

STATEMENT

By Associate Professor Chavdar Nikolov Gyuzelev, PhD

Department of Cinema, Advertising and Show Business,

on the dissertation of

Elitsa Mateeva

an independent doctoral student at NBU, within the Department of "Cinema, Advertising and Show Business," in professional direction 8.4 Theatre and Film Art, on the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional direction 8.4. Theatre and Film Art

Title of the dissertation:

THE MANIFESTO. DOGMA 95. REFLECTIONS ON THE LATEST BULGARIAN CINEMA

Academic Supervisor:

Prof. Petya Alexandrova, DSc.

Elitsa Mateeva's dissertation, "The Manifesto. Dogma 95. Reflections on the Latest Bulgarian Cinema," offers a unique retrospective on cinema history through the lens of manifestos. It explores the Dogma 95 manifesto and its impact on filmmaking, particularly within the context of Bulgarian cinema. These three aspects from the title are developed in the same sequence across the three chapters. The dissertation spans 220 pages, with the main text occupying 205 pages. Its structure encompasses an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, the dissertation's contributions, an extensive bibliography featuring 80 sources (45 in Cyrillic and 35 in Latin), and a filmography comprising 115 titles. Many of the mentioned 115 film titles are not referenced or analyzed in the text - I would recommend arranging them after the bibliography in chronological order of their appearance in the history of cinema.

The introduction lays the groundwork for the dissertation, outlining its relevance, objectives, and research methodology. Mateeva's ambitious endeavour in the first chapter aims to embrace the evolution of cinema from the Lumière Brothers onward, traversing various national cinemas across the 20th century. Despite the vast scope,

Mateeva skilfully distils the material into a concise yet comprehensive exposition, focusing on pivotal figures and examples.

The second chapter is dedicated to Dogma 95, a manifesto that sparked a significant film movement. Mateeva's exploration of Dogma 95 probes into its implications for avant-garde and popular cinema, the role of smaller cinemas vis-à-vis Hollywood's dominance, and the future trajectory of art cinema as a medium for cultural exchange among nations. Through insightful portraits of Danish directors associated with Dogma 95, Mateeva enhances our understanding of this movement, filling gaps in our media's coverage of its proponents and their works.

The third chapter shifts the focus of the study from the past to the present, directing attention to the latest Bulgarian cinema and posing two possible hypotheses: "Whether the proposed contemporary Bulgarian films are an echo of Dogma 95 or a mediated interpretation of accumulated cinema representations - these are different hypotheses that would be interesting to discuss." In this chapter, the doctoral candidate analyzes the echoes of Dogma 95 in six Bulgarian films from the last 10 years, presenting her own authorial perspective on their content.

The contributions of the dissertation are summarized as follows:

- Systematization of manifestos in the history of cinema.
- Supplementing information about individual directors associated with Dogma 95, whose work is not adequately studied and represented here.
- Attempting to demonstrate the influence of examples from world cinema on the latest Bulgarian cinema.

The author cites six articles on the dissertation topic, all published in the same online edition. Their number satisfies the requirements for the dissertation's approval. The bibliography presented contains a sufficient number of sources that demonstrate the study of literature on the dissertation topics.

I would advise the doctoral candidate to pay closer attention to language usage and undergo a thorough editorial review focusing on spelling, stylistic coherence, and semantic precision in the text. This is particularly crucial for someone whose academic background is intertwined with writing as a profession. Although the author clearly acknowledges the significance and impact of Dogma 95, incorporating more critical theoretical reflections would enhance objectivity in the exposition and foster a platform for debating the phenomena under discussion. The dissertation's topics offer opportunities for enrichment and future development by strengthening the analytical section and contextualizing the discussed facts within a broader historical and socio-economic framework. Providing a more in-depth exploration of the economic and financial rationale behind adopting technological minimalism as an aesthetic strategy would enhance the persuasiveness of the dissertation.

Conclusion: Taking into account the contributory aspects of the dissertation, the efforts made, the formal requirements met, and the demonstrated knowledge, I vote positively for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Elitsa Mateeva.

Sofia, April 30th 2024

Sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Chavdar Gyuzeliev, PhD