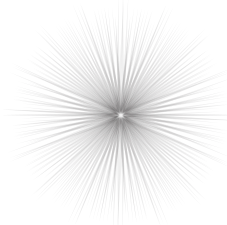


The Magickal Lantern:
*A treatise concerning the Nature of Light and
its use as a medium of Spiritual Transcendence.*

+++

Raymond Salvatore Harmon



Published under the authority of
Ordo Argentum lux Lucis



Comprised of the following essays:

On the Nature of Light
Transcendental Cinema
The Magickal Lantern

An Introduction

The three essays collected here were written over a period of about five years. Each of them appeared in print, in various performance and esoteric magazines. They outline the basic structure of a concept of conscious expansion that is flexible enough to be incorporated into any existing form of ritual (magickal or otherwise) practice, yet able to function as the center of the ritual in itself.

The power of the cinematic tradition over the evolution of man and contemporary culture is indisputable. We are changed by the experiences we have through cinema, it is a medium on par with literature in the development of the model of contemporary consciousness in the world today.

Spirituality and mystical tradition have existed in culture for as long as the written word, if not longer. Mankind seeks to know that which is outside of perceptual existence, and the paths toward enlightenment are many. Yet these traditions that have developed throughout history have always utilized advanced technologies to achieve their ends. Chemistry, yoga, psychology, all play into the tool bag of the shaman and the occultist and have so for millennia.

Yet within all of these traditions a single model exists to represent true knowledge - light. Light is the icon that stands for truth and knowledge in its purest form. The dominate historical tradition for representing 'divinity' as a kind of understanding outside of ones perceptual reality has been light for countless millennia.

In seeking a form of practice that utilizes tools able to function on the mental level of the contemporary person in 21st century society one must look to the media which controls the visual dynamic of the world today. By using these modern techniques the journeyer can explore a wider range of perceptual experiences outside of the self than ever before.

Thus the development of a transcendental cinematic form able to work within the paradigm of ritual practice is necessary. This transcendental cinema becomes the modern tool through which the practitioner may expand themselves outward and beyond.

These three works outline a way in which the journeyer may proceed toward the light that draws them into the horizon of the self. Specifically they become a map that leads one away from the self toward that beyond of being.

Obviam lux Lucis
Raymond Salvatore Harmon

On the Nature of Light:

The Cinematic Experience as Occult Ritual

"These were her Instructions, which were no sooner delivered, but she brought me to a clear, large Light, and here I saw those Things, which I must not speak of."

-Thomas Vaughan from *Lumen de Lumine*.

Transcendental Cinema is at its core the cinematic understanding of the use of spiritual content in relation to the context of its practical use as a device for controlling the state of our conscious mind. In a practical sense all film (or any cinematic experience) changes our perceptions and alters our sense of the real. (For instance, we are constantly fooled into believing we are seeing motion instead of a series of still images.) This ability of the mind to reinterpret incoming data based on preconceived notions of reality (we interpret motion because what else could it be but motion?) gives us a clue to the function of Transcendental Cinema's mechanics.

The human mind does not specifically relate reality to us. It alters the actual in order to give us the necessary

information for our survival. Filtering data, the mind softens the edge of our world through various implementations of data flow. What cinema possesses is an ability to create a mental landscape, like a waking dream state, in which man can explore his desires and fears, fulfill its lusts and passions without conflicting with the 'real' world of his existence. Thus cinema gives us the ability to manipulate the emotional and mental state of the viewer.

From the beginning of film directors have sought to utilize this ability that film possesses in order to create an overwhelming cinematic experience for the viewer. Men like Eisenstein and Vertov developed basic formulas for implementing complex ideas via the cinematic model. Montage, rapid cut editing, disassociation between sound and visual input were tools utilized from the earliest days of films birth in order to propagate philosophic and political ideals and to explore forms of creative expression.

The means by which the transcendental film may affect our mind state is varied and can utilize iconic imagery, empathetic plot lines, and abstract imagery in conjunction with subliminal content, specifically chosen strobic effects, and color frequency rates to gain access to the architecture of the mind. Often attacking the perceptual input of our senses on multiple fronts, the transcendental film may act on the conscious and subconscious mind simultaneously. It may distract the conscious mind while accessing the subconscious in order to deliver various sets of information that modify the viewer's sense of the real. Pushing the mind outward beyond the normal state of awareness, the transcendental film possesses the ability to confront our

latent ideas of reality and to alter our perceptions of the now.

A practical example of the transcendental (or occult) film whose purpose is the practical exploration of the transcendental state is my work, *The Rites of Eleusis*.

Based on the seven public rituals performed by British occultist Aleister Crowley in 1910 in Caxton Hall London, *The Rites of Eleusis* are seven, seven-minute-long visual distillations of Crowley's rites representing a specific form of performance-based occult ritual. The primary visual content of the pieces are evolving abstract patterns and structures. The developing visual forms are manipulated live via various video signal feedback loops and circuit bending the video processors signal path.

The practice of circuit bending is one of improvisation within the context of a piece of electronic hardware's ability to function. At its simplest circuit bending is the act of opening up a piece of hardware and short-circuiting various pieces inside the device to change the path through which the video signal flows. Any device may have thousands or more simple connections that can be made to alter the input and output signal. By experimenting with a device before hand, and then hardwiring a set of switches that create multiple combinations of a set of points in the circuitry of the device, the performer is given a much wider ranging brush with which to explore the nature of the video signal path.

Similarly the video feedback loop is a constantly flowing input and output of the same source, taking the output of

a chain of devices and feeding it to the first device as the primary input. As the signal feeds through the devices it is altered by various color and signal distortions via circuit bending. Constantly feeding out and back into itself the signal evolves through the slightest movements of the various controls of the video devices in the feedback chain.

My first transcendental film, YHVH, was created using a simple video feedback loop with a vcr, digital still camera in display mode, and a television set. The process of creating the developing content through experimentation yielded approximately 6 hours of material. I edited this down to the 22 minutes of the piece. This type of exploration of the video path yields a landscape-like field of shifting forms that perfectly translates for use as a trigger to access the subconscious mind. When manipulated correctly the strobic forms and shifting fields of distorted video feedback provide a perfect canvas on which to edit the various texts and instructions of a given occult ritual.

Beneath the apparent visual imagery Rites of Eleusis utilizes the entire text of Crowley's original Rites of Eleusis as complex subliminal content. This text content is masked in various ways in the visual field, and it is often shown for as little as 1/30th of a second to the viewer. The words are placed in specific locations in the visual field that maximize the human eye's distinct pattern of response to movement and color.

The text can be scaled to emphasize specific passages, certain phrases may be repeated or moved around in the visual field. This type of design element within the subliminal content

is common in the world of advertising and marketing. Even in contemporary society, the written word is a powerful element in all mystical and philosophic traditions. We take an oath on a book, venerate the writings of certain people, store our collective knowledge and express the nature of the human condition in the written word. William Burroughs once said that language is a virus, and its power over the formation of our thoughts is indisputable.

During the development of a transcendental film, careful control of color frequency, tonal range and strobic rate are taken into consideration. Using vectorscopic and waveform analysis of the video content each frame is examined and tuned to be in harmony with the maximum desired effect of accessing the subconscious mind. Each edited frame is processed to be in tune with the mind's native response curve to specific color range and light sensitivity. All of this works in conjunction with the subliminal content of the text in order to create the maximum impression on the mind.

Though the subliminal content is developed in a controlled studio setting, the primary visual content of the piece is dramatically performed in a live context through various electronic devices. Utilizing video circuit bending and pushing the primary signal through a set of feedback loops, the content is responsive to the environment of the performance.

The improvisational nature of the performance is such that it becomes a feedback loop of socio-emotional energy. Almost everyone has experienced the feeling of group emotion, at a music concert, at church, at a rally for some political ideal.

The atmosphere of any performance is charged with the positive and negative emotional content of the audience. The best performers feed off of this energy and channel it into their creative path. As the transcendental film unfolds and the audience is drawn into the content the performer is feeding off of the content being developed and the charge of the audience. A much larger feedback loop occurring between the viewer, the performer and the content, which parallels the feedback loop of the video content.

The practical side of the performance from a viewer standpoint is that the participants in the production (the audience members) are able to view the development of the piece live. Standing at a distance in front of and facing the screens, the performer guides the audience on a journey through the mental landscape of the subconscious mind.

In any transcendental cinema screening or performance careful attention must be made to set and setting. This is, after all, a ritual—and by its very nature the setting must be rarefied and made to conform with the intent of the practice. Due consideration must be given to all of the variables of the environment of a piece. Sound levels, projector brightness, smell, ambient noise, audience comfort (or discomfort)—all things must be evaluated and taken into account in developing a production or staging a screening of a transcendental film.

The environment for the Horse Hospital performance was that of an actual cobble-stone-floored horse hospital from the 1700s. Its wooden pillared environment created a framework for the setting of the piece. In the center of the

room was a ritual circle with a hexagram (seven pointed star) inside, each with an alchemical symbol representing a planet of the classic system. Above the circle were the three screens in a half circle to the rear of the hexagram. Opposite the screens inside the triangle was the altar, on which the various video pieces were placed.

The three screens each had their own projector, with the center screen carrying the primary signal containing the subliminal and primary visual content, and the outer two screens being a feed from the content on the center screen through the video electronics on the altar. This allowed for the creation of a live moving shape that develops out of the primary content in relation to the audiences response to the film.

The audience entered from the rear of the room. Chairs were placed in rows facing the screen, much like a traditional film screening. But the chairs flanked both sides of the circle, leaving the altar and performer (myself) standing in front of the audience like a conductor.

The sound of a given piece can be a prepared audio document or performed live either improvisationally or from a prepared score. Within the context of Rites of Eleusis all of the sonic content is derived from minutely abstracted samples of Aleister Crowley's recorded voice. Tiny fractions of his incantations are manipulated in order to bring about a sense of immersion within the visual field. This utilization of sound in order to heighten the visual stream or edited content of film is nothing new. The emotional content of almost all contemporary cinema utilizes the score to

develop the underlying depth or urgency of a given scene. Horror films in particular use the soundtrack to heighten the anxiety and tension of the viewer. Often building up the emotional content in order to direct the viewer's attention to the upcoming scenario of the plot.

The historic antecedents for this type of emotional manipulation in order to force states of enlightenment can be traced from both eastern and western sources. It is commonly understood that the Eleusian and Dionysian rites of ancient Greece both utilized staged performance as part of the initiatory rites of their cults. The initiate was led through caverns with staged events being performed theatrically by actors that reenact certain mythological parables and heighten the participant's often drugged mental state to that of religious experience.

Crowley's Rites used the classic form of the Eleusian Mysteries to demonstrate very contemporary forms of theatrical practices—the musical and dance improvisations, the placing of the Magus within the triangle of invocation. Much of Crowley's Rites foreshadows the works of Artuad and Growtowski in its form and approach to the theater as a religious experience. His expansion of the theatrical form of ceremonial ritual magic led to a broadening of interest in theater as spiritual exploration of self.

Much in the way Crowley expands on the classic form of initiatory ritual, my Rites of Eleusis deconstructs the theatrical performance, approaching the audience with a much more advance set of tools for expanding mental perceptions and accessing the subconscious. Abandoning

the theatrical in favor of the immersive installation, Rites of Eleusis approaches the mind of today's audience with the level of data input it has come to expect from its experiential existence. By placing the participant in a field of sensory input control, the mind state that leads one to the path of understanding can be achieved.

As the cinematic experience has infiltrated contemporary culture as the dominant form of story telling in modern society the individual viewer has become callous to the more subtle forms of theatrical presentation. What could once be achieved through simple stage acting must be done at a much higher and interactive level with the average contemporary mind. Video games, the internet, social networking tools, mobile phones that do everything are examples of technology that operates at this heightened level. It's not just our children who have these technologies and use them everyday. We do as well. Thus the natural role of the theatrical in the mystical/spiritual experience must evolve with society's demand for high resolution and data rate.

The transcendental film as a performance-based art is simply the next generation in society's approach to understanding the unknown within the mystical paradigm. We have as a species sought out more access to knowing, to illumination in all its forms. Thus the use of cinematic models for the presentation and practical exploration of the mystical state is merely a parallel to our modern forms of understanding the everyday.



Transcendental Cinema:

A treatise on the use of film as a tool of mystical understanding

Introduction
Content & Context
Conscious Expansion
Subliminal Layering
Set & Setting
Technique & Application
Closure

Introduction

For over a century man has explored the creation of abstract imagery through the use of film. In that time many artists have utilized films illusion of motion to develop painterly abstractions of color and light. Filmmakers like Len Lye, Harry Smith, Stan Brakhage and many others have painted directly on film, exposed film rolls to raw light, and developed pieces through optical printing that reveal the inherent nature of films illusion of motion and chronology of form.

Since it's the birth of film birth a wide range of filmmakers

have shown an interest in the symbolic and speculative practices of occult and magical ideologies. Kenneth Anger, Alejandro Jodorowsky, and others have depicted the symbolic imagery associated with occult practices in their films, to varying degrees of detail and accuracy. Not to mention the entire field of entertainment based cinema associated with the occult. Jowdorosky in particular reveals the hidden secrets of several occult orders in films like *El Topo* and *the Holy Mountain*. Though these filmmakers depict the symbols and images of the occult in their works none have yet developed films that give us an applicable tool for the practice of occult/magic rituals.

As we shall explore in this brief treatise, film (cinema, video, etc), possess a very powerful ability to alter one's state of conscious, and with the correct variables one can in fact utilize this medium of film in order to achieve an expanded state of mental perception. Thus opening the doors of the mind to allow for the practical interaction with outside forces required in any occult ritual.

Though the use of occult film in the practice of ritualized magick can be approached by both the layman and the initiate this treatise has been designed for use by those with a more than passing knowledge of the variables involved in an occult ritual performance. The explanations of the rituals themselves are intended to be brief and only to cover the potential of use, not to outline any specific ritual or practice. Instead this text offers an introduction to those who seek to utilize the occult film as a practical tool for the expansion of the conscious mind and the refocusing of the sense of self to a higher plane of perceptual reality.

It is my hope that students of occult philosophies will begin to find interest in the field of occult filmmaking, both as practitioners of occult rituals and as filmmakers developing works for the exploration of the human conscious.

Content & Context:

Though much of the outward understanding of many occult sciences speaks of a narrowing of the sensory input in order to channel specific energies for practical application, in fact, it is the combined field of sensory input created within the theater of the ritual (*see my *Architecture of Being*) that refocuses the mind in order for this expansion of perceptual awareness.

Our senses are the input devices that shape our perception of the world in which we exist. Much in the way that many drugs have the effect of retooling the input data at the neuron level of the brain we can control the actual source and form of the input data around us.

Technology has given us the ability to control our perceptual input via a wide range of devices. The mp3 player (ipod) is just another step in the chain of devices that have given mankind the ability to have access to music and other audio in a portable fashion. By blocking out our natural environment and replacing the sonic input field with a controlled audio source we are in affect changing the way our mind perceives the world around us as we travel through our day.

+++

Of the range of senses man possess the human eye is our most powerful and absolute input source. Culture itself has been shaped around this source of input. Almost every aspect of human civilization is rooted in the visual input field. We are surrounded by a stream of designed and controlled visual environments, from restaurants, shopping centers and institutions to the devices we own, the television we watch, film, cinema, everything we do in our lives has been designed for a specific visual aesthetic.

Yet the actual range of input for the eye is limited to a very narrow band of light. We see only a small percentage of the actual light around us and the band of color we have awareness of is tiny in relation to the actual spectrum of light that exists. Bees and other insects for instance see a range of color several times larger than humans.

Studies in the 1950s and 60s show that man has several levels of visual input, based on the clusters of cells in the human eye. Each area of cell structure occupies a different input field in order to process as much of the world around us as possible. Our periphery represents a separate set of inputs from our foreground vision.

Data received via the eye is broken into several paths, each going from the retina to different places within the brain. Data is filtered, dissected and stored by the brain in a continuous stream. The brain is also capable of “lying” to our conscious mind, filtering out data as it comes in, altering

the data flow to make navigation and physical balance more stable for our bodies.

In conjunction with the visual input our mind overlaps the audio input from our ears to help create a higher resolution model of our environment. Here too the mind is capable of filtering data (eliminating unwanted reverb, etc) in order to create a more stable representation of our environment. As the audio and visual data are received the mind combines these two data streams in order for the body to react to its environment in the fastest and most reliable way (to avoid danger, hunt food, etc).

+++

In the context of the occult film the field of input data is something that is controlled by the filmmaker in order to further push the conscious mind out of its shell and toward a state of expanded self awareness. Utilizing abstract imagery to alienate the mind from its sense of self allows the filmmaker room to explore the vast sets of shifting color and light forms capable of achieving this push away from our sense of self.

Color represents to the mind a visual cue of emotion. Rhythm and form allow the filmmaker to convey complex sets of meaning through various shapes and shifting patterns within the color field. The viewer achieves a state similar to hypnosis by staring intently into the field of visual input. Blocking out the setting in which the viewer resides and

making the imagery of the film fill the full visual field of the viewer creates an abstract landscape of movement in which the viewer is immersed.

This immersion within the visual field is the ideal state in which to approach the expansion of the mind. Having shed the input of the mundane world the viewer explores the abstract color-field. Moving within this field the viewer becomes free of the physical form and can explore the patterns and forms of abstraction that unfold within the film. Free from the convention of 3 dimensional space the developing film draws out the mind's need to realize depth within the visual cortex. The mind in affect creates the illusion of 3 dimensional space out of the shifting field of color and form.

Conscious Expansion:

The state associated with the expansion of the conscious mind is something that is common to all forms of occult and magical practices. Freeing one's self from the body and pushing the state of mental perception outward away from the physical form is something that one finds as a common link between all forms of magic, both ancient and modern. By being able to perceive the larger pattern of life and movement in the universe to which we are connected and shape one can exercise the potential force of the will to change the evolution of movements to conform to one's will.

By becoming aware of this larger shape that life inhabits the mind loses its ability to focus on the concept of the ego, one's sense of self becomes unfocused and often gives in to the larger push of energy that one has become aware of perceptually. (Keep in mind that other wills are continually pushing and pulling at the fabric that is this larger sense of life force in the universe.) The overall form that this expanded sense of self-takes is what is regarded by most orders as the "Holy Guardian Angel" or "Manifestation of God". In fact this being is your own expanded sense of self, an awareness that is much further beyond the state of normal perception, giving one an awareness of a much bigger picture of the form of life.

Many cultures have relied on the use of organic modifiers to control the structure of the perceptual input data of the mind. For 30,000 years man has found that by ingesting or smoking a variety of plants that we can alter our perceptions, retooling our ideas of self and broadening the concept of self into a larger shape. In the 20th century man found the key to synthesizing these active chemical modifiers in order to channel the energy of the will into reshaping who and what we are. Our long-term use of chemical modifications to the psychological soup of the mind is altering the path we are taking on the evolutionary journey of life.

The control of the visual input field in the use of occult ritual is nothing new. In the Dionysian rites of the ancient Greeks the cavernous halls of the temple were transformed into an orgiastic ritual of theater in order to push the minds senses to the limit and allowing the freedom from the physical form so often sought. Long underground caverns were used

as complex stages to enact a theatrical performance for the initiates. The use of the ergot fungus (the organic source for LSD) on bread further amplified the performances for the initiates, creating an overloaded sensory experience.

Subliminal Layering:

The use of subliminal images in film dates back to the early days of cinema. Over a period of 3 decades Hollywood developed the use of subliminals to boost sales of popcorn and candy at the box office. By the 1960s subliminal imagery in film had gone from a crude flash of popcorn to sophisticated content hidden within the film scenery. At this point the US government declared the use of subliminals for commercial gain illegal.

Much study has led to various opinions on the effectiveness of subliminals in any media. Controversial trials over “back masking” (playing sounds in reverse within the musical mix) in heavy metal music in the 1980s led to a revived interest in the potential of subliminals as a control device. (Though subliminals have remained illegal for use in commercial media they have a very close (and legal) counterpart in “product placement.”)

Subliminal imagery acts on the subconscious rather than the conscious mind. Creating an awareness of the input data without the conscious minds recognition of that data. By flashing some icon or word before the viewer at a rate too fast for the viewer to consciously recognize,

the subliminal has the effect of passively influencing the viewer's perceptions.

Within the context of the occult film the use of subliminals allows the viewer access to the incantation or words that are required to focus the mind on a specific task (say the conjuration of an entity). The viewer need not recite these words or even be aware of them, they merely allow their mind access to the stream of data being presented by the film and absorb the incoming data in a meditative state of awareness.

Through repetition of use and practice the viewer is able to achieve the expanded sense of transcendental self-awareness. The mind grows accustomed to the triggers of the input data, both in the subliminal and the liminal content of the film. The sound sets these two visual variables together to create a cooperative unit.

The form of the incantation often takes a repetitive cycle (especially in conjuration) in order to drive the mind out of its shell and focus the energy of the will on a specific entity or task. In the works of the Kabbalah these words are used in a more meditative way, like a mantra around which one contemplates some specific ideal. The form the subliminals take (quantity of repetition, location in the visual field, color, font, etc) and the content of their source (incantations, sigils, treatise, etc) decides the shape of the experience of the film.

Set & Setting (the surround):

Experiencing any film can take a variety of settings. From casually watching a DVD on the television to seeing a film on the “big screen.” The set and setting of film viewing can change based on numerous variables including who is with the viewer, how loud the sound is and how big the image is. Outlined below are some basic guides in utilizing occult films in the research of the expanded mind.

As with any film experience “bigger and louder” is generally better, There is a reason people still go to the movie theater. By seeing a film on a screen large enough to fill the periphery of sight the viewer feels more fully immersed in the unfolding imagery. Being able to experience any occult film on a large projection screen with a full sound system is something that is ideal in its input control. On the other hand seeing an occult film in a public place is often a more difficult situation, especially for the actual practice of a given ritual. Viewing the film in the private of one’s home or studio gives the viewer the chance to interact with the film. (Slowing down the playback and analyzing the frames, speeding up the play, controlling the volume.) One can also feel more relaxed in private and capable of intoning aloud or performing ritualized movements.

On preparing the setting of the viewing experience one should approach the experience as if they are performing a ritual itself. Cleanse the mind and body beforehand, perform relaxation exercises, select the appropriate time and day for the function at hand.

As we mention above presenting the film in a context that allows for the visual field of the film to fill the entire range of peripheral vision is important. Unfortunately if the viewer is watching the film on an average television set the experience will be less than optimal. Even large screen sets fail to provide the resolution of image that is appropriate to the experience. Not to mention that both plasma/liquid crystal display and traditional CRT television can cause eye fatigue when viewing the image too closely. Projection is a much more optimal viewing experience for the presentation of an occult film. The reflective light off the screen is much less fatiguing to the human eye and the larger distance between the image and the viewer (due to the larger screen the viewer can sit further back and still have the film fill their peripheral field) creates an easier sense of 3 dimensional space within the evolving abstract form of the work.

The sound system is often as much a part of the experience of a film as the visual imagery. Proper sound (full range reproduction, relative fidelity and an appropriate setup for surround sound) can create a powerful release from the sense of perception, giving the viewer a greater sense of expanded awareness by creating a higher resolution experience in the viewing of the film.

In preparing the room for the performance/ritual/screening one should take all these variables into affect. It is not impossible for a less than perfect setting to still provide an extraordinary perceptual experience but generally the better prepared the set and setting of the ritual the more accurate the experience will be in any practical sense.

+++

Depending on the goal desired in terms of the practical application of the experience and the film chosen for its content the use of chemical modifiers to amplify the experience is an option.

In utilizing chemical modifiers to enhance the overall theater of incoming sensory input the viewer must take into account the active and passive requirements of the will in association with the task at hand.

For instance, often during a drug experience the mind becomes unable to focus on normal perceptual reality. If the conjuration being attempted requires a great force of will in order to maintain the confinement of an entity then allowing the input data to be altered in a way that unfocuses the will would be dangerous.

That said much of the experience of occult performance is about the exploration of the mental landscape in relation to the sensory input that is reality. Being unfocused is part of the shape of the experience.

Confronted with the vast array of chemical modifiers available one is most greatly assisted by a broad family of hallucinogenic such as LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, DMT (often in conjunction with an MAOI), and the softer experiences associated with cannabis (THC). (Beyond these there are a myriad of barely known experiences for conscious expansion including salvia, datura, ahayuasca, etc.)

Once some relational boundaries have been set for the drug to film interactions (what parts of the films content are effected by the chemical modifier tweaking the input of the senses on a neural level, etc) a path can be developed for expanding ones awareness beyond the perceptual limitations of both the physical form and the social ego.

As with any occult ritual experience there are risks involved. Playing with the mind's ability to focus specifically on the "now" is a risky undertaking and all attempts to extinguish potential problems during the ritual should be taken. Fear plays an important role in any experience and in combination with drug use can push us into a dark and antisocial place outside of the normal human mental landscape.

+++

Above and beyond all of the other variables that create a specific occult film experience the mental state of the viewer going into the presentation of the work will determine the total effectiveness of the experience. Not to exclude the use of negative energy in achieving ones goals during a ritual the mind should be at the least stable, free from confusion and not overwhelmed by particular emotional divergences. The capability for one not to fall into paranoid delusions or otherwise be distracted from the ritual at hand is of utmost importance in order to seek the path of light that leads out of the human form.

Technique & Application:

In order that the viewer can achieve the practical use of the occult film in ritual one must begin a series of exercises aimed at the unfocusing of the self and the projected focus of the goal of the ritual (conjunction, contemplation, etc).

Seated an appropriate distance from the screen the viewer must relax, close the eyes, and soften the mental landscape much in the way one beings a period of meditation. Allowing the mind to release the hold it has on any specific thought and allow all thoughts to drift away from conscious perception.

Once this state of relaxation has been reached, (prior to the beginning of the film) the viewer should then open their eyes and accustom their sight to the darkened room. It is of great importance that any distracting influence be eliminated prior to the preparations going into the ritual/screening.

As the mind clears and the film begins the viewer must (through practice) hold a particular set of focal depths in their range. Being aware of the full field of visual data and exploring simultaneously the evolving details of the rhythm, form and color of the film itself. Once this ability to master a two-fold path of vision is achieved the viewer can then being the journey away from the self.

The mind has a natural tendency to force the perception of 3 dimensional space on any evolving set of color and form. This mental trickery on the mind's part can be used against

its tendency to avoid the transcendental.

Utilizing the shortcomings of our mental paradigm to transcend the mundane facilities of perceptual awareness allows for the exploration of a broader aspect of time and space. Being free of the confinement of the body's natural tendencies to filter out the unknown gives the viewer the opportunity to come into contact with other entities (either through forced manifestation or by random exploration) and to become perceptually aware of a "larger" definition of the self as it manifests in the universe. (* See my *Architecture of Being*.)

+++

The fundamental structure of the film is one of predefined controlled content. Every moment of color and form is something that was meant to be captured and represented. Even in the documentary form the filmmaker is the control agent for the evolving content. (Often in conjunction with others involved in the film making process).

Any film can control the emotional range of the viewer by presenting a narrative that the viewer relates to. Some narrative films are capable of creating glimpses of the transcendental in the viewer as certain realities become clear to the conscious. But these are merely moments of "I understand!" rather than landscapes offering a different perceptual reality to the viewer.

What the abstract possess as its strength in occult filmmaking is the breakdown of linear space and the visual cortex's ability to force the perception of 3 dimensional space on the incoming data stream (of visual and sonic input).

In the context of each culture there are certain preset ideas within any given community that place traditional roles on the nature of a given color and the mood, tone and emotional content that comes with that color. Even within the individual psyche there can be developmental mental associations with specific colors. These factors place an emotional charge on the use of color in a film.

Paired with the complex control of rhythmic and arrhythmic editing (in both visual editing and sound) the filmmaker can create visual experience that push the mind out of the sense of self into something other.

In terms of a direct translation of a ritual from the book to the abstraction of an occult film the work is based on the references to color, form and natural sympathies associated with these variables. In any occult tradition there exists a set of referable colors, forms, emotions and sound associations that together create the structure of an ecstatic experience. Vodoun, Masonry, Kabbalism, Sufism, Transcendentalism, any background possesses a complex set of these sociographic architectures. The variables themselves create a complex form within the collective conscious of mankind.

By creating structural content development in relation to the variables of a given sociographic architecture within an

occult film the filmmaker is able to project ideas into multiple layers of human sentient awareness simultaneously.

In the context of exploration for the viewer this means that the film can create a complex set of events that force the minds perceptual awareness into a broader definition of self. The achieved transcendental state depends on the content and context of the occult film presented.

Closure:

As the occult film ritual comes to an end the viewer finds their field of sensory input contracting back to that of everyday reality. This feeling of contraction can cause a claustrophobic reaction in some viewers. But after a few moments the perceptions we have grown accustomed to since birth settle back into place and leave us with a feeling of calm and wonder (much like the post meditative state). Once we have regained our sense of mental balance we can begin a short period of contemplation and rest in order to refocus our minds eye on the world at large.

After the experience of viewing an occult film some downtime is inevitable. Like any extrasensory experience the active (rather than passive) viewing of an occult film can be an overwhelming and sometimes exhausting endeavor. Much like the downtime associated with the use of many chemical modifiers this time should be used for rest, relaxation and contemplation of the experience itself.

During this period of meditative contemplation one should look to the variables of the experience as a guide for future development. (Particularly the ease of transition between the passive and active states of viewing.)

Often, with practice, this transition can become an intuitive and almost effortless action.

Each experience of an occult film will leave the viewer with a unique impression of the unfolding forms within the visual field. With multiple viewings a specific film can give a wide range of impressions based on the psychological preparedness of the viewer during the presentation. The versatile nature of some occult films will allow for their use in multiple practical occult applications.

Though the path away from the self is often clouded with uncertainty and distraction the occult film offers a magnificent tool to guide the viewer through the recesses of the mind and out into the abstraction of reality that our perceptions normally filter out.

In conclusion the work of occult filmmaking is an untapped resource for the practice of magickal and occult rituals in the 21st century. By using occult cinema as a tool for the transcendence of being the practical occultist can achieve as yet unheard of results in their exploration of the mysteries of the beyond.





The Magickal Lantern:

Transcendental Cinema as the Fifth Tool of Occult Ritual

Illumination is the cornerstone metaphor for the advanced state of human consciousness. In any mystical tradition the state of expanded awareness of the human mind is compared to enlightenment. Even the Luciferian tradition of Christian theology contemporizes the angel Samael as the bringer of light or “lucifer.”

This comparison between knowledge and light, this parallel that is drawn in all cultural models stands as a testament to the formation of life and its dependence on the sun’s light waves as a provider of the necessary energy to support all living existence. Within the framework of occult tradition one finds numerous references to light as knowledge, and it is necessary to consider that light itself plays an important role in the development of the human mind beyond the physical form. The primary text of Kabalistic tradition is the Zohar, or Book of Light. Many of the tenants of Judean mystical understanding originate within this text and it is not the first in the lineage of the tradition of light.

The use of light in ritual has until now been mainly concerned with providing an atmospheric condition for the environment of the ritual. Via various means this theatric tool is often employed to alter the perceived nature of a given environment or experience. The play of shadows, isolation and delivery of light in a cathedral, grove, or ancient temple sets the mood and alters the normal state of the mind.

In considering the delivery of light as medium for illumination one must approach it as scientifically as possible. Isolating causes and effects based on content, environment, staging, sound conditions and overall form. By creating a specific shape to the overall delivery of light to the participant one can achieve the maximum result in reordering the participants perceptual experiences.

The ancient model for light delivery within the framework of initiatory ritual began in the Grecian mysteries of the ancient world. In the west theatrical tools for ritual performance developed over a period from the ancient Mediterranean through the middle-ages on to contemporary religious models like the catholic mass. Within this framework lighting is a generalized effect, its delivery more closely associated with the staging and sound effects of the environment. But light (or its lack thereof) is in many ways the primary source of the temperament and mood of a given ritual. Even today the practitioner of any spiritual self-exploration uses lighting to set the mood, be it candles, lamps, or more sophisticated lighting effects.

To the mind of the ancient and pre renaissance initiate

the theatrical model of ritual performance presented a very distinct and realistic portrayal of specifically chosen story forms from within their religious pantheon. Often in conjunction with some mind-altering substance (alcohol, herbs, etc) the initiate was presented with what appeared to be visions of the mythological representations of their then contemporary deities. In fact a theatrical staging of such events was occurring, providing a backdrop for the initiates passage through the levels of the experience. Although this early theatric model of ritual form has evolved in the past several thousand years, often in conjunction with architectural advances in the presentation of the religious environment, its basic structure is rooted in a theatrical stage play form.

The mind of the modern individual experiencing the 21st century is much more complex and able to handle a much wider and higher resolution area of information than that of its forbearers. The advent of visual effects in film and constant exposure to incoming data from various media has pushed the mind of the average person beyond its ability to be enveloped in the illusion and effect of the staged ritual. Suspension of disbelief is a much harder thing to come by in an advancing information based society.

Cinema as a model of human expression both artistically and scientifically has presented a form with the maximum of integration with the contemporary human mind. It's form a play of light, illusion of motion, reproductions of sound, gives the filmmaker an expansive palette with which to approach the conscious and subconscious mind of the viewer.

The mind is not only receptive to the illusion that is cinema, but the modern human mind actually works with the principals of cinema (frame rate, cut editing, point of view) to an astounding degree. The human mind often filters out data it deems unnecessary (excessive reverb in a sound environment will be reduced by the mind regardless of the input sound at the ear level; a quick movement of the head will result in the mind visually 'holding' a frame of the last image the eye saw before movement so as not to cause disorientation during the quick movement.) Between the mind's self-editing process and the flicker rate of a cinematic experience we find a tool in the search for a comparative experience for the contemporary initiate.

From its inception cinema has dealt with the illusion of motion and the representation of the fantastical within the ordinary. The first men to present cinema to the public were spiritualists and stage mediums whose utilization of technological breakthroughs in order to heighten there performances created the original term 'magic lantern.'

But merely representing what seem to be magical, miraculous or illuminating events will not push the contemporary initiate into a state of advanced spiritual awareness. Due to the level of sophistication we have developed in regards to filtering media in our environment we now regard such illusions as *HAVING* to be created by some technology, for what other means could there be?

So in order to present the initiate with a visual sensory input model that is comparable both to the level and degree of the contemporary mind's abilities we must challenge its actual perceptions of the real. Not by presenting a fictionalized

version of the real (as the initiate will simply regard this as illusion and trickery) but by representing the visual field with an evolving abstract pattern of light. One which, due to its lack of representational form, allows the mind to 'project' its own concepts onto the evolving abstractions.

Brion Gysin, contemporary of William Burroughs, created a device that worked within the principles of light as actively used in ritual meditation. The Dream Machine was a very simple device using a record player, sheet of paper with holes and light bulb in order to create projected patterns of evolving light in a room. (The flicker rate of the light dependent on the speed of the turntable and the brightness of the lamp.) Though simple in design the Dream Machine represents the second chain of evolution in the development of the Transcendental Cinema.

Modern video technology represents a much more sophisticated variable for use in the creation of complex abstract patterns than a simple light machine. In a multiple projector environment the illusion of depth can be achieved, and with a very fine degree of control over color, form, brightness and flicker rate. Once we have approached the mind with a visual input stream beyond the ordinary we can tune this stream to the needs of a given ritual. Color, flicker rate, form, speed all can be used in order to maximize the mind's wave-forms and thought patterns toward a specified ritual goal. When used in conjunction with subliminal content, isotonic audio patterns, and surround sound environments the encompassing transcendental cinematic experience becomes the modern equal to the ancient initiatory mysteries.

Transcendental cinema is the use of film or video to induce a state of the conscious mind beyond that of the ordinary. To create a cinematic experience utilizing complex content manipulated in order to achieve specific states of mental awareness. Using the sensory inputs access to the subconscious mind in order to push the participant away from the sense of self, and toward a sense of the beyond.

+++

Within the realm of mystical traditions (from a contemporary perspective) technology is often shunned. A yearning tends to exist in the average practitioner for a time 'before technology' and a returning to what is perceived as a more pure and straight forward period in humanities' spiritual past.

This perception of the past is illusory. The practitioners of the spiritual methodologies of the past relied on the most complex technologies available to them. From astounding knowledge of psychochemical structures to technological advancements in architecture, language, mathematics, and altered states of the human mind. The priests, shamans, initiates and participants of any spiritual belief system have relied for countless ages on whatever technology had to offer for the presentation and exploration of the spiritual self, whether group or individual.

Aleister Crowley's Rites of Eleusis represented a breakthrough in theatrical forms of improvisation and

an advancement of the form of the Greek Mystery into 20th century avant-garde theater. Paralleled in Artaud, Gombrowicz, Ionesco, and decades ahead of its time it is now a theatrical form that is a century old.

If the modern magickian or spiritual initiate seeks the farthest path away from the self, and is indeed looking to achieve illumination, the use of all the available knowledge and tools of the contemporary world need to be utilized. Only when we are prepared to travel the furthest away from “here” will we be able to begin our journey.



Abandonment of the traditional model of ritual theater is not necessary in order to utilize transcendental cinema within a given working. The two forms, theatric and cinematic can be brought together to create a set and setting that is ideal for the practice of ritual, in either group or individual workings.

The placement of projected light in an environment should be based on the needs of the participants in the ritual in terms of exposure to that light. Facing into the reflection of projected light from a wall, screen, or other surface will most often allow for the sense of envelopment in a film's visual field. When the cinematic light is being ‘performed’ as part of the ritual it is often best to create a setup that allows for the ‘confinement’ of the projected light. Allowing the light to be the receptacle for both the projected energies of

the participants and the evoked energies of the ritual. Thus the use of transcendental cinema as the Magickal Lantern within the context of the traditional ritual can bring about an astounding spiritual experience. Amplifying the rituals power and creating an all encompassing setting for the ritual to take place within.

Yet beyond its role within the context of the traditional ritual the use of transcendental cinema as a tool for the expansion and exploration of the human mind in relation to the beyond is in itself independent. Just as cinema no longer has need for the trappings of theater the Magickal Lantern of Transcendental Cinema will evolve into its own singular form of experiential ritual archetype. Once it has shed its earlier form it will be more capable of delivering the mind of mankind to the threshold of the beyond and to open the doors of perception to the light of truth.

Obviam lux Lucis
Raymond Salvatore Harmon

*He who is illuminated with the Brightest Light
will cast the Darkest Shadow*



*He who is illuminated with the Darkest Shadow
will shine with the Brightest Light*