ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Dissertation Title: The Styles of Three Women Film Directors: Bach Diep, Viet Linh, and Siu Pham

Major: Cinema and Television Theory and History **Code:** 9210231

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ABSTRACT CONTENT

1. Research Aims and Subject

The aim of this dissertation is to identify and explain the styles of three women film directors - Bach Diep, Viet Linh, and Siu Pham - in relation to their historical and cultural contexts, artistic worldviews, gender discourse, and cinematic poetics. Drawing on an integrated framework that combines auteur theory, film poetics, and feminist film criticism, the dissertation seeks to clarify the processes through which each director's style is formed and the mechanisms through which it is manifested. It also identifies similarities and differences in the ways the three directors organize their artistic worlds and cinematic language.

The subject of this research is the directorial styles of Bach Diep, Viet Linh, and Siu Pham. Style is approached as an integrated whole encompassing an artistic worldview, gender discourse, and a system of cinematic poetics.

The scope of the study focuses on the feature films directed by the three filmmakers, examined in relation to their specific historical and cultural contexts and conditions of filmmaking. Bach Diep is studied in connection with revolutionary cinema and the postwar period; Viet Linh is examined in the context of her trajectory from filmmaking in the revolutionary base to the Đổi Mới (Renovation) period; and Siu Pham is approached as a Vietnamese-origin director whose creative practice is transcultural, shaped by the interaction between filmmaking environments in Vietnam and internationally. The dissertation also draws on materials relating to screenplays, creative processes, scholarly studies, critical writings, interviews, and other documents concerning the careers of the three directors.

2. Research Methods

The dissertation adopts three main theoretical approaches: auteur theory, film poetics, and feminist film criticism. Auteur theory is employed to identify consistency and individual artistic signatures in the directors' works. Film poetics provides the basis for analyzing the ways in which directorial style is expressed through cinematic language. Feminist film criticism examines the construction of images of women, the female gaze, the body, gendered experiences, and female subjectivity in the films.

The principal research methods and analytical procedures include:

- Film analysis: This serves as the central method for examining various aspects of cinematic poetics, including narration and point of view, mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, sound, and music. Through this analysis, the dissertation identifies relatively stable formal characteristics in each director's body of work.
- Analysis and synthesis: Individual films and specific aspects of the research are analyzed separately and then synthesized to clarify the relationships among artistic worldview, gender discourse, and systems of cinematic expression.
- Comparative analysis: This method is applied to compare works within each director's body of work and across the three case studies, thereby identifying convergences and differences in their respective styles.
- Interdisciplinary approach: Perspectives from aesthetics, cultural studies, sociology, and gender studies are brought together to examine directorial style in relation to its historical, cultural, and social conditions.
- Statistical procedures and systematization of research materials: These are employed to collect, classify, and organize films, documents, and relevant data, providing a basis for the subsequent processes of analysis and comparison.

3. Main Findings and Conclusions

The dissertation examines the styles of three film directors - Bach Diep, Viet Linh, and Siu Pham - through an integrated approach combining auteur theory, film poetics, and feminist film criticism. The findings indicate that directorial style is not a direct consequence of biological sex. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between personal experience, historical and cultural contexts, artistic worldview, and relatively stable choices in cinematic language.

At the level of artistic worldview and gender discourse, the dissertation identifies distinct approaches adopted by the three directors in their representations of human experience and women. In Bach Diep's films, her artistic worldview is closely associated with revolutionary ideals, war, and a sense of community. Women are portrayed in relation to family, the nation, and history, while their inner lives, personal wounds, and individual choices are also explored. In Viet Linh's films, the artistic focus shifts towards the individual, memory, emotion, and conflicts between the desire to live and social constraints. The director pays particular attention to women in exceptional circumstances, including those marked by physical or psychological impairments, feelings of inferiority, or positions outside established social norms. The female body is represented through the marks, injuries, and transformations inscribed by lived experience. Beauty is associated with human dignity, emotion, and vulnerability in the face of social change. In Siu Pham's films, experiences of migration and cultural interaction extend gender discourse to questions of identity and existential freedom. Female characters often inhabit the intersection of multiple cultural value systems; their identities take shape through processes of dialogue and adaptation rather than being determined by a fixed sense of belonging.

At the level of cinematic poetics, the dissertation clarifies the prominent formal principles underlying each director's body of work. Bach Diep's style is characterized by humanistic

realism, with narrative structures predominantly following classical conventions, everyday mise-en-scène, restrained cinematography, coherent editing, and sound rooted in the social environments depicted. Viet Linh's lyrical-psychological style is expressed through subjectively oriented art-cinema narration, points of view shaped by characters' memories and experiences, visually expressive imagery, nonlinear editing structures, and the use of traditional music. Siu Pham develops an experimental and transcultural style characterized by fragmented narrative structures, highly constructed mise-en-scène, cinematography using compact cameras that produces an approach close to documentary filmmaking, associative editing, and a sound design that operates with a relative degree of independence from the image.

The dissertation makes three principal academic contributions. *First*, it examines the styles of Bach Diep, Viet Linh, and Siu Pham within a common analytical framework integrating auteur theory, film poetics, and feminist film criticism. *Second*, it develops an analytical framework for directorial style across three dimensions: historical and cultural contexts; artistic worldviews and gender discourse; and systems of cinematic language. *Third*, it proposes an approach to style through two organically interrelated aspects: the mechanisms of style formation and the mechanisms of its manifestation. This approach contributes to understanding style as a dynamic, integrated whole, identifiable through the coherence between artistic ideas and modes of expression.

The findings add research materials and scholarly evidence to the study of the three directors. They may also serve as reference material for research, teaching, and learning in cinema theory, history, and criticism, particularly in areas concerning directorial style, film poetics, and gender studies. The research further suggests avenues for extending the investigation to directors from different generations, creative environments, and film genres. Future studies may also combine textual analysis of films with research into production and reception processes to provide a fuller understanding of the relationship between the creative subject, socio-cultural contexts, and the evolution of directorial style.

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