

Video 3

6 V2 Video 2

6 V1 Video 1

Audio 1

Audio 2

Audio 3

Audio 4

0.0

Master

*T J Watson 1.10.2019*

The enclosed work adopts the form of ten non-sequential videos, isolated and afloat on YouTube.

Like previous broadcast platforms, YouTube accrues profit from advertising. Yet unlike previous broadcast platforms YouTube faces little imperative to privilege any particular image commodity, whether singular film or serial television show; rather, YouTube aspires merely to keep viewers watching, irrespective of form or content. Through their extended, undirected spectation, users apprehend lucrative advertisements and supply the data necessary to vend advertising space, neatly bestowing a commodifiable record of their viewerly activity.

The majority of YouTube's most watched items remain music-videos, each bearing durations of three minutes. When moving image and sound were first conjoined, the visual held primacy over the sonic: musical compositions were devised to accompany film. For the most watched YouTube videos today, however, the hierarchy is inverted: audio tracks are established first and moving image made secondarily. In the epoch of cheap and demanded video content, affirmative visuality proliferates.

The construction of this work began with its audible dimension: text, taken largely from a previous work, *Whether with Joy or in Fear*, was rendered into scripts (see Fig 2), then narrated to produce voiceover segments, each supplemented with opening – and punctuating – sound test files.

Subsequently, a library of moving image was compiled, comprising newly taken footage, digitally animated graphics and sequences purchased from existing stock catalogues (see Fig 1). The narrated scripts were assigned a host of library entries (see Fig 3) and uploaded to YouTube. Within the footage library, the bespoke shots of London register a number of imagistic contestations: a far-right political sticker adorns a civic statue, a waste disposal vehicle obscures a law firm's doorway, and window cleaners labour to maintain a city sky scraper. Studio and stock shots, by contrast, appear self-consistent.

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If the moving-image was once marshalled to critique the heteronomised static image, what might critique the heteronomised moving-image now?

## Playlist

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfk2Llz6UD\\_OjYYHV3FzbHA/playlists](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfk2Llz6UD_OjYYHV3FzbHA/playlists)

1.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy069rQukLU>

2.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fnHd5Pfp98>

3.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bE91qtF2K0>

4.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcO6Lrq1XKU>

5.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzVSpN2njNw>

6.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ\\_gNEh6gFk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ_gNEh6gFk)

7.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPUwtxrQ8VA>

8.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4h5a6ljMsw>

9.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRH-bue1R3E>

10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx6f8bl8kbE>

## **Desert Islands**

10 single channel videos  
2019

FIG 1.

## Footage

### A Kant (Green Screen)



**Aa** Zoom in

**Ab** Zoom out

### B Paperwork (Green Screen)



**Ba** Zoom in

**Bb** Zoom out

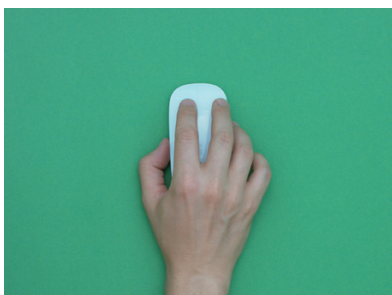
### C Coin and Hand (Green Screen)



**Ca** Zoom in

**Cb** Zoom out

### D Mouse and Hand (Green Screen)



**Da** Zoom in

**Db** Zoom out

**E** City of London



**Ea** Zoom in

**Eb** Zoom out

**F** Farrer and Co, Lincoln's Inn



**Fa** Zoom in

**Fb** Zoom out

**G** De la Rue Printing, London



**Ga** Zoom in

**Gb** Zoom out

**H** KFC Sign, London



**Ha** Zoom in

**Hb** Zoom out

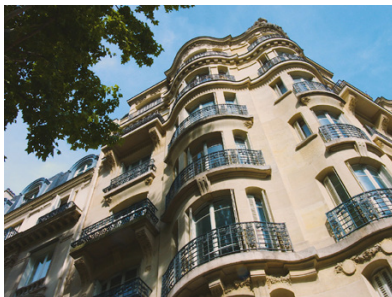
**I** Dragon, City of London



**Ia** Zoom in

**Ib** Zoom out

**J** Apartment of Gilles Deleuze, Paris



**Ja** Zoom in

**Jb** Zoom out

**K** Waves, Grand Cayman (Shutterstock ID 1028853938)



**L** Green Iguana (Shutterstock ID 1013777840)



**La** Zoom in

**Lb** Zoom out

## M Green Screen TV (Shutterstock ID 1009494500)



**Ma** Zoom in

**Mb** Zoom out

## N Robinson Crusoe Frontispiece



**Na** Fence and sword

**Nb** Background ship

**Nc** Guns and face

**Nd** Summary text



**Na1** Zoom in

**Na2** Zoom out

**Nb1** Zoom in

**Nb2** Zoom out

**Nc1** Zoom in

**Nc2** Zoom out

**Nd1** Zoom in

**Nd2** Zoom out

## O Cayman Bank Note



**Oa** Queen and flag

**Ob** Cayman Map

**Oc** Turtle

**Od** De la Rue



**Oa1** Zoom in

**Oa2** Zoom out

**Ob1** Zoom in

**Ob2** Zoom out

**Oc1** Zoom in

**Oc2** Zoom out

**Od1** Zoom in

**Od2** Zoom out

## P Rotating CGI Ugland House (Half-Constructed)





**Q** United Kingdom Map



**Qa** Enlargement

**Qb** Reduction

**R** Robin Hood Print



**Ra** Enlargement

**Rb** Reduction

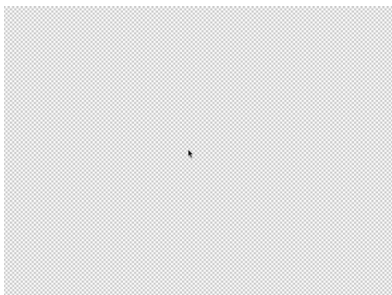
**S** City of London Logo



**Sa** Enlargement

**Sb** Reduction

**T** Cursor



**Ta** Spiral inwards

**Tb** Spiral outwards

FIG 2.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Rêver des îles, avec angoisse ou joie  
peu importe, c'est rêver qu'on se  
sépare, qu'on est déjà séparé, loin des  
continents, qu'on est seul et perdu - ou  
bien c'est rêver qu'on repart à zéro,  
qu'on recrée, qu'on recommence.

(pauses)

In the early 1950s, the Cayman Islands  
did not have a bank; it remained a  
provincial Caribbean economy, sustaining  
fewer than ten thousand inhabitants.  
From the 1960s onwards, however, Cayman  
began to court the reserves of the  
world's booming financial industries.  
Gilles Deleuze ended his life in 1995.  
Subsequently, banking assets held in  
Cayman have tripled. Today, the islands  
hold close to 1.5 trillion dollars.

A4 voice-over script (1)

NARRATOR (V.O)

The Cayman Islands grew affluent through their role in offshore finance. Though the islands' population is small, they boast a GDP of roughly 2.5 billion dollars. By most estimates, the Cayman Islands have a higher GDP per capita than the United Kingdom. The islands parade expensive real estate, upmarket restaurants and luxury boats. The Cayman Islands have a negative trade balance of more than 1.5 billion dollars: they import far more goods than they export. The Cayman Islands' currency notes are printed by De La Rue printing, a firm based largely in the UK; Cayman Islands coins are minted by the Royal British Mint. In the Cayman Islands, currency is imported.

(pauses)

On Thursday 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. Listed among those reasons for exiting were concerns regarding the global movement of persons and the desire to reclaim national sovereignty. "Take back control" was one of the leave campaign's principal slogans. Some argued that leaving the European Union could encourage further deregulation of British finance. It was suggested that, subsequent to these changes, Britain's economy might adopt an economic model similar to that of Hong Kong, heavily centred on financial institutions, operating as a repository for global capital. The United Kingdom was poised to cement its status as centre of the transnational offshore system.

NARRATOR (V.O)

British industrial capital rapidly developed upon production's withdrawal from global markets. With trade trailing behind Holland's, Britain adopted high-tariffs and protectionist policies. Subsequently, markets in daily necessities emerged, servicing a working class and engendering urban development. Since the decline of its empire, the British economy has turned increasingly to financial services. It is often claimed that Britain could not manufacture cheap commodities without being undercut by the Global South. In the Global South, many have voiced complaints regarding the role British finance plays in tax avoidance: unable to tax local elites, it is argued, their sovereignty is diminished.

(pauses)

Tax havens, or "secrecy jurisdictions", enable individuals and businesses to evade domestic criminal laws, financial regulations, transparency rulings and more general social obligations. The spectre of tax havens further affords capital bargaining power: if taxes are too high, supposedly, money will be moved "offshore". The civil servant, Vassel G. Johnson was instrumental in the establishment of the Cayman Islands as an offshore financial centre. Johnson introduced much of the law that enabled tax avoidance. He once stated, "the Cayman Islands view confidentiality differently: we treat it with kid gloves, for it is the prime support of the country, of promoting the tax haven business." On 26 February 1994, Vassel Johnson became the first Caymanian to be knighted by Her Majesty the Queen.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Under English law, company directors are required to maximise shareholder value. For a publicly listed company, this entails minimising the company's outgoings. Given that a high tax bill is seldom desirable for investors, directors will often divert profits offshore. It is unclear whether company directors are legally bound to minimise taxation or not. In 2013, Farrer & Co produced a report claiming that it was not illegal for directors to refrain from minimising a company's tax bill. The finding was reported in major newspapers. Farrer and Co's legal practice, however, largely involves facilitating trusts established offshore. This was not reported.

(pauses)

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NARRATOR (V.O)

Stranded on a seemingly deserted island, Robinson Crusoe constitutes a privileged image for philosophers. For Karl Marx, Robinson offered a means to consider differences in use and exchange value; for Wittgenstein, a way to discuss a private language. In most philosophical invocations, what is notable about Robinson is his isolation. In Defoe's novel, Robinson Crusoe is not alone. There are numerous other inhabitants of his island: "savages" as the narrator states. Robinson Crusoe was written at a time of British imperial expansion. Through the often-violent subjugation of much of the world, Britain established a vast territorial and trade empire.

(pauses)

In 1719, John Clarke and John Pine produced the earliest illustration of Robinson Crusoe. In a scene absent from the novel, Robinson appears forlorn whilst a ship struggles in the background. The engraving includes various narrative and symbolic elements, enabling the picture to summarise the novel. It is often claimed that the reception and development of photography was structured by that of previous two-dimensional arts, such as painting and printmaking. In this regard, recent - and developing - pictorial habits are thought to be manifest within older media. It is estimated that over 800 billion photographs will be taken this year. The *Ken Burns Effect* constitutes a popular technique in documentary filmmaking whereby a camera pans across and zooms upon a still image. It is supposed that the Ken Burns Effect enables filmmakers to retain an audience's attention; implicitly, viewers are thought to lack the discipline or inclination to parse a static image.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Setzen wir nun an die Stelle Robinson's einen Verein freier Menschen, die mit gemeinschaftlichen Produktionsmitteln arbeiten und ihre vielen individuellen Arbeitskräfte selbstbewusst als eine gesellschaftliche Arbeitskraft verausgaben. Alle Bestimmungen von Robinson's Arbeit wiederholen sich, nur gesellschaftlich, statt individuell. Ein wesentlicher Unterschied tritt jedoch ein. Alle Produkte Robinson's waren sein ausschliesslich persönliches Produkt und daher unmittelbar Gebrauchsgegenstände für ihn. Das Gesamtprodukt des Vereins ist ein gesellschaftliches Produkt. Ein Theil dieses Produkts dient wieder als Produktionsmittel. Er bleibt gesellschaftlich. Aber ein anderer Theil wird als Lebensmittel von den Vereinsgliedern verzehrt. Er muss daher unter sie vertheilt werden. Die Art dieser Vertheilung wird wechseln mit der besondern Art des gesellschaftlichen Produktionsorganismus selbst und der entsprechenden geschichtlichen Entwicklungshöhe der Produzenten. Nur zur Parallele mit der Waarenproduktion setzen wir voraus, der Antheil jedes Produzenten an den Lebensmitteln sei bestimmt durch seine Arbeitszeit. Die Arbeitszeit würde also eine doppelte Rolle spielen. Ihre gesellschaftlich planmässige Vertheilung regelt die richtige Proportion der verschiednen Arbeitsfunktionen zu den verschiednen Bedürfnissen. Andererseits dient die Arbeitszeit zugleich als Mass des individuellen Antheils des Produzenten an der Gemeinarbeit und daher auch an dem individuell verzehrbaren Theil des Gemeinprodukts. Die gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen der Menschen zu ihren Arbeiten und ihren Arbeitsprodukten blieben hier durchsichtig einfach, in der Produktion sowohl als in der Distribution. Woher also der räthselhafte Charakter des Arbeitsprodukts, sobald es die Form der Waare annimmt?

NARRATOR (V.O)

Green iguanas were first brought to the Cayman Islands as pets. Within a decade of arrival, however, their number had increased exponentially. Today, the wild population is considered almost unmanageable. In 2019, nearly one million iguanas were culled. Cullers were remunerated for every iguana body collected, costing the government millions of dollars. Wealthier residents bemoaned the scheme as a welfare system for the island's unemployable surplus population. Alert to the conditions of their income, the wealthy claimed, cullers would only kill lizards too old or too young to reproduce.

(pauses)

In recent decades, the Cayman Islands have courted tourism to augment profits derived from offshore finance. The Cayman Islands offer a combination of luxury services and unspoilt marine life. Though the Cayman Islands use few resources, they benefit from global manufacturing: capital accumulated in industry is funnelled into Cayman-based financial vehicles. Should global industry continue to operate as it does, climate change will inflict irreparable damage on Cayman's coral reefs. Many have complained that such destruction would leave tourists without reason to visit.



NARRATOR (V.O)

Design software often uses a grey and white chequered image to signify transparency. Paradoxically, the visible, gridded pattern represents absence. Through the design's formal regularity, the appearance of non-transparent objects, opaque and alienable, is supposedly rendered obvious: image-makers register interruptions in tessellated squares. As computerized shorthand for non-appearance, the "checkerboard" background is relatively recent. Historically, it emerged as European socialisms disintegrated, gaining international popularity while the twin processes of financialisation and digitisation underwent acceleration. Financialisation and digitisation are best understood at transnational levels. Without fixed geographical centres, the two produce seemingly discrete objects, expanding through abstraction.

(pauses)

Significant collectors of contemporary art often purchase works through vehicles based in tax havens. In doing so, they avoid inheritance tax, capital gains tax and a host of other duties. Today, the sale of major artworks often involves offshore companies, freeports and other constructions that enable tax avoidance. Over the last fifty years, the art world has grown significantly. Presently, there are more people who identify as an "artist" than at any other point in history. The majority of these people, however, will not earn an income sufficient to survive on from art alone. Unable to subsist on state benefits, most will undertake precarious employment within the service sector.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Designed logos are ordinarily saved and downloaded as vector files with transparent backgrounds. Such images can be rescaled without pixelation. Transparent backgrounds permit logos to be superimposed onto various backdrops; the designs appear free floating, isolated. Though a vector logo without background will appear devoid of context, the file contains a bounding box: a rectangle situating the design within. Hence, while designs might appear discrete, there is an invisible structure that registers where images begin and end.

(pauses)

The term "society" is commonly used in two ways: to refer to the general condition of living with others and to refer to groups of people. In this regard, "society" has been opposed to both the idea of the lone individual and the idea of other distant, different societies. The latter meaning has often led people to speak of independent national societies. "Society" is frequently interpreted as a formation distinct from the state. The British Conservative prime ministers, Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron were noted for their use of "society". Both politicians advocated reduced state intervention and the rule of the market. In 1987, Margaret Thatcher famously declared that there was "no such thing as society". In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, David Cameron spoke of the idea of a "big society". This became a flagship policy.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Wir haben jetzt das Land des reinen Verstandes nicht allein durchreist, und jeden Teil davon sorgfältig in Augenschein genommen, sondern es auch durchmessen, und jedem Dinge auf demselben seine Stelle bestimmt. Dieses Land aber ist eine Insel, und durch die Natur selbst in unveränderliche Grenzen eingeschlossen. Es ist das Land der Wahrheit (ein reizender Name), umgeben von einem weiten und stürmischen Ozeane, dem eigentlichen Sitze des Scheins, wo manche Nebelbank, und manches bald wegschmelzende Eis neue Länder lügt, und indem es den auf Entdeckungen herumschwärmenden Seefahrer unaufhörlich mit leeren Hoffnungen täuscht, ihn in Abenteuer verflechtet, von denen er niemals ablassen und sie doch auch niemals zu Ende bringen kann. Ehe wir uns aber auf dieses Meer wagen, um es nach allen Breiten zu durchsuchen, und gewiß zu werden, ob etwas in ihnen zu hoffen sei, so wird es nützlich sein, zuvor noch einen Blick auf die Karte des Landes zu werfen, das wir eben verlassen wollen, und erstlich zu fragen, ob wir mit dem, was es in sich enthält, nicht allenfalls zufrieden sein könnten, oder auch aus Not zufrieden sein müssen, wenn es sonst überall keinen Boden gibt, auf dem wir uns anbauen könnten; zweitens, unter welchem Titel wir denn selbst dieses Land besitzen, und uns wider alle feindseligen Ansprüche gesichert halten können.

FIG 3.

Script	Footage Sequence
1	Ja-Qb-Ob2-Ab-Ea-K-P-Jb
2	Ga-K-Oa1-P-Nb1-Od2-Ob2 Ia-K-C-Sa-Bb-Ea-Oa2
3	Qa-Na1-Hb-Da-Sb-Eb-Nb1-C-Oa2 Oa2-Sb-C-Ra-K-Fa-Bb-Pa
4	Fa-Ba-C-C(Ob1)-Ra-Ma(Fa)-Ma-B(Ob1)-Mb P-Ob1-D-Bb-K-Hb
5	Qa-Aa-Na1-Nc1-Nb1-Nd1-Lb-F-I-E-G N-Nc-Na-Nb-Nd-Ra-P-J-C-F-E-D-G-H-I-B-A-Oc1-M-M(N)
6	Na1-C-G-Od1-N-Nc1-Nb1-P-Ma(K)-D-Ta-Ba-Hb
7	Lb-I-Sa-Na1-Cb-Oa2-Ba Oc2-K-P-Ga
8	Da-Sa-Bb-B(F)-B(Ob1)-B(I)-B(K)-Hb-Ma(Ta-D) Ea-Aa-Qa-A(K-Ob1-I-E)-Ra-Ob1-Cb-Qa
9	Ta-Qa-Ra-Sa-P-Cb-Ea-D-Tb K-P-C-Fa-Ra-D-Ha
10	Aa-Na1-Qa-Ca-Ma(K)-Tb-Jb-Ob2-Nc1-Fa

