1 Abstract

This thesis puts forward the proposition that spam and advertising are one and the same thing. In case such comparison is considered valid, it asks why do advertising and spam receive such a differentiated treatment, which considers advertising as an art-form and spam as a threat to society. Where does the difference between the two, that is responsible for opening this gap, reside? I will argue that the main difference lays in the fact that spam is minor form of advertising. And if that is the case spam becomes a threat to advertising. But what exactly is the threat?

2 Introduction

The thesis will begin with a description of Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's concept of a minor literature, in reference to Franz Kafka's work. The features that bring Kafka's literary production to be considered minor, namely the deterritorialization, the political dimension, and the collective meaning of the language, will be used to ask whether spam does also constitute a minor language. If spam can found to be a minor language, the question that needs to be asked is within what major language is spam constructing its body. My answer is advertisement, spam constitutes a minor language of advertisement. In order to sustain that position I will place the two languages side-by-side and describe their affinities and asymmetries. Based on the work of Gilliam Dyer I will describe the major developments advertising went through from the Seventeenth century on to the pos-Word War II period, and based on his observations detect practices share within both spam and advertising. Namely their forms of persuasions, the smooth integration into the surrounding context both languages look aim for, and creative circumvention of restrictions both come up with. As for their differences I will refer spam's deceptive, third-world, and fraudulent nature, which puts it nearly at antipodes of the positions occupied by advertising, at the very center of the capitalist economy, but also the fact that spam constitutes a minor language of advertising. I will argue that it is this very fact, this minor position occupied by spam which poses the real threat to advertising. The nature of a minority withholds the possibility of infecting the majority and force it to come down on its marginal territory. To make things worse spam, I will argue, constitutes an even more serious threat, by presenting advertising with an image of what it might become in the future: a form of consumer persuasion that no longer asks consumers to buy products, but fantasies. To sustain my argument I will employ Raymond Williams view of advertising as a magical system and conclude with a proposal for program dedicated to the innovation and raising of the public appreciation for the art of spam.

Despite the many and diverse forms of spam one can encounter, throughout the essay I will mention mostly and draw most of my examples from the so called "419" spam. The handle "419" derives from the Nigerian code law that persecutes crimes involving the impersonation of state's officials (Glickman, 2005). In its original form the fraud consists of a game of appearances that leads to a confident trick. The act begins with an email, although letters and faxes have been previously used in "419s", sent to a large number of addresses. The email make reference to a large sum of money held in an African bank account or other location. As the owner of this sum is often dead, the sender asks the recipient's collaboration in transferring the frozen funds to a foreign account, so that the money becomes accessible. As a reward the recipient is promised to receive a fraction of the total sum. Victims who fall for this telltale are normally asked to provide their personal details, bank name and account number early on, such information is normally used in credit card applications or checks forgeries. If the recipient is eager to take part in the proposed deal he will, at later stage be requested to transfer money to the sender's account, under the excuse that a lawyer needs to be payed to do the necessary paper work, an official has to be bribed to set the process rolling, or identity marks be removed from banknotes. Victims, like gambles, struggle to admit they are loosing money, and go on complying with these requests, in hope that their promised share will appear. And even when they realize that they have fallen for a scam, victims are deterred from denouncing it, as they are aware of the illegal contours of the business they have joined (Glickman, 2005, pp.465-469).

Several reasons made concentrate more in the "419" than in other form of spam. In the first place it lives from the ability of the author of the scheme to tell a convincing and enticing story. The stories are in themselves quite fascinating and amusing materials, pregnant with humor, ingenuity, and inventiveness. A great wealth of research on the topic has been done in last decade, stretching from anthropological research (Burrell, 2012), Cultural Studies (Chude-Sokei, 2010), African Studies and recent History (Apter, 1999) and (Glickman, 2005). And lastly the fact that I am currently developing an artistic project - Narratives of Deception - based on "419" emails, has been a strong motivation to try to thoroughly understand the "419" phenomena.

3 Minor literature?

In *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari interpret Kafka's work as a subversion that takes place within the confines of the major German language. The chapter *What is a Minor Literature* delves

into the classification of Kafka's oeuvre as minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari describe minor literature not as a development of a minor language, but rather 'rather that which a minority constructs within a major language' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.16). Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's work as a minor literature for two reasons. Kafka's birth within a German-speaking Jewish family, a German education, in parallel to a life in the mainly Czech-speaking Prague positions him both within the linguistic and ethnic minority. Not unlike emigrants in their new country of residence, Kafka was a foreign in his own hometown, Prague. But he also decided to become a foreigner to the "correct" high German, by choosing to bring into his writing the peculiarities and deformations of the German spoke in Prague.

Deleuze and Guattari resource to the tetra-linguistic model proposed by Henri Gobard to explain Kafka's linguistic entanglement. The model consists of four languages types: vernacular, vehicular, referential, and mythical. Vernacular refers to a territorial language, spoken mainly by rural communities; vehicular to the language used in everyday transnational exchanges; referential to the language of culture; and mythical to a religious or spiritual language. The authors ask what is the Prague Jews', and specifically Kafka's relation to those four language typologies. Czech and Yiddish are vernacular languages, disregarded in an urban scenario, yet Kafka, unlike most Jews, was able to understand and write in Czech. German filled both the vehicular and referential function, occupying the same role in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as English occupies in today's world. And Hebrew, was the mythical language, associated with the foundation of Zionism and the state of Israel. In spacial terms the 'vernacular language is *here*, vehicular language is *everywhere*, referential language is *over there*, and mythical language is *beyond*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.23).

With the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the movements of deterritorialization increase and new and intricate territorialities are formed in the heart of Europe. Withing this wave Kafka does not opt for a 'reterritorialization through the Czech. Nor towards a hypercultural usage of the German... Nor toward an oral popular Yiddish' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.25). Instead he chooses an intermediate route, by bringing the Prague's German into his writing, and exploring it beyond its previous boundaries. '[H]e will tear out of Prague German all the qualities of underdevelopment that it has tried to hide ... He will turn the syntax into a cry that will embrace the rigid syntax of the dried-up German. He will push towards a deterritorialization that will no longer be saved by culture or by myth' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.26). In other words Kafka places the *here* of the vernacular language into *everywhere* of the vehicular language. He casts a language that despite having roots, is not locked to anywhere in particular, and is able to encompass many places.

Deleuze and Guattari situate the revolutionary intensity of Kafka's writing in the minor and undefined language Kafka chose to explore. By deciding to write in a underdeveloped language, Kafka was making a deliberate choice towards a poor language, without define identity or masters. It is in it that Kafka 'find[s] points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which language can escape' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.27).

4 Spam

The decision to become minor, and the consequences that result from such choice, is not confined to literature. Other major discursive practices have their own minor languages. Marcel Swiboda (2005) describe how African-America and Afro-Caribbean musical manifestations constitute instances of a minor culture. Swiboda detects minor aspects of these musical genres in the deterritorilization of the English language which they perform. Since the mentioned genres employ a language usually responsible for uttering a dominant culture, minor culture formations need to find ways of appropriating that language and make it utter a non-dominant discourse , or in Swiboda's words 'to render them sonorous'. As an example Swiboda mentions the politicization of the English language performed by Jamaican-British poet, Linton Kwesi Johnson. In his poems Kwesi Johnson inscribes the Jamaican Creole on to the English language, as a way of challenging the oppression from the dominant major language. Swiboda also finds minor aspect is present in transformation of the personal and singular perspective on to a collective addressing. As an example Swiboda mentions the figure of the Hip Hop MC, whom despite being an individual voice with a personal style, forms part of the Hip Hop collective, without which it could not exist (Swiboda, 2005).

Another contemporary popular discourse that I believe qualifies as a minor language is spam. Spam is synonym to unsolicited emails, sent to large number of addresses, with the underlying intention of selling products such as Rolex replicas or Viagra pills, or even extort money from its recipients. Despite being an ostensibly marginal and often deceptive practice, is Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a minor language applicable to it? The philosophers recognize the deterritorialization of language, the collective enunciation, and a latent political meaning, as the main features of minor literature. In order to assess the minor character of spam I will begin to look for these minor characteristics in spam.

4.1 Spam's deterritorialization

Deleuze and Guattari put a great deal of attention on the deterritorialized German Kafka adopted and explored in his works. Although this was the language of the Jews from Prague, its roots were in the international vehicular German,

which made it take distance from the Czech territoriality. Aren't we witnessing a similar form of deterritorialization taking place within spam? Firstly and most visibly through the common employment of far-from-perfect versions of English. It is common for spam emails to be filled with typos, unorthodox grammar, unusual expressions, and awkward punctuation. Such is the case of the following email:

From: Fatima Kone
Subject: Hello My Dearest,

Hello My Dearest,
My name is Miss. Fatima Kones , 23 years old originated from Nairobi-Kenya, East Africa, Female, tall, slim, fair and a very good looking girl that loves traveling and dancing, a student, that loves to be loved, I want you to also understand that your Age, distance,Religions does not matter to me, kindly permit me to contact you through this medium, I am compelled to contact you via this medium for obvious reasons which you will understand when we discuss details of my proposition.
My father was the former Assistant Minister of Home Affairs and the Kenya road Minister Mr. Kipkalya Kones had been on board the Cessna 210,which was headed to Kericho and crashed in a remote area called Kajong'a, in western Kenya.
After the burial of my father, my step-mother has threatened to kill me because of the money my father deposited in one of the banks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in my name as the next of kin before his dead which amount is ($10.7USD) Million United State Dollars. I travelled down to Burkina Faso to withdraw the money so that I can start a better life and take care of myself.
Fatima Kones
http://pzwart3.wdka.hro.nl/django/acastro/collect_spam/spam/88

In this example it still possible to read the echos of a correct English, but the text is far from being there. The correct English appears as a horizon against which these phrases are set. These two different versions of English illustrate the crossroad inhabited by spammers in relation to language of their craft. If on-the-one-hand English - world's current vehicular language - needs to be used in order to reach as many readers as possible, on-the-other-hand its imperfections expose the deceptive nature of spam. But if the deterritorialized German offered Kafka a venue to explore, so does the deterritorialized English offers spammers, whom invent characters that are often as foreign to a perfect English as the authors themselves, as is Fatima Kones in the previous example. In that same line of thought Harvey Glickman (2005) proposes an explanation for these linguistic distortions, arguing specifically in reference to "419" spam, that such anomalies constitute a conscious choice from the authors. By adopting a broken English the authors exploit the racist stereotype of Africans being considered naïfe, corrupt, and illiterate, it hope that it will lead the readers into believing that nothing harmful will come out of a deal with someone so innocent.

The language of spam also appears to be deterritorialized by the employed mode of address. Although sent in bulk to millions of addresses spam emails often address the reader intimately and directly. Spam authors are clueless about a recipient's gender, nationality, social strata, occupation; essentially they know nothing expect one's email address. Despite that shortcoming they try to make each recipient feel as the single lucky receiver of their emails.

A similar disjunction can be witnessed in messages that employ big world events to justify the presented narrative. That is the case with the following email in which the assassination of Osama bin Laden, reported by a soldier who took part in it, serves as the explanation for the appearance of a large sum of money, and the following deal proposal.

From: Sgt. John Samuel
Subject: Hi

Hi ,

My name is Sgt. John Samuel US ARMY serving the World and my country in the most honourable way I know I can, in AFGHANISTAN right now, in a nutshell, I am an American soldier serving in the Military with the Army 3rd infantry division. With a very desperate need for assistance,I found your contact particulars during my email search and picked up courage to contact you for your assistance.

Some money in various currencies were discovered in a room at a farm house near one of Osama Bin Laden's old house in Kabul-Afghanistan during a rescue operation, I happened to be one of the soldiers that led that operation that day, so it was agreed by Col. William E. Cole the head of our battalion that some part of this money will be shared among both of us before informing anybody about it since both of us saw the money first. This was quite an illegal thing to do, but I tell you what? No compensation can make up for the risk we have taken with our lives in this hell hole, my brother in-law was killed by a road side bomb just few months ago, and I cannot count how many times GOD has saved my life down here.

Now i found a very reliable way of sending a trunk metallic box containing the amount of United States Dollars worth Twelve Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars(US$ 12.5 Million) as you must agree with me it has been hell on earth trying to keep this money safe from people's eyes for all these while and with

this opportunity all I need is just someone capable I can trust 100% I can send the box to. So if you can assure me of your honesty I will go ahead and send the box to you for safe keeping till I am back home and I will gladly give you 40% of the money.

If this okay with you please get back to me with the following so i can get the box across to you.

1. Your full name
2. Contact address
3. Telephone number
4. Occupation.

Waiting to hear from you.

Yours in Service.
Sgt. John Samueln
US ARMY
http://www.army.mil/

http://pzwart3.wdka.hro.nl/django/acastro/collect_spam/spam/94

In this example we are given a personal and close, but also fictitious perspective on the heavily mediatized event of Osama bin Laden assassination, over which we only had a birds'-eyes view provided by the mass-media. The fact that these two perspectives are superimposed, as are fiction and reality, and the intimate voice through which millions of readers are addressed, brings spam into an unstable and undefined territory, which I see as a significant contribution for its deterritorialization. The mentioned traces of spam's language deterritorialization become more amplified if one takes into consideration the technological context of its production. As already mentioned, spam, particularly its "419" genre, was first developed and perfected in Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s, and is in great part still associated with this country, although statistics reveal Nigeria by no means to be the current center of spam's production (Shue et al., 2009). As pointed out by Lois Chude-Sokei (2010) is somehow surprising that this form of cyber-crime comes from a country like Nigeria. If commodities such as electricity, running water, and roads are scarce, one can only imagine what the access to a computer and an Internet connection will be like. Yet, it was this lack of resources that propelled Nigerians to perfection a form of cyber-crime that did not required high levels of technical expertise, permanent access to online machines, or stable Internet connection. It simply required the ability to tell a convincing story, that would titillate the victims' greed and trust. Chude-Sokei sees "419" as being in a similar position to one once occupied by Jamaican reggae and dub. Both criminal and musical productions originated and perfected their forms in the backwaters of the industrialized world, yet they gained world-wide fame, and became replicated outside their birth-nations.

4.2   Spam's collective nature

Deleuze and Guattari defend that within minor literature 'everything takes on a collective value' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.17). The lack of talent and the impossibility of virtuosity that results from writing in a new, uncharted language, prevents enunciations from being inscribed within the line of a given "master", opens up the language towards a collective meaning. Considering that spam is not inscribed in a lineage of any given "master", or has a defined authorship, it is also "available" to adopt a collective meaning. Spam production is not the result of the work of a single identifiable individual, but of a collective. No single author can be identified in most spam messages, even in the cases of fraud emails like the "419s" where writer-narrator draws the reader into an enticing money-gaining narrative, this character is essentially a fabrication from the real author, whose true identity is nowhere to be found. As the result from the authorless nature of spam, it a material prone to appropriation, which happens not only within the circles of spam production, but also in the art-world, where spam appears to be an endless and rich sandbox, filled with material ready to be utilized in the most diverse ways.

Within the realm of spam production we can testify the intense borrowing of materials from one email to another. Spam messages are essentially assemblages of previously specimens, which are borrowed on to the composition of new emails. This process of appropriation becomes visible if one follows a given writing character across the group of emails written under that character's name. At a certain point of my research I came across the previously quoted email by Fatima Kones, the daughter of Kipkalya Kiprono Kones, Kenyan's former roads' minister, who died in plane accident. On searching for more emails written by Fatima Kones I was confronted by the same story, told by the same character, but under a different first name. I found emails from Aminali, Cindy, Nora, Samira, Susan, Amina, Dalila, Esther, Joy, and Mercy - quite a few daughters even for wealthy man. Although the story each incarnation of Miss Kones told was essentially the same, there were many variations among the found emails. I was witnessing a process of appropriation, that was spreading the same story through a multitude of versions and variations, turning a single entity on to a dispersed network of texts.
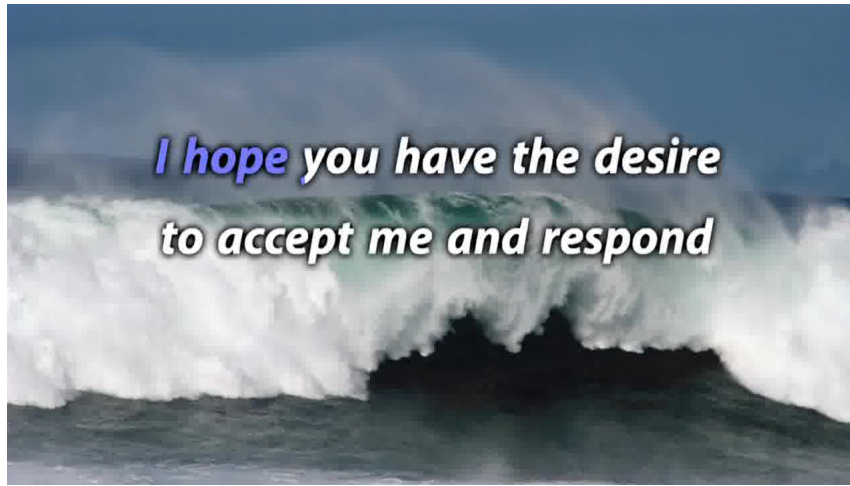
Figure 1: Still from Thompson and Craighead's *More Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Moving outside on to the sphere of art production, we see spam collective utterance spreading on to many appropriations by artists. One example is the piece *More Songs of Innocence and of Experience* by Thompson & Craighead `http://www.thomson-craighead.net/docs/songs.html`. The work emerged as a response to a commission for the online exhibition *Our Mutual Friends*, which revolved around Charles Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend*. The artists decided to explore the resemblances between Dicken's romanticism and realism, and the language of contemporary spam messages. The end result became a series of karaoke videos, with spam email's as lyrics. The songs are accompanied by MIDI version of light music that make you want to reach the mute button as quick as possible. [ADD 1 more examples]

4.3   Spam's political dimension

I have previous made reference to spammers' use of stereotypical images of Africans, through the employment of a grammatically incorrect English. Such tactic inevitably feeds into the political dimensions of "419" spam. The effectiveness of "419" scam relies in great part on the way Africa and Africans are seen by the developed world. Only by believing in image of Africans as naïfe and corrupt do the victims allow themselves to fall for this fraud narratives (Chude-Sokei, 2010). However it is no less stereotypical the image that spammers have of Westerns: rich, opulent, and blinded by greed. It is this image that allows Nigerian spammers to go forward with their acts of cyber-crime with a clean moral consciousness. They believe to be stealing only from greedy Westerns, who look-down on Africans, and are stupid enough to fall for the scam. Andrew Apter finds a certain level of 'righteous third world banditry to the Nigerian "419" ' (Apter, 1999, p.274) and points out Nigerians' awareness of the West's complicity in the fraud, in its unmeasured hunger for profit. Given the low living conditions of the majority Nigerian's population, both under the colonial and the pos-colonial regimes, and the large sums of money that flew out of the country or slipped into the elite's pockets, during Nigeria's oil-boom, it is only natural that spammers, and Nigerians at large, want their share in the country's wealth. The song *I Go Chop Your Dollar* by the Nigeria actor Nkem Owoh provides a vivid portrait to the sentiment felt by those who commit "419" towards their victims.

```
I don suffer, no be small
Upon say I get sense
Poverty no good at all, no
Na him make I join this business

419 no be thief, it's just a game
Everybody dey play am
If anybody fall mugu,
Ha, my brother I go chop am

National Airport na me get am
National Stadium na me build am
President na my sister brother
You be the mugu, I be the master

Oyinbo man I go chop your dollar
I go take your money and disappear
```

Figure 2: Stills from *I Go Chop Your Dollar* music video

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419 is just a game
You are the loser, I am the winner
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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1nKR3gYRY8

However Chude-Sokei (2010) argues against this image of an African cyber-Robin Hood, by reminding us that the victims often belong to the same community as the perpetrators. And if the spammers happen to succeed, non of the sake will be invested into the public good, but rather pave their away into becoming part of the elite and perpetuate its greedy behavior. The same way "I Go Chop Your Dollar" justifies the "419", the song "Yahoozee" - a clear reference to "yahoo boys", the pseudonym attributed to young Nigerian scammers -, glorifies of the life-style that follows a successful "419" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBP2RkKsryg

It seems hard to imagine that the ostentation of wealth that we see in "Yahoozee's" video stems from low-profile criminals, in crowed cyber-cafes powered by a generator, situated in one of Lagos' computer villages, where the detritus of West's digital revolution end-up. Andrew Apter's essay *IBB = 419: Nigerian Democracy and the Politics of Illusion* (1999) traces the genes of "419" to Nigeria's 1980s and 1990s political establishment. The essay revolves around the comparison of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, commonly known as IBB, who governed Nigeria from 1985 to 1993, and the "419" financial fraud scam. In it Apter describes the political dance, comprised of democracy's false starts and stops, which allowed the IBB to remain in power for 8 years. In a nutshell BBI's political ballet consisted of the following moves: the first elections under his rule held in 12 December 1987 were annulled by the National Electoral Commission due to a shortage of ballot boxes and irregularities; On May 1989 the six-year ban on political parties is lifted and new parties can be formed, yet IBB's claim that none of the applying associations broke with tribal and religious divisions suspended the process; To replace them two new parties come into being: the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention; Both parties were IBB's fabrication, which warranted him control over the political *democratic* process; Between 1991 and 1993 IBB annulled, disqualified, and rescheduled several elections, until the population revolted in June 23rd, 1993, which resulted in IBB's resignation. During those demonstrations Apter mentions seeing one protester holding a placard with the words "IBB = 419". Apter argues that such analogy between the General and the art of con is not only metaphorical (Apter, 1999, p.287). IBB's fabrication of a fictitious democracy, with all its external signs, but no real democratic processes was in itself a "419", in which

Figure 3: Stills from *Yahoozee* music video

Figure 4: General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida

the entire external appearance was crafted in order to look believable and appealing, whereas in fact none of it existed below the surface that served as a cover for the real deal. Furthermore, it was that pristine appearance that allowed IBB to build a fortune for himself while being the head of state.

5   Ads = spam?

Based on the outlined features of a minor language on to the language of spam, I believe to be possible to affirm that spam constitutes a minor language. However one question remains unanswered: Within what major language is spam building its body? My intuitive answer is advertising. And similarly to advertisement, spam aims to persuade the reader to buy the product or service it announces. Some times the claims on the product in question are legitimate, other times they are not. Yet, despite those similarities there seems to be a significant difference in the way spam and advertisement are perceived. One is seen legitimate and has carte blanche to take-over our visual and aural surrounding, at every occasion and in any context, whereas spam, just as the handle indicates is seen as distasteful, unsolicited, and deceptive junk, which must be kept away from our vulnerable selves. Why is there such a distinct treatment concerning these two forms of marketing? Where does the difference between the two reside?

In his book *The Discourse of Advertising* Guy Cook introduces advertisement by stating that:

> Ads use fictions, word play, compressed story-telling, stylized acting, photography, cartoons, puns and rhythms in ways which are often memorable, enjoying and amusing . . . The words and details of ads often come to people's minds more readily than those of novels and poems and plays, and they are often recalled with more laughter and enthusiasm. Yet it is often a love-hate relationship: one which frequently causes unease, and in which the love is often denied. It seems that with many ads, we suffer a split, contradictory reaction: involuntary spontaneous enjoyment, conscious reflective rejection (Cook, 1992, p.3).

Such definition seems applicable not be only to ads, but also to spam. We could replace every occurrence of the term "ads" for "spam" and infer that this description maintains in great part its truth. But what is actually advertising, and in what ways is it similar to spam?

5.1   A short history of advertising

Gilliam Dyer (1982) succinctly describes advertising as an intermediary between the production and consumption of manufactured goods. By generating a steady demand for products or services advertising ensures products will be consumed and there won't be a excess of produced goods. Dyer traces the history of advertising as we know it today, beginning with its first appearance in the newspapers, which started to flourish during the seventeenth century. The ads from that period weren't much different from the classified ads present in today's papers, and were mainly directed at a wealthy audiences, advertising luxury products such as tee, coffee, wine, cosmetics, lottery and theatre tickets. In general, using a formal language, ads provided direct information on the announced products. In the two centuries that followed not many changes were introduced into this form of advertising. It was the nineteenth century that ads became increasing disseminated, with posters and leaflets hitting the city streets, and advertisers started trying new strategies to better communicate the benefits of their products, but ads remained confined to informing the public about the newly introduced products.

After the Long Depression that took place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, small industrial enterprises joined together in order to be in better position to face another crisis. They also understood the necessity to ensure the existence of a market section for consuming their products. These combined efforts resulted in a small amount of large manufacturing companies controlling large sections of the market, through large and expensive marketing campaigns, against which smaller manufactures simply couldn't compete. It was also in this period that household products made there ways into the ads. Whereas until then one would simply ask for a bar of soap at the local drug store, now advertisers had to make sure consumers asked for Pears Soap, through new advertising methods such as the use of catch-phrases.

As the world entered the twentieth century advertising gained a more prominent and vital role in both American and British economy. With the end of World War I the market was flooded with durable consumer goods such as refrigerators, radios, washing-machines and cars, and advertisers had to maker sure that consumers bought the latest model of these product, despite their lack of need for them. And given the success in such task, by the 1930s advertising was an established field and an essential part of the capitalist economy. The end of World War II brought another invasion of consumer goods, joint with an invasion of ads designed to ensure products were met with a similar amounts of consumer demand. Since then advertising hasn't stopped increasing its presence and the amounts of money spent on it. The total overall ad expenditure in the USA has increased from $50 billions in 1979 to $200 billion in 1998 (Klein, 2001).

5.2   Persuasion

Alongside this historical description Dyer mentions the innovations in the methods of consumer persuasion. The simple recommending tone from the ads of the mid-seventieth century started to shift to a more rhetoric discourse, calling on the authoritative voice of *physicians* to enumerate the advantages of the product in question, such as "most excellent and approved":

> It is worth remembering that the eighteenth century was an age of quacks, 'empirics' and tricksters. These were men who enjoyed a considerable influence and social standing. They both made and peddled an alarming variety of pills, purges, solvents and elixirs for which extravagant claims were made. The quacks attracted attention to their wares by indulging in the most repulsive details of the diseases and scourges they claimed to be able to cure. Their promises were matched by spurious testimonials elicited from miraculously cured sufferers, who were preferably 'dukes and other noble personages of this kingdom' (Dyer, 1982, p.24).

The concept of advertisement based on unproven facts, and on someone who claims to have professional knowledge resonates strongly with the contemporary spam emails, like the ones described in the previous section. In both cases the consumer is led to believe that the announced product or service does more than what is able to. This strategy requires an authoritative "voice", given usually through a constructed persona, into which the consumer is bound to listen and believe in. Spam is then employing a strategy that mounts back to the beginnings of modern advertising.

At the dawn of the Twentieth century advertising was beginning to explore new forms of consumer persuasion and the new discipline of psychology began to be applied in consumer persuasion. Ads started to appear associated with positive images that would engage the reader, such as health, prosperity and attractiveness. On the opposite end of the spectrum advertisers also found guilt to be a particularly powerful feeling. Ads were not only promising happiness to those who bought the product, but also guilt to those who resisted it. Guild would lead consumers to act, to buy, to engage with product (Dyer, 1982, pp.35-36). Both strategies, often at the same time, are employed in spam fraud emails. The emails are often wrapped in a aura of positiveness, from the kindness and proximity the reader gets from the writer's words, to the grand fortunes and rewards announced, to the sensation of well being the reader is promised to be left with if he gives a helping hand to someone in need. But sense of guilt is also likely to take hold of the reader for not having grabbed this chance to become rich, or for not having helped someone in need.

With the end of World War I and rates of production rising so did the need for consumption. One of the tactics that began to be used by the industry was distrust. As it was noticed that satisfied costumers weren't buying as much as dissatisfied ones, ads began inducing sentiments of self-criticism, discontentment and insecurity on to consumers, and the product appears as the antidote for all the problems, both real or fabricated ones (Dyer, 1982, p.38). In spam the same kind of tactic can be witnessed most prominently on emails announcing weight-loss programs, sexual enhancers, or cosmetic surgery. Hito Steyerl (2012) interprets the pictures present in these forms of spam as images of perfect humans whom constitute a negative image of the real humanity. The images reveal an army of photoshopped, sexy, skinny, smiling, horny, and rich humans, who are there to address all of us who do not look like that, and seduce us into becoming as perfect as them. By being shown the perfect bodies and perfect lives from these super-humans we become discontent with ourselves and will wish for that magical pill, that extreme diet, that profitable deal, which will warrant us a happy and perfect life. These are images that generate the same sort of discontentment and resentment that advertisers began to explore in the beginning of the Twentieth century. [ADD EXAMPLES OF IMG SPAM]

5.3 Adapting to the media

The parallels between Spam and ads also seem to share similar processes of adaptation and camouflaging, in order to make there way on to the consumers' eyes. By the mid-nineteenth century newspapers were the medium for ads, however advertisers were dissatisfied with restrictions no the content and dimensions of ads. An ad wasn't allowed to extend beyond the width of a newspaper column, or employ display layouts. Faced with these limitations advertisers began exploring ways to circumvent them. One of these tactics was the repetition of the product's name endlessly throughout the newspaper column, or the use of small letters to draw the product's in *small* font-size (Dyer, 1982, pp.25-26). More then one century later, and under a very different context, that of BBSs, computer clubs, and hackers, the same technique was becoming popular under the name of ASCII art. Faced with the limitations of computers of 1970s and 1980s, ASCII art became a solution for creating images or large font-size text, which could be exchanged among users (Wikipedia, 2013a), as in the example bellow.

```
                      ..',''...
                 .,:ldxkkkkkkkkkkxol:'.
              'cdkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkko:.
            .;dkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkxxkkkkkkkkkkkkkkko,
          'okkkkkkkkkkdc;'.          ..';cdkkkkkkkkkc.
        'dkkkkkkkkd:.                        .:xkkkkkko.
      .dkkkkkkkx;.                             .:xkkkkko.
     ckkkkkkkd'                                  ,xkkkkkk,
    dkkkkkkx,                                      ;kkkkkkl
   .xkkkkkko                                        .dkkkkko
   dkkkkkkc                                          okkkkkl
  ckkkkkkl  .....                                    dkkkkk,
 .kkkkkkx ;XMMMMMNd  WMMMMMMK: .MMMMMM,  OMMMMN ;MMMMM, .kkkkkx
 ckkkkkk; WMMW.OMMM' WMMMckMMM cMMMMMMd  OMMMMM.dMMMMM,  ckkkkk,
 xkkkkkk  NMMMo:,,,  WMMM.cMMM.OMMWkMMN  OMMMMMoXMWMMM,  .kkkkkl
 kkkkkkx  'OMMMMXl.  WMMMONMMW.WMMOlMMM. OMMWOMNMMOMMM,  .kkkkkd
 kkkkkkx   .lOMMMW'  WMMMOxdc.,MMMl,MMMl OMMWlMMMMlMMM,  .kkkkkd
 xkkkkkk  XMMM oMMMd WMMM.    oMMMMMMMMK OMMW.MMMO:MMM,  .kkkkkl
 ckkkkkk, kMMMcOMMMl WMMM.    KMMMx:WMMM.OMMW XMMo:MMM,  ckkkkk,
 .kkkkkkx lONWWXOc   0000.    0000. k000,d000 l00.,000' .kkkkkx
  lkkkkkkl          ,kkk.     ;kkkxo:.            okkkkk,
   dkkkkkkc          NMNMX    oMMoclOMMo          okkkkkl
   .xkkkkkkl         OMK.NMd  oMM.   oMM,        .dkkkkko
    .dkkkkkkx'       :MM; cMM' oMM.   :MM:       ,xkkkkkl
      ckkkkkkko.    .WMMWWWMMN oMM' .cNMK       'dkkkkkk;
```

```
    .xkkkkkkkd,    OMX    .WMx oMMMMWNOc    .;xkkkkkko.
  ,xkkkkkkkko,.                        .;dkkkkkkkd'
    'okkkkkkkkkxo:'..          ...,:okkkkkkkkkl.
      .:dkkkkkkkkkkkkkxdddxxkkkkkkkkkkkkko,
        .,lxkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkdc'
            .;codkkkkkkkkkkkkdl:,.
                  ..',;;;,,'.
```

It is curious that this same technique had a rebirth in the 2000s as way of sending typical in-your-face spam messages without actually writing terms such as "discount", "Viagra", or "promotion", which allow spam-filters to easily classify the message as spam (Shankland, 2008).

Other, least explicit Spam and ads also seem to share among themselves an intention to merge with the surrounding context. Advertising arrives to us through newspapers, magazines, billboards, hand delivered fliers, radio and TV commercials, and web-pages. In each of these media ads must not disrupt or the content of its hosting medium, but flow with it. [REFERENCE: ADS AND THEIR CONTEXT] Within the digital realm spam is no less pervasive, appearing not only in our email accounts, but also om blog comments, wikipedia articles, or instant messages. On each one of these media spam tries to disguise itself as their typical style of communication. On emails we might read a message that might seem sent by a close friend or by our bank; On a wikipedia spam might disguise itself as an article, or might insert promotional links to existing articles (Wikipedia, 2013b); On a blog spam, we might read something that sound like a comment, such as

> This post is so help to me! Thanks for share.ugg boots for cheapdiscount ugg bootsugg boots cheap-cheap ugg bootsugg boots on salediscount ugg bootsugg boots for menugg boots outletugg boots for kidshttp://bestdiscountuggboots.webs.com/http://bigdiscountuggboots.blinkweb.com

In Dalas Smythe's theory of audiences as a commodity sold by the mass-media to advertisers, the contents provided by the media are seen essentially as a mood generator that facilitates the digestion of ads by its audiences.[ADD REFERENCE]

5.4 Direct marketing and online ads

Besides all the mentioned parallels advertising seems to come closer to spam in the form of direct marketing and online ads. Direct marketing approaches consumers directly, communicating its message by surreptitiously entering their private lives. Generally direct marketing arrives by post - direct mail - , or telephone - telemarketing. In these cases advertising uses the same channels as we do to receive important mail or phone calls, from friends, family, or our bank. [GIVE LONGER DESCRIPTION, references, and COMPARISON TO SPAM] Spam tries the same strategy to get our attention, by appearing side-by-side to legitimate electronic communications, and taking on the same type of language as the legitimate ones. It asks us for the same amount of attention and trust we deposit on a friend of bank. However there is a fundamental difference: direct marketing functions still mainly in a physical world. When we receive a letter from our bank, before opening it, we don't know if it contains an ad for its latest savings program, or an important message about our account. As neither do we nor the postman know this, he delivers the message on to our mailbox, and we go on and open it. If this had happen within the digital realm, spam filters would have sieved through the content or our message and assessed the probability of it being spam. [How spam filters work. Look at Spamassin] The digital nature of spam allows machines to analyze, quantified, and binarily define digital communications as either spam or a legitimate message, or in other words noise or signal. It than be affirmed that the possibility of classifying something distinctly as spam is exclusive to digital realm.

If I follow this line of thought all kinds of online advertising would be considered as spam, and therefore filtered away, but that isn't case. Surely one can resort to the use of ad-blocking plugins, but that is not the norm, and online ads seem not to contain any of the dangers, and disruptive potential attributed to spam. [EXPAND]

5.5 Where is the difference?

Since spam and online ads are both unsolicited forms of advertising why isn't the same treatment given to two of them? Why is spam fought with spam filters, to which quite a lot of research goes on to, while online ads are free to appear next to our emails, or on Youtube videos we want to watch? First of all online advertising, unlike spam, does not originate on the fringes of the capitalist economy, but at its very center. With a company like Google, as the source of many of the online advertising, it is only logical that online ads will continue to be present in our online life. Secondly, spam, as I have previously argued, constitutes a minor language, which a minority constructs within the major body of advertising. This situation positions spam as a threat to advertising, like a virus that lives from its host, but also threatens it. According to Deleuze and Guattari's:

> Minorities, of course, are objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity or sex with their own ghetto territorialies, but they must also be thought as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger

uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.106).

If a minority has the potential to deterritorialize a majority, it poses a threat to the majority by threatening its dominant and established position. If spam would grow to become as prominent, accepted, and popular as advertising it would bring advertising into a marginal territorility, similar to the one inhabited by spam. If this were to happen consumers would begin to look at ads with the same kind distrust and obliviousness with which they look at spam. Not only this would be disastrous to the advertising industry, which has been built on the premise that ads are a reliable way of making consumers buy products, but also to the whole capitalist economy that relies on advertising to keep functioning, and the mass-media that in great part live from the ads' revenue.

If one adds to this threat of becoming minority, the fact that spam is in great part deceptive, and therefore consumers must be protect against it, it is only natural that forces within the capitalist economy try to push spam aside. However I am convinced spam entails a stronger threat to advertising, by being one step ahead from it and presenting a perfected and evolved form of advertising. My argument is based on Raymond William (1980) claim that advertising constitutes a magic system. William argues that our society is often criticized for being too materialistic, but in fact it doesn't seem truly materialist. If that were the case, Williams argues, an ad would only have to announce the product qualities, and no extra claims would be needed. But evidence suggest that ads which make extra promises, such as "beer X will make manly, young and friendly", are more successful than the ones than don't do it. Why does that happen? Raymond Williams sees this demands for the validation of a product, beyond its actual capabilities, as a form of magic - an organized and professional system of non-logical actions which a given group of individuals believes in - functioning within our high-tech and rational society. When we respond to these extra claims made in ads, and buy the announced product, we essentially are buying the fantasy of how we would like to be. The product is simply a pretext for the fantasy we are paying for. Given this, isn't it then expected that in a future incarnation of advertising the advertised product will entirely disappear, and costumers will just buy a dream brought by the ad? And isn't that what the fraud spam like the "419" is doing, but in a more honest a perceptible way? When we reply to one of these emails we are buying the dream of becoming rich through the involvement in a dubious business with an America soldier whom took part in Osama bin Laden's capturing, or to gain the friendship of a slim, fair, and very good looking Fatima Kones. We are free to choose one from the numerous fantasies circulating is spam emails. They will surely provide us with escape and release from our uneventful lives.

5.6 Spam: the future of advertising

I all seriousness I would like to know if this development can possibly happen. If at some point in the future spam and advertising will become one and the same thing. If advertising will recognize in spam its future image and the next logic step for it to take. In a effort to push things into this direction, and taking inspiration from the popular best ad competitions, I would like to launch the Spam Awards. The contest will be both a source of awareness to the great wealth creativity that circulates in spam, often unnoticed to eyes of the public, as well as a stimulus to innovative strategies to the thriving sector of the 21st Century creative industries which is spam. [Spam Awards Image]

6 Conclusion

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