

ing above the others, the *deus ex machina* that intervenes in order to overcome the irreconcilable, to bring about the denouement by offering science's solution for city planning. To speak of dialogue is somewhat inaccurate. It is, rather, a question of a debate since the voices never address each other but an absent and shifting interlocutor, who is at times the spectator as individual or as collective force, at others, the unidentified parties of social responsibility.

The voice undergoes a process of impersonation by assuming certain signs of a social personality. The voice of capital is aggressive in its tone and its relation to the addressee. It exhorts to action, its major mood is the imperative: "Forget the quiet cities. Bring in the steam, the iron men, the giants. Open the throttle! All aboard! The promised land!" (101-3) The voice, which has the neutral character of standard American English, is nonetheless marked with irony and affectation. The text's rhetoric and its emphatic delivery show the voice to be a mask. Most importantly, there is the textual irony. The voice avoids reference to the field of the image—a series of ominous industrial landscapes. The image track tells the truth and gives the lie to the linguistic message. On the other hand, the second voice possesses many more signs of its enunciation. In contrast to the voice of capital, it makes constant reference to the field of the image, using gesture in its speech—the ostensive indicators: "We gotta face life in these shacks and alleys. We gotta let our children take chances here with rickets, t.b., or worse" (116-18) The voice takes its place in the image—it is a discourse of truth. Its tone is angry, but submissive. When it addresses its interlocutor, it is in the interrogative mood: "Who built this place? What put us here? And how do we get out again? We're asking. Just asking." (131-33). The identificatory "we," the colloquialisms, the plain accent of class (although clearly affected) situate the voice's social origin.

Four transcriptions, four ambivalent texts containing quite different discursive tendencies. The frame of enunciation shifts between the discourse of fiction and the fiction of a real discourse. Each text sets up its major and minor keys and its strategy of resolution. The discursive partner, who is sometimes acknowledged, sometimes not, is caught up in this textual play. The spectator-subject positions and repositions himself, vacillating between identification and distanciation. It is time to turn our attention to this ambivalent figure of the spectator.

The Nonfiction Film and Its Spectator

What occurs when the documentary text is placed within the cinematic apparatus—the system that establishes the conditions of reception for all films? The darkened theater; the configuration of the seating that assures passivity and isolates us as spectators maintaining at the same moment our distance from the screen; the cone of light that projects from behind us and as if out of our consciousness; and the image itself, immense, dazzling, hypnotic. What becomes of documentary realism under such conditions of reception? Is there a nonfiction effect, that is, does the documentary text, attached, as we presume it is, to real occurrences and verifiable historic moments, engage the spectator in a specific kind of affective participation in the film?

Film theory has most often spoken of the spectator's experience in terms of the "realism" of the cinematographic image. Taking on the appearance of real forms and endowed with real movement, the motion picture is a highly iconic and indexical system of signs that seems to close the gap between objects in the world and their representation. It is this sense of immediacy, theoreticians argue, which engenders in the spectator an intense feeling of participation in the film. Until recently, there has been little consideration given to the moment of reception and to the conditions in which the spectator consumes the image. As Jean-Louis Baudry points out, this failure to examine the cinematographic apparatus in the totality of its functioning is part of a general resistance to considering the place of the subject within cinema:

Actually, cinema is a simulation apparatus. This much was immediately recognized, but, from the positivist viewpoint of scientific rationality which was predominant at the time of its invention, the interest was directed towards the simulation of reality inherent to the moving image [and] to the unexpected effects which could be derived from it without finding it necessary to examine the implications of the cinematographic

apparatus being initially directed towards the subject and simulation's possible application to states or subjects-effects before being directed toward the reproduction of the real.¹

In order to discuss documentary's particular situation within the cinematographic apparatus, it is first necessary to describe the subject-effect which that apparatus produces.

Baudry's analysis suggests that the motivating desire of cinema is not to replicate reality but rather to produce within the spectator-subject a specific condition of consciousness, which Christian Metz calls the filmic state. Cinema is a simulation apparatus—a perfected configuration whose partial realizations can be found in other historical devices. But what it represents (repeats) for the spectator is not the real as such, but the "ghosts" that have not been laid to rest and that still occupy the scene of the unconscious: "In order to explain the cinema-effect, it is necessary to consider it from the viewpoint of the apparatus that it constitutes, apparatus which in its totality includes the subject. And first of all, the subject of the unconscious."²

In order to describe the subject-effect that cinema produces, Baudry, and Metz in his essay entitled "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator,"³ draw on the psychoanalytic theory of certain psychic states—the special economic situations that Freud called the "hallucinatory psychoses of desire." In particular, Baudry draws parallels between the dream state and the filmic state, underscoring the material conditions of the cinematic spectacle—the darkness of the place and the passive immobility of the spectator—which recall the somatic conditions of sleep. Sleep, Freud tells us, is a "reviviscence of one's stay in the body of the mother." It permits a developmental regression to the stage of primitive narcissism in which the subject's libido withdraws the cathectic energy it deployed into objects in the subject's waking state in order to reinvest it in the ego itself. As Freud argues, the human psychic organism always retains its capacity to retrace its steps, to return to earlier forms of object relations: "The primitive stages can always be reestablished; the primitive mind is, in the fullest meaning of the word, imperishable."⁴ In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud notes that temporal regression in the dreamer is accompanied by topographical regression. Excitation, instead of moving from the sensory extremity to the motor extremity of the psychic apparatus, is allowed through deactivation of the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious systems to flow in a backward direction until it produces the "hallucinatory revival of the perceptual images."⁵

As Metz's analysis in "The Fiction Film and Its Spectator" demonstrates, the filmic and oneiric states are related by a complex set of partial similarities and differences. In dreams, mental images, as products of the regressive movement of libidinal energy and the cathexis of the perceptual apparatus, are taken to be perceptions of reality, i.e., they are hallucinated. Cinematic images on the other hand belong in essence to the order of reality and are recognized as originating in the outside world, in a play of projected light on a screen. And yet the experience of the spectator demonstrates that it is not the "moving visual and sonic impressions"—the cinematic signifier—which are taken as real, but the characters and actions represented. The initial impression of reality that the filmic image produces in us indicates in itself at least the beginning of a regressive movement and the desire to confuse what is real with what is imagined. Furthermore, the spectator is subject to fleeting moments of intense belief, which Metz accounts for in economic terms. The psychic conditions of the filmic state are the result of a very specific organization of the perceptual and somatic situation. On the one hand, the flow of libidinal energy that is normally dissipated in the waking state is blocked by the absence of motor discharge because of the passive, immobile position of the spectator. It tends to turn back in the direction of the perceptual agency, which it hypercathects. Simultaneously, on the other hand, the film presents the spectator with an unusually intense sensual experience, that nourishes his perception from without:

What defines this equilibrium is a *double reinforcement* of the perceptual function, simultaneously from without and within: apart from the filmic state, there are few situations in which a subject receives particularly dense and organized impressions from without at the same moment that his immobility predisposes him to "hyper-receive" ["*sur-recevoir*"] them from within. The classical film plays on this pincer action, the two branches of which it has itself set up. It is the double reinforcement which renders possible the impression of reality.⁶

Both Baudry and Metz point to the resemblance between the filmic and oneiric flux that is a resemblance of their signifiers. The topographical regression of the dream produces a transformation of the word-representation of dream-thought into the image-representation of the manifested dream. Indeed Freud considers the question of representability—the displacement of expressions toward pictorial substitutes—as the third factor in addition to condensation and displacement responsible for the transformation of dream-thoughts.⁷ Hence the cinematic signifier—images in movement ac-

accompanied by sound—has a certain kinship with the figuration of dream. It is of course necessary to distinguish the secondary, bound character of cinematic discourse from the freely flowing psychical energy that is characteristic of the primary process. However, the cinematographic image is never completely consumed by discourse; it never completely submits to the chain of logical sequence in which it is caught: "The unconscious neither thinks nor discourses; it figures itself forth in images; conversely, every image remains vulnerable to the attraction, varying in strength according to the case, of the primary process and its characteristic modalities of concatenation."⁸

Regression in dream is topographical in that it describes the redirection of excitation; it is temporal in that it implies a return to past phases of development; it is formal in that its modes of expression involve a reversion to primary process. Through this complex psychical experience, the dreamer reinstitutes an archaic mode of identification. He or she rediscovers an immediate relationship to the object in which there is no distinction between interior and exterior, between self and other; the dreamer occupies the entire field of the dream:

One might even add that we are dealing with a more-than-real in order to differentiate it from the impression of the real which reality produces in the normal waking situation. The more-than-real translating the cohesion of the subject with his perceived representations, the submersion of the subject in his representations, the near-impossibility for him to escape their influence and which is dissimilar if not incompatible with the impression resulting from any direct relation to reality.⁹

Cinema belongs to the order of reality and what the spectator experiences in the movie theater is regression in a partial and incipient form. Yet, if we agree with Baudry's compelling argument, it is precisely this archaic mode of being that the subject seeks to repeat by assuming the position already marked out for the spectator within the cinematographic machine. It is obvious that the delusion coefficient is less in cinema than in dreams, and cinema's capacity for wish fulfillment is less certain. The film is not a production internal to the spectator. Yet, as Metz asserts, cinema derives much of its power from the fact that its illusion is produced within a spectator who is awake. Within the darkened walls of the movie theater we as spectators permit ourselves to lower, just slightly, our defenses, to mitigate the authority of the reality principle and secondary process in order to mimic within this apparatus our own

archaic subjectivity in this scene of instinctual representation, which has been denied and excluded:

In other words, without his always suspecting it, the subject is induced to produce machines which would not only complement or supplement the workings of the secondary process, but which could represent his own overall functioning to him: he is led to produce mechanisms mimicking, simulating the apparatus which is no other than himself. The presence of the unconscious also makes itself felt through the pressure it exerts in seeking to get itself represented by a subject who is still unaware of the fact that he is representing to himself the very scene of the unconscious where he is.¹⁰

Baudry and Metz, among others, have advanced our understanding of the metapsychology of the spectator of the fiction film. They have analyzed the state of the subject—the effect produced by the conjoining of the psychic and cinematic apparatuses. My analysis of documentary has thus far centered on the text and its modalities of enunciation and this study has necessarily included the spectator. However I would like to shift attention to spectatorship itself and attempt to describe in economic and topographical terms how documentary modifies the filmic state. For in order to produce something other than the fiction-effect, documentary must modify the classic arrangement of parts of the cinematographic apparatus; it must have another manner of articulating the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. As I will attempt to demonstrate, documentary institutes a rather specific inflection-deflection of the desire for cinema which it both acknowledges and denies.

Metz has demonstrated in his analysis of the scopoc regime in cinema that the cinematographic image partakes of the imaginary by its very system of representation. The cinematic signifier combines in its production a certain presence and a certain absence. In films the actors, their actions, and the settings within which they act are present only as moving traces of light on the screen; their models, really present only at the moment of the shooting, are elsewhere; everything is recorded:

The cinema only gives [its object] in effigy, inaccessible from the outset, in a primordial *elsewhere*, infinitely desirable (= never possessible), on another scene which is that of absence and which nonetheless represents the absent in detail, thus making it very present, but by a different itinerary. Not only am I at a distance from the object, as in the theatre, but what remains in that distance is now no longer the object itself, it is

a delegate it has sent me while itself withdrawing. A double withdrawal.¹¹

By this double withdrawal of the signifier, as Metz asserts, every film is a fiction film.

The documentary image as signifier is no more a part of the real it represents than is the image in the fiction film. It has been cut off from its model, deferred, transformed. And yet the documentary image, or rather the sequence of images that constitute the film, shares at least one feature with the image (perception) of the real: it does not produce or produces intermittently or perhaps produces only in its marginal (aberrant) productions the specific kind of pleasure that is the whole aim of the fiction film as institution. We find ourselves faced with the question that Daniel Sibony poses in opening his analysis of the effect produced on the German public by the televising of the American serial melodrama, *Holocaust*: "Let's start with this simple question: why is it the fictive image which works on the spectator and overwhelms him, while the real image (indeed the event itself) leaves him indifferent, or at least completely in control of himself, 'master of the game' for which he is the permanent *mise en scène*."¹²

Why do the images of horror—perceptions of the real—remain bearable, while images of fiction evoke profound and cathartic excitement? If we accept, following Sibony's analysis, that society attains a certain recognition (repetition) of itself through the agency of an orchestrated play of "fictional" images, why does it appear that documentary film has been excluded from this symbolic function? Why does the documentary representation of the holocaust leave the spectator unshaken, whereas fictional images are capable of provoking a sacrificial burning in effigy? What better effigy than the documentary film, which would appear to bear the marks of the real? What closer conjunction of reality and representation, what more prodigious repetition can be imagined?

I can begin to respond by stating what appears to be a tautology: documentary films often fail to engage the spectator's affective participation because they often produce filmic displeasure. But the spectator's displeasure must be understood here in terms of psychical processes. As Baudry and Metz demonstrate in their analyses of the cinematographic apparatus, the spectator goes to the movies in search of a certain pleasure, the satisfaction of specific drives. He or she entertains with the film an object relationship: the images and the stories they tell may either gratify or frustrate according to whether those images and stories satisfy or fail to satisfy the

demands of instinctual fantasies. The individual spectator invests him or herself more or less completely in a given film in an infinite gradation between pleasure and displeasure. As Metz points out, distinct filmic displeasure can be described in topographical terms as either the lack of instinctual gratification, i.e., displeasure of the id, or as a threatening excess of excitation that occasions the intervention of the superego,¹³ and it is certainly documentary's failure to nurture the spectator's fantasy that is at issue here. Any film may displease by the very fact that its images and sounds are external to the spectator-subject, who does not produce them according to his or her desire:

The diegetic film, on the other hand, which in certain respects is still of the order of phantasy, also belongs to the *order of reality*. It exhibits one of reality's major characteristics: in relation to the wish (and to the fear which is the other face of the wish), it can "turn out" more or less well; it is not in total collusion with them; it can become so only after the fact, through an encounter or adjustment whose success is never guaranteed: it can please or displease, like the real, and because it is part of the real.¹⁴

Both fiction and nonfiction films belong to the order of reality, but what remains to be explained is why nonfiction "disappoints" so consistently. It is not because of the greater reality of the signifier in documentary, since the signifier in cinema always evokes that play of presence and absence that links it to the imaginary. It is not the specific content of the images that accounts for their being apprehended in a general way as "good" or "bad" objects: there is no absolute distinction to be made between fiction and nonfiction on the basis of the "semantic fabric." Nor is a clear-cut distinction to be made on the basis of differing forms of content: as we have seen, documentaries tell stories and to do so they often borrow the formal structures of the classic narrative film. If documentary creates special conditions of reception for the spectator, we must look for them not simply in the object, the film, but in the interrelationship of subject and object by which both subject and object are shaped. This relationship is conditioned first from without. We will consider documentary as a social institution whose mythology acts to model the spectator's responses and shape the attitude he or she adopts with regard to the film. Second, we will reexamine documentary from within, from the perspective of the text, in order to weigh the effect of documentary's modes of enunciation on spectatorial consciousness.

If there is one feature that characterizes documentary as institu-

X tion, it is a basic dependency. Documentary film production takes place within other institutional contexts; it is financed by governmental or industrial public relations agencies or educational and scientific organizations: Sovkino (USSR); the fascist *Stattsauftragsfilme*; the U.S. Information Services, the Farm Security Administration; UNESCO; the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France); the Empire Marketing Board, the General Post Office, the Shell (Oil) Film Unit (Britain), to mention but a few of the most significant "parent" institutions in the history of documentary production. Unlike the commercial film industry, documentary filmmaking is not generally self-sustaining or self-perpetuating; it stands outside the circuit of finance, production, and consumption that defines cinema as institution. Spectators do not normally pay to see documentary films; they do not participate in an exchange of money for pleasure. Consequently, a "bad" film in documentary, one that fails to please on the level of the instinctual fantasies of the spectator, is not necessarily a failure of the institution (although documentarists often feel constrained to make concessions to filmic pleasure).

The spectator who goes to see a documentary film is quite aware that the film is not designed to provide the same experience as the fiction film. Normally, he or she has not chosen the film as a leisure time activity whose goal is to activate the pleasures of the imaginary. The spectator is, rather, conscious of an overriding seriousness of purpose, defined at least in part by special conditions of consumption. If the film is projected within an institutional framework, it is that institution—film society, labor union, university, civic forum—which sets the social context of reception. When it was projected as part of a commercial film program as frequently occurred in movie theaters between 1935 and 1955, the documentary, always a preliminary event, was not to be consumed, as every spectator knew, in the same manner or for the same purpose as the feature film. Always the spectator recognizes a distinct contractual situation in which he or she agrees to maintain a level of wakefulness and a certain activity of secondary process appropriate to this object, just as such an arrangement is established between the spectator and the fiction film: "Thus a sort of compromise is created, a middle level of wakefulness, itself institutionalised in the classical cinema, where film and spectator succeed in being regulated one by the other and both by an identical or similar degree of secondarization."¹⁵

Documentary requires a higher degree of vigilance from the spectator than does the fiction film. Through its apparent relation to

the reality of social existence, it invokes the defense mechanisms of the ego and calls on the operations of waking thought, controlled reasoning, and judgment characteristic of the bound energy of the secondary processes. Thus documentary films bring into play within the spectator a resistance to the material conditions of the movie theater which as Baudry and Metz assert, were set in place precisely to permit a certain lowering of defenses. The cinematic apparatus by its very configuration tenders a promise of libidinal pleasure that the spectator here is led to refuse: the documentary film is an object inappropriate to desire. We can then describe in economic terms the unpleasure that documentary films seem to produce so often in the spectator: boredom is the condition of frustration (*Versagung*) in which the subject who is denied consequently denies himself.

The attitude that the spectator adopts toward the documentary film is further nourished by the popular belief in documentary realism. Documentary film succeeds in producing in the spectator a specific sense of the real, which we must distinguish from the impression of reality experienced by the spectator of the fiction film. Metz's work has demonstrated that the impression of reality cannot be explained only by reference to the cinematic signifier: the intensity of belief evoked is not simply a function of the great resemblance between perception of the image and perception of the real:

The impression of reality is founded, then, on certain objective resemblances between what is perceived in the film and what is perceived in daily life, resemblances still imperfect but less so than they are in most of the other arts. However, I remarked also that the similarity of the stimuli does not explain everything, since what characterises and even defines, the impression of reality is that it works to the benefit of the imaginary and not of the material which represents it (that is, precisely, the stimulus).¹⁶

The documentary, like the fiction film, is composed of photographic images in movement that produce an impression of depth and provide great perceptual richness. Like the classic narrative film, the documentary hides the traces of its work in order to "open immediately on to the transparency of a signified."¹⁷ It also produces the previous existence effect, but with an authority the fiction film cannot claim: more than the fiction film, documentary creates the impression of merely transmitting to the spectator events that have already taken place. It produces the referential illusion and in fact derives its prestige from that production.

As Metz suggests, it is the absence of actors and objects in the fiction film—more precisely, their presence in the mode of absence—which serves to induce the spectator's imaginary relationship with his or her counterpart in the images. Thus the cinematic signifier is characterized by its perceptual wealth combined with a profound unreality: a most convincing simulation that acknowledges its lack of real being. It is this unreality that is the precondition for the production of another (psychic) reality—the illusion of being-there of the thing.

Documentary shares with the fiction film the character of its signifier. It also produces a pseudo real since the reality it evokes with those same powers of imitation is elsewhere, in another time. However, documentary does not possess the same powers of illusion as the fiction film; it does not lead the spectator to imagine the phantasmic presence of actions, objects, and persons. The sense of the real is strong in documentary, but its effect is achieved through a modification of the spectator's consciousness of the relationship between presence and absence. The signified in documentary has status as document; its signifier conserves the traces in the present of events that have already taken place. The projection of a documentary film is always a retelling. The act of signification is presented as already complete, as redemption (to use the word of realist theory): the signified derives its prestige from its anteriority. Hence the documentary appears invested with certain characteristics that Roland Barthes ascribes to the photograph.¹⁸ Like the photograph, the documentary film is not experienced as illusion: it does not evoke in the spectator the consciousness of the being-there of the thing. Its signified does not belong to the here-now but rather to the having-been-there. It participates in the illogical conjunction of spatial immediacy (the presence of the signifier) and temporal anteriority (the assumed preexistence of the signified). This primordial signified stands in temporal opposition to the realization of the desire of cinema: the assumption by the spectator of the film's images as his or her own present enunciation. As Freud tells us, the present tense is the tense in which wishes are represented as fulfilled. For Benveniste it is the time of enunciation. The impression of reality, then, in documentary film can be described as a belief in the reality of the signified as the having-been-there of the thing.

This sense of reality suggests a distinct spectatorial attitude in which the character of the spectacle itself is modified, in particular the mode in which the spectator engages the object, the images. As Metz has shown in *The Imaginary Signifier*, the major socially

accepted arts are based on the senses at a distance, i.e., on sight and on hearing, which suppose a separation between the generative organ and the object of the drive (in cinema, the separation between the eye and the screen institutionalized in the configuration of the seating). All visual spectacle is based on the rejection of fusion and can therefore be characterized as voyeuristic. According to Metz's analysis, the specifically cinematic scopic regime depends on a double withdrawal of the object. Not only is a distance maintained between the eye and the screen, but the object itself is offered only in effigy: it is imaginary, inaccessible *ab origine*. Cinema is distinct in that the two protagonists of the perverse couple (both present in the theater, for example, as audience and actor) are never present at the same time. Technically speaking, it is the chronological separation of the shooting and the projection that acts to create the segregation of spaces in the movie theater: the space of the auditorium, which is real, and the space of the film, which is perspective. The voyeur and the exhibitionist fail to meet and hence voyeurism in cinema dispenses with the consent of its object. Yet just as the domestic voyeur presumes the consent of the passive actors, the spectator in cinema presumes the exhibitionism of the film: "Yet still a voyeur, since there is something to see, called the film, but something in whose definition there is a great deal of 'flight': not precisely something that hides, rather something that *lets* itself be seen without *presenting* itself to be seen, which has gone out of the room before leaving only its trace visible there."¹⁹

It is, of course, not possible to determine the quality of consent given by the "actors" in documentary film. In one sense, documentary appears to bring cinema closer to the representation of the conditions of the primal scene by adding the element of uncertainty to the consciousness of the spectator-voyeur: to what extent has this exhibitionism been consented to? to what extent is it unauthorized? Paradoxically, as we shall see, it is precisely this uncertainty that arrests the movement of fantasy. The question of consent has always been at the center of theoretical discussions of documentary practice. Theories of ethnographic film or direct cinema, for example, are preoccupied with the notion of consent, and allegations of heresy among documentarists are always grounded in such a notion.

As Jean-Louis Comolli has pointed out however in his article, "Le Passé filmé,"²⁰ such theoretical discussions are always enclosed within the myth of cinematic realism, as if the central question of cinema were to find the strategies to escape from the

mise en scène imposed on it by theatrical or literary models. For Comolli, everything in cinema partakes of *mise en scène*:

There is no "visible" except caught in a *dispositif* of the look and, so to speak, always-already framed; on the other hand, it is naive to situate *mise en scène* only on the side of the camera: it is just as present, and even before the camera intervenes, everywhere social prescriptions order the place, the conduct, and I would add almost the 'form' of subjects in the diverse configurations where they are caught.²¹

Let us assert with Comolli that there is no difference of nature between fiction and nonfiction, nothing in the cinematographic operation that proves the "reality" of any image, the real existence of any referent. Cinema produces effects (I attempted to show in the preceding chapter how at the level of the text documentary produces the nonfiction-effect); that is, it is always a question of the consciousness of the spectator, a question of belief. If the documentary shares with the classic narrative film many of the repetitions that serve to "articulate together the imaginary, the symbolic and the real,"²² it is also a special regime of credence. I emphasized from the outset the unsteadiness of this regime: the specific splittings of belief that determine its character operate unevenly, for reasons I will now try to make clear.

The belief—the sense of reality—that the documentary evokes depends in the first instance on a perceived demand that such films make on the spectator: "We ask you to believe that . . ." Belief in cinema is not a question of delusion; it is the result of a highly organized contractual situation in which belief of a certain order is given in exchange for certain institutionalized defenses. As Octave Mannoni's analysis of theatrical illusion suggests,²³ the spectator in theater as in cinema is always aware that a deception is being practiced. The act of going to the theater or to the movies is in fact an act of collusion that assumes that the spectator is well versed in the conventions without which spectacle could not exist. As knowing spectators we identify with the *magister ludi* who orchestrates the unfolding of the imaginary world where we will take our pleasure. But it is also the case that we go to the theater or to the movies in order to be deceived. Some part of ourselves takes the imaginary for the real, and without such deception theater and cinema would be without interest for us: we could not obtain that pleasure that cinema and theater exist to produce. The spectator is then divided: he or she embodies two spectators—one disabused, the other naive.

In his essay, "Je sais bien, mais quand même . . ."²⁴ Mannoni

describes this splitting of belief (Freud's *Verleugnung*) as a fetishistic process. In the Freudian account, the fetishist perpetuates an infantile mode of defense. The child who becomes aware of the feminine anatomy and discovers the absence of the penis repudiates this discovery, which reality imposes, in order to retain an irrational belief in the maternal phallus. Disavowal corresponds to a splitting of the ego: it supposes an agency that recognizes reality and another that repudiates it. For Mannoni, the disavowal of the child with regard to the maternal lack is the prototype of all subsequent splittings of belief: "But like everyone else, by a kind of displacement, [the neurotic] utilizes the mechanism of *Verleugnung* with reference to other beliefs as if the *Verleugnung* of the maternal phallus outlined the first model of all repudiations of reality and constituted the origin of all beliefs which survive even when refuted by experience."²⁵ We as spectators, secure in our knowledge of the real—secure in our defenses—permit the emergence within ourselves of our own desire to believe, which belongs to the child we know we no longer are. Theater and cinema are sites within which a permissiveness, which is socially highly organized, allows the release of the imaginary powers of the ego:

When the curtain rises, it is the imaginary powers of the Ego which are at once liberated and organized—dominated by the spectacle. How to say it, for by metaphor, the word *scene* has become the term by which one designates the psychic site where the images display themselves. We can say that the theatrical stage [*scène*] becomes the extension of the Ego with all its possibilities.²⁶

As I already noted, disavowal in cinema functions first of all at the level of the signifier, whose reality yields in order to produce the impression of reality. The exchange between a real instance (the reality of the signifier) and an imaginary instance (the represented: the diegesis) is characteristic of all fiction: "In the cinema as in the theater, the represented is by definition imaginary; that is what characterises fiction as such, independently of the signifiers in charge of it."²⁷ This exchange is always dialectical, and theater and cinema for example are distinguished not only by their signifiers but by the difference of economy that the different signifiers install. However, with documentary film the spectator cannot make this exchange in quite the same manner. Our knowledge of the spectacle is marked by fissures, areas of uncertainty, which tend to undermine the system of defenses that cinema has set in place. Of course we recognize the objects—what is being represented by the image. However in cinema recognition is only a first step, a setting into

motion of the mechanism of the apparatus, the "chain of mirrors" within which we as spectators take our place. This chain by its very configuration positions us so that we may admire ourselves in the mirror of the screen. But the release of those powers of the ego supposes that an exchange takes place within the spectator between the real and the imaginary in which reality is partially repudiated in the interest of a certain belief in the world of the fiction. In documentary film, however, the spectator remains uncertain as to where the real in fact lies. The real is the signifier, but it is also the signified—that historical field of reference to which the signifier gives us immediate access. At least this is what the idea of documentary realism leads us to believe.

As Mannoni asserts, the imaginary always rests on a doubling: "As long as the stage presents itself as a place other than the one it really is, as long as the actor presents himself as another, a perspective of the imaginary will be created."²⁸ The spectator knows that the stage is not the place of the "action," that the screen is incommensurate with the space of the diegesis. It is precisely in this gap, in this negation of one term by the other, that the theatrical and cinematic "illusion" is generated: "At this moment the theater would play a properly symbolic role. It would be entirely like the great negation, the symbol of negation, which makes possible the return of the repressed in its denied form."²⁹

The fictionality of the signifier in cinema is not, however, a sufficient defense for the spectator. Representation is not taking place (as it does in theater) entirely before our eyes, within the perimeters (the safety zone) of the movie theater. We must know that what is absent, whose trace is the object of our desire, is also seized by the imaginary and subject to an initial doubling. The actors present themselves as characters, the real acts in the interest of the production of a pseudo real (the diegesis): "A *place* consisting of actions, objects, persons, a time and a space (a place similar in this respect to the real), but which presents itself of its own accord as a vast simulation, a non-real real; a 'milieu' with all the structures of the real and lacking (in a permanent, explicit fashion) only the specific exponent of real being."³⁰ This is what Daniel Sibony refers to as the "third degree" of the image: not the image of the real (perception in daily life), nor the deferred image of real events (the "document"), but the image that is "played," which is itself *imaged*, a recognizable counterfeit.³¹ What the spectator is seeking then is repetition of a certain order. Cinema is the site of an obsessional ritual within which the spectator-subject can stage the never-ending return of the repressed. But the stage of this represen-

tation must be carefully delineated, marked off, distanced from reality—a reflection of that distancing that sets the repressed apart from consciousness. As Baudry suggests, the cinematic apparatus is a machine that is fashioned for this particular sort of *mise en scène*.

Thus, in order for the spectator to experience the functional pleasure of the nonrecognized return of the repressed, it is necessary that everything come to nothing, that the forces that have been placed in movement be brought to rest, that the "reality" of this other scene be contained within the ritual of cinema. This is precisely how Mannoni describes the economic situation instituted by theater: "Besides, Hamlet had already said it: 'Players cannot keep counsel.' Actors cannot keep a secret; they will tell all. This suggests that the anxiety and tension provoked by the solicitation of the unconscious will, in the end, be brought back to zero."³² The pleasure that the cinematic apparatus provides for the spectator is, first of all, a functional pleasure, before the special pleasures that certain images reserve for certain spectators are considered. The unprecedented conjunction of an incipient delusional state and a relative wakefulness (compared to dream) places the spectator in an unusual (and illusory) position of power. Through the symbolic, which is the cinematic apparatus, the spectator achieves a simulation of infantile omnipotence. Our insertion into the apparatus and the regressive movement that we thus undergo enable us, but only partially, i.e., only symbolically, to rediscover by the analogy that this simulation provides something like our primordial subjectivity. A conditional glimpse of our power before the word murdered the thing, before the symbol installed the distance between self and things, between self and others, before the self conceded to the social "I," before the *Spaltung*. Cinema is a way of (conditionally and temporarily) weakening the subject's submission to the signifier, to the powerful mass of symbolism through the fleeting and unrecognized rediscovery of the "underside of the mask," the repressed. It is the (impotent) staging of a revolt against the impossible coincidence between the *I* of subjectivity and the *I* of discourse.

It is, therefore, the dual relationship whose representation cinema stages even before it stages its imitation of the real. The subject, both deluding and deluded, who has been excluded from the production of cinematic discourse, reasserts an illusory power over the text, whose images he or she assumes as the products of subjective desire. Classical representation has led to this substitution that is essential to the subject-effect: the image producer

evacuates the ideal point of vision in order that it may be occupied collectively and without contradiction by the many eyes of the spectators. Bertrand Augst observes, "The ultimate achievement of cinematographic discourse is not only to have refined, condensed and disseminated all the rules of discursive exclusion, but also to have created a pseudo-subject who by inserting himself in the place of the spectator-subject, deprives the spectator of the right to speak while deluding him into thinking the other's discourse is really his own."³³

As we saw in the preceding chapter, the cinematographic apparatus and the film text produce the homogenization of what is actually heterogeneous: the subject-producer / the subject-spectator; the space of the auditorium / the space of the screen; the heterogeneous signifier / the homogeneous signified. Homogenization—psychical, spatial, and discursive—acts so as to produce the impression of immediacy. The darkness and configuration of the movie theater diminish the attachment of the spectator to the real. The cinematic signifier effaces its reality and its multiplicity in the interest of the diegesis. Hence the spectator is able to play at abandoning the "phantoms," the signs of his or her social integration by means of the signifier in favor of phantasm: the illusion of filling in the primordial lack, the breach that the symbolic imposes.

If then this functional pleasure is the goal of the cinematographic apparatus, what can be said of the intrusion of documentary with its uncertain sense of the real and its ambivalent forms of enunciation? To the extent that it asserts its difference from dominant cinema, the documentary film disrupts the functioning of the apparatus, which has achieved a state of economic equilibrium. To the extent it is in fact constituted, its modality of enunciation contradicts the historically imposed classical structure of representation in which the artist is inscribed only as an absence, an ideal point of vision. In documentary, an "enunciator" is already present—represented by the voice of the commentary—and this doubling of the position of subject (subject-producer / subject-spectator) undermines the "rationality" of "pure" representation. It is significant that this already-constituted enunciator can do no better than attempt to hide the irrationality of his presence, to seek his own effacement, to encourage an identification that the spectator can no more than partially accept. It is understandable that the spectator should experience this duplication as duplicity, as an obstruction of desire, for it enjoins the subject to share the power that he or she is used to exercising exclusively.

If the cinematographic apparatus is arranged so as to produce an

artificial psychosis without danger to the organism, a return to the duality of narcissistic identification, the documentary text brings about a partial denial of this regressive movement. As we have seen, documentary tends to reassert the heterogeneity that the apparatus functions to deny. It distinguishes the spectator from the enunciator of the images; it reestablishes at least intermittently the heterogeneity of certain elements of the signifier; and consequently it calls attention to the segregation of the two spaces of the movie theater by replacing the spectator in a more knowledgeable relation to his or her perception. In sum, the documentary text reinstalls mediation. This mediation has an expressed form, the voice, which contrasts with the dark muteness of the theater. The documentary text exposes itself as a system of representation and returns the spectator to his or her seat, to a fuller exercise of reality testing. What it restages, then, is the ultimate triumph of the symbolic order over the normal subject with all the sacrifice that the subject's submission entails.