Appendix I:
Dogma 95 Manifesto and its Progeny

**DOGME 95**

...is a collective of film directors founded in Copenhagen in spring 1995.

**DOGME 95 has the expressed goal of countering 'certain tendencies' in the cinema today.**

**DOGME 95 is a rescue action!**

In 1960 enough was enough! The movie was dead and called for resurrection. The goal was correct but the means were not! The new wave proved to be a ripple that washed ashore and turned to muck.

Slogans of individualism and freedom created works for a while, but no changes. The wave was up for grabs, like the directors themselves. The wave was never stronger than the men behind it. The anti-bourgeois cinema itself became bourgeois, because the foundations upon which its theories were based was the bourgeois perception of art. The auteur concept was bourgeois romanticism from the very start and thereby ... false!

To **DOGME 95 cinema is not individual!**

Today a technological storm is raging, the result of which will be the ultimate democratization of the cinema. For the first time, anyone can make movies. But the more accessible the medium becomes, the more important the avant-garde. It is no accident that the phrase 'avant-garde' has military connotations. Discipline is the answer ... we must put our films into uniform, because the individual film will be decadent by definition!

**DOGME 95 counters the individual film by the principle of presenting an indisputable set of rules known as THE VOW OF CHASTITY.**

**VOW OF CHASTITY**

'I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by **DOGME 95:**

1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in. (If a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found).
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot.)
3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place.)
4. The film must be in colour. Special lighting is not acceptable. (If there is too little light for exposure the scene must be cut or a single lamp be attached to the camera.)
5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.
6. The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur.)
7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)
8. Genre movies are not acceptable.
9. The film format must be Academy 35 mm.
10. The director must not be credited.

Furthermore I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work", as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations.

Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY.

Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995

On behalf of DOGME 95
Lars von Trier
Thomas Vinterberg

MINNESOTA DECLARATION: TRUTH AND FACT IN DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

'LESSONS OF DARKNESS'
1. By dint of declaration the so-called Cinéma Vérité is devoid of vérité. It reaches a merely superficial truth, the truth of accountants.
2. One well-known representative of Cinéma Vérité declared publicly that truth can be easily found by taking a camera and trying to be honest. He resembles the night watchman at the Supreme Court who resents the amount of written law and legal procedures. 'For me,' he says, 'there should be only one single law: the bad guys should go to jail.' Unfortunately, he is part right, for most of the many much of the time.
3. Cinéma Vérité confounds fact and truth, and thus plows only stones. And yet, facts sometimes have a strange and bizarre power that makes their inherent truth seem unbelievable.
4. Fact creates norms, and truth illumination.
5. There are deeper strata of truth in cinema, and there is such a thing as poetic, ecstatic truth. It is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization.
6. Filmmakers of Cinéma Vérité resemble tourists who take pictures amid ancient ruins of facts.
7. Tourism is sin, and travel on foot virtue.
8. Each year at springtime scores of people on snowmobiles crash through the melting ice
   on the lakes of Minnesota and drown. Pressure is mounting on the new governor to
   pass a protective law. He, the former wrestler and bodyguard, has the only sage answer
   to this: 'You can't legislate stupidity.'
9. The gauntlet is hereby thrown down.
10. The moon is dull. Mother Nature doesn't call, doesn't speak to you, although a glacier
    eventually farts. And don't you listen to the Song of Life.
11. We ought to be grateful that the Universe out there knows no smile.
12. Life in the oceans must be sheer hell. A vast, merciless hell of permanent and
    immediate danger. So much of a hell that during evolution some species — including
    man — crawled, fled onto some small continents of solid land, where the Lessons of
    Darkness continue.

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 30, 1999
Werner Herzog

VOGMA MANIFESTO
[Vertov with a Mac and a modem]

vogma

a manifesto (in no particular order)

1. a vog respects bandwidth
2. a vog is not streaming video (this is not the reinvention of television)
3. a vog uses performative video and/or audio
4. a vog is personal
5. a vog uses available technology
6. a vog experiments with writerly video and audio
7. a vog lies between writing and the televisual
8. a vog explores the proximate distance of words and moving media
9. a vog is dziga vertov with a mac and a modem

<www.hypertext.mit.edu/vog/index.html>

WEBDOGME MANIFESTO
On this last day of the 2nd millennium we freely commit that should we survive, we will
dedicate ourselves to the promotion of a new kind of film. For the first time in the
history of film, we declare that now is the time and this time everybody can not only
view films — everybody can make and distribute films themselves! We aspire that
everyone will love the simplicity of the new language and will use it to create a new
global, accessible and democratic medium. We decree that films:
1. Are cheap to make.
2. Are quick to produce.
3. Are cheap and easy to distribute.
4. Employ only basic and free equipment, light and cast.
5. Any subsequent video or audio editing should be done using only free tools.
6. Distribution should be done through the internet.
7. All genres are equal.

Naomi Bamberger Naom Knoller Lev Kol
16:20 30/12/1999 XXc.
Tel-Aviv, Israel, World.
<www.go.to/webdogme>

THE NEW PURITANS MANIFESTO
1. Primarily storytellers, we are dedicated to the narrative form.
2. We are prose writers and recognise that prose is the dominant form of expression. For this reason we shun poetry and poetic licence in all its forms.
3. While acknowledging the value of genre fiction, whether classical or modern, we will always move towards new openings, rupturing existing genre expectations.
4. We believe in textual simplicity and vow to avoid all devices of voice: rhetoric, authorial asides.
5. In the name of clarity, we recognise the importance of temporal linearity and eschew flashbacks, dual temporal narratives and foreshadowing.
6. We believe in grammatical purity and avoid any elaborate punctuation.
7. We recognise that published works are also historical documents. As fragments of time, all our texts are dated and set in the present day. All products, places, artists and objects named are real.
8. As faithful representations of the present, our texts will avoid all improbable or unknowable speculation about the past or the future.
9. We are moralists, so all texts feature a recognisable ethical reality.
10. Nevertheless, our aim is integrity of expression, above and beyond any commitment to form.

Nicholas Blincoe and Matt Thorne (eds), All Hail the New Puritans (London: Fourth Estate, 2000).

THE LARP (LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY) VOW OF CHASTITY
1. It is forbidden to create action by writing it into the past history of a character or the event.
From the point of view of an organiser, the LARP may appear to be good because every character has an exciting story in the written background. This is a typical pitfall. From the point of view of the player, only what happens in the LARP has reality. LARP is not literature, LARP is action. The use of retrospect in the character description forces the player to relate to incidents that are not real.
APPENDIX I

The Vow of Chastity forbids all action in the written character description's past; all action of the story must take place during the play.

Examples as to how this may be solved, is to use fates, to leave it to the players to agree (and role-play) upon conflicts between themselves, or to use static conflicts in the backgrounds. It is not in conflict with this rule for players to invent a more detailed background, if they find this necessary for their immersion into the character.

2. There shall be no 'main plot'.
(The story of the event must be made for each player, not the whole.)

With main plots we here mean conflicts that are meant to touch the entire LARP; but do not directly involve all characters. Main plots are another typical pitfall: the conflict is important for the organisers and those players directly involved in it; but reduces the roles of characters that do not play a part in this plot to the position of an audience. The use of main plots almost universally leads to a division between important and less important characters.

This convention probably comes from organisers seeking to replicate movies, literature and theatre. A story in the non-interactive media necessarily has a limited amount of active characters. In LARP, an interactive form of art, the amount of actors and stories is theoretically unlimited.

Examples of alternative ways to bind a LARP together:

- The LARP may contain many smaller intrigues, where the intrigues are thematically connected.
- The LARP scenario may be a slice of reality. In real life, there are no main plots.

3. No character shall only be a supporting part.
Not only must every character be directly involved in the conflicts that touch it; the character must also in its own way play the lead part of the conflict. It is therefore not permitted to write a character whose most important function in the LARP is to help or support another character.

4. All secrecy is forbidden.
(Any participant who so desires shall in advance be shown all documents that pertain to the event.)

In conventional LARP, organisers often attempt to create tension by preventing the player from knowing what the organiser has planned for the character. Actually, things are often kept secret so that players or organisers can feel important - I know something you don't know - or out of habit.

The reality of the LARP is what is acted out, not what is kept secret and becomes known only after the LARP is over or to a minority during the event. By removing secrecy, we also remove part of the competition aspect of LARP. Some players may wish to know everything before the event starts, whereas others will not. Dogma #4 implies that all plans must be made available to the players who wish to know them, not that these must be published to all players.
5. After the event has begun, the playwrights are not allowed to influence it.
(Any use of staging and ad hoc organiser roles is forbidden.)

Organisers of conventional LARP use a number of methods to influence the LARP after it has begun. They do this to entertain players and to steer the event in the 'correct' direction.

As organisers take control during a LARP, the players become passive. This leads to players learning to expect organiser control, even demanding it. Only a LARP entirely without organiser influence will place the real initiative in the hands of players, where it belongs. As we learn how to make LARP's work independent of organiser control and influence, it will become possible to develop more constructive and activating methods of organiser interaction.

6. Superficial action is forbidden.
(The playwrights may not in any way plan or encourage the use or threat of violence as part of the event.)

The LARP medium is quite fit to create tension through the simulation of violence. The medium can, however, be used for far more than this – something which is often overseen in favour of combat. At the time of writing, it is for many LARPers difficult to imagine a combat-free LARP. We are of the opinion that it is about time playwrights and players learn to create LARPs without using these simplest methods to achieve thrill and suspense.

7. LARP inspired by tabletop role-playing games are not accepted.
LARP and tabletop role-playing are different media that, despite some similarities, work on different terms. In the tabletop role-playing game, the action is played out as the roles (players) and the fictional world (storyteller) meet. In a LARP the focus is on the roles (players) and what happens between them.

Some of the pitfalls that come from the tabletop heritage:

- The idea of 'game balance' (all players must have the same opportunity to find the treasure).
- Focus on solving the riddle/completing the adventure.
- Organisers wish to control the game.
- Division between important and unimportant characters ('PC' and 'NPC').

Most conventional LARP is inspired by tabletop role-playing games both in form and content. It is no longer original to make a LARP of a new kind of tabletop RPG. We also register that a majority of the clichés in current LARP are inherited from tabletop RPGs.

The most important argument, however, for not being inspired by tabletop role-playing games is that only through these means are we able to find out what LARP as a separate medium may achieve.

8. No object shall be used to represent another object:
(All things shall be what they appear to be.)
APPENDIX 1

In conventional and most mainstream LARP a number of signs and substitutes are used, swords are made from latex-covered styrofoam, cordial is supposed to be wine, the curtains are drawn because windows weren't invented in the middle ages, a rope is used as a city wall, tents instead of houses, make-up and masks are used to signify supernatural creatures etc.

Signs are most often an ingrown, but unfit, solution to the problems of transferring settings from other media to LARP. Exaggerated use of signs easily leads to absurdities in the play, as it is difficult for players to remember what the different signs represent. The focus of LARP disappears in the signs.

Human beings are, in this context, not to be considered 'objects'. A player may still be used to represent a character ...

What we wish to end is the absurd certainty that for instance Styrofoam sticks are swords, and the assumption that this is the only way it can be done. The signs are not a part of the essence of LARP. Though they occasionally may come in handy, we wish to learn how to create LARP without their use.

9. Game mechanics are forbidden.
(Rules for the simulation of for instance the use of violence or supernatural abilities are not permitted.)

By 'game mechanics' we mean all rules used to simulate situations believed not to be possible to do for real in LARPs: violence, pain, intoxication, magic, poisoning et cetera.

LARP has developed from tabletop role-playing, which again has developed from strategy games. The use of game mechanics is merely a fossil remnant from the strategy games, and is unnecessary and generally impractical in both LARP and tabletop role-playing. Game mechanics may be easily replaced with trust in the players' ability to improvise.

Dogma #9 does not exclude rules for other purposes than simulation; such as security rules and fates.

10. The playwrights are to be held accountable for the whole of their work.
LARP has often been perceived as a hobby. In part with this thought, playhouses applaud their organisers no matter the product because the organisers anyway do a good job for their hobby. To the extent criticism is perceived after an event, it has often been for purely practical matters – food, fire security and such. We are not opposed to hoists in this way honouring the will to do something, but it helps little when one desires to develop the medium and art form. Which criteria LARP is to be criticised according to is another discussion.

Playwrights of a Dogma-event therefore refuse to wear the Emperor’s New Clothes. We will be held accountable for our production, slaughtered for anything bad or imperfect, and merely receive positive criticism for what was original, well done and progressive.

The Future

We appeal to LARPs who share our goal of developing LARP as a diverse medium of expression to consider the following broad aims for the future:
The abandonment of conventional LARP – the current conventions of LARP are merely an infant stage and should be abandoned. In the future, it should be impossible to speak of 'conventional' LARP, as no conventions should exist. What we in the Dogma 99 manifesto term 'conventional' LARP might one day be called 'primitive', 'fallen' or 'corrupt' LARP.

To this end, training and handbooks must be made available for new scenes and troupes of playwrights, lest they fall into the pitfalls of convention.

Diversity – LARP playwrights and scenes must diversify the genres and methods of LARP events. We seek the death of 'mainstream' LARP, in that the diversity of LARP events should be so vast, no single genre or group of genres may be called 'mainstream'. We certainly do not want the current mainstream genres to disappear, but they should lose their dominant position.

We therefore appeal to the playwrights of the current mainstream to organise new and different LARPs, experiment with new methods, and explore or create other genres.

Publicity – LARP must become well-known in the eyes of the public as a new medium that takes diverse forms, not as a curiosity. To forward this end, LARPers should be conscious of the media attention they receive, and steer this away from 'feature' coverage towards in-depth journalism.

Fundamentalist and moral-panic critics must not be allowed to choose the battleground. Active and well-planned relations with the media are the best way to achieve a good, steady and objective coverage.

Recruitment – LARP must lose its profile as a young, slightly geeky, white middle-class activity. Recruitment should aim at all levels of society, and especially at groups from which recruitment has previously been scarce. We must abandon the misconception that conventional LARP is the best way of introduction to the medium; it is not.

Communication – The links between local, regional and national LARP communities must be strengthened. Forums (including magazines, the internet and conventions) must be opened for the exchange of ideas and know-how. LARPers must document their work, experiments and experiences, and make this documentation available to the international LARP community.

An exchange of knowledge with related media (drama, theatre, movie-making, storytelling, tabletop RPG) should take place, although the differences of the media should always be taken into consideration.

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