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SHADOWS OF STAINED GLASS

AN ANALYTICAL LOOK AT HORROR FILMS

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Proposal

One of my favourite “things of beauty” in this world is stained glass windows. By themselves, they often contain intricate works of art with vivid colour palettes that overlay silhouettes of the outside world. They’re like a dreamy, imaginative capture of the beauty of nature and the precise capabilities of humans to create intricate art. But one of the things that make stained glass an extremely unique art medium, is their shadows. The shadows stained glass windows cast serve a utilitarian architectural purpose (that of lighting insides of churches and other buildings) while being a deep expression of colour and emotion, a work of art, by themselves. It is almost as if stained glass has the capability to tell a multifaceted story by itself.

Films, as an art form, have the unique ability to fully engage our auditory and visual senses, just like the beautiful imagery of stained glass. Unfortunately, a side effect of this is that our untrained brains are so engrossed in the momentary frames that they tend to miss the larger patterns of filmmaking. They neglect the “shadows” films cast. Most of us give very little thought to the underlying philosophy of cuts, narrative structures and sound design.

In my long form essay, I want to take a look at the “shadows” of these stained glass windows (i.e. films) to understand the patterns exhibited by the church (i.e the religion of filmmaking). I will take an objective, data-backed approach to analysing films, writing code to extract data from the raw film files. My project will be broadly categorised into three parts: visual, auditory and textual. In the visual part, I will look at the frames that compose films, analysing colour palettes and tones and looking at some of the psychological underpinnings of colour theory in film (and horror). The second part will look at sound as a complementary art form, focusing on different aspects of background music and sound effects as an emotion manipulation tool. The third part will look at screenplays and how differences in narrative decisions impact the manifestation of the uncanny in film.

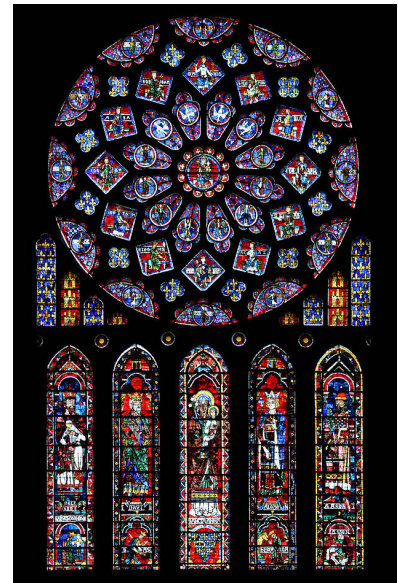


Figure 1: The north rose window of the Chartres Cathedral

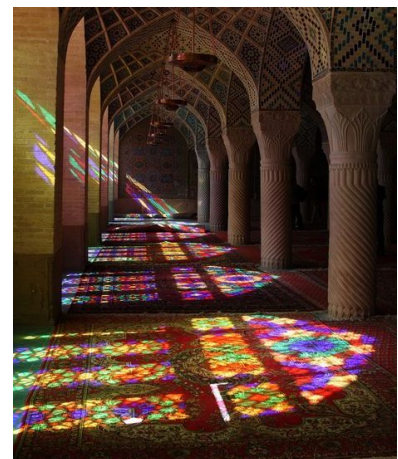


Figure 2: Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, Shiraz, Iran

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