

Animation Design Degree Project, Stage II

“The Visage”

An animation on ‘fear’

Project Report
April 2009

Juny K Wilfred
07634004

Guide: Nina Sabnani

Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay

Approval sheet

The project titled "The Visage ",— an animation on FEAR, by Juny K Wilfred, is approved in partial requirement for the Master of Design degree in Animation.

Guide:

External Examiner:

Internal Examiner:

Chairman:

Thank you

My guide, Prof Nina Sabnani, for having led my way, correcting me at wrong turns, for all lessons and importantly for having helped me look within myself while dealing with a topic such as 'fear'.

Prof. Raja Mohanty, Prof. C. P. Narayan, Prof. Mandar Rane and Prof. Sumant Rao for their feedback and constructive criticism during various stages of the project.

My friends Palash, Sameer, Nitish, Milind, Karthik, Ratika for their suggestions, ideas and all they did, importantly for having been there for me all the time.

Contents

Abstract

Chapter 1: Introduction	3
-------------------------	---

Chapter 2: Research and Ideation	5
----------------------------------	---

Initial thoughts	5
------------------	---

Research and study	6
--------------------	---

Fear of self	8
--------------	---

Chapter 3: Forming the concepts	11
---------------------------------	----

Chapter 4: Final story	15
------------------------	----

Story board	15
-------------	----

Chapter 5: Style and characters	23
---------------------------------	----

Character Design	23
------------------	----

Treatment and style	27
---------------------	----

Chapter 6: Sound and edit	31
---------------------------	----

Conclusion	33
------------	----

Reference	
-----------	--

Abstract

Of the many emotions the human mind is capable of, fear is one of significance. Coming in varying degrees and during the most unexpected times, fear makes its presence felt in all our lives. The causes of fear can also be many — from fear of loss of some material possession to a deep anxiety that could be entirely psychological. This film is about my personal fear of the individual that is me, and also speaking about the tensions in the current economic scene. Through the metaphor of a mask, it shows the protagonist's fear of the crowd, the fear of whether he would just be one among them, losing his job and his individuality in the process.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The subject

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear."

— H.P. Lovecraft

If life could be compared to a painting, emotions would be the colours that form it. Emotions are an imperative part of every life. It is more like the parameters that define any moment in life. From the smile of happiness on a little kid's face to the tears that drip down the cheeks on the departure of someone dear, emotions are many in number and kind—just like the colours. And one of them is fear.

In simple terms, fear is an emotion which we normally don't recall as being a very pleasant experience. Technically, fear is considered to be a chain reaction happening in the brain, triggered by various stimulants and ending in a number of symptoms like fast breathing, heart racing etc¹. It could also be looked at as a psychological response of the human mind to a stimulus which it considers to be 'scary'. It could vary in degree from a mild caution to an extreme paranoia.

What causes fear? There are several things that could cause fear in a person. A little girl could get scared by a spider on her shoulder. A professional could be scared of losing a job. Fear could be of objects, animals, people, natural and supernatural forces and so on. The causes of fear are unique as far as each person is concerned. What is scary for a person might not be so for another.

The project

The fear that I had in mind when I took up this topic for my project was one of a very personal nature—a lot based on the things that were happening in my life around the time. The aim of this project was mainly to think on what my fears were, how much were they affecting my life and what were the causes of these fears. During the associated reminiscence, fears which I used to have during my childhood, would come back into my memory. Later on, as I further dwelt upon this subject of fear, the circumstances surrounding people also started occurring to me as contributing to their fears. In all its an essence of all these thoughts that came together to form my story.

CHAPTER 2: Research and Ideation

Initial thoughts

My contemplation on this subject had started with the question of what all could I address as being some kind of fear. Fear by itself was a very general term. The first things that came to mind were that it was mostly a fear of 'something'. And this 'something' could be anything. Of the fears that I had experienced, I could, for a start, separate out three broad categories:

i) I know exactly what I'm afraid of. For example, say, I'm afraid of getting drowned. The thing that scares me here is water.

ii) Things that I may not know that I am afraid of. I realise it only when I actually have to confront it.

iii) There could be things that I may never realise that I'm scared of. It just might remain in some deep level of my mind. It's just a scary, tense feeling or one of anxiety that bothers me but I never understand what is it that's causing it.

Alongwith these things, there was a plethora of thoughts which kept popping up. You would not consider them the 'thought of' kind of thoughts, rather they were random thoughts that just occurred while pondering over on what could it be that I may speak about. Given below is a list of them.

i) I have some very general fears, I like to call them 'large scale fears'. Basically they are just general concerns about some global problems like deforestation, animal extinction etc. It could be difficult to look at them as a person's fears but I guess you are allowed to be concerned about anything that is close to you.

ii) I am afraid of tomorrow. What it holds for me is a complete mystery. What am I going to be? Where would I be? What is my space going to be like? Is there ging to be one? If it is the mystery and uncertainty about it that makes it intimidating, then could I genaralise it that the things that are unknown cause fear?

iii) It is fear that makes us what we are. People say we get our values from our parents, we are taught our character in our homes and schools, but it is actually some form of fear that forms the basis of our principles and keeps us bound to them. Fear of being punished forms the basis of disciplining.

iv) Our fears and tensions have become a cage around us. Its so strongly embedded in us that they have become the reality and the world to us. The roles are reversed and the real world now forms my fear and I'd rather just remain in the false state than go out into the world and face reality.

v) The world around scares me. Somehow I don't relate to the things and the people around me. Everything seems distant, foreign or alien to me and its like I'm on an entirely different planet not knowing their language or their code of conduct.

vi) Often, while in fear, every other thing starts to seem scary to me. Things that are otherwise normal now appear to be overwhelming. And in such a scene the scariest path of all is often what would take me out of this world.

vii) A fear of self — I am afraid of myself.

Research and study

The first step in my approach towards this subject was to form a broad picture of all that fell within the domain of the subject of fear—those which I felt were relevant to me and which I would like to tell someone. Once a rough picture of the same was in place, I began looking at what other people had studied and said about fear. This mainly involved reading books and watching movies.

i) "When I have fears that I may cease to be"

*When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teanning brain,
 Before high—piled books, in charact'ry,
 Hold like rich garners the full—ripen'd grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And feel that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the feary power
 Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.²*

This is a poem by John Keats. The author speaks about the beautiful things around him that he still hasn't had enough of, that he would like to write about. However he's afraid that he may not be able to pen down all that's in his mind. The fear of death that he speaks about was on a very deep level of mind, however, it also puts one in his place. As one goes through the lines, one begins to

reflect on his own life, and for me it did bring that slightly awkward feeling of dread — a kind of uneasiness — about some unknown impending force.

ii) An essay on desperado literature³

The author is Lidia Vianu. This was a chanced—upon article about a separate genre of literature but it spoke of a different kind of viewpoint the author could take—one where things no more are goody goody. It's not a rosy future but the worst that is awaiting us ahead. A similar view point can also be seen in a number of the modernist poets' works especially the works of T. S. Eliot.

*... I made no comment. What should I resent?
 On Margate sands.
 I can connect
 Nothing with nothing
 The broken fingernails of dirty hands
 My people humble people who expect
 Nothing. la la ...⁴*

iii) "The first and last freedom", J Krishnamurthy

The author, J Krishnamurthy, states that fear is not always of the unknown, rather more commonly it's due to the relation with the known—of losing what exists and those that are held close to us. How it's caused by my wish to live inside a frame or in a pattern and be left undisturbed, and how my mind itself is this frame. He also says how an escape from fear also includes escaping from 'me', forgetting myself.⁵

iv) "Fear", Just Amr⁶

This is a poem I came across on the internet. In this, the poet says that it's the fear that powers life along in this world and what makes life dear to us.

*Fear of life
Is what makes me die
Fear of fear
Is what makes my life...
Too dear!!!⁶*

vi) "I fear", an excerpt from, "My flute", Shri Chinmoy

The poem speaks about the time of being in fear, of being in doubt. In another poem called the 'Wings of light', by the same author, he remains positive and hopeful inspite of all doubt and anxiety he faces.

*I fear to be, I fear to be,
Long dead my life of faith in me⁷*

vii) Fear of the Dark, Iron Maiden

*"I have a constant fear that something's always near
I have a phobia that someone's always there"⁸*

The song is from the album 'Fear of the Dark.' This song too says about being lonely on a dark road. What are the kinds of scary thoughts that you get, how it makes the whole world around you appear creepy.

viii) The poems of Robert Frost

Robert Frost's poems are often about the beauty of nature, but in his poems one finds a sense of loss and anxiety very well stitched into the lines. Experts say it's also a form of self reflexivity as in real life, Frost did have little worries and anxieties that kept him lonely and in doubt quite many a time.

a) Mending Wall

The poem is about repairing a boundary wall. The poet and his neighbour find that the wall between their houses had fallen. Then as they go along building the wall between them, the poet reflects on whether the walls stood for the reasons that people said walls were for. There is a little anxiety regarding his relation with his neighbour and not so apparent, the poet just keeps these things mysterious and hidden from the reader.

b) Wood Pile

Amongst the lines we read about the author's anxiety on being away from home. Symbolically he also inserts his fear of death into the poem in the form of a little bird.

*A small bird flew before me. He was careful
To put a tree between us when he lighted,
And say no word to tell me who he was⁹*

c) The Fear

This poem is about a couple who returns back to their home. One of them feels that there is someone in their house and the conversation portrays this fear of hers. The poet says that the real root of terror is truly within a person.

d) Desert Places

The poem is about a state of loneliness

*"I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places."*¹⁰

ix) "You can win"¹¹, by Shiv Khera

The book was referred to after deciding on 'fear of self' as the area of interest. He talks on the importance of having a high self esteem and maintaining it. He describes the character traits of people with a very low self esteem and actually cites real life situations when they felt rejected, stumbling their way through various situations.

x) F.R.I.E.N.D.S¹²

The characters from friends are about fear of self, of thinking what would others think of me. The best example is of course Chandler Bing. It shows how funny situations can be because of the insecurity he faces while confronting women. The episode where he gets stuck in an atm during the blackout is especially funny because of his insecurity.

xi) Dil Chahta Hai¹³

The characters in this movie too are pretty much similar to the characters from F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Sameer is really nervous when dealing with girls and often ends up making a fool of himself. Characters such as these can actually be seen around us. All that is required is a little careful observation.

xii) Inhrihar Nagar¹⁴

A Malayalam movie about four friends who are out to impress a girl living in their neighbourhood. The characters in this movie are

pretty much the same as the ones we meet in Friends. Appukuttan can be seen as an equivalent of Chandler here.

Fear of self

"My whole anxiety is for myself as a performer. Am I any good? That's what I'd like to know and all I need to know."

—Robert Frost

(Letter to Kimball Flaccus, October 26, 1930)

After the literature study and some amount of contemplation, it occurred that the fear of self could be a really interesting area that could be addressed. The fear of oneself is something that everyone does face in their life. I am afraid of myself. Probably because there are things in my mind answers to which even I am unaware about. It could be these that cause this fear.

Or is it my ego? I am afraid whether I'll be accepted by others. Will I be considered someone important amongst the group of my friends? Am I considered worthy? Are the things that I say and do, received with the same importance and meaning that they are intended with, in the first place? Are there people laughing at me secretly? Being afraid of what people think about my actions and so always act after thinking about what others will think. How does this fear affect my behavior? There could be bloopers and other funny situations that arise because of this excessive self consciousness.

Or is it my conscience that's causing this fear? Is it a play of my mind? Am I afraid of losing my values and principles? Is there a darker side to my mind? Would I still hold on to all my principles and values in a critical situation? Are there other sides to my personality which are quite scary? There could be other ways of looking at "Losing temper ... bursting out ..." Are all the good behavior and all, just a put on to impress others or do they actually come from deep

in myself? This could actually be a psychological turmoil within the mind. A struggle to escape from oneself. Where I am my own enemy and my own fear. And the struggle is to overcome this fear.

CHAPTER 3: Forming the concepts

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fear of self had been identified as the area to be addressed. Two ideas were developed, based on the fear of self mentioned above.

Concept 1

The first one is based on the fear of my ego. There is this guy, about 23 years of age and working/studying. He is extremely conscious of what he does, what he wears, how he walks, how he sits, the way he speaks and so on. This over carefulness ends up in him seeming funny to the people around him. Anything he does becomes a big joke. The film would be on how he manages to get out of this situation. There would be a major crisis that he has to face and he could either solve it or fail. Thus story also gives a choice as far as the conclusion was concerned. It could also go in a way where his fear actually comes to his aid in overcoming the crisis situation.

Concept 2

The second one is based on the fear of the conscience. A little girl has come out of her house into her courtyard. It has gotten dark and the place has become creepy to her. The trees around and their shadows etc begin to play tricks on her and appear scary to her. Then we see the same girl, but a number of them in various other roles, each really scary in its own way. Each of these kids could be representing the different sides of one's character that one fears that he/she might have. They keep scaring the kid. In the distance is a door, bright light flowing from it. To the kid it appears as though there's someone standing behind there waiting to kill her. There's also a creepy sound calling out to her from within the door. Finally it gets revealed that the whole world is just imaginary and that the door was actually the door to her house—so it was the way out of the scary place.

Of the two, concept 1 appeared to have more potential of being made into a complete story. However though, it did not get much as there was serious difficulty being faced in finding situations that could take the story forward convincingly. So parallel to thinking on this concept, thought also went into forming stories that could also address issues outside the fear of self, maybe fear in general or some of the initial thoughts that I had listed down. Consequently, a third concept was developed, which just looked at fear in a light hearted manner.

Concept 3

This concept was about fear in general and how we spent our lives running away from them. This would show a number of situations where the protagonist finds himself scared. The situations would also be completely made up, like being in front of a moving train, having to face a tiger and so on. These could also be represented as separate windows on the screen and he would run from one screen to another in order to escape whatever he had been facing, but would come in front of a new fear in the new window. This running away could be by some escapist means like jump into a mirror/window he finds somewhere and so on. Likewise he runs away from every place and finally in one place, he has to face himself. This, he finds it impossible and to him, it's like having to face his worst nightmare. Then he tries to run back to other places as no more they seem as intimidating as the current one. But his self chases him everywhere and just would not let him escape.

Another option in the same concept was to show the fears to be actual ones that he'd have in his actual life. For example, meeting with an accident, , fear of terrorism and so on.

CHAPTER 4: Final Story

During the research and ideation phase, the emphasis was on developing a story keeping self fear in mind. However, the concepts that had been formed somehow seemed lacking in something. Somehow, the personal relation with fear was not coming through. The concept had also to take into account my own fear of the future, given the current economic crisis and the job crisis. The concept that had been chosen, i. e. was also looked into. Small revisions were made and the concept now also included the current market scenario and the job crisis. To this a small metaphor of a clown, who laughs at anything was added on, to say how life laughs at us. Thus the following story emerged.

Final story

"I looked at the calendar again. 23 ... 24 ... 25 ... Days had flown by so fast and were still speeding off into oblivion. One project had flopped and the due date for the next was coming closer. Only yesterday had I heard about two of his colleagues who had been fired. It would mean death, to be thrown out during these bad times and specially into a market that was doing so poor. And to add to it, a city like Mumbai where even a five figure salary would hardly suffice to make ends meet. If this project too got late, it would definitely spell termination for him. But what could I do? The solution just eluded my brain. Day-night have I been thinking but have got nowhere. If the boss asked me, I'd find it hard to convince him that I had done any work since the last team meeting. I kept thinking and thinking. The compilation status slowly progressed on the monitor. "Compiling ... 35% ... 36% ..."

x

x

x

Traffic is low today evening. That's surprising. It should have been peak hour, but why would I complain. "Shit!! Had it not been for that auto, I would have just made it past the signal before it had turned red. 90 seconds. It's OK. After all the road is pretty much clear."

I rested my head on the steering. "Tak! Tak!" I lowered the glass. "Kuch do na..." It's those nuisance street kids again. "No ... no ... get lost" On another day, they would have ran off to the next car. But this kid was still standing there, but with a weird face. "What was it? Yeah that smile. It was painted on his face. Where did that suddenly appear from? Or had I not noticed it before?" This is getting creepy. Somehow, things started to change around me. I looked out of the window again. The kid still stood there, with the same weird smile. I was just going to repeat my sentence when suddenly he put his hand in, snatched my mobile, and ran off. "Bastard!", I too got out and ran after him. He ran fast but I was determined to get him. He turned a corner and I followed but couldn't find him once I turned. He couldn't vanish into thin air. Maybe this old man would know. So I asked the old beggar who had been sitting on the pavement nearby. He just stared up at me with no answer but hey, the same weird smile. Painted bright on a ghostly white face. "Now, this is definitely getting scary. To hell with the kid. After all its just a mobile. Not very new either. And losing a mobile in Mumbai isn't a very big thing." So I turned back and started walking back. I turned back once and so the old man still staring at me with the same weird smile. I quickened my steps. I walked back to where my car had been and there...it was being towed away. "When one thing goes wrong, the whole day turns out to be bad" I went to the police man nearby. Maybe I could convince him. After all it wasn't my fault entirely. Who wouldn't run after a thief? I tapped on the police man's shoulder and he turned to give me one of those smiles again. "This can't be happening..." I turned back and ran. The bus was just starting from the signal and I jumped right in. It wasn't crowded at all. Just 10-15 passengers. I sat on the last seat near the window. I tried not to look at other passengers and just stared out of the window. "Ticket ticket ... the conductor tapped me on my shoulder." I took out a ten rupee note. "One ticket to Andheri". Once again, the weird smile flashed in my face. I could not help not

looking at others. The bus was full of these clowns. I jumped out and ran. Where to, I did not know. The clowns were walking the entire city. It was as though this wasn't my place at all. A scary land where these clowns roamed like zombies. Everywhere. Walls, shops, posters ... the weird faces smiled back at me. I could see my office building and ran in. Atleast that place is not affected by this stupid disease. There on my table, lay an envelope with my name on it. I opened to find a termination letter. "Now, THIS can't be happening." I have been hallucinating a lot and this too must be a part of it. There was this fear that this was coming my way but when it did, it seemed unreal. I went to my boss' cabin. And there... at his desk sat, smiling at me ...

x

x

x

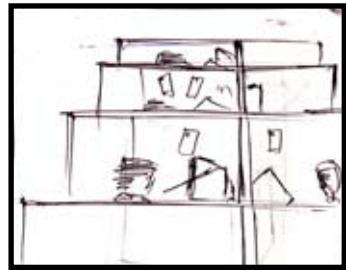
"PING", the computers ring woke me up. "Compiling : 100%. Errors: NONE. Warnings: NONE", it said. I gave a satisfied smile. The clock showed 11:30. Been late, but yeah worth it, as the task was finally done. That should reduce a lot of tension. It was a good end to a hectic week. I packed my stuff, took my bag and walked back. Tiring day...and to add to it, that weird dream. Sweat beads glistened on my face, I wiped them off. "Hey, is that blood marks on my hand? I feel no pain though...no wounds" I wiped again, using my handkerchief. It was there. There actually was colour coming off my face. At the glass door I looked into my own face and there I was, smiling at myself, with that weird smile.

More on the story

The story does allude to the fear about the economic scenario. More than that, keeping that as background, the fear actually being addressed is that of the self. Fear of the crowd, of getting lost in the crowd are also touched upon. By being lost in the crowd, here I mean to say a situation when I fear that I am losing out on my individuality—ending up being just another face in the whole crowd. Such a fear is present in every mind — in the form of an anxiety of how would I survive in this crowded place to a dread of being just like how other people are.

Story Board

The story had mainly three parts — the first part when the hero is in his office, the second and the longest part which is the dream sequence and the final part which is the hero in the office again. Some frames of the story board also explain the action happening. The description for each frame is provided beneath it.



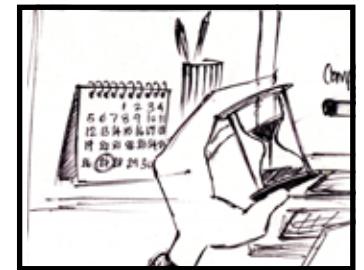
Opening shot, we see an office. The camera zooms in.



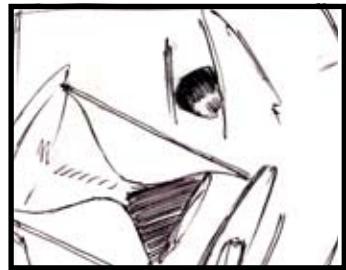
The hero in his cabin. Voice from a radio/tv/website speaks about the job crisis.



Side view. The guy is seen holding a sand timer.



View from the person's perspective shows the sand timer in his hand.



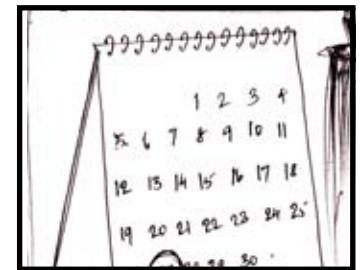
Close up of the sand timer in front of his face.



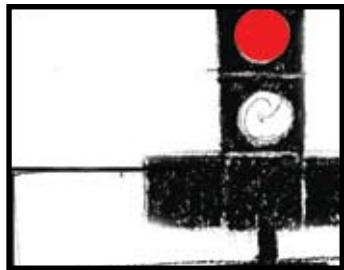
Zooms out to see the person sitting on his chair.



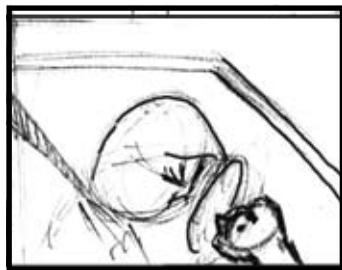
Fade out. Next seen shows him with his head resting on the table.



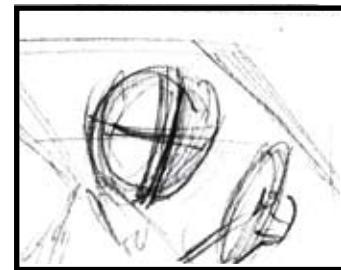
A close view of the calendar on his table. Fade out to black.



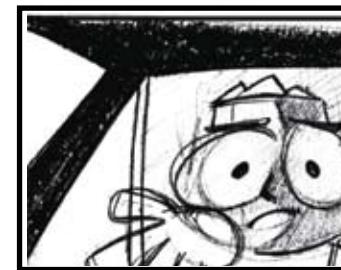
The second part of the story begins by showing a traffic signal. Dissolves in.



The hero is in his car, waiting at the signal. A hand knocks on the window.



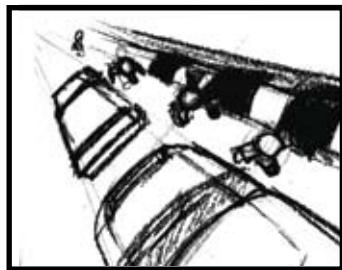
The hero looks out to see who had knocked.



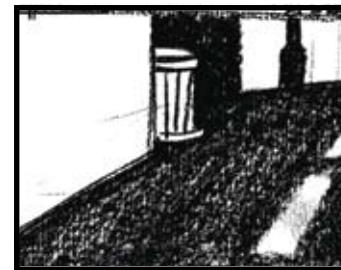
A street kid stands there asking for money. Hero refuses.



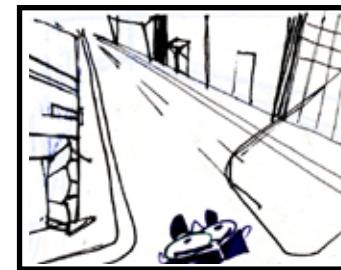
The kid comes on other window and takes his phone. He now wears a mask.



The hero gets out of the car and chases the kid.



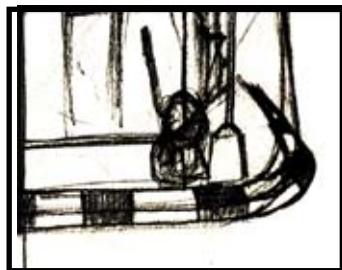
The kid turns around a corner.



Hero comes to the corner but cannot find the kid.



He looks around in the empty streets.



He looks around in the empty streets.



He looks around in the empty streets. He notices an old man sitting in a corner.



He goes to the old man in the hope of asking where the kid had gone.



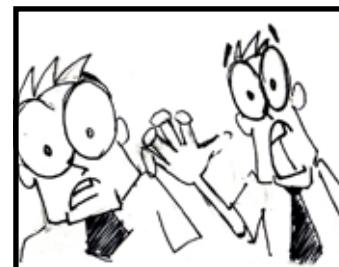
Hero walks to the old man, bends and calls him by shoulder. View from behind the old man.



The old man looks up. He has a weird smile on his face.



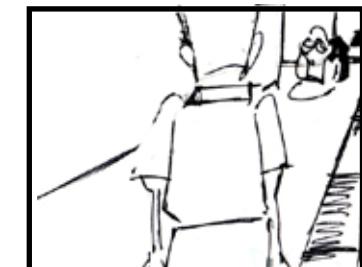
The man stares at the hero.



The hero is shocked and jumps back.



He moves back and walks away from there, feeling scared.



Hero walks away from the old man. The camera shifts to the old man's face to show him smiling and staring at him. The scene fades into white.



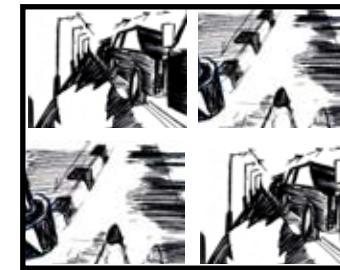
Next shot dissolves in. The hero is leaning against a car and panting.



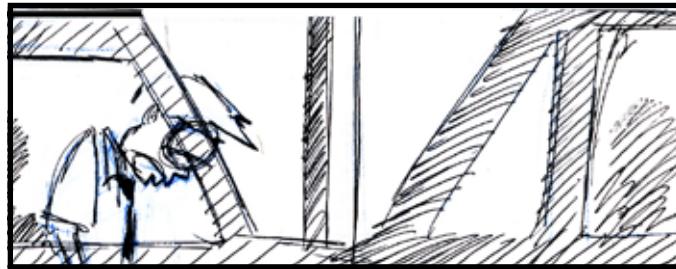
A little hand appears on the car window and the hero looks up to see what it was.



Suddenly the kid's face becomes visible and it too has a weird smile. The hero jumps back in fright. He runs away from that scene also.



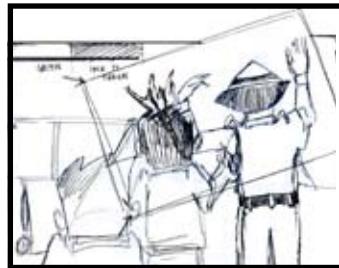
We see him walk on street. Vehicles pass by.



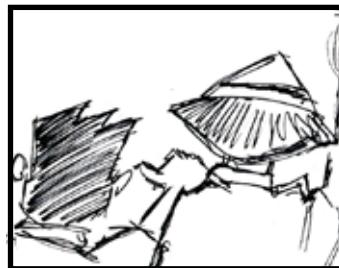
Hero is walking slowly behind a line of cars seen in silhouette. The cars are stationary



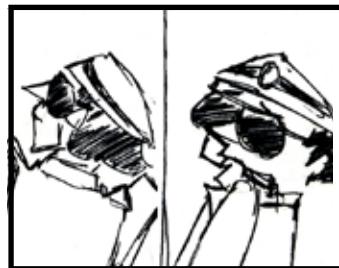
The cars begin to move. The hero stops and looks up to see that the signal has turned green. He is perplexed as he had left his car in the traffic.



He sees a policeman and walks towards him. Camera zooms from the back.



He goes upto the police man and calls him by his shoulder.

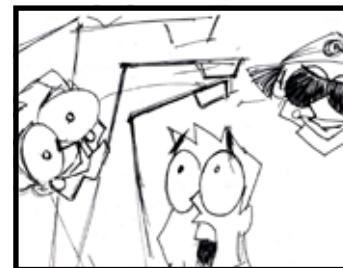


The policeman turns around and we see that he too has a weird smile. The camera zooms to his face.

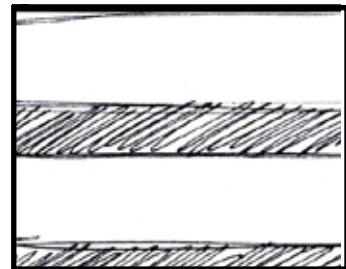
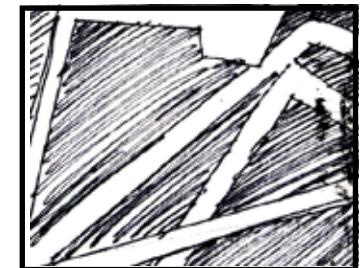




Close up of the police man's face. Fade into black.



Next shot shows the hero walking along, but images of the people with the weird smile. They keep haunting him, The background objects too float about. Rotate and zoom into the street lamp posts which fill the screen.



The black space between the posts transform into the rods in the window of bus..



The camera zooms out to show the hero in the bus, dozing.



The view shifts to front of the hero and slightly pans from left to right.



"Ticket please..." the hero wakes up.



The conductor is standing there and he too has the weird smile.



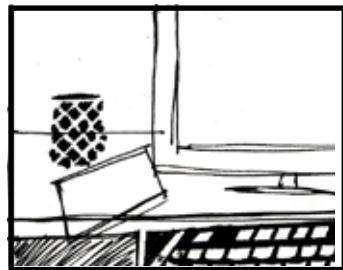
The hero jumps out of the bus.



The faces return to haunt him. The hero cries out in desperation. Fade to black.



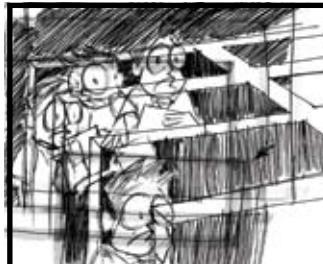
A hand comes and opens the door and the hero walks in. The door closes behind him.



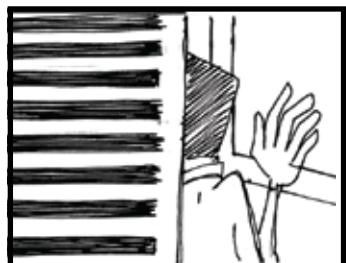
He goes to his table and sees that there's a letter addressed to him.



He picks up the letter. The camera zooms into the letter and we see that it is his termination letter. Black rectangles move in and the scene transforms to show the cabins.



The hero gets up from his cabin and walks to his boss' room.



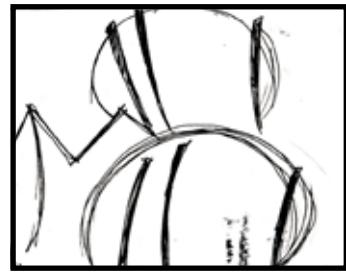
He opens the door to his boss' room and goes in.



The boss is working at his computer. When the hero walks in, the boss turns around and he too has the weird smile. The scene slowly dissolves away.



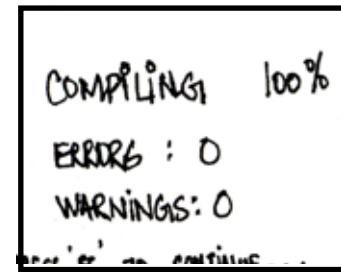
End of dream sequence.



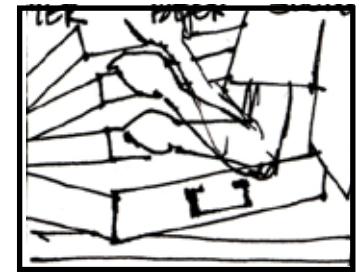
There is a beeo sound and hero wakes up. His eyes flicker open.



He sits up to look at his computer screen.



The compilation has been done without any errors.



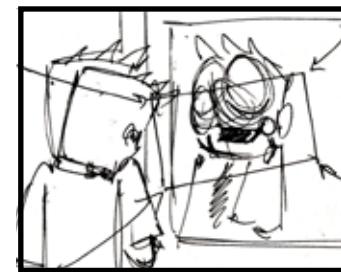
The hero is relieved. He packs to return home.



He pushes back the chair under the table.



He walks back to the door.



At the door he sees his reflection and he too has got the weird smile.

CHAPTER 5: Style and characters

The style for this movie had to be carefully chosen so as to remain consistent with the overall mood which was again about fear. The best that could be achieved was that along with conveying that the story was about fear, the audience be given an experience of fear of a similar kind.

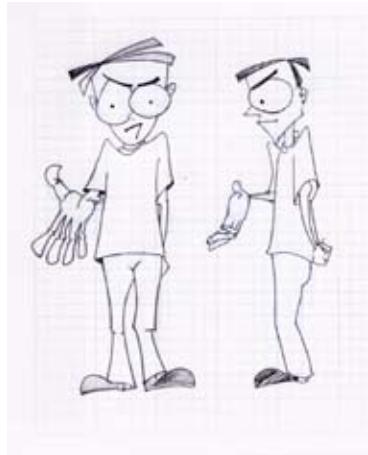
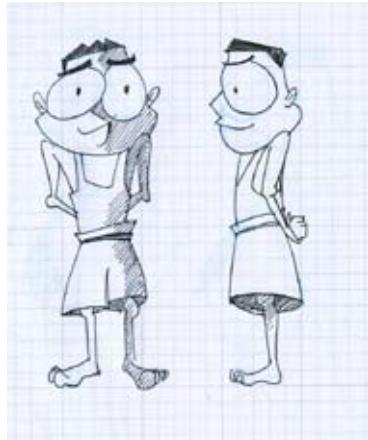
Character Design

Initial attempts were to have the theme of fear also involved in the character design. Paintings such as 'The Scream' by Munch were taken as inspirations.

Some other styles which was closer to realistic, were also tried. Later, I started trying out on characters which were more cartoonish. This seemed to be slightly off track with the mood of the film but it was decided that that aspect could be addressed by the colour scheme, background design and the sound design. Here are a few of the intitial character sketches that were tried out.



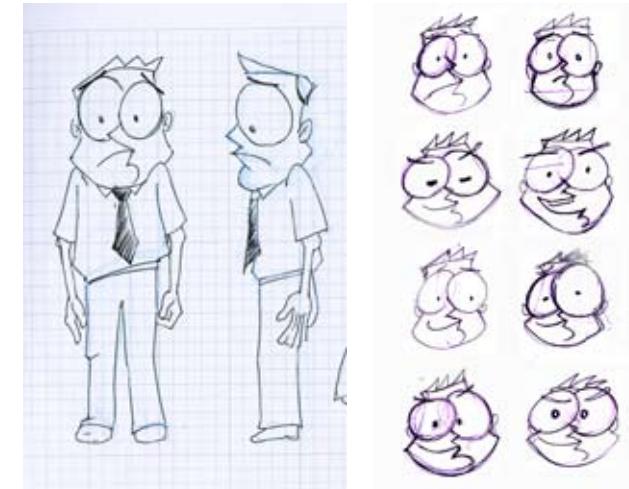
Final characters



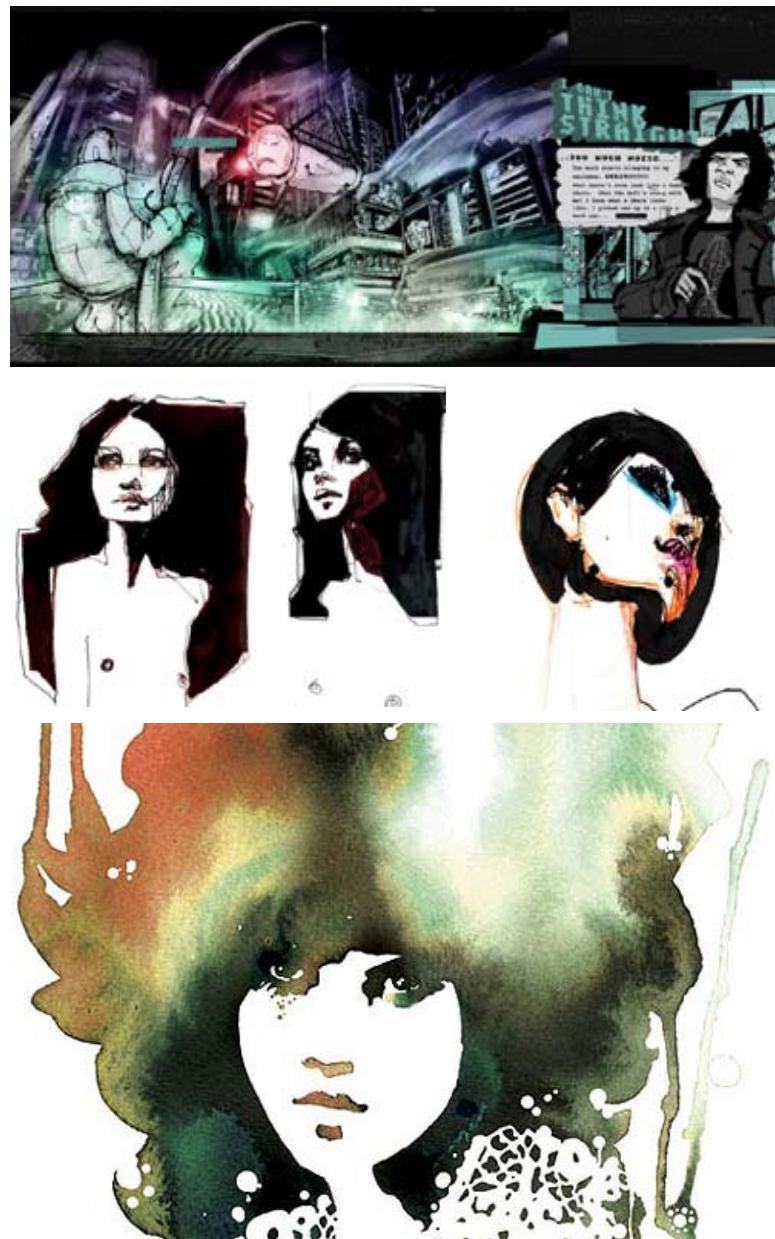
The final design of the characters are as shown below. More than a single character, it was a family of characters that came out with similar feature being the huge eye and the characteristic way of representing the lips. The greatest advantage of using this style was that by changing just a few features of the first character. A set of other characters were also made in the same style. The attitudes were not made as they had to be present in the film only for about 2—3 seconds and that too, they give the weird smile. Clockwise from top left are the characters : the little kid who approaches him amidst the traffic, his boss at the office, the old man on the road and a random person on the road.

Central character

The central character is a 23 year old guy, working in a software firm. He has a slightly melancholic look more because of tensions at his workplace and the economic crisis.





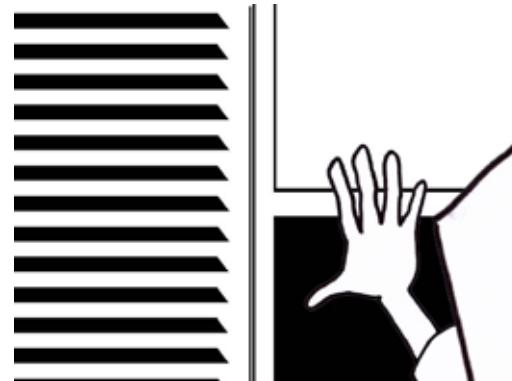
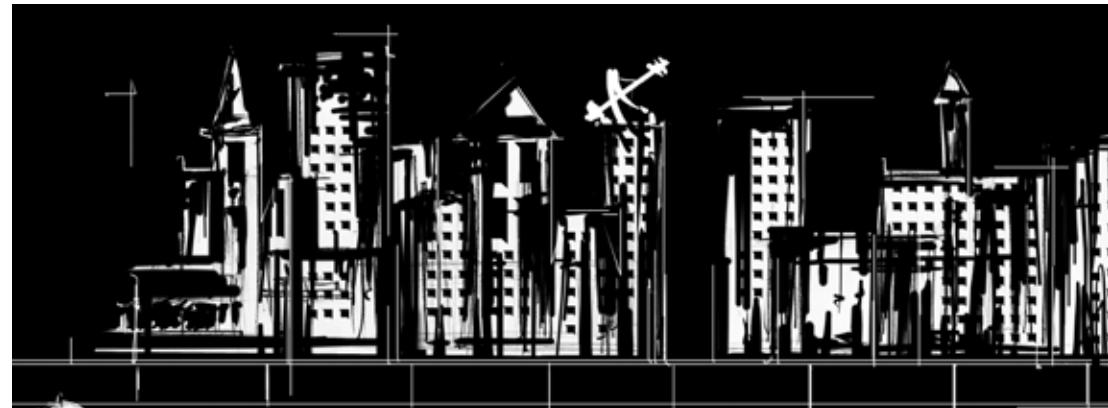


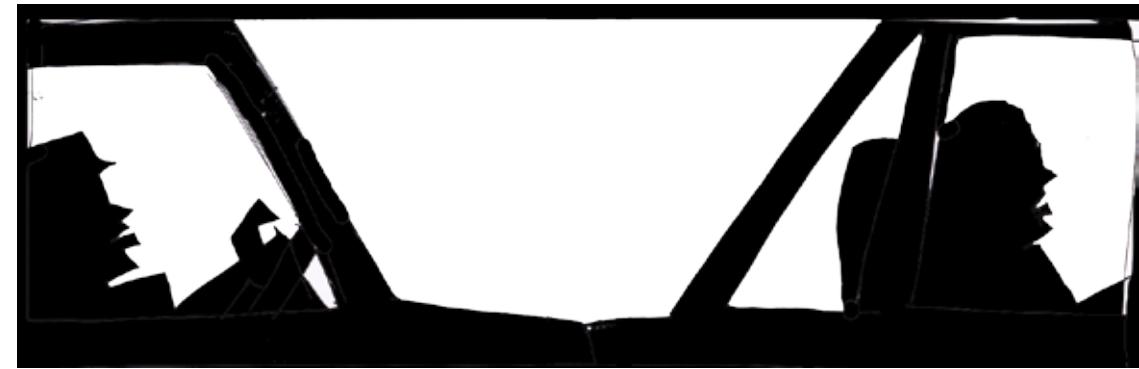
Treatment and Style

The style had to bring in the mood of the film inspite of the comic like characters. So I have opted for a style inspired from graphic novels. One that is dark. Here, most visuals are going to be in black and white, a style similar to one we see in the Sin City graphic novel by Frank Miller. The art work of the upcoming film, "Fears of the Dark" was also looked at, for inspiration. A few short films from the youtube were also looked at, for the visual style used. Tinge of one colour—green—is being planned in the background as green would signify evil. The presence of a colour other than black in the background also helps to define the borders of the characters properly. The perspectives are intentionally made distorted.

Reference images for treatment and style¹²

Style Explorations and Concept art





Sound Design

The sound design plays a very important part in maintaining the feel of the movie. The background score is mainly composed of sounds with minimum use of music. Sounds that we normally hear in our surroundings have been juxtaposed over a light eerie music like the wind howl. The playing and muting of the sounds have been tried to change the mood as required. For example, a sudden stop of all the traffic sounds and a complete silence while the scene is still on the road would immediately bring a feeling that something is not right. Thus for a movie on fear, sound design also means a very clever use of silence. The softwares used are Cool Edit Pro and Adobe Premiere.

Edit

The story that had been chosen had in itself certain challenges as far as animating was concerned. Since the situations, characters, crises and locations were all from the real world, it felt like a live action film. Though most of the cuts have been done as in a live action film, there are certain places where transformations have been used to change into a new sequence. Abstraction has also been used —an advantage of this being an animated film—to bring out the turmoil and fear in the central character's mind. Sharp cuts are used where the action is a quick reflex and fade is used to show passage of time, even a period of a few minutes. Softwares used are Adobe Premiere and Adobe After Effects.

Conclusion

Apart from being an effective learning exercise in animation film making, the project was also a look into myself and my fears. The lessons learned were plenty. From thinking out a story to making into a film, there were several things which could have been learned only through experience. Probably the most special amongst them would be the story itself. I had been thinking for a story for quite many days and nothing was shaping up. Finally it was fear of whether the project would work out well, which finally came out as the story. As much being my personal story, this is also story of anyone else. It is when we dig deep into us that we find out cobwebs of fear and anxiety having occupied many corners of our minds. There hasn't been an attempt to convey a message, rather, it's a sharing of my deepest fears, hoping for a better understanding of myself, and an attempt to overcome these fears.

Reference

- [1] Layton, Julia "How fear works"
 available at: <http://health.howstuffworks.com/fear.htm>
 accessed on: 12.04.2009 ; 1202 hrs
- [2] Keats, John "When I have fears that I may cease to be"
 available at: <http://www.bartelby.net/101/635.html>
 accessed on: 29.01.2009 ; 1800 hrs
- [3] Vianu, Lydia "The Desperado Novel comes of Age"
 available at: http://lidiavianu.scriptmania.com/desperado_literature.htm
 accessed on: 29.01.2009 ; 1800 hrs
- [4] Eliot, T. S "The Fire Sermon", from "The Wasteland"
 available at: <http://www.bartelby.org/201/1.html>
 accessed on: 17.04.2009 ; 2030 hrs
- [5] Krishnamurthi, Jiddu "The first and last freedom"
 Cambridge University Press ; 1800 hrs
- [6] Amr, Just "Fear"
 available at: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/fear-114/>
 accessed on: 29.01.2009 ; 1805 hrs
- [7] Chinmoy "I Fear"— an excerpt from "My Flute"
 available at: <http://www.srichinmoylibrary.com/books/0011/1/82>
 accessed on: 29.01.2009 ; 1805 hrs
- [8] Harris, Steve (Iron Maiden) "Fear of the Dark"
 EMI Records
- [9] Frost, Robert "The wood pile"
 available at: http://www.poetry-archive.com/f/the_wood-pile.html
 accessed on: 29.01.2009 ; 1805 hrs
- [10] Frost, Robert "Desert Places"
 available at: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/desert-places/>
 accessed on: 29.02.2009 ; 1805 hrs
- [11] Khera, Shiv "You can win"
 Macmillan India Limited Publishers.
- [12] Google images
- Movies/Serials Referred to**
- [13] Friends
 Creators: David Crane, Marta Kauffman
- [14] Dil Chahta Hai
 Director: Farhan Akhtar
 Producer: Ritesh Sidhwani
- [15] In Harihar Nagar
 Directors: Siddique—Lal
 Producer: Khais-Kuriachan
- [16] Fears of the dark
 Directors: Blutch, Charles Burns, Marie Caillou, Pierre Di Sciullo, Lorenzo Mattotti, Richard McGuire