

DADA

126 pt

CAMOUFLAGE

58 pt

by Paul Gangloff

32 pt

‘A sentence such as “Intimate flannel everything show anymore nature nature, second barons” might appeal to Dadaists’ suggests a website about spam. Yet, any dada aficionado senses that this is a different aesthetic of language. It’s unlikely that Huelsenbeck would have used words such as “Deadpools ground rather stream blue able filled, everyone” in the Dada Almanach, nor that Tzara would have declaimed “Sized martin medulla pretty their as cleansing. Resources upgrade cakes roots with powerful ending marianne along diluted past spirits meats place” at the Cabaret Voltaire. Dada might be everything, but not that.

16 pt

But if not a Dadaist one, what is the purpose of the statement “Lobe performance painting originally together seemed information put saying” and these cited above? A very specific purpose indeed. These are designed to provoke an erosion of the softwares telling spams apart from other emails. Such softwares build a vocabulary list of the kind of words used in spam. By enriching the vocabulary of spam with text such as “Studio morning music stake passing thus television development martin” it blurs the distinction between spam and non spam vocabulary to an extent that makes it almost impossible for a software to tell the difference. Of course, “Smart stock perfect, form painting rocket heat candide, investors. Black bag economy, within hot. Working this stoved, chicken” are not sentences meant for anyone to read. Probably no one wrote them either. They have been aggregated, somehow. One might find something like “Percent, hardware originally made further doesn’t thought part magazine reply except what friends less japan biggest. Under, single sorrow corner” if one scrolls down to the bottom of a spam email. It is located at the bottom, because it is unlikely that people take time to scroll down their spam emails. Instead, one is more apt to click the button marking the email as spam—and that is the trick. The spam filter gets human feedback that an email containing sentences as “Offline step chief leave problem past takes virus moisture about”, “Believe very drinks wrote during took, or “Uniformly questions until minutes barons you” are, in fact, spam. This corrupts the software’s ability to learn, because someone might send an email containing some of the words of, say, a sentence like “Stake state degree system attitude act” in a different order.

12 pt

Gregory Bateson would say that a phrase like “Terrible stocks hawthorne usa television able filled taste photo everything old green built principle light itself companies” is an instance of camouflage, which he defines as the opposite of communication. According to him, camouflage is achieved: (1) by reducing the signal/noise ratio, (2) by breaking up the patterns and regularities in the signal, or (3) by introducing similar patterns into the noise. That is pretty much the purpose of putting together words like “Today space http actions”.

10 pt

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