

Fnord

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*For the web server, see ***F*fnord (web server)**.*



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Wiktionary

[wɪk][ʃənəri] *n.*, a wiki-based Open Content dictionary

Willow Tree fnord

Look up ****F*fnord*** in Wiktionary, the free dictionary.



Hidden messages

Subliminal messages

Audio

- Backmasking
- Reverse speech

Numeric

- Numerology
- Theomatics
- Bible code
- Cryptography

Visual

- Ambigram
- Fnord**
- Pareidolia
- Psychorama
- Sacred geometry
- Steganography

See also

- Apophenia
- Clustering illusion
- Observer-expectancy effect
- Pattern recognition
- Unconscious mind

Fnord is the typographic representation of **disinformation** or irrelevant information intending to misdirect, with the implication of a **conspiracy**.

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Origin

The word was coined as a nonsensical term with religious undertones in the *Principia Discordia* by **Kerry Thornley** and **Greg Hill**, but was popularized by *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* of **books** by **Robert Shea** and **Robert Anton Wilson**.

Definition and usage

The Illuminatus! Trilogy

In these novels, the interjection "fnord" is given **hypnotic power** over the unenlightened. Under the **Illuminati** program, children, while still in grade school, are taught to be unable to consciously see the word "fnord". For the rest of their lives, every appearance of the word subconsciously generates a feeling of uneasiness and confusion, and prevents rational consideration of the subject.

In the Shea/Wilson construct, fnords are scattered liberally in the text of newspapers and magazines, causing fear and anxiety in those following current events. However, there are no fnords in the advertisements, encouraging a **consumerist** society. It is implied in the books that *fnord* is not the actual word used for this task, but merely a substitute, since most readers would be unable to see the actual word.

To **see the fnords** means to be unaffected by the supposed hypnotic power of the word or, more loosely, of other **fighting words**. The phrase "I have seen the fnords" was famously **graffitied** on a railway bridge (known locally as *Anarchy Bridge*) between **Earlsdon** and **Coventry (U.K.)** city centre throughout the 1980s and 1990s, until the bridge was upgraded. The bridge and the phrase were mentioned in the novel *A Touch of Love* by **Jonathan Coe**. Fnord was also graffitied all over the state of Maine and New England, an interview with one of the writers can be found here [**1**]

In the **John Carpenter** movie *They Live*, the main character discovers a similar conspiracy when hidden conformity messages appearing on billboards, magazines, television, and currency are revealed to those wearing special sunglasses.

Discordianism

"Fnord" is a popular word with followers of **Discordianism**. It is often used in **Usenet** and other computer circles to indicate a random or surreal sentence; coercive subtext, or anything jarringly out of context (intentionally or not), can be labelled "fnord".

Other subcultures

The term is also commonly used by **hackers** and **programmers** as a **metasyntactic variable**. It appears in the **SubGenius** Recruitment film Arise! and has been in use in the SubGenius newsgroup alt.slack.[**2**]

Popular Culture

In the online parody **role playing game** the **Kingdom of Loathing**, when one acquires 23 of one item at a time, the word FNORD appears in white text after the game message. As the browser background is also white, it is virtually invisible unless highlighted, adding to the joke of the "conspiracy".

See also

- Culture of fear
- Fear, uncertainty and doubt

References and further reading

Books

- The Illuminatus! Trilogy* by **Robert Shea** and **Robert Anton Wilson**, ISBN 1-56731-237-3 (Hardback collected edition) & ISBN 1-85487-574-4 (Paperback collected edition)
- The Golden Apple* by **Robert Shea** and **Robert Anton Wilson**, ISBN 0-440-53981-1
- Schrödinger's Cat* by **Robert Anton Wilson**, ISBN 0-440-50070-2

External links

- Fnord-I Archives
- An excerpt from *The Golden Apple*, dealing with fnords
- Steve Jackson Games: Fnorder, a program for generating "fnord" sentences
- "A Short Discourse on the Ancient and Accepted Discordian Practice of Fnording Dollar Bills" OI' Sam, U:M, PS!, A/B.

		Discordian Religion	[hide]
People		Malaclypse the Younger • Omar Khayyam Ravenhurst • Emperor Norton I	
Organizations and Titles		Legion of Dynamic Discord • Pope	
Symbols and Mythological Personae		Eris (aka Discordia) • Aneris (aka Harmonia) • Spirituality • Pineal Gland • Apple of Discord • Chao • Fnord • Bowling alleys	
Foundations		Discordianism • Principia Discordia • Discordian Works • Discordian calendar • Law of Fives • The Original Snub • The Curse of Greyface • The Pentabarf	

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Categories: Discordianism | Conspiracy | Neologisms

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