

## **fear/fɪr / ɪl/fie(r)/ n. *uncountable or countable*<sup>1</sup>**

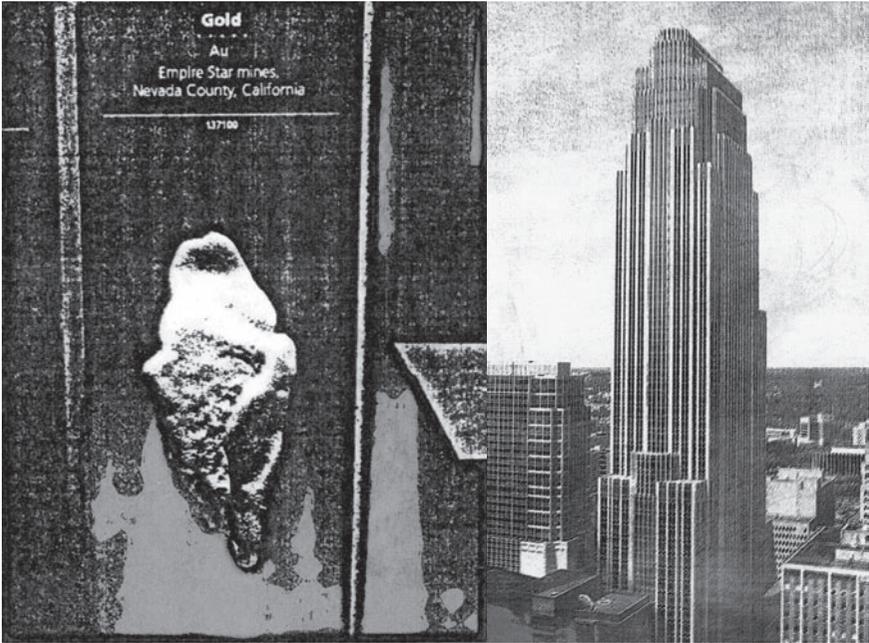
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Fear as medium, not message.  
 Fear as economic value, as currency, as exchange rate.  
 Fear as collateral.  
 Fear as import and export.  
 Fear as the force behind progress.  
 Fear as refuge, as home, as the reinforcer of national pride.  
 Fear as the potlatch of colonialism and the war on terror.  
 Fear as President.  
 Fear as Facebook friend, as Twitter follower, as search engine.  
 Fear as style.  
 Fear as character.  
 Fear as tradition.  
 Fear as the new Wild West.

*The American frontier moved gradually westward decades after the settlement of the first white immigrants on the Eastern seaboard in the 1600s. The 'West' was always the area beyond that boundary...*

*Through treaties with foreign nations and native peoples, political compromise, technological innovation, military conquest, establishment of law and order, and the great migrations of foreigners, the United States expanded from the coast to the coast (Atlantic Ocean-to-Pacific Ocean), fulfilling its belief in Manifest Destiny. In securing and managing the West, the US federal government greatly expanded its powers, as the nation grew from an agrarian society to an industrialised nation...*

*As the American Old West passed into history, the myths of the West took firm hold in the imagination of Americans and foreigners alike.<sup>2</sup>*



### Origins and Convictions

Certitude is Fear, and Fear descriptive discovery. Not just as feeling but as discipline, responsibility and expression. Intolerant to disorder and assertiveness, Fear builds on inherited beauty and the relocation of status and respectability, its foundations nowadays inherent in a denationalised American post-modern dream.

Historically, the use of photographic resemblance (imprinting its new version of reality in series) as metaphor for Western progress, of brand image as friendly guidance and reliable statistic for knowledge, turned the search for the ultimate frontier into a matter shaping national security – masked under the mystified moniker of enterprise and vision. Ever-increasing speed in technology and information alike developed express companies, highway patrols, franchises and correspondents into entities servicing abstract revenue, both in operational terms and consumer influence. The network activated the negative pole of telegraphic machinery, smoke signals were intercepted, and the dreamt paradise faltered.

With horizontal communication widely deployed by then, every threat turned into an offer, and every intimidation into a lobby. The car started sanding the asphalt it itself demanded and heated up (but never financed), and the household became more and more a blog version of the mart – resettling, wiring, specialising, upgrading and archiving.

## Staples

Common display of domestic values and the anxiety of possession, accelerated by digitalisation, counterbalance the disorder orchestrated by intranet news and the resurgence of social participation. A neighbour is still labelled an a priori friend and accomplice of the everyday routine space, but keeps being pushed back by e-socialising – the traditionally assumed relationship/association suddenly regarded as insecure and not to be trusted. Why knock on the door when we can mouse click?

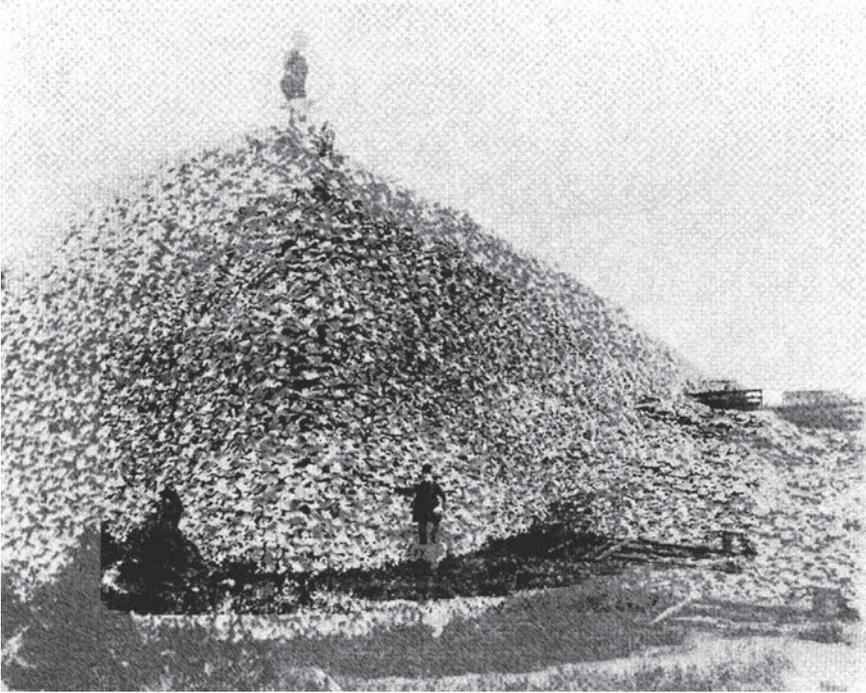
Consumerist societies familiar with Fear have not forgotten the potential use of rejection for its own good. The warranty of appliances, electrical gadgets and family products, granted for the consumer's conscience, are presented as improvers of quality and service, but more than offered guarantees, they are hidden ransom demands. It is in this perilous scheme of experience barter (where no bargains are to be made) that Fear consolidates itself as necessary item, as commodity and as unpossessed source of wealth. For, in order to benefit from its powers, Fear neither needs to be owned nor to be too literally controlled, just adequately administrated. And what better strategy to induce this forum of Fear than through its random rationing – driving consumers and producers into surveyed panic, letting go of the wheel just to steer back on track.

## Control

The comfort of interacting as part of a hospitable network (supposedly developing to a great extent thanks to its own members and users) facilitates management and rule by media purveyors. What most users do not seem to be able to grasp is that the Internet is in itself content, and that the assumption of freedom of speech powered by accessibility is just an illusion triggered by the medium itself and produced by an instinct of defence and survivalism. Yet safety does not mitigate Fear, as Fear, partly passive and covered, does not expect reflex reaction.

Automated in mode and intolerant in function, Fear operates, creating influences of interrelation and service exchange, entwining a web of multiplied favours against instant transaction. Fear is not a product and does not expect its agents to behave as such. With mechanical serial production and the traditional chain of command surpassed, the channeling of previous organisation charts based on folklore and feudalism into future virtualities has become a matter of the utmost importance to secure boundaries and minimum shelter. Our walled structures, ceasing to be protected (and protective) environments, barricade kin relationships in the distance while, at the same time, making the very spaces they wish to save at home vulnerable by means of fragmented inclusiveness.

The secluded and evading face of anachronisms in ages of anxiety and instantaneousness has finished pushing evolution forward. That is why the experience of danger, the feeling of threat, has survived across the last centuries and has now, with the permanent interrelation and viral accessibility between social networks and platforms at a global level, acquired a quality of permanence and a status of benign chronic disease.



### Expedition(s)

*Men are moved by two levers only: fear and self interest.<sup>3</sup>*

The domestic securing of one's own entourage by prevention and concomitant warning further motivates Fear to develop itself, to adapt and to prosper. After Fear proved its viral nature for an industrious pulling of the strings in practical anonymity, the scope of the investment and the interest collection predicted lost sole mathematical approach and passed on to the realm of the abstract. Fear was no news, no information, no involved medium. Fear became classified and specialised knowledge and, once founded, looked to become applied and to infiltrate. Following the enclosure of the immediate primeval entourage, Fear expanded to neighbouring territories with no border in mind, looking only to diversify, be implemented and produce an exchange rate to keep in the loop.

Through blind belief in progress understood and materialised as narrative surplus, dwellings expanded, soil was prospected, transportation got faster, buildings grew taller and men fought and counterattacked harder and harder. Contrary to our economic, industrial and land growth, Fear was not bigger, but it was definitely better. Subsidised and diversified, with franchises and sister companies, Fear shattered the frontier and held the innovations it itself had fostered at stake with the help of human excess: natural resources dried up, crashes

were stronger and hijacks more frequent, collapses higher and targets more numerous, everyday relationships harsher and reactions more violent.

The resources of Fear itself, feeling the menace of extinction, led to a new expansion – of Fear as a whole, of the culture, meaning and message of Fear, and the unpredictability of its extremist twin version: terror.

### Have Fear, Will Travel

*It takes two to make an accident.*<sup>4</sup>

As for now, in the aftermath of a non-documented historical event in constant progress, traditions are no longer experienced as traditional in the vicariously age-old world of the West, and the rising of Eastern economies is just a secondhand headline, documenting a drift started decades ago.

One skill that Fear has learnt fast is that once the presence in the arena has been made and running blood has been staged, it is best to act through absence than through exposure, migrating the main body of activities to a third market. In order to carry out this presence without visibility, with no licencing, the forging of partnerships and alliances operating under their original name is key, and a potential creator of new forms of Fear on its own. The Western shareholders of Fear might feel now that some control has to be exercised, that an ownership has to be acknowledged and established. Too patronising for Fear – and too late in time.

Fear is at this very moment playing doubles with The Other and, as usual, keeps winning, no matter the surface, the referee or the opponent. The Other has taken his chance, keeps fit, sweats and enjoys the abundance of serves, scoring the aces. But it is Fear who plays and wins.

Fear caresses. Fear embarrasses. Fear manages. Fear rocks.

### Notes

1. *Wordreference.com–English-Spanish Dictionary*. Available at: <http://www.wordreference.com/es/translation.asp?tranword=fear> (accessed 14 January 2010).
2. *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. "American Old West" (redirected from "Wild West"). Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild\\_West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_West) (accessed 5 August 2009).
3. *Brainy Quote: Famous Quotes and Quotations*. "Napoleon Bonaparte", p. 3. Available at: [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/n/napoleon\\_bonaparte\\_3.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/n/napoleon_bonaparte_3.html) (accessed 3 November 2009).
4. *Francis Scott Fitzgerald [1925]. The Great Gatsby (Wordsworth Classics, 2001, London), p. 39.*