulations of identity/subjectivity/body by Foucault and Deleuze, with respect to the question of sexuality and gender in the cinema – have yielded a number of insights and results. For instance, it made it possible to claim that film theory's successive use of Freud and Lacan, polemically critiqued by Foucault and Deleuze, has followed a certain internal logic, and is not merely the expression of an externally imposed change of intellectual paradigm, such as the often-invoked move in film theory from 'psycho-semiotics' to 'cultural studies'.

Instead of seeing these theories and the methods derived from them as incompatibly juxtaposed, we tried to trace their antagonisms along several lines of transformation and rupture around the notion of sexual difference (which underpinned the feminist concern with power and inequality), opening out into the notion of gender. The sex/gender problematic was thus extended at the theoretical level, in order that *The Silence of the Lambs* and its controversial reception could be analysed in a way that made the controversy comprehensible also within the text. We have thus offered a complementary reading to the deadlocks variously noted by Stephen Heath, Janet Staiger, and Judith Halberstam. More specifically, thanks to Foucault and Deleuze, the nexus of power and personhood, of difference and opposition, but also of desire and pleasure could be seen as multiform and decentred, localized, and micropolitical, rather than as categorical and absolute, which is how it often appears in the binary and exclusionary articulations of militant practices and academic discourses. For Foucault and Deleuze, energies flow in either direction, sexuality is multi-layered, and affective connections can be established across apparently insuperable barriers and antagonistic concepts – those of good and evil, of male and female, of pleasure and horror.

The conflicting viewing positions have thus been resolved not by adopting an either/or, or both ... and stance, but by a kind of theoretical layering, appealing to a reconceptualization at another level, which allowed us to see this particular film (though the same would be true of many other contemporary films: apart from the ones already cited, David Fincher's *Se7en* and *Fight Club* come to mind) presenting us with different worlds, and several ways of conceiving their protagonists' and antagonists' identities. The key concept that permitted the shift is that of the body, or rather the move from 'subject' and 'subject position' to body, figured not only as the inseparability of consciousness, matter, brain, and flesh, but also as the non-antagonistic relation of inside and outside, of surface and extension, sexuality and gender. The body becomes not only a topographical 'site' for an inscription of the world and its different kinds of textuality. It also emerges as the locus of

energies and intensities emanating from it and oscillating between spectator and screen. In respect of the film experience, the body is thus both foundational and constructed, an a priori given and the result of that which it is not – image, schema, representation.