

March 2001

FOTAMECUS PROJECT

Project outline and history

The purpose of the project is to make a film as a magickal experiment, specifically, as an attempt to invoke the 'egregore' of Fotamecus. Fotamecus is a thought form or servitor created by a magician through the means of a sigil. The basic mythology surrounding the form of Fotamecus is still new and open to development but I have taken the specific name from the workings written up by Fenwick Rysen (additional documents are listed at the end of this outline). In essence Fotamecus has the power to manipulate time by compressing and expanding it. In this role Fotamecus represents a power of time that is in conflict with the established and existing order of time given by Chronos, whose talisman is the clock face. Fotamecus is not simply a 'non-linear' time, but a chaotic time. Instead of the metronomic beat of time we will find the 'duration' of time (as suggested, for example, by the philosopher Henri Bergson). Time is not a series of moments set before and after the present, as though in a cinematic roll of film where each frame represents a 25th of a second, it is instead the duration of an event, as in the time it takes sugar to dissolve in water, the time of waiting.

The aim of the project, originally, was for me to attempt to make the film myself with my own magickal background, using actors and friends for the parts. As I thought more about the project it felt right to attempt, at least initially, to see if the project could be a collective group work rather than a more solitary operation through which a visually experimental piece would be made. The advantage of the group work would be that it would increase the blur between the 'film' side of the project and the 'magick' since the film would take on a slightly more recognizable form for a wider audience. It would be slightly less visually experimental in order to become more practically experimental. The goal of the project from the beginning was to attempt a process of participation where, with their implicit consent, the audience 'takes part' in the invocation through their experience of watching the film. Such a participative operation firstly implies consent, which would be done at the start of the film, and then suggests a greater use of narrative structure in order to let the audience slip into the willing suspension of disbelief. The use of a semi-documentary style 'recording' of a rite seemed the ideal genre vehicle in this instance. To this end I have approached a number of magicians and pagans, including locally in Brighton as well as on email lists through which a meeting took place with someone from London. I have also discussed the possibility of a Brighton based animator and pagan being involved in the project at both a design level and at an animation level, allowing the film to integrate a small degree of animated effect work which will enable the thought form to be visually suggested to the audience with greater impact. This animated aspect of the film is intended to be abstract and free, a black scratch of colour and movement rather than a determined form. Think of the shapes that you can see on the insides of your eyelids with your eyes shut and the light on.

Plotline

Beginning in the cinema we see an audience watching a film, during which the titles and a notice about the intention of the film is displayed. The audience consists of the characters we are about to see in the film and the notice of consent is seen through their eyes, from the POV of the film's participants but seen for the audience as though they have switched into the heads of those in the film.

Cutting to a busy cluttered fast moving series of shots on a railway platform, early in the morning we see, low down, a bustle of feet rushing around the screen. No faces, the camera low to the floor, the noise cacophonous, deep within the confused sound we can pick up on the mantra 'fotamecus' and as we do our eye is caught by a flicker on the screen, an indistinguishable black fleck.

We move, staying at ground level, away from the station, to a bedroom with the feet rapidly running through the routine 9-5 day of breakfast, work, lunch, work, tea, TV, sleep, with the focus on the movement from one place to another, feet going through routines, the pace getting quicker, the cuts coming faster, gradually building but without ever really taking off, not so much speed as repetition. Throughout we have the fotamecus mantra, almost inaudible at times, at other times the central voice. The images are of clocks, ticking hands, counting numbers and the movement of the mechanism of society, imageries of mechanism and clockwork behavior. A young child sits winding a large wooden clock and the scene stops moving, only the noises linger, gradually fading until the clock is put on the mantelpiece, its ticking beginning to form a rhythm that in turn is gradually mimicked and then replaced by the fotamecus mantra, gently flowing, and as we begin to settle after the frantic day at work, watching the clock on the mantelpiece tick away, these occasional flecks of black begin to form again. A sledgehammer suddenly smashes the clock to smithereens and we cut to the kitchen.

The scene will begin with the magicians seen from the inside of a clock before, with a switch of perspective, we see in the center of a round table, a large clock face beside and on top of which the magicians are baking. They are sitting round the kitchen table in a mundane environment that is laced with subtle and discordant imagery and objects. On the wall are signs of the elements and quarters, a shadow plays across the back wall, an odd, contrived shape that we will come to recognize as the sigil of the servitor. The activity is everyday, making biscuits, though the pots and jars on the table are oversized, archaic looking, with unfamiliar words on them. The scene is incongruous but essentially mundane. This scene is based around the Time Consumption Rite (see list of additional materials). During the course of making the biscuits we hear, in a casual conversation, about the statement of intent, the purpose of the activity. In the background there is other activity going on, a coming and going and busy scene even though it is never rushed.

The black shape darts across the walls every now and then, the sound of children and household appliances nestles against the conversation and the fotamecus mantra continues its gentle rhythm underneath all the sounds, occasionally coming into greater

focus before drifting back into the background perceptions of the audience. The camera moves round in a circular direction throughout this scene, sometimes behind the participants, looking over shoulders at faces and forms, at other times turning in a continuous pan looking at the participants from within the center of the circle.

The next scene begins from the POV of someone walking up a large white winding path, which a sharp bank of green to either side of them, as though they were walking up a cutting. The person walking will look up the bank to the hillside and woods at the top and we will cut to see the magicians walking, in procession, up a steep hill. The first few members of the procession are cloaked and wearing headdresses of some sort whilst carrying staffs, the first 'traditional' imagery. Behind these robed figures are a series of others carrying TV's, boxes and folded banners up the hill. We will watch as the magicians enter the wood in procession. Gathering quietly, the sounds of the woods in the air, the hum of the mantra still low in the background, the space would be briefly consecrated in some form before the magicians relaxed, talking freely as they create the space. Holes are dug and TV's buried within them, a fire lit, a feast laid out and the trees garlanded and the quarters marked out. Finally, as the sun drops, darkness creeps in and the moon lifts her brow, the circle prepared. The chattering dies out, drums or music begins and the circle is opened.

After the circle is opened and the fire is stoked a brief rite based around the Fotamecus Empowerment Rite (see additional texts) is carried out, with two central figures for the Rite. These are the robed figures who now reveal from under their robes headdresses and garb based around the animal totems of the Boar and the She-Wolf. The Boar holds a club like instrument and the She-Wolf a long wand. In the background the black flecks are intermittent and we also see black shapes moving in the woods. Gradually, these flecks will build into a swirling vortex, still almost indiscernible, like a flux on the film, building into a vortex above the magicians as they reach the end of the rite. In the quarters are TV's, dug into the ground and covered with earth like small mounds, blaring out images of the elements, with the sigil, masking part of the screen, lit from behind and casting a shadow across those in the circle as they move. At one point we see the magicians in their circle from afar, their fire in its center, the woods at either side. The moon is rising and we can see it through a clearing in the woods. As we look up the hill at the moon, the magicians are framed by the arching dome of the hill top in the background, the moon in its center, the fire below, and the black flux forming above them. At the culmination of the ritual the large clock from the kitchen table, now placed at the center of the circle next to the fire, is smashed, first with the Boar's club and then the She-Wolf twists the wand to reveal a vicious claw handle with which the hands of the clock are ripped from its face.

Finally, having smashed and exploded the clock face, the talisman of Chronos is painted over with the sigil of Fotamecus before being burnt on the fire. We will wind the film down with the feasting and banish with laughter, the magicians eating the biscuits baked earlier, each of which has a sigil of fotamecus on its face. The film will end slowly as we move away from the feast to watch the clock burn, the sigil of fotamecus burning on its face, replaced gradually with a flaming sigil on the screen and then with a moving

animated black figure of the sigil on an increasingly white background, the fotamecus mantra now an unbearably loud noise drowning out everything from the film. This last image will last just that little bit too long to be pleasant, before finally cutting to a bright white and silence.

Notes

- 1) This sketch has been developed in the content and from of its imagery after discussion with the animator and storyboard artist. In particular the use of animal totems in the ritual is an element that is open for discussion. Any collective development of the ritual obviously necessitates a certain openness in the imagery of the film.
- 2) One of the principal things a plot outline cannot do is actually deal with the practicalities of what is proposed. In a film making situation the writer and director literally decide everything. It is a one way thing. In this sort of experiment the point is to cross boundaries to some degree so there is an inbuilt flexibility on my part. In the end though there is also a difficulty in fully describing how the film will eventually look or feel, the responsibility will still come down in large part to the person directing the editing which would be me. There is thus an inherent separation of stages in this experiment. (a) preparation, during which everything is open and we all reach consensus on the roles, imagery and intent of the rite. The practicalities of the filmmaking are obviously able to be discussed here (b) the rite itself, where the practicalities of filmmaking will be 'out of the way' even though they are ever-present, such that the rite, even though possibly done more than once, will still maintain its integrity of intent (c) the final polishing. In effect the first two stages should have prepared a working machine that is then merely made over within the editing. It is a polishing, but one more reminiscent of working with a gem than a polishing shoes.
- 3) The visual sigil used by Fenwick is not something I am necessarily fixed on using. It does not feel like the right sigil to use for this rite as there is some sort of mutation at work and thus a slightly mutated form of Fotamecus might be the real object of invocation, one more appropriate for our place within GMT and the center of the continental time zone. Maybe a slightly more warlike figure than the original, which may be one reason for the animal totem imagery in the two central figures of the rite. I think, moreover, that the possible reconstruction or mutation of this servitor is part of the magickal work and interest in the project and at a minimum one of the questions that is posed in its preparation.

If interested in this project, provisionally scheduled to be 'shot' in Summer 2001, please contact me by emailing keyman@indifference.demon.co.uk or at Indifference Productions, details given at the start of the document.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS

The following files, available in .PDF format from me, are the relevant texts from which the Fotamecus servitor has been drawn;

Fotamecus Servitor.PDF

Don't blame me blame my servitor.PDF

Fotamecus Empowerment Rite.PDF

Fotamecus Time Consumption Rite.PDF