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Listening to the 'Multi-Voiced' Feminist Film: Aspects of Voice-over, Female Stardom, and Audio-Visual Pleasure in Stephanie Beroes' *The Dream Screen* (1986)

Abstract: Experimental film literature often neglects the important role played by sound design as a key aspect within feminist film practice. Indeed, the utilization of audio techniques, such as voice-over, polyphony, and sonic collage, can powerfully challenge the scopophilic fetishism placed upon images of women. In order to expand the scholarly conversation, I focus on an exemplary found-footage film, *The Dream Screen*, 1986, by Stephanie Beroes. The 45-minute, 16mm film presents appropriated and re-edited footage of LuLu (Louise Brooks) from G. W. Pabst's silent film *Pandora's Box*. As we see Lulu in familiar scenarios from the original film, the audience also bears witness to a rich tapestry of quotations on the soundtrack, all spoken by different women. These quotations span 1970s feminist theory, Greek mythology, R&B song lyrics, personal diary entries, and Brooks' own autobiography, giving new meaning and depth to Lulu's character. I argue that Beroes' mobilization of these disparate voices and discourses seeks to 'undo' (to borrow William Wees' term) the misogyny of Pabst's original depiction of femininity. In turn, her film refashions Lulu/Louise Brooks into a punk-feminist icon of resistance, while pointing to ways that women artists might recover images and sounds from and of their own experience.

Keywords: voice-over; *acousmêtre*; Louise Brooks; G. W. Pabst; Stephanie Beroes; feminism; experimental film

With advances in sound technology and 16mm film equipment many feminist artists in the 1970s and 1980s attempted to resist the synchronization process of sound and image in classical cinema, where the fetishism placed upon women's voices was contiguous with the fetishism placed upon their bodies.[1] Artists worked with voice and strategies of vocal recording, such as postdubbing, voice-off, sound collage,

[1] In Kaja Silverman's analysis "Hollywood requires the female voice to assume similar responsibilities to those it confers upon the female body. The former, like the latter, functions as a fetish within dominant cinema, filling in for and covering over what is unspeakable within male subjectivity." Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 38.

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polyphony, sonic counterpoint, and more. In a break with classical cinema, where sound was subordinated to the visual, sound itself was treated in materialist and anti-illusonistic ways, producing new cinematic structures. These new forms allow for a multiplicity of voices and nonsynchronous audio effects to emerge in relation to the visual, destabilizing women's equation with spectacle.

Filmmakers played with techniques of vocal recording and voice-over, as a way of negating spectacularization of women's bodies. In the words of Mary Anne Doane, the voice-over turns human bodies (and their attendant ideological attributes) 'inside-out'.[2] Kaja Silverman argues that "[t]he voice in question functions almost like a searchlight suddenly turned upon a character's thoughts; it makes audible what is ostensibly inaudible, transforming the private into the public."[3] In these aspects voice-over could be a way of relating to a visual field differently, challenging viewer's stereotypical notions while revealing forms of women's experience.

The presence of female subjectivity, in the form of an 'acousmatic' voice, creates a gap in the usual synchronicity of image/sound. For Michel Chion, the acousmatic voice, or *acousmêtre*, refers to an all-powerful, all-knowing, but invisible voice exists both inside and outside the diegetic world of a film, citing the example of Fritz Lang's *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, 1933, where the spectator hears but does not see the voice of the mysterious villain.[4] The *acousmêtre* in a feminine cast is not analyzed by Chion but is pivotal within the historical trajectory of feminist avant-garde filmmaking. The female acousmatic voice makes an appearance in a number of feminist films, such as *Make Out*, 1970, and *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 1977. A strategic weaving of voice and image allows viewers to think about and experience their own spectatorship anew by 'actively listening', making these films "paradigms of a radical auditory cinema".[5] Such filmmaking activity attempting to fuse feminist dialogic and sound design, as a critical avenue of expanding women's representation on film, reinforces one of the principal objectives of the Women's Movement: the need for having women's voices heard as a means of consciousness-raising, fostering a receptivity among men and women so that political solidarity could be created.

In the vibrant film community of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, one filmmaker in particular, Stephanie Beroes (1952–) was interested in developing a critical auditory cinema that was able to 'audit' a broad range of voices, in which sound might "deviate from and expand the realm of the visible".[6] Beroes was the exhibitions programmer

[2] Mary Anne Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," in *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, ed. Elisabeth Weis and John Belton (New York: Columbia University Press: 1985), 168.

[3] Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 53.

[4] Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1999), 23–4.

[5] For a detailed discussion of 1970s-era "theory films" by feminist filmmakers which prioritize, in her words, women's "listening, as much as speaking", see Sophie Mayer, "Listening to Women," in *Other Cinemas: Politics, Culture, and Experimental Film in the 1970s*, ed. Sue Clayton and Laura Mulvey (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), 41–55.

[6] For more discussion on how the usage of acousmatic voice can challenge the visual construction within narrative cinema, see Hye Jean Chung, "Cinema as Archeology: The Acousmêtre and the Multiple Layering of Temporality and Spatiality," *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture* 1 (2011): 109.

at Pittsburgh Filmmakers media arts center, taking inspiration from visiting artists who traveled to the city in the 1970s, Carolee Schneemann, Jean-Luc Godard, Yvonne Rainer, and others. Her films blend critical theory and modernist poetics with her own autobiographical experience, constantly referring back to personal conflicts she had in a male-dominated film scene, fusing the formal and emotional.[7]

In her body of films, Beroes concentrates not on a singular female voice, but many voices, and is thus emblematic of the projects around audiovisual feminism in the period. Her use of voice produces temporal and historical connections, creating rich time-/sound-images. Her film *Valley Fever*, 1978, for instance, takes the form of a disjunctive conversation between an unnamed man and woman debating the phenomenology of perception.[8] Her subsequent film, *Recital*, 1978, contains a series of monologues by nine women who read from texts such as personal letters, critical theory, artist statements, and feminist manifestoes.[9] Beroes is most famous for *Debt Begins at Twenty*, a 1980 documentary-fiction film hybrid about punk bands in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh.[10] The film is 'dialogic' in its assembly and content: it spotlights a group of young women punk singers, and features humorous captions and subtitles as counterpoints to the stark visuals. The singers' plain and coarse vocal delivery challenges the notion women should be seen but not heard.

Beroes' 1986 film *The Dream Screen*, 45 minutes, black-and-white, on 16mm, manifests this ongoing commitment to articulating women's voices on film. It also evinces a new interest in multiple layerings of temporality, and draws upon theoretical strands of psychoanalysis, feminism, semiotics, and personal experience, thereby standing as the most complex work in her career. The movie is a 'feminist remake' of the G. W. Pabst film, *Pandora's Box*, 1929. It contains re-edited scenes, documentary footage and new scripted footage, featuring a cast of women characters who look nearly identical to Lulu, the central protagonist of Pabst's film played by Louise Brooks.

Interspersed within the variety of visual material, the film contains voice-over narration spoken by female narrators. As we see Lulu in familiar scenarios from the original film, the audience also bears witness to a rich tapestry of quotations on the soundtrack, all spoken by different women. These quotations span 1970s feminist theory, Greek mythology, R&B song lyrics, personal diary entries, and Brooks' own

[7] Stephanie Beroes, Artist Statement, "Recent Directions in American Independent Cinema: a program of films by West Coast film artists," Stephanie Beroes Artist File, Carnegie Museum of Art, Film and Video Archives.

[8] *Valley Fever*, color/sound, 25 minutes.

[9] *Recital*, color/sound, 20 minutes. For an interesting discussion of this film as a "powerful liberation from the illusions of traditional heterosexual romance", see Lucy Fischer *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 125–31.

[10] *Debt Begins at Twenty*, black-and-white/sound, 40 minutes. For more on *Debt Begins at Twenty*, see: Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Barcelona Boogie and Pittsburgh Punk," *The Soho News* (June 4, 1980): 36; Evanne Weirich "A Day in the Life of Bill Bored," *The Vanguard Press* 8, 6 (February 24–March 3, 1985); Elfrieda Pantoga, "Discovering local filmmakers," *Milwaukee Sentinel* (Friday September 7, 1984); Lucy Fischer, program notes for one person show at Carnegie Institute, Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sept. 1980; Gina Chetti, "Documenting Punk: A Subcultural Investigation," *Film Reader Journal* (1982): 269–80; and Stephen Locke, "Aufregende Konzeption," *Tip*, *West Berlin City Magazine* (June 20, 1980): 46.

autobiography, giving new meaning and depth to Lulu's character. These audio elements are interwoven and juxtaposed together almost seamlessly, as they alternate from original written material to quotations of pre-existing works.

The presence of voice-over narrations function 'acousmatically', in the terms defined by Michel Chion; with "one foot in the image", women's voices are synched with women's bodies on screen.[11] For instance, a new voice is given to the figure of Lulu: a woman reading from the autobiographical text restores the flesh-and-blood identity of Louise Brooks to Lulu, while also delving into the making of the film and her fraught career in Hollywood. Conversely, the voice/voices operate nonsychnronously with "one foot *outside* the image", that is, the female voice-over narration often appears to be all-powerful and all-knowing, commenting on and weaving together the visual strands, as though it were floating specter-like above and detached from the visual field.[12] At the same time, Beroes allows her images to retain an opacity which is not entirely explained away by the voice-over commentary. This in turn produces fascinating ambiguities and unresolved gaps within the critical argument about gender relations she puts forward, and this inherent opacity differentiates Beroes' practice of voice-over as not being a form of 'authoritative speech'.

By engaging in an 'intertextual dialogue' with canonical narrative cinema, and by employing archival methods of feminist research – such as citation, quotation, and juxtaposition – Beroes works like a researcher or film archivist as much as an artist. The film writes back otherness into a male-created film text, expanding the range of women's voices and identities on film. In turn, the original male film auteur Pabst no longer monopolizes the 'power to mean'. His characters are able to speak for themselves, even against the author. It is as if the characters speak directly through the film to us.

Lucy Fischer describes her method of intertextual film analysis in sonic terms: "I aspire to recoup not only woman's vision but her discourse – to provide a cinematic '*voice-over*' for the canonical track."[13] In this spirit, I begin with a brief analysis of *Pandora's Box*, how it was created and received, and its conflictual but prominent status in the canon. I rehearse how the film, on the one hand, is considered formally dazzling and expertly made, and is elevated into a metaphor for filmic signification itself; and how, on the other hand, it is seen as hostile to women's subjectivity, an unselfcritical glorification of the male gaze.

I then show that, in terms of content, form, production, and reception, *The Dream Screen* should be considered a feminist remake and a recuperation of the Pabst film. My main claim is that the uncritical allegory of female spectacle in *Pandora's*

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[11] Chion writes: "The acousmêtre […] cannot occupy the removed position of commentator, the voice of the magic lantern show. He must, even if only slightly, have *one foot in the image*, in the space of the film; he must haunt the borderlands that are neither the interior of the filmic stage not the procenium – a place that has no name, but which the cinema forever brings into play." See *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 161.

[12] Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 24.

[13] Fischer, *Shot/Countershot*: *Film Tradition and Women's Cinema*, 24.

Box is altered through Beroes' feminist remake. Through the use of multiple voices and through the strategies of Eisensteinian associational montage, the problematic allegory of Woman-as-Mythic-Other becomes culturally specified as a trope, rather than a natural explanation of gender. Through an exploration of the critical potentials of female acousmatic voice-over, the visual spectacle of Lulu becomes an occasion for analyzing masculine domination, feminine resistance, and the broader conditions (and limits) of feminist filmmaking in the 1980s.

Lulu as 'pure image': Comparison of *Pandora's Box* to *The Dream Screen*

G. W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* is a Weimar-era film, starring Louise Brooks in what is considered her most important role as a silent movie star.[14] In the film Brooks plays Lulu, a beautiful but frivolous young woman who depends on the generosity of (typically male) strangers and patrons. The story is based partially on playwright Frank Wedekind's cycle of 'sex tragedies' *Erdgeist* (Earth Spirit, 1895) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1904),[15] and takes place across several historical period settings, including Berlin and London.

Pabst's film devotes considerable attention to Lulu's beauty and charm. She is frequently shown in close-up and soft lighting, her face enveloping the frame. These facial close-ups evoke the 'absorptive' and obsessive look of the beholder that Béla Balázs championed in the early cinema.[16] Often equated with Weimar's commercial culture of surfaces and light, Lulu has been variously described as a "pure image"[17] (Lulu is equated with a framed photographic image from the film's beginning); an art object;[18] a "pagan idol";[19] and even a "lunar landscape".[20] Lulu is framed so close-up in some shots that "her whole head looks like the planet Saturn".[21]

[14] Brooks starred in 21 Hollywood films, though none of them as sensational as *Pandora's Box*, a production which essentially assisted "in withdrawing her from the limelight in Hollywood". For more on Brooks' complicated cinematic career see Amelie Hastie, "Louise Brooks, Star Witness," *Cinema Journal* 36, 3 (Spring 1997): 4–5.

[15] Thomas Elsaesser has identified several important changes Pabst made in adapting the source material. See Elsaesser, "Lulu and the Meter Man: Louise Brooks, G. W. Pabst and *Pandora's Box*," *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 264–67.

[16] Béla Balázs, *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory: Visible Man and The Spirit of Film* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 31.

[17] Mary Ann Doane "The Erotic Barter: *Pandora's Box* (1929)," in *The Films of G.W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 67.

[18] Andrew Burkett, "The Image Beyond the Image: G. W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929) and the Aesthetics of the Cinematic Image-Object," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 23, 3 (2007): 239.

[19] Lotte H. Eisener, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 296.

[20] Ibid, 299.

[21] Margaret McCarthy, "Surface Sheen and Charged Bodies: Louise Brooks as Lulu in *Pandora's Box* (1929)," in *Weimar Cinema*, ed. Noah Isenberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 224.

Lulu's beauty becomes the principal source of conflict within the narrative dynamics of the film: she is entrancing, but nobody knows who she is or what motivates her. Lulu is a consummate performer, cycling through many identities and personae. She tricks men as to suggest a certain status of wealth; in her stage performances, she captivates and distracts her audience with illusion. Lulu's tendency toward the theatrical produces a strong association of the *femme fatale*, leading men to ruin. Thus, despite her entrancing smile, she holds many dangers.

After an initially cool reception upon release – one reviewer wrote "Louise Brooks cannot act!"[22] – the film was rediscovered in the 1950s as a lost classic.[23] Brooks would not receive positive recognition in the States until many years later.[24] The film, meanwhile, cemented Pabst's noteworthiness as a director and playwright Wedekind as exemplary of the *Autorenfilm*, films in the Weimar era noted for a strong authorial presence.[25] Creation, creativity and ownership, in other words, are at the heart of the film, and they imbue the layers of reception and production that continue to emanate from it.

In the critical literature scholars have taken the film to be a problematic depiction of Weimar-era gender relations. The treatment of Lulu as a manifestation of Pandora during the murder trial is taken to task by many feminist analyses. Lulu's quasi-mythological status serves as evidence of the filmmaker's blatant antipathy toward women, as demonstrated in Doane's influential critique.[26] Within the logic of the film, she represents a chameoleonic, almost demonic signifier of womanhood, a source of Otherness that (in the narrative's logic) deserves containment, death and moral judgment from the community.

I will show in the next section the aspects of the original work that receive reconsideration in Stephanie Beroes' *The Dream Screen*. I also analyze the significance of newly created scenes in her film which are interwoven as an 'intertext', a parasitic but productive addition to the original, rendering *The Dream Screen* into a feminist remake. In particular, voice is used in various ways to repel negative meanings and lacunae associated with Pabst film and masculinist classical cinema in general. This negation is not necessarily negative, but rather productive, allowing the recognition of speaking human subjects in the image.

[22] See Louise Brooks, "Pabst and Lulu," in *Louise Brooks: Portrait of an Anti-Star*, ed. Roland Jaccard (New York: Zoetrope, 1986), 88.

[23] According to Elsaesser's account, James Card, curator of film at the George Eastman House, Rochester, found Brooks in New York, "found her in almost squalid circumstances and brought her to live in Rochester on a small Eastman House stipend." Card restored *Pandora's Box*, leading to a revival of interest in the film. See Elsaesser, "Lulu and the Meter Man," 259.

[24] Amelie Hastie, "Louise Brooks, Star Witness," *Cinema Journal* 36 No 3 (Spring 1997): 4–5.

[25] Paul Cooke, *German Expressionist Films* (London: Pocket Essentials, 2002), 9.

[26] See Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 142.

Analysis of *The Dream Screen:* The autobiographical voice as a means to restore complexity to Louise Brooks-as-Lulu

The dominant, masculinist interpretation of Lulu-as-Mythic-Other is challenged by Stephanie Beroes' *The Dream Screen.* The main way she does this is by editing and reforming the original footage with audio voice-over. The inclusion of voice-over provokes a new empathy and curiosity about the performer, Louise Brooks, who starred as Lulu. Brooks went through tremendous psychic and physical distress before, during, and after the role. Further, the film supports Brooks, who, as other scholars have noted, struggled over how she and her 'voice' have been portrayed during her career.[27]

The Dream Screen features key segments of Brooks' autobiography, *Lulu in Hollywood*.[28] Beroes focuses on the tense, and oftentimes dysfunctional, relationship between Brooks and Pabst during the film's production. Voiced as if to imply Brooks herself speaking directly to the audience, this strand of narration recounts a particularly traumatic incident involving Brooks' favorite dress.

Pabst, against Brooks' wishes, forced her to use a white dress in shooting the film's climactic scene in which Lulu is brutally stabbed to death by Jack the Ripper. No amount of pleading could change Pabst's mind about which dress was most appropriate for the act of killing. The dress was, in Brooks' account, irreversibly ruined. On top of this, the autobiographic voice stresses that Pabst was 'controlling and rigid' in nearly all areas of Brooks' self-presentation: "Pabst chose all my costumes with care. But he seemed motivated by sexual hate. He chose them for their tactile as well as visual seductiveness."[29] These anecdotes reveal complexity in the figure of Brooks, uncovering the private struggle that she faced against the director, a controlling force in her life. Pabst emerges from the testimony as a sort of puppet master treating women like props for his imaginative designs and sexual gratification. The voice later quotes the *Autobiography* again, cementing an image of Pabst as a manipulator and puppet master: "Your life is exactly like Lulu's,' he said [to Brooks], 'and you will end the same way.'"

The voice-over reveals Lulu's beauty to be a construction, a product of makeup and artifice that contributes to women's social control. The use of voice challenges a voyeuristic position on to-be-looked-at-ness, since it interrupts the viewer's tendency to view women's appearance as a fetishistic object for consumption. Clips from *Pandora's Box* depict Lulu applying makeup in the London hideout before her murder by Jack the Ripper. On the audio track, a voice-over narrator describes makeup from a feminist-theoretical lens as manifesting a form of women's oppression. She states, "Make-up. That's what women do in the mirror. Make better. Taking the natural and ornamenting it… A splitting of self. Taking the woman you are and the woman you are transformed

[27] Hastie "Louise Brooks, Star Witness," 5.

[28] Louise Brooks, *Lulu in Hollywood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

[29] Louise Brooks elaborates on the incident concerning the dress in the section of her autobiography titled "Pabst and Lulu", 103–4.

into – what magic!" Converging with Silverman's notion of female voice as an "acoustic mirror," makeup is thus exposed as one of the vectors by which women are expected to construct an idealized image of femininity and be consumed by a male gaze.

The voice stresses autobiography and personal history as a way to challenge the mythic time of Pabst's film. The mythic discourse of *Pandora's Box* posits Lulu as a timeless villainess, established by the prosecutor at the trial scene. In *The Dream Screen*, a female voice-over puts the mythic story in ideological-critical scare quotes. Beroes notably leaves out the murder trial scene from the original where the prosecutor tells the story (incorrectly) claiming that Pandora herself – not Prometheus's brother – opened the box and 'loosed evil upon us.' This strategic omission is corrected with the voice-over narration explaining it was the brother's impulsiveness – his choice to open the box in the first place – as the founding act that corrupted the world.

Through the activity of voice-over commentary Beroes 'creates' Lulu anew, and her cinematic legacy is transformed. No longer a passive spectacle or stand-in for mythic Pandora, the machinations of the men around her are revealed as constraining and shaping her behavior. These revelations add psychological complexity – and sympathy – to Lulu's cinematic image. The biographical experience of Louise Brooks shatters the 'sovereign spectacle' figuration of Lulu, as has been discussed in the critical literature.[30] Beroes' mobilization of disparate voices and discourses seeks to 'undo', borrowing William Wees' term, the misogyny of Pabst's original depiction of femininity.[31]

Challenging female narcissism with writerly voices in *The Dream Screen*

A highly charged visual motif that recurs in both *Pandora's Box* and *The Dream Screen* is images of women shown absorbed in their own self-reflections in mirrors, or shown consuming other images of women in mass media forms, such as women's fashion magazines. This familiar stereotype of female narcissism is resignified in Beroe's film as something positive and creative, rather than negative.

The activity of women's self-reflection in mirrors is ambiguous and can be read in various ways. Within the Weimar culture of Germany, modern art and visual culture positioned the New Woman as a figure of narcissistic self-absorption and poor morals.[32] Some critics have argued that Lulu attains a level of self-control and self-fashioning when she is at work on her self-image. Yet, this kind of agency contrasts sharply to scenes later in the film where pictures of Lulu are traded among men.[33]

[30] Margaret McCarthy, "Surface Sheen and Charged Bodies," 225.

[31] Wees writes of found-footage essayistic filmmaking, "To 'undo' an image means to loosen its connections to the cultural and ideological assumptions that lie behind its production and intended reception, so that it becomes available for […] re-production and alternative reception […]." Wees, "The Ambiguous Aura of Hollywood Stars in Avant-Garde Found-Footage Films," *Cinema Journal* 41, 2 (Winter 2002): 3.

[32] McCarthy, "Surface Sheen and Charged Bodies," 221.

[33] McCarthy signals an equivocation around whether Lulu should be seen as agent or object of visual culture. This "specular sovereignty" becomes threatened and falters, when Lulu is rendered into images and an object of exchange in the Pabst film. See McCarthy, "Surface Sheen and Charged Bodies," 227–31.

The most significant scenes of women partaking in self-reflection, in *The Dream Screen*, tend to feature the presence of a diary, opening up a new kind of acousmatic voice: the voice of the woman as creative writer. The diary challenges the previous film's idea of womanhood as being reducible to an image. Julie is frequently shown in a train car or sitting by the window, writing notes. Through the diary, *The Dream Screen* links Julie with real-life Louise Brooks in their turn toward the activity of writing as a means of refining upon and defining their lives, asserting control over the project of selfhood. The figure of the diary revises the tendency in which masculine culture had taken women to be objects, surfaces of visual pleasure exclusively.

The diary suggests, additionally, a possible linkage between the voice-over narration and the visuals. Is Julie the narrating agent gathering multiple literary sources that appear on the audio track? Just as plausibly, Julie's writing may be a response to diegetic events that have happened to her. In any event, Julie is not merely an object of the narration, nor is there any moment in the film where the acousmatic voice is threatened with 'deacousmatization', where it is fully equated with an actor's body. In this way, Julie remains a highly mysterious figure, neither a feminist heroine nor a passive victim to patriarchal domination.

The extraordinary autonomy given to Julie indicates Beroes' deep interest in the Bakhtinian, multi-voiced potential of film art. Through the act of writing and journaling Julie has made a space of her own within the patriarchal symbolic economy. This is precisely what was missing from Pabst's film: instances of women shown creating or narrating their own thoughts, for themselves.

Psychoanalyzing the unconscious of the patriarchal media culture

The figure of the father is manifested as a major interest in the film, particularly in the therapy session segments centered on a young woman, Jennifer Canaga. Off-screen, Beroes asks Canaga open-ended questions concerning her relationship to her father. These scenes recall the psychoanalytic model of the 'talking cure' that Sigmund Freud favored, and they point to the wider interest in the feminist project of revising psychoanalytic theory as was prevalent in 1980s independent film culture.[34]

Canaga is shot fairly clinically in a room similar to that of a therapist's office. The head-on view of Canaga invites analytic scrutiny of her as the confessional patient, with the viewer placed in the position of analyst. Importantly, however, this therapeutic segment does not reproduce the problematic power dynamic of the confessional woman, as noted by Silverman. The point is not to individualize a woman but to make an inquiry into patriarchal culture. We see this when Canaga relates

[34] Mayer, writing on feminist filmmaking in US and Britain during the 1980s, argues that many of these films "reflexively and critically adopt the unconscious processes of psychic formation identified by Sigmund Freud, such as traumatic repetition, parapraxis and screen memory, in order to formulate a Marxist feminist political aesthetics." Mayer, "Listening to Women," in *Other Cinemas: Politics, Culture, and Experimental Film in the 1970s*, ed. Sue Clayton and Laura Mulvey (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), 41.

aspects of her childhood in response to the director's questions, while footage from *Pandora's Box* is interspersed and edited throughout the conversation.

Canaga states that "one could never be over-educated, it was a never-ending process"; and an insert of Lulu, dancing and spinning in circles, appears. This insert of frantic dancing is a visual match for the undertones of control, power, and discipline hinted at in the verbal description of aesthetic education as "a never-ending process".

The incorporation of appropriated footage, and the use of voice-over narration, acts as a sort of 'dream screen', a projection triggered by words from Canaga's testimony that creates a newly dynamized relationship between viewer and filmed content. In this way Beroes' film makes an argument about the nature of women and men on a wider transhistorical scale. Canaga's conflicted relationship with her father stands in for any number of relationships, in which the father-daughter situation is partly violent, partly loving, schizophrenic. On a deeper level, the investigation into abusive, fatherly paternalism reveals the fundamentally controlling nature of heterosexual masculinity in general, as noted by Jacques Lacan and Freud.[35]

Tragically, Canaga can only comprehend her self-identity in relation to her father. In a later interview segment, she suddenly recognizes the absence of her mother from the development of her sense of self, all along. As is evident from the testimony, the paternalism of the father cultivates a particular image of the woman, an image that seeks to control femininity for its own self-preservation. The masculine culture isolates her from others, as well. The so-called education of the father is the miseducation of patriarchal society, as noted by Mulvey et al., a pedagogy that strays women away from solidarity and critical thinking.

At this point in the film, the voice-over narrator asks, "Who is Lulu? Maybe that is not the question. Who created Lulu?" The question's obvious answer – Pabst – suggests Lulu is not created out of thin air, but that she is a projection on the part of male auteurs. The aggressive creativity of Pabst is the 'unconscious' dimension of the original which Beroes uncovers. Thanks to the juxtaposition of voice-over narration, appropriated footage, and the filmed interview, psychoanalytical analogies are formed between the film and the activity of dreaming. *Pandora's Box* is analyzed as if it were a dream of the patriarchal mind.

Conclusion: Women's audiovisual experimental practice

The remade *Pandora's Box* becomes less a triumphant metaphor for the cinematic medium, than an exemplary 'dream screen' for men's fantasies and fears about women. Beroes' construction of multi-voiced acousmatic female personae is revelatory, exposing misogynistic power across multiple domains. The film's dedication suggests Brooks herself could be considered a collaborator in the film's genesis. Brooks' biography as a woman who sought self-ownership and the power to narrate, within

[35] Silverman provides a helpful description of Freudian and Lacanian models of the masculine subject in relation to cinematic signification, in *The Subject of Semiotics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 132–50.

and against a visual culture that was attracted to her as a fetishistic image of sexuality, is a precursor for the figure of the contemporary female artist.

The Dream Screen should be recognized as a pioneering feminist film. To borrow the words of one perceptive critic, *The Dream Screen* is not a diary film or film diary, but a 'diary of ideas'.[36] In its innovative working methods, and in its palimpsest of women's voices and experiences (placed over silent-film segments, which essentially 'revoice' the past), *The Dream Screen* performs a genuine contribution to the study of gender relations and patriarchy.

Image 1: Figure 1. Advertisement for Stephanie Beroes' *The Dream Screen*, New York Premiere at the Living Cinema, November 7, 1986. The grid displays three women characters featured in Beroes' remake of Pabst's film, while hinting at the prominent role of editing. In contrast to Pabst's acclaimed use of fluid, continuity editing, Beroes edits material to emphasize cuts as gaps. This approach surfaces the intellectual and historiographical possibilities of editing in the context of essayistic filmmaking. The ad also evokes broader motifs around doubling, memory, and look-alikes. Artist File: Stephanie Beroes, Whitney Museum of Art Archives, Folder 1 Box 3, December 15, 2016.

[36] Sandra Maliga, quoted in *The Dream Screen* advertisement, Stephanie Beroes Artist File, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, Folder 1, Box 3.

Images 2–5: Louise Brooks' performance of Lulu catapulted her into film history. As an exemplary, immortal image of feminine beauty, the figure of Lulu has been critically dissected from head to toe: from her "smooth disc-like face" to her empty smile, to her hair, her social exhibitionism, and her near-acrobatic skill as a dancer. The more subversive qualities of Lulu have to do with her poymorphous sexuality – she is shown dancing with the masculine woman Augusta Geschwitz – and her momentary seizure of phallic power: taking the gun from Schön and killing him, fusing eroticism and death.

Image 6: In *The Dream Screen*, Schön is equated with Pabst: both are controlling male figures who set Lulu down a dangerous path. From *Pandora's Box*.

Images 7–8: Lulu reading magazines is indicative of female narcissism in *Pandora's Box*. Meanwhile, the image of Julie in a shattered mirror (above) indicates that identity is schizophrenic and malleable, in *The Dream Screen*. The cracked mirror hints at male power that infuses the construction of female selfhood, but also the playfulness of assembly and collage which was the ethos of the punk music subcultures explored in Beroes' remake.

Image 9: Julie lifts the Louise Brooks autobiography to her face, like a mask. The image encapsulates the historiographical project of *The Dream Screen*, but it also suggests that Lulu is not merely a passive image or witness to cinema history. "Lulu" also denotes a creator of images. This spirit of creativity continues in the form of Julie and Beroes herself.

Images 10–13: In one sequence, Beroes edits together documentary footage of Jennifer Canaga (left), with appropriated footage from *Pandora's Box*, featuring Lulu and the old man. First Canaga explains how her father both encouraged study and cultural immersion but scolded her, making her feel helpless. As she discusses this, images appear of Lulu being nearly attacked by the old man provide a visual illustration of Canaga's testimony. This associational editing strategy demonstrates how Beroes is able to turn the tables on Pabst's film, so that it no longer demonizes women, presenting Lulu as passive. Instead it uses the source material to question how men, particularly fathers, seek power and control women.

Image 14: By film's end, Julie is no more certain about herself than at the start. The opaque mirror prevents an acquisitive male gaze from conferring to-be-looked-at-ness upon her.

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