

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

In this research, the content and the meaning of suppression of humanity in von Trier's film were defined and interpreted through the visual components, which is the form of von Trier's film language. In Ben Shahn's opinion (Shahn 72), form is the shape of content. Form and content are inseparable in art creation. Therefore, this research is focused on the content — suppression of humanity, and form — visual components in von Trier's films. In his films, the form is visual narrative, which is the shape of content. In order to understand the content of the films, we need to study the visual narrative.

The research is started with analyzing visual narrative as the first step of understanding the content. The content of von Trier's films in this research is regarded as suppression of humanity. Visual narrative as the form was primarily built upon the idea of Dogme 95. Forcing the truth out of character and setting is the goal of Dogme, which is also the key idea of visual narrative in von Trier's films. The idea of Dogme was embodied in the unique manners of forms, such as constant use of hand-held camera. Others can be sum up with the following points:

1. In shooting, he uses hand-held camera to make the images look frankly shaky and rough. The color of the image is usually dim and dull. These features of documentary have enhanced the subtle and realistic feeling of his film story. These techniques can be seen obviously in *Golden Heart Trilogy*.
2. In setting, von Trier uses the setting to guide the theme of his film as much as possible. For examples, in *Breaking the Waves*, the harsh environment matches with the strict community and sentimental feeling of the story. In *American Trilogy*, the simple and

artificial background setting gives influential metaphor for presenting the whole story.

3. The psychological depiction of characters and provoking dialogues has completely revealed the truth of humanity in the stories of von Trier's films.
4. The literary approaches in von Trier's films including theater effects in *American Trilogy* are the division of chapters to foreshadow the coming events, the dramatic storylines, the detail portrayal of characters and dialogues, and the moral lessons resembling modern fables.
5. The previous visual and contextual components have created expressive symbols and metaphors to make the audience tangle with the story and evoke profound reflections for the films.

Regarding the film contents—suppression of humanity, has been shaped by the following elements that are embodied in forms. It started with the settings in the environment, society, or people that have impacted on the main characters in the film. Besides, the attitude, behavior or reaction of the character has disclosed different aspects of humanity suppression. This is how the form informs the content.

In the content of von Trier's films, we saw human struggle under these suppressions, and the truth of humanity was revealed through their struggling. In sum, different social phenomena have caused influential issues and controversial debates of humanity within the context. Hence the research has supposed that suppression of humanity resulted from social repression. However, the society was mold by human, therefore the human suppression also accounted for the social repression. They influenced each other as a unity in the films.

In Lars von Trier's films, human life was presented through purposeful visual symbols and metaphors in images. They were consisted in the plots and settings, the meaning of lines, the arrangement of shots, the behavior or psycho representation of characters. In Ban Shahn's words, the form of visual narrative can be the shape of the content in this research. This study

has analyzed these visual narratives as well as elaborated on the issues and their hidden meanings in the content of the film.

In addition, the content presented in the film and the interpretation of it share commonness in our reality. In other words, the state of mind and life experience of the film characters engaged with the audiences. They intercommunicated with each other. Therefore, the issues of humanity in the films are universal inquiries. According to Ricoeur, a text can be very significant when it brings something meaningful to our world (Simms 37-42). In my opinion, this Danish director, Lars von Trier, did put this concept into practice through his film productions. This research started with an artistic perspective of analyzing the visual form. Then it reaches to the state of human mind, which is also the spirit of art creation. Finally, it ends with thoughtful significance concerning our life, and that is also the purpose and contribution of art making.

To a further extension, the hermeneutic circle lied not just among the audience who has watched the films. It could also be applied to the function of the research. The interpretation took places among the viewers of the films, the researcher and the films, the researcher and his/her research, and the readers of this research. We were all in a hermeneutic circle for interpreting the text. In a word, the conversation about the films among the viewers could be very diverse; they ranged from the film itself to any text about the films, including this thesis which has been elaborated in this research.

As a result, this research has built a boundary for people to join the hermeneutic circle for a mutual understanding between the text and ourselves. That is to say, this research not only opened an intersubjective world of von Trier's films, but also widened the intersubjective world of the film text. People who have read this thesis expanded their thoughts and interacted with the extended film text written in this research. It contributed to clarify individual identity and also expanded cultural connotations. That is also an embodiment of the purpose of art creation.

In conclusion, on one hand, the plain style of shaky and rough image in von Trier's films might not be pleasant; on the other hand, they have created pure and subtle perception to inspire the audience with the issue of human suppression. As von Trier's celebrated dictum stated, "*A good film should be like a rock in the shoe.*" The film does provoke profound thoughts regarding human existence. It is also substantial evidence that embodies the purpose of art making. As a result, this research has proved the significance of von Trier's films, so does the significance of art creation. This research enabled the reader of this research or the viewer of von Trier's films to see the intention of the films. Along with the aesthetic appreciation of von Trier's films, the viewers have been provided opportunities to develop critical thinking and profound comprehension for an art piece. Thereupon, it has fulfilled the contribution of this research. That is, more people can appreciate von Trier's films, or this genre of art films.

In the end, the possible future study for this research can be a further discussion on how the reality created by the film, the reality of the world, and the reality created by the perceiver of the film interact and influence each other. Through interaction and formation, we create our intersubjective world at every moment. In other words, we are creating new reality through perceiving, interpreting and understanding. In the process of creating, we are constantly reshaping who we are, deciding what reality we want to create, and are aware of the new meaning we have presented to ourselves.