

NARRATOR (V.O)

How you act depends on how  
you are. So to be responsible  
for how you act, you must be  
responsible for how you are.  
But to be responsible for  
choosing how you are, you  
must have chosen how you were

*T J Watson 01.04.2019*

...e that.  
...finitum.

There is no ultimate self-  
determination. There is no  
ultimate responsibility.

The work here documented was produced with the aid of random selection and algorithmic distribution; it consists of online video advertisements, designed and assembled, uploaded and circulated.

To construct the advertisements, text used in a previous work, *Vanishing Mediation*, was first simplified and re-worded to comport to a YouTube idiom (see FIG 1.). Subsequently, two American, class-unspecific voices were employed to narrate the text, forming the basis of separate audio tracks. Two pieces of stock music – randomly selected from Pond5's audio library – were further allocated to each voice-over.

Once audio had been completed, the advertisements' visual element was made by randomly selecting six videos from Shutterstock's footage library and dividing them, randomly, between the two audio tracks. Subsequently, two five-second extracts were taken from each video file and edited in a regular cycle to form thirty-second moving image works (see FIG 2 for schema). Thus constructed, the videos were uploaded as a YouTube advertising campaign.

Ordinarily, advertisers meticulously tailor the algorithmic distribution of online advertisements, determining the virtual location of their video so as to target particular demographics. The only specification given to the circulation of these videos, however, was regional: they play to viewers within Greater London, the site of *Vanishing Mediation*. Thus, YouTube users within a defined geographical area encounter an argument – once previously displayed in public – in private, mediated, like many online advertisements, with prefabricated music and images.

As reservoirs for outsourced moving image, stock libraries accord to capitalistic imperatives, lowering equipment and labour costs and expediting production time. Yet, when browsing catalogues of stock content, filmmakers confront a range of self-contained single-shot videos, each precisely composed as if to resemble canonical artists' moving image. Alienable and discreet, the videos – as commodities – await their instrumentalisation, vulnerable to the caprice of advert and advertiser.

But to what do such adverts and advertisers remain vulnerable?

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Video 1.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sYKC-rnu6c>

Video 2.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-c7t9AkiPoc>

### **Mediation Vanishes**

YouTube video advertisements  
2019

FIG 1.



NARRATOR (V.O)  
How you act depends on how  
you are. So to be responsible  
for how you act, you must be  
responsible for how you are.  
But to be responsible for  
choosing how you are, you  
must have chosen how you were  
before that. And before that.  
And before that. Ad infinitum.  
There is no ultimate self-  
determination. There is no  
ultimate responsibility.



FIG 2.

Video 1.

American man voice-over.

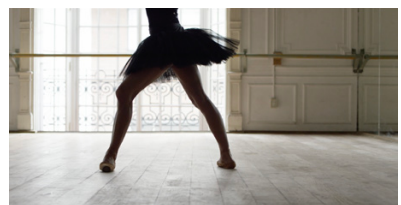
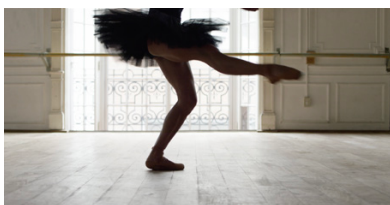
Pond5 music. ID:45383312.



Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 26702797



Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 32010973



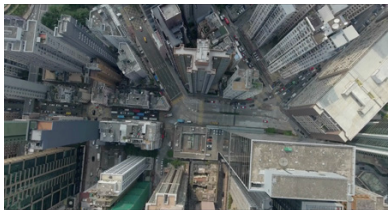
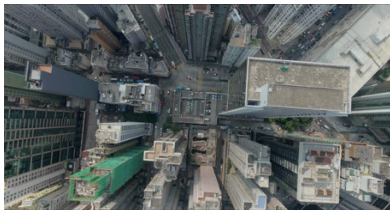
Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 16900717

FIG 2.

Video 2.

American woman voice-over.

Pond5 music. ID:80158737.



Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 24089902



Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 19000327



Shutterstock video. Stock footage ID: 12327599

