

1 Introduction

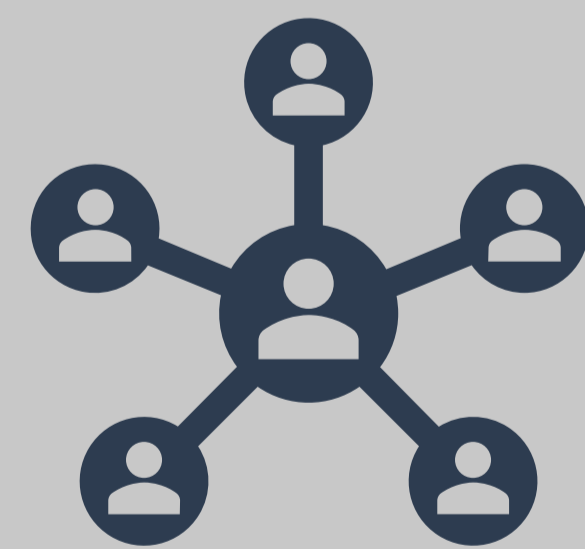
- ▶ **YouTube** (YT): largest online video platform
- ▶ People who make YouTube videos as a full-time job (“**creators**”) face financial precarity
- ▶ “**Sponsorship**”—i.e. promoting 3rd party product/service to audience *within* a video—as way to secure extra income



- ▶ Discursive tension between
 1. creator’s relationship with their viewers (built on perceived **authenticity** & **community**);
 2. introduction of commercial motives (commodifying those very attributes)
- ? Linguistic strategies to negotiate tension?

2 Creators & Viewers

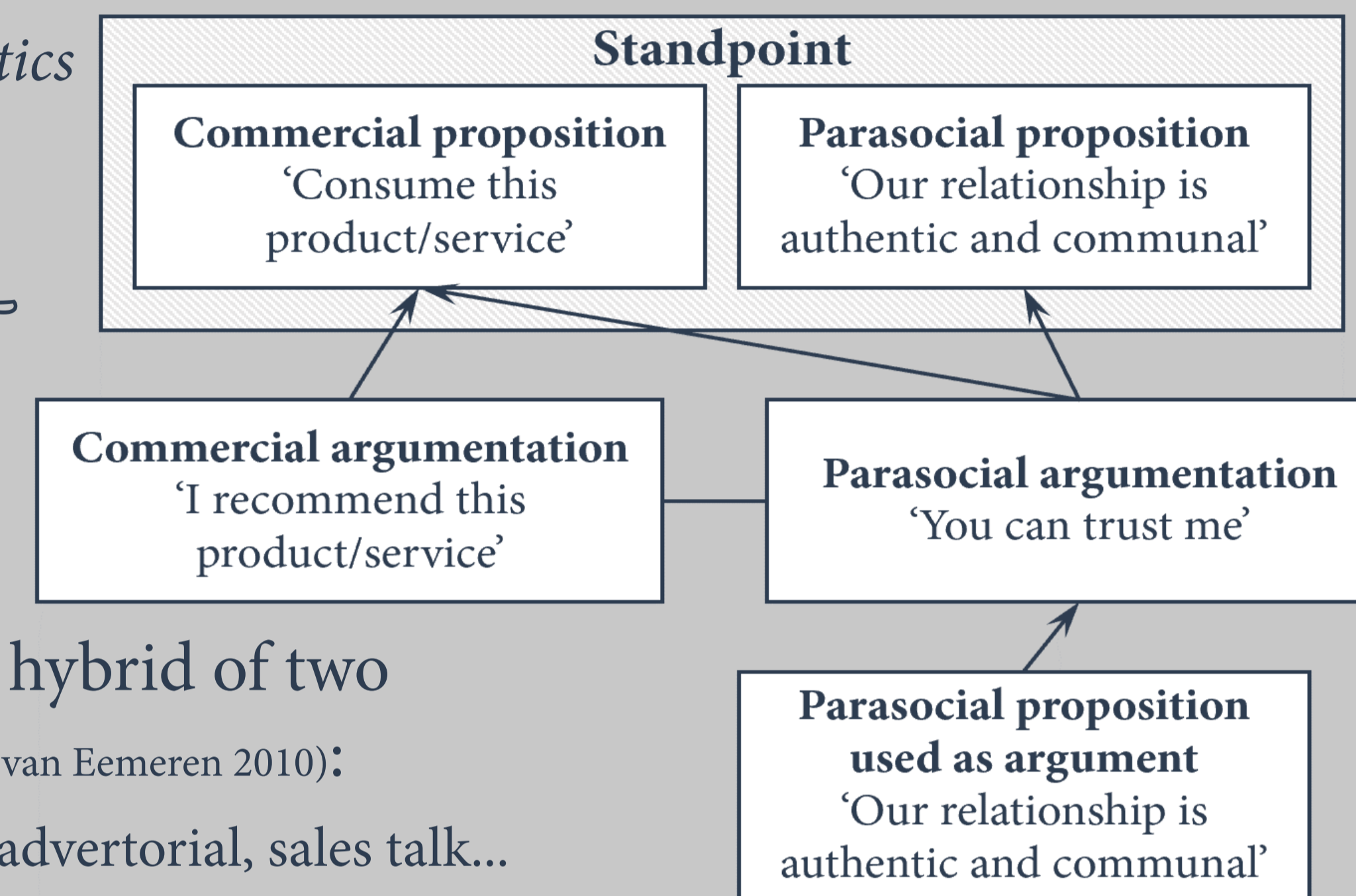
- ▶ Interaction between creator and viewers on YouTube = “**parasocial**” (coined by Horton & Wohl 1956—cf. Chen 2016; Ferchaud *et al.* 2018; Rihl & Wegener 2017)
- ▶ That is: one-way relation viewer → creator, which viewers nonetheless experience as **intimate** and **meaningful**
- ▶ Two “parasocial attributes” (e.g. Banet-Weiser 2012; Cocker & Cronin 2017; Cunningham & Craig 2017; Hou 2018):
 1. **Authenticity**: “congruence between avowal and actual feeling” (Trilling 1971:2)—on YT as a *performed* and *perceived* affect (Hou 2018);
 2. **Community**: “collaborative, co-constructive and communal interdependence” (Cocker & Cronin 2017:455; Cunningham & Craig 2017)
- ▶ Expectation: creators will **protect** parasocial attributes *and* **employ** them **persuasively**



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3 Framework

- ▶ Argumentation theory: *Extended Pragma-Dialectics* (van Eemeren 2010): valuable analytical tools
- ▶ (Re)conceptualize sponsorship as (non-mixed) **multiple difference of opinion**
- ▶ Parasocial proposition can be employed as “**argument by authenticity**” (cf. *authority*)
- ▶ Macro-contextual opportunities/contraints: hybrid of two **communicative domains** → **activity types** (van Eemeren 2010):
 1. Commercial domain → *promotion*—e.g. advertorial, sales talk...
 2. Interpersonal domain → *communion*—e.g. chat, love letter...



5 Conclusions

- ▶ Observed strategies are aimed at undercutting commitment to the **commercial proposition**, while substantiating the **parasocial** one
- ▶ Analysis as argumentative practice provides tools for understanding strategic moves...
- ▶ ...and vice versa, YT sponsorships provide interesting case of argumentation in context
- ▶ Follow-up questions: **quantification** (which strategies are most frequent?) & **generalization** (strategies on platforms other than YT?)
- ▶ Interested in reading more? Full paper accepted for publication in *Journal of Argumentation in Context*; pre-print accessible [here](#).

4 Strategies

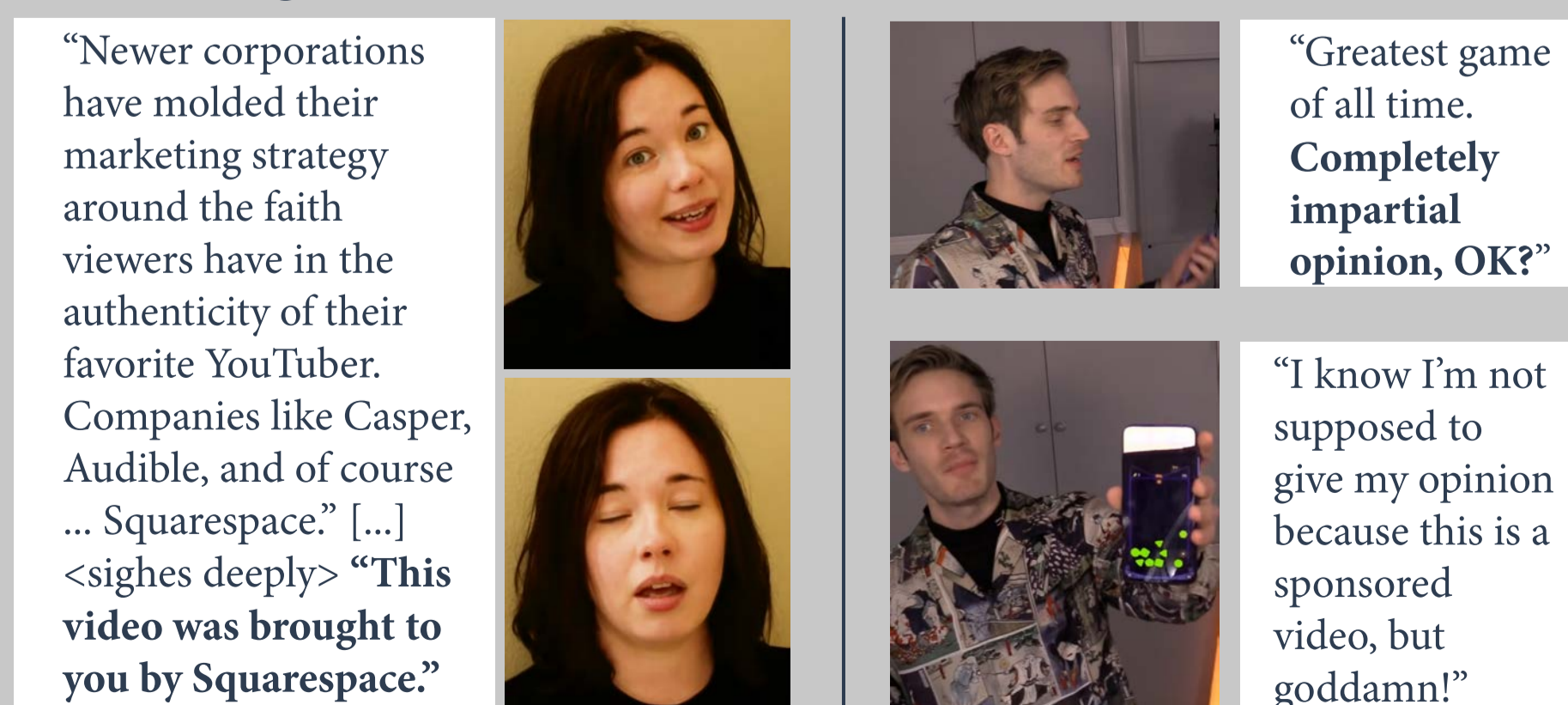
- ▶ Three “aspects of strategic maneuvering” (van Eemeren 2010): *Topical selection*, *Presentational choices* and *Audience adaptation*
- ▶ Case studies: sponsorships by YT creators PewDiePie (Kjellberg 2019), brutalmoose (MacLeod 2017), Lindsay Ellis (Ellis 2018) & Drew Gooden (Gooden 2020)

4a Topical selection

- ▶ **Flouting reasonability standards**: offering evidently insufficient/untrue arguments

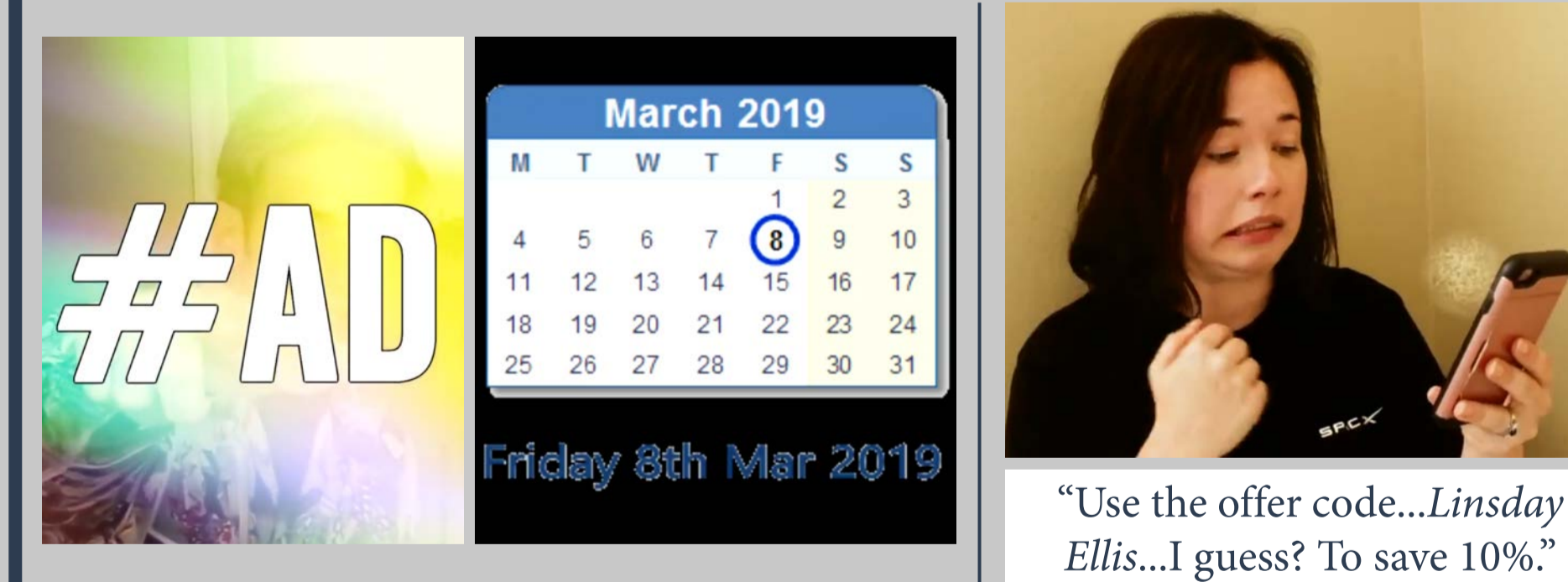


- ▶ **Engaging in (ironic) meta-discourse** on doing the sponsorship



4b Presentational choices

- ▶ **Indices for ‘low effort’**: amateurish, low-res effects; underprepared/relevant delivery

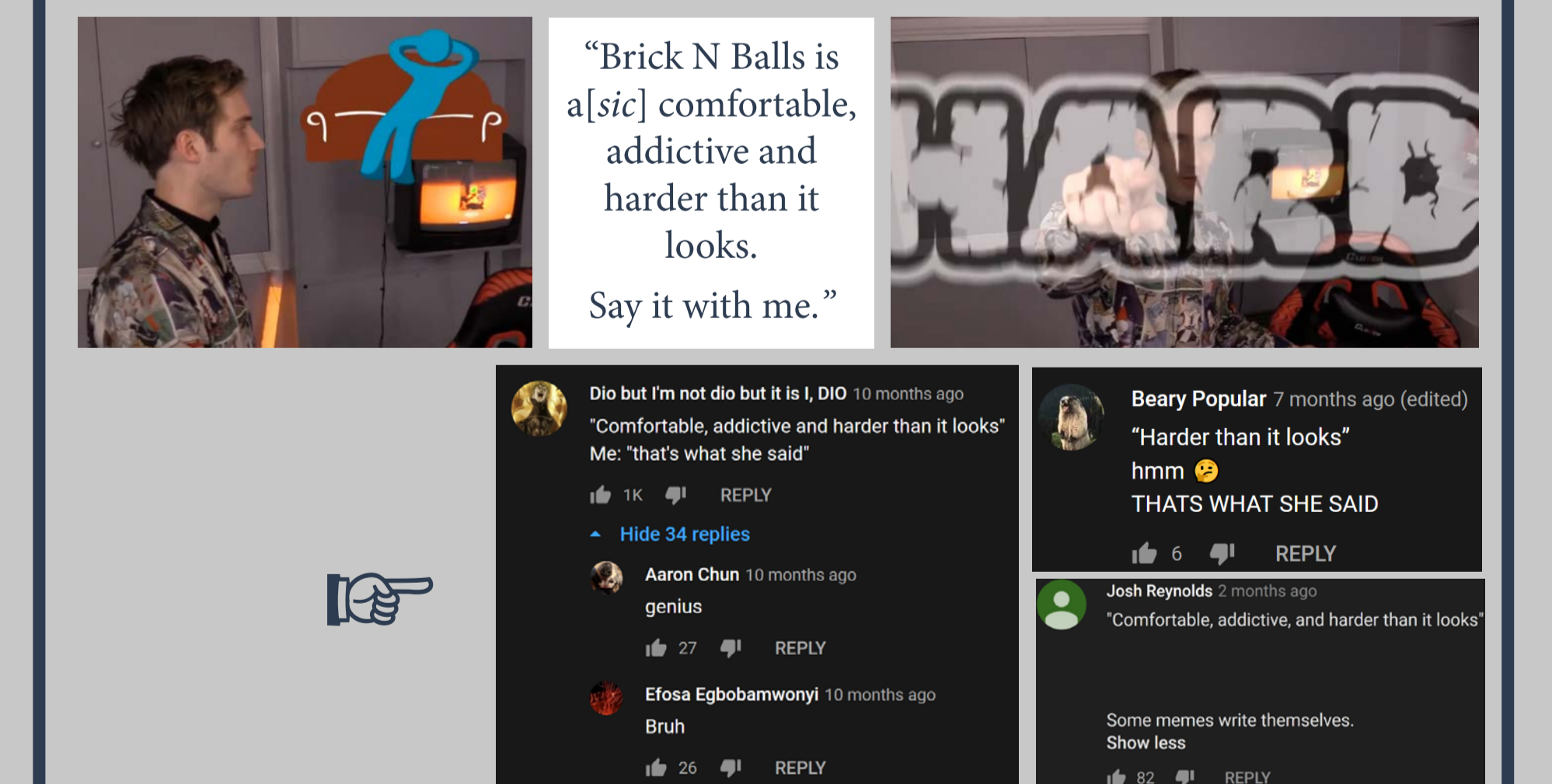


- ▶ **Subverting sponsor demands** in presentation



4c Audience adaptation

- ▶ **(Co-)constructing local tropes** ‘in real time’



- ▶ **Drawing on existing shared tropes**

