

Title: *From the Female Body to Mediated Sensuality: Psychological Landscape of Barbara Hammer's Dream Age (1979)*

(This paper is for the Falmouth conference.)

Abstract: This paper explores Barbara Hammer's *Dream Age* (1979) and how Hammer investigates her complex psychology through a Surrealist lens. Alongside Barbara Hammer's lifelong career as an experimental filmmaker, her desire to explore the female body, ageing, illness, death, and sexual desire becomes one of the most important themes in her films. Among Hammer's extensive filmography, *Dream Age* (1979) marks a shift in its thematic focus from the 1970s to the 1980s. In the 1970s, Hammer's films concentrated more on the visibility of lesbian female identity and bodily sensuality, which made critics like Andrea Weiss criticise Hammer's work as the adoption of 'the masculine romanticised view of women.' Different from these earlier films. Hammer moves beyond mere romanticism toward a more spiritual, philosophical, and abstract exploration of her multiple identities. The dream landscape and the encounter of multiple personalities in *Dream Age* (1979) distinguish itself from the direct presentation of romantic lesbian love and sensual experience in Hammer's previous films. This paper focuses on Hammer's depiction of a dream-like landscape and the application of Surrealist collage, which breaks the traditional signification of objects and forms a more pluralistic identity that cannot be appropriated by rational thought or its signification of masculine value. Refusing to offer a singular, coherent explanation, Hammer's *Dream Age* (1979) thus challenges the passive film-viewing experience rooted in traditional cinema. My argument is that *Dream Age* (1979) indicates Hammer's management to form an abstract, unique vision to replace the conventional film narrative and its association with the traditional value system of masculinity. (Word Count: 254 words)

Bio: Jiacheng Du is a fourth-year PhD candidate at the University of Southampton. His PhD project explores the intersections between Surrealist cinema and feminism from the 1960s to the 1980s. Apart from his PhD project about Surrealist cinema, Jiacheng's research also includes film and other art forms, films in the art world and other forms of expanded cinema.

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