**DOG STAR MAN (1962-1964)**

Avant-garde filmmaker Stan Brakhage’s five-part film cycle epitomizes his [film theories](https://archive.org/details/metaphorsonvisio00brak) and embodies his belief that the personal is universal. Subjective perceptions reveal objective truths and one man’s experiences describe civilization’s great concerns. Brakhage drew on literary epics, modernist works, and world myths to create an epic hero, the Dog Star Man, who conquers nature to fulfil his patriarchal role. The plot involves his search for the World Tree, which he procures for his family’s fire. Each film uses superimposed image layers, filters, distorting lenses, paint or scratches, and a moving subjective camera to depict the hero’s experiences, memories, and dreams.

*Prelude* (1962) depicts the dream of a day in the Dog Star Man’s life, with the subsequent four parts constituting that day. *Part 1* (1962) presents his difficult progress up the mountain to the World Tree. Intercut images portray memories recalled as he struggles and fails. In *Part 2* (1963), the awakening senses of the Dog Star Man’s child help resurrect him, but his heart does not beat until the sexual daydream of *Part 3* (1964). *Part 4’s* (1964) dreamlike qualities and repeated motif images recall the *Prelude* and bring the series full circle as he completes his mission.

Further reading:

Brakhage, S. (1963) *Metaphors on Vision*, New York: Film Culture, Inc.

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