

Reflections on Borders and their Crossing in Lars von Trier's *Dogville* (2003)

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"I've always been fascinated by the limits a given space imposes on you." (Lars von Trier)¹

Interpreted, among other things, as an anti-American salvo² and a religious parable³, a formal provocation and a genre parody, a misogynist's creed and a satire of same, a pitch-blackened slice of Thornton Wilder and a rudely immodest proposal worthy of Jonathan Swift, Lars von Trier's *Dogville* contains ample material (close to three hours' worth) for a reflection on the nature of borders and their crossings, be it only because it was conceived as a bridge between different artistic worlds. "Critics have tried to cordon and limit film and literature, which is what I'm challenging by creating a fusion between film, theater and literature," he claimed in an interview when the film was presented at the Cannes festival.

In keeping with this statement, *Dogville* offers itself as a singular object to the viewer. It is obviously a feature film bearing the recognizable touch of the director of *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) or *Breaking the Waves* (1996), yet it immediately strikes the spectator as not being filmed theater, but "something else". Indeed, even if the prologue does inform us that the action supposedly unfolds in a small town in Colorado, instead of the anticipated, ordinary re-creation of an American habitat, the bare bones of the town are all that we are given to see: the houses and the names of the streets are drawn in white lines on the black floor of a rectangular sound stage, some elements are represented by symbols (for instance the gooseberry bushes), and only a few props (essentially pieces of furniture) are

¹ Director's comments on the DVD soundtrack – Zentropa Entertainment APS, 2003.

² Among many, see Robert Sklar, "Dogville", *Cineaste*, 00097004, Vol. 29, Issue 3, 2004, 47-49, or Wesley Morris, "Dogville", *Boston Globe*, 04/09/2004. <https://www.boston.com/movies/display?display=movie&id=5154>.

³ A few examples can be found in Charles Baladier, "A propos de *Dogville-Grâce*", 2003, <https://www.oedipe.org/fr/spectacle/grace>; Lorenzo Chiesa, "What is the Gift of Grace? On *Dogville*", *Film-Philosophy*, 11 (3), 2007, 1-22; Ilana Shiloh "Review of *Breaking the Waves*, *Dancer in the Dark*, and *Dogville*", *Modern Language Studies*, 35 (1), 2005, 84-88.

added to this cartographic representation.

In what follows, and within a reflection on the capacity for visual arts to bring together apparently heterodox elements pertaining to different modes of representation (in the case of von Trier's creation, the theater and cinema), I wish to use the particular arrangement of the set design as a springboard for developing the argument that, following Thomas Elsaesser's suggestion that both media "mutually interfere with each other,"⁴ von Trier uses the delineation of space as a determiner of identity, as a singular locus of interaction, and as the crucible where the creation of a third space is made possible.

In the prologue to the film, John Hurt's voice-over narration imparts to the spectator that "Dogville was in the Rocky Mountains in the U S of A. Up here where the road came to its definitive end near the entrance to the old, abandoned silver mine." Only punctual visual and aural elements disseminated throughout the film illustrate and sustain this presentation of the *dispositif*. For example, we come to learn that there is, beyond and unseen, a bigger town (Georgetown) and a road (Canyon Road) that leads there. But the surrounding space – what purports to be the horizon, the sky – is a uniform black or white, which establishes an eerie atmosphere of claustrophobia, as if the universe thus created was meant to imitate a giant vivarium or a coffin.

Mapping out the town in this fashion manifests the symbolical existence of boundaries, of limits marking the presence of human organization, thus making Dogville at the same time unique and representative of any human settlement: singled out as a town at the top of the mountain, Dogville cannot stand for anything but a universal figure. All the more so as, associated with this rudimentary form of existence and some sound effects, the restraints in making the town "real" allow the director to establish, right from the start, specific conventions for both actors and spectators, which are banal in the context of the theater but much less so for the silver screen: the performers on the set act as if there were actual walls, doors, roofs ... and interact with their materialized or imaginary presence accordingly. Similarly, the spectators' imagination is solicited to bridge the representational gap, and to negotiate "agreed terms of mutual interference."⁵

However, it is evident from the limited number of signifiers constituting the entity of the town that representational accuracy is not von Trier's major issue in this endeavor. In fact, it is easily discernable that the director's depiction of Dogville is quintessentially based on pre-existing materializations of small-town America in fiction. Not unlike Arthur Penn's 1967 *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Dogville* manages to evoke the U.S.A. during the Depression era with a few symbolic artefacts: cloche hats, a copy of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, a couple of Model T cars and a bit of FDR over the radio. In a similar contention that the spectators' imagination will be able to summon visual references from their experience in fiction, von Trier populates the isolated Rocky Mountain community with stock figures ranging from the boy inventor and the Black mammy to the town doctor and the big-city gangster. In this respect, one could be tempted to infer that the director's intent in stripping the number of explicit signifiers to a bare minimum is to bring the viewers to the conclusion that most of the knowledge they possess about the United States originates from and is conditioned by what Hollywood's film industry provides. And that the capacity for America's "soft power" to evoke relies on the efficiency of metonymy.

⁴ Thomas Elsaesser, "Ingmar Bergman in the museum? Thresholds, limits, conditions of possibility", *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, Vol. 1, 2009, 10, <https://doi.org/10.3402/jac.v1i0.2123>.

⁵ Elsaesser, "Ingmar Bergman", 7.

More challengingly, the way the setting quickly loses its traditional importance in favor of its emblematic function – in coherence with the first impression when considering the set as a vivarium – may conjure up the image of the film director transformed into a sort of laboratory experimenter who builds models, feeds the models with variable parameters, then lets the models run and interact, and sees what happens during the course of the interaction in a particular milieu. In this perspective, the evolution of the protagonist, Grace (Nicole Kidman), in her interactions with the population of Dogville, brings to mind Augustin Berque's pivotal concept of *ecumene*, defined as the "relationship between a human group and the terrestrial expanse it occupies."⁶ In a sense, the idea developed by the geographer of a "reciprocal impregnation of the place and that which can be found in it"⁷ gives the spectator a possible clue to the understanding of the development of the plot. Combined with the diagrammatic setting, the dead-end road progressively appears as the materialization of the denizens' voluntary insularity and, to a certain extent, of their consequently limited world view: their world is flat and surrounded by darkness.⁸ And von Trier makes that literal. Furthermore, just as Dogville is reportedly established on a frontier, on the edge of a precipice where, in a sense, it is bound to fall, so its very name could be thought of as an indication of the true nature of those who dwell there. Indeed, the course of the film proves that, beneath the veneer of goodwill and charity, the proverbial "dog eat dog" mode of relation is made bare, not only regarding Grace's treatment by the Dogvillians, but conversely by the protagonist's vengeful retaliation. It then comes as no surprise that at the end of the film, when all else has been literally wiped out, the only remaining living resident of the town should be Moses the dog. Heretofore the animal has remained invisible, almost a ghostly figure, only perceptible in its audible presence. In a sense, what is left of Dogville is a ghost town.

To take the analysis of the presence of frontiers a step further, one of the key issues in the early moments of the film is to know whether the Dogvillians will let the beautiful stranger – who has been "forced" into their midst – stay safe from a yet unclear danger lurking just beyond the boundaries of the town. The subsequent developments of the plot propose a series of variations on the classical tension and interplay between keeping in/keeping out. And it is significant that the boundaries of the town preserving Dogville's self-sufficiency are exposed and challenged with the arrival of this outsider. Up to the moment when Grace appears, the town seems to have lived in a state of stasis, as it has only had minimal interactions with the outside world (essentially through the town's only truck-driver's regular visits to Georgetown for business and pleasure). However, once the stranger has been let into the community, Dogville loses its autarchic self-containment and, not unlike the process of contamination of a body by viruses, other visitors (the police, gangsters) drive in and out until the town is finally overrun and annihilated, its very limits dissolved, the chalk lines wiped out, leaving the set barren.

Intimately connected to the idea of a progressive determination of its defining traits through intercourse rather than on (geographically significant) setting, it is noteworthy that little is said of the history of the town, its memory, just as its physical delineation is purely schematic. Strikingly, the interference of an outsider imposes itself as necessary for the town's identity to be constituted: it is the arrival of Grace that sets in motion the historical time of Dogville, which appears to have existed in what could be described as a-historical time up to that moment. Then, not only does Grace make the Dogvillians come to life (and, in the process, reveal their true nature), but her apparition also brings

⁶ Augustin Berque, *Ecumène*, Paris: Belin, 2000. Derived from the Greek verb *oikeo*, which means "to inhabit", "ecumene" originally designates the part of the earth occupied by humanity.

⁷ Berque, *Ecumène*, 15. My translation.

⁸ The set of *Dogville* was built in an old 30 by 60 meter machine hall in Europe's new cinematographic Mecca: Trollhättan, Sweden.

about, within the fictional timespan of one year, the apocalypse, the end of time for the community.

Though *Dogville* can be perceived as a stylized exercise in the establishing of multiple limits both material and symbolic, the film does not simply offer static observation: it also proposes an experimentation in crossing borders, and with it, an exploration of the consequences of voluntary, deliberate, intentional movement from one space/state to another.

Part of the spectator's experience when watching the film has to do with the perception of *Dogville* as an intermediary space, a porous frontier between two dimensions. On the one hand, what the spectator is given to see is a territory with a certain physical significance, which it sheds in favor of a space principally devoted to the advent of relationships on the other hand. In other words, *Dogville* functions as an interface, "the place at which independent and often unrelated systems meet and act on or communicate with each other."⁹

In this respect, the set of the film is presented as a space of transaction. The modalities of material and symbolic commercial exchange are too numerous to cite them all here. Suffice it to insist on the fact that the protagonist's name is an indication of the importance of the said exchanges. Apart from its associations with religious or spiritual – in broad terms, culturally connoted – meaning, the main character's Christian name, intentionally chosen to echo the term "grace", can be understood as "ultimately based on a continuous exchange of favors, or gifts, in which what Marcel Mauss named the gift-exchange of primitive societies still resonates."¹⁰ It is noteworthy that the protagonist originally gives herself away to the people of *Dogville* (she has nothing else to offer), in exchange for their protection. It gives a Christlike, transcendental dimension to the character and makes of her an interface between the divine and human dimensions. The reactions and subsequent adjustments to this original commerce compose the central part of the film and dramatically generate its ending. As a matter of fact, the installation of a symbolic system of exchange based on solidarity, reciprocity, *quid pro quo*, counterbalance, and friendship does not lead to the development of a stable community life, but to the gradual deterioration of the social fabric into a structure of outright hostility, retaliation, punishment and revenge. What creates the complexity and ambiguity of the situation is that the more *Dogville* shows its acceptance and hospitality by integrating Grace into a mutually agreeable pattern of social transactions, the more *Dogville's* politics of gift-giving crystallize into a shared, communal and seemingly "fair" practice of exchanges, the more the town turns into an inhospitable, hostile and radically unfair community. The more respect *Dogville's* people want, the more disrespectful they become. The more Grace shows them her "true face" and offers them her vulnerability, the more they take advantage of it.

Equally worthy of attention is the possibility for *Dogville* to exist as a space of translation, in the geometric sense of the term. It can be contended that, by removing the setting, von Trier leaves the ordinary Euclidean space behind and instead creates a field of force where the interactions between the characters are determined dramatically but also aesthetically. It is not too hard to ascertain that what is at the heart of von Trier's intent here is the interplay between moviemaker and spectator through the manipulation of the medium and the viewer. First of all, it must be re-established that, faithful (up to a certain point) to the "Vows of Chastity" he took when he wrote the rules of *Dogme 95*,¹¹ von Trier balances an unconventional stage set with specific cinematic devices such as

⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interface>

¹⁰ Chiesa, "What is the Gift of Grace?", 2.

¹¹ <https://www.dogme95.dk>.

(among the most recurrent) the use of point-of-view shots and close-ups, which means that the spectator "aesthetically (...) is in permanent motion as his eye identifies itself with lens of the camera, which permanently shifts in distance and direction."¹² Other elements constituting the fabric of the director's discourse, such as the slowness and repetitiveness of the narration, its cyclical dimension, the temporality of the action (which is often not diachronic, but synchronic and occurring in serial moments), or the unevenly distributed, improvised camera movements demand a certain effort on the part of the viewers, thus keeping them at a distance – visually creating a material and symbolic frontier of sorts.

Also, even though the setting in *Dogville* is missing, all the sounds associated with actual objects can be heard loud and clear: the opening and closing of the (non-existing) doors, footsteps on the gravel road, birdsong, the sound of rain and wind, the barking of Moses the dog. That striking feature of the soundtrack (beside the use of Vivaldi's *Nisi Dominus* and its chords as sparse as the set design) invites the spectators to participate in the creation of the town through their sense of hearing and the individual images associated with them.¹³ In a sense, the audience have, in large part, to fill in the missing elements for themselves, and the blueprint for the movie is given form by their mind's eye.

Nonetheless, instead of alienating the spectator from the space of representation by making the audience aware of the "being-staged-ness"¹⁴ of the film, the Danish director's aesthetics aim at an even more engaging immersion in the virtual reality of the story world by having it emerge from an interaction between the semiotic materials provided by the film and the mental representations of the spectators. The latter have to re-virtualize this bare theatrical space with their own mental representations of the Depression – and of Americana at large, as was evoked earlier – sampled from any number of cultural sources: novels, photographs, television programs and first and foremost movies.¹⁵

More problematically, there are moments when the functioning rules of the fictional universe fail to be coherent – though without losing their meaningfulness. I should like to expand briefly on two such moments. In the first sequence [00.25 – 00.26], when Grace appears for the first time to all the residents of *Dogville*, the actors blatantly flout the *modus operandi* according to which, though they may be signified only by chalk lines, the partitions are supposed to block out any possibility to see beyond them. By having the townsfolk stare in Grace's direction, von Trier possibly suggests the character's sensation through objectifying images, thus creating a counterpoint to both the narrator's and Tom's statements,¹⁶ and, in the process, a shift in the nature of the atmosphere of the town, where all is not what it seems, and a sense of oppression sets in.

The second sequence [1.29.33 – 1.31.48], when Grace is violated by Chuck, is one of the most

¹² Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," in Gerald Mast (ed.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 362-374.

¹³ In another context, Thomas Elsaesser evokes the importance of listening "to Bergman's soundtracks and 'see' them as palpably as his images." Elsaesser, "Ingmar Bergman", 5.

¹⁴ The famous Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* (or V-effect) that should make the spectator aware that the filmed events are not real but staged.

¹⁵ As an illustration of this, the main artery of the entity called *Dogville* bears a name that is meaningful to both filmgoers and Americanists: Elm Street is famous for being the setting of a series of notorious cinematographic nightmares, thanks to Wes Craven (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1984) and also echoes the name of the roadway where President Kennedy was shot.

¹⁶ Tom: "All I see is a beautiful little town in the midst of magnificent mountains. A place where people have hopes and dreams even under the hardest conditions..." The narrator: "Calling *Dogville* beautiful was original, at least. (...) When (Grace) suddenly sensed what would be best have been described as a tiny change of light over *Dogville*."

unsettling scenes in the film. In this sequence, the way in which the camera zooms out from long shot to extreme long shot (3 times in total) is most peculiar; the camera moves so far away from the center of the action that the spectators are forced to focus their attention on the details of the grossly disturbing event. Also, the camera's zooming out brings other townspeople into the frame, ultimately making Grace's rape a social act – and, in a sense, prolonged by our own participation as spectators/voyeurs. It is difficult to resist the temptation of seeing this singular series of shots depicting a most odious event as an illustration of Roland Barthes's seminal opposition between "*studium*" and "*punctum*" – although the terms were used in the context of a discussion of photography – whereby a certain arrangement (the *studium*) is disrupted:

"[by a] second element [which] will break (or punctuate) the *studium*. This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. (...) A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me), is poignant to me."¹⁷

Once again, the use of the two terms points to a delicate and fleeting difference between elements associated by an interface which is materialized by the set, and the re-arrangement of its elements for the viewer's benefit. Also, it is not uninteresting to underline that the words used by Barthes should contain a dose of violence echoing the situation.

Simultaneously backing away from it and keeping the crime as the focal point of the frame make of the scene a radical turning point for the spectator: the nature and identity of the whole of *Dogville* (both the place and the film) change, from potential threat to actual harm to the character, and installs irremediable unease for the viewer.

As regards the connections between spaces, it is fruitful to observe that Grace's suffering body marks out an appropriate space for the exposition of *Dogville*'s moral and social breakdown. The irreversible crossing of moral boundaries is made concrete in the abuse of the female protagonist's body, which then becomes the space of corruption. Contrary to the Christian conception of martyrdom, Grace's ordeal – resulting from the entire community's systematic and repeated doings – brings about an inevitable and questionably proportionate retaliation. This dramatically "mechanical" response should be questioned by the viewer.

As was just discussed, the position of the spectator within the director's scheme both materially and symbolically requires a certain amount of attention.

First, it should be noted that, despite a number of echoes (theatrical, filmic and literary),¹⁸ *Dogville* is recognizable by the audience as something different. The fusion of multiple signifying sources brings about a form of saturation of the filmic text. As was suggested above, this impression left

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, London: Vintage Books, 2000, 26-27.

¹⁸ *Dogville* is presented as a novel (read aloud in voiceover by John Hurt) that has been adapted for the stage, and possibly as a play that has been filmed. Moreover, the subject of this play could be construed as the endeavor of a wannabe writer who tries to stage his fantasies by directing a woman named Grace. More straightforwardly, "the film-maker has cited influences including the Brecht-Weill song 'Pirate Jenny' (attitude), Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (music and narration) and the 1980 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Nicholas Nickleby* (mise en scène). But *Dogville* most obviously travesties Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* (1938)." James Hoberman and David Thompson, "Our Town", *Sight & Sound*, 14 -2, 2004, 24-7 and 40-1.

on the viewer is the result of a deliberate strategy on the part of von Trier. What then becomes apparent is that the fictional space elaborated by the director relies on the necessity to make boundaries (formal or metaphorical) uncertain. And this goal is achieved by constantly shifting the audience's bearings.

In this perspective, the town of *Dogville* comes into existence as an "in-between" space: a vaguely rectangular surface almost floating in the air. What is more, the quasi-absence of set props (which otherwise help the spectator to succumb to the illusion of spatial recreation) makes it possible for the director to use a new dynamic mode of recording the events on-stage, offering perspectives that conventional cinematography does not. Yet, though the cinematic image produced by von Trier is fluid and flexible, its transparency turns out to be veiled. Grace's attempted escape scene [1.48.46 – 1.53.48] is a case in point: as she hops on the back of his pick-up truck, and lies between the crates of apples, Ben (Zeljko Ivanek) throws what is seen first as a tarpaulin. However, as the camera zooms in, the opaque material immediately turns into a transparent cover, which lets the viewer privy to the rearrangement of the original deal made between Grace and the truck driver. The long scene (with only one cut) concludes with Grace returning to *Dogville* against her will, which is made clear when, simultaneously, the tarpaulin is pulled off the back of the truck, and the camera pulls out vertically to reveal her surroundings. If anything, then, the film stands out not as a mere exploration of the limits of cinematographic genres but as a marked attempt at exploring, in a provocative and challenging manner, cinema, its conception, its identity, in order to question the nature and function of the very medium through the integration and manipulation of multiple and heterogeneous components.¹⁹

To a certain degree, the permanent instability alluded to allows the director to conjure up a space that is properly uncanny, insofar as it hesitates between an imagined dimension and a very real one, between a dream-like and a nightmarish materialization of the 1:1 scale map described by the likes of Jorge Luis Borges or Lewis Carroll in the domain of literature, thus making Grace an heir to Alice or the unnamed characters penned by Borges and trapped in his cartographic labyrinths. Furthermore, though the reference does not appear in the interviews with von Trier, the confined universe of *Dogville* is not so distant from that created by Luis Buñuel in his 1962 surrealist fable, *The Exterminating Angel*, in its centripetal dimension: in both cases the inhabitants are unable to go beyond its boundaries, and it is as if all of them were drawn there to the bitter end.²⁰

Also in keeping with the metaphorical use of the characteristics of space in the Spanish director's endeavor, Lars von Trier's creation renders tangible the problematic vision of the Other and the relations with him/her/them. As a matter of fact, the town of *Dogville* transforms into a machine of destruction, an organism in its own right, which crushes the individual in the name of the collective. The events unfold perfectly, like clockwork no humans can escape, which causes their demise and, by extension, society's undoing. And this is conveyed by the incisive, barren quality of the director's style, which underlines the implacable shift in the hearts and minds of the town's population.

As an apt supplement to the complexity of the project, one cannot ignore the importance of the film's coda. The segment consists in a series of photographs, which combines shots of Depression-era America captured by Russell Lee, Dorothea Lange, Jack Collier, A. Siegel, Carl Mydans, J. Vachon, Arthur Rothstein, and contemporary images of graphic violence and naked distress taken from Danish

¹⁹ Even technically, the famed introductory scene of the town seen from above was in fact generated by a computer from 156 individual shots since the ceiling of the filming studio was in fact not tall enough to make one single, wide shot from above possible.

²⁰ In itself, the trope is by no means new in either literature or film.

photographer Jacob Holdt's 1977 multimedia presentation *American Pictures*.²¹ It must be made clear that the trajectory of these remediated photographs is the sequential reflection of images made in America by American photographers and filmmakers, then projected all the way to Denmark and back again to American audiences. One cannot minimize the complexity of the link between the intermedial dimension and the mediation of this almost autonomous segment of the film: the almost surrealist montage over David Bowie's song *Young Americans* (1975) can only be understood as a final, multi-layered interpellation of the audience. At the most evident level, the association of black and white stills, color photographs and short clips acts as a testimony on the persistence of human suffering in the USA, apparently caused by economic strife and mostly affecting the underprivileged part of the population. Failing to pinpoint an immediate link between these images and what we have seen before brings about a second moment of questioning: if the fictional recreation of a community's behavior when in dire straits is anything to go by, then there is much to fear about the potential consequences on our capacity for self-blinding when accepting without questioning genre conventions as mediators of our sense of the world.²²

When considering von Trier's very concrete reactivation of the problematic relation between an object and its representation by mapping out *Dogville*, it can be argued that there are two fundamental postures one needs to envisage if one wants to avoid fruitless controversy over what the filmmaker may have or may have not wanted to say: the universal bearing of the tale he is telling, and the critical distance the director wishes the spectator to have *vis à vis* his film.

Dogville has been perceived by many as America-bashing yet failing to grasp the importance of the paradox: the notoriously travel-phobic director has never set foot in the USA, and only relies on a mediated knowledge of the tenets of the country. Not unlike Franz Kafka writing about America (*Amerika*, 1927) or Raymond Roussel about Africa (*Impressions d'Afrique*, 1910), without ever having experienced first-hand those exotic places, Lars von Trier sets his tale in a place and time that is a fantasized reconstruction of a place that is no-place or any-place. Therefore, limiting the reach of the argument to America alone would be missing the universality of the director's political aim. After all, while *Dogville* was in production, Von Trier suggested that his political inspiration was Denmark's new restrictions on immigration to which he reacted by saying: "I think that the moral standing of a country can be measured by its attitude to refugees."²³

The Danish director seems to have managed to create an object that is all at once mischievous and profound, natural and artificial, emotional and thought-provoking. Perhaps its lasting merit would be to exist as a serious re-consideration of the notions of acceptance, tolerance, hospitality and solidarity, which political theorists and sociologists have identified as central principles of a democratic society. What von Trier's film provokes is not only our realisation of the fundamental lack of solidarity that animates, permeates and substantiates a community of people, but the equally intrinsic lack of reciprocity that governs and maintains the exchange of social goods.

²¹ See Jacob Holdt, *American Pictures; A Personal Journey Through The American Underclass*, Copenhagen: American Pictures Foundation, 1985; Jacob Holdt, *American Pictures-Gallery*, <http://www.american-pictures.com/gallery/usa/index.htm>

²² Perhaps one should also consider *Dogville* as an indictment of the use of iconography in the hindsight construction of the American self-image in the 30s. Americans themselves are still discussing the complexities of commissioned photographs and their effect, when, for instance, Roosevelt's New Deal was strongly dependent on image in the most literal sense.

²³ Director's comments on the DVD bonuses.