

Transgressive Voiceover Narration and Contested Audience Complicity in *The Wolf of Wall Street*: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse-Reception Analysis

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This study examines how a transgressive voice-over narrator sustains charisma while recounting fraud, addiction, sexual excess and legal exposure. Data comprise 199 JORDAN (V.O.) units from *The Wolf of Wall Street* screenplay and an IMDb reception corpus of 2,063 user reviews. The full review corpus was searched for recurring reception terms, and a purposive sample of 200 substantive reviews was qualitatively coded. Using corpus-assisted interactional-pragmatic discourse analysis, the study investigates how the narrating-I converts wrongdoing into performance, quantification, comedy and legal procedure, while positioning an implied audience as witness, consumer and occasional accomplice. The findings show that the voiceover is strongly self-centred, frequently quantified and rich in money, sex/body and drug vocabulary, but comparatively poor in explicit moral vocabulary. The narrating-I appears reflective through ironic distance from the acting-I, yet this split rarely becomes moral answerability. The voiceover does not simply recount criminal ascent; it sells a socially desirable identity built around money, masculine confidence, risk and survival. IMDb reviews further show that viewers publicly negotiate the same tension. Many reviewers describe the film as energetic, funny and seductive, whereas others criticize its lack of morality, victim erasure and possible glorification of Belfort's lifestyle. This pattern is described as pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction. These findings extend interactional pragmatics beyond participation management by demonstrating how voiceover systematically organizes moral positioning and how this positioning is reproduced, resisted and complicated in public reception discourse.

Keywords: voiceover narration, interactional pragmatics, dialogical self theory, moral neutralization, reception discourse

Narratives of wrongdoing do not always damage the narrator's self-image. Some narrators can publicly acknowledge greed, fraud, addiction, betrayal or exploitation while still appearing charismatic, funny, self-aware and in control. This creates a linguistic and pragmatic problem: how can transgressive narration make wrongdoing narratable without making the narrator fully answerable for it?

Film is a cultural product as much as a narrative one. As Teays (2012) observes, "with movies, we can explore complex ethical issues in a venue that allows us to feel, think and judge at the same time." For the present study, film is treated not only as a visual object but also as a site where language organizes moral attention. Recent work on screen narratives similarly treats television drama as a site where social meanings and audience engagement are produced (Adway, 2024; Yasin & Khan, 2022).

Language in films is also relevant because meaning in films is generated not only through plot and images, but through language, including dialogue, silence and tone. Dialogue in film is of special significance for analysis because it is designed to appear naturalistic yet performs carefully scripted pragmatic work (Kozloff, 2000). Voiceover is especially important because it can speak across diegetic and extradiegetic levels, addressing viewers while also commenting on the narrated world.

Recent work in film pragmatics has shifted voiceover from a narratological device of exposition or focalization to an interactional-pragmatic phenomenon. Dynel (2025) shows that voiceover narration can reorganize participation frameworks through narrator turns that operate at the production end, the reception end and the level of diegetic quasi-participation. Existing interactional-pragmatic research therefore explains how voiceover manages participation, but it has not adequately accounted for how voiceover reorganizes moral accountability across narrating selves, or how such moral positioning is reproduced, resisted and complicated in reception discourse. The present study addresses this limitation by examining voiceover not only as participation management, but also as a mechanism for organizing moral accountability and audience positioning.

To address this limitation, the article brings interactional pragmatics into dialogue with Dialogical Self Theory, moral neutralization and reception discourse. It proposes pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction as a framework for analysing cases where a retrospective narrator appears divided from a past acting self, yet uses that division to manage, rather than deepen, moral accountability. *The Wolf of Wall Street* is used as an empirical case because Jordan Belfort's homodiegetic voiceover offers a concentrated example of transgressive narration organized around split-self commentary, direct address, quantification, comedy and legal procedure.

The present study examines the voiceover narration in *The Wolf of Wall Street* screenplay. The analysis consists of 199 voiceover passages attributed to the narrating Jordan Belfort. It uses interactional pragmatics of voiceover narration, Dialogical Self Theory, moral neutralization and reception discourse to explain how the narrating-I manages a morally damaged self-image while directing audience attention toward charisma, comedy, money, expertise and survival.

The study also uses IMDb reviews as a receptional triangulation corpus. It contains 2,063 user reviews, many of which explicitly debate whether the film is comedy, critique, glamorization, satire or a morally empty spectacle. These reviews are not treated as controlled audience-response data. Rather, they are treated as public reception discourse. They show how viewers themselves negotiate the tension between attraction and moral unease.

Five research questions guide the analysis:

RQ1: What corpus-assisted linguistic patterns characterize Jordan's voiceover narration in the screenplay?

RQ2: What interactional-pragmatic strategies does the narrating-I use to make morally transgressive conduct narratable?

RQ3: How does the voiceover construct the relationship between the narrating-I, the acting-I and the implied audience?

RQ4: How do IMDb reviewers negotiate the film's tension between entertainment, charisma, moral unease and perceived glorification?

RQ5: To what extent do IMDb reviews reproduce, resist or complicate the audience positions designed by the voiceover?

The study advances four closely related arguments. First, the interactional practices of voiceover examined in recent pragmatics research also operate in transgressive narration, as distinct from nostalgic or reflective narration. Second, Jordan's narration produces a pseudo-dialogical self: the narrating-I appears divided from the acting-I, but the split does not develop into sustained moral answerability. Third, the screenplay's voiceover transforms fraud, excess and legal danger into scale, comedy, knowledge and procedural risk. Fourth, IMDb reviews show that this moral appeal is socially debated as viewers adopt, reject or complicate the invitation to enjoy transgression. The study therefore contributes in three ways. It extends interactional-pragmatic voiceover analysis to transgressive narration, introduces pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction as an analytic concept, and demonstrates a replicable two-corpus design that links the interactional-pragmatic design of scripted voiceover narration to public reception discourse.

Literature Review

Voiceover narration and interactional pragmatics

Voiceover narration has been discussed in narratology and film studies as a means of explanation, memory and focalization (Bordwell, 1985; Chatman, 1990; Kozloff, 1988; Piazza, 2010). Beyond these narratological functions, pragmatics of fiction and film discourse treats voiceover as a communicative act with participant roles and reception effects (Dynel, 2011; Goffman, 1981; Janney, 2012; Jucker & Locher, 2017). Dynel's (2025) interactional-pragmatic account is especially important for this study because it treats voiceover as a turn structure that operates at the production end, the reception end and the level of diegetic quasi-participation. Dynel's call for further datasets directly motivates the present article, which tests these insights on another narrator and genre.

This perspective is central to the present study. Jordan's voiceover is not treated as a mere explanatory device or as simple exposition. It is treated as a pragmatic resource that organizes participation by addressing, instructing, joking with, challenging and sometimes implicitly involving the audience it constructs. In this sense, the voiceover does not only tell the story of fraud and excess; it frames how that story can be heard, judged and morally negotiated.

Narrative identity and split-self representation

McAdams' (1993) narrative identity theory suggests that an individual creates a sense of self by creating a life-long history based on their experiences. Wortham (2001) similarly emphasizes that narratives do not simply report events; they position speakers and characters across narrated and narrating events.

The present study draws on this distinction because Jordan's voiceover constantly separates the self who acted from the self who now narrates. Harrison's (2020) study of *The Handmaid's Tale* is useful here because it shows how voiceover can mediate split-self presentation, especially when linguistic features such as "you" address combine with filmic composition devices to shape audience interpretation. In *The Wolf of Wall Street*, however, the split self has a different ethical function. It is not primarily a structure of trauma or resistance. It is a mechanism of self-management: the narrating-I can mock, coach or correct the acting-I while preserving control over the moral meaning of the story.

Dialogical Self Theory and pseudo-dialogical selfhood

Dialogical Self Theory posits that there exist multiple I-positions within an individual's self structure that can interact with one another in unique ways (Hermans, 2001). Harré and Moghaddam (2003) explore this multiplicity from an interactionist perspective, asserting that subject positions are constructed through discourse and social relations. This framework is suitable for addressing how the narrating-I and acting-I are organized in the screenplay.

Tappan's (1999) extension of this framework includes a normative aspect that is missing in purely structural models. Tappan posits that authentic moral agency requires a special type of relationship between the authorial voice and the experiential voice: the narrator must allow the past or experiential self to address and potentially trouble the present authorial self. Raggatt (2015) similarly warns that multiplicity does not automatically produce meaningful dialogue. A self may contain several positions without allowing those positions to challenge one another.

This distinction allows the present study to develop the concept of pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction. The voiceover creates structural dialogicality because the narrating-I and acting-I are distinguishable. Yet it rarely creates moral dialogicality because the acting-I is narrated, mocked and managed rather than allowed to accuse the narrating-I. The self is split, but the split often protects rather than transforms the narrator.

Moral neutralization, pragmatic unreliability and transgression narratives

Scholars have examined multiple strategies through which storytellers account for immoral conduct. Presser (2004) identifies how offenders construct moral selves even while describing violence. Menard-Warwick (2005) shows how speakers can voice contradictory moral positions in transgression narratives. Phillips (2013)

demonstrates how available ideological vocabularies can transform contradictions into acceptable self-presentations.

Together, these studies show that accountability in transgression narratives can be managed across categorical, relational and ideological dimensions. The present study extends this concern to scripted film voiceover by showing how Jordan's narration redescribes wrongdoing through comedy, quantification, professional register, sales language and legal procedure. This is why Dynel's (2021) work on deception in multimodal film narrative is relevant. The issue here is not always factual lying. It is a form of moral-pragmatic misdirection in which the narrator guides attention toward excitement, scale and skill while moving victims, harm and remorse to the margins.

Corpus-assisted film pragmatics and reception discourse

Corpus-assisted approaches are useful because they reduce reliance on isolated memorable examples and allow recurring patterns to be checked across a defined dataset. Bednarek (2015) demonstrates the value of bringing corpus procedures into the analysis of television and film narratives, while Zykova's (2025) study offers a recent model for combining an ad hoc film corpus, manual pragmatic annotation and frequency-based evidence. The present study follows this general logic rather than a fully automated corpus-linguistic design: it uses systematic extraction, selected frequency counts, review-term searches and qualitative pragmatic coding to support the close analysis of scripted voiceover narration.

The second corpus in this study consists of IMDb reviews. In this case, reviewers repeatedly discuss the same issues that the voiceover analysis raises: energy, comedy, charisma, excess, moral discomfort, possible glorification, satire and victim absence. Voiceover research has long emphasized that voice choices shape authority, truth-value and representation (Drummer, 2014; Kozloff, 1988). The IMDb corpus allows this article to examine not only how the voiceover designs audience positions, but also how those positions are taken up or challenged in public commentary.

Previous work on *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Prior scholarly engagement with *The Wolf of Wall Street* has approached the film from several disciplinary positions. Laurence (2016) reads the film through moral ideology and late capitalism, showing why viewers may be drawn to a figure they are also invited to condemn. Brokerhof et al. (2025) offer a particularly important recent connection, finding that popular Wall Street narratives can relate to viewers' desired future work selves. This matters for the present study because it suggests that the film's moral problem is not only representational; it is also aspirational. Viewers may read Belfort not simply as a warning, but as a figure attached to fantasies of success, freedom and status.

The gap is therefore precise. Existing studies help explain the film's ideological ambivalence and its potential relation to viewer aspiration, but they do not show in detail how that ambivalence is produced by the voiceover's language. The present study fills this gap by isolating the full JORDAN (V.O.) corpus and asking how its interactional-pragmatic design makes transgression enjoyable, narratable and commercially reusable. The IMDb review corpus then adds a second layer: it shows how public reviewers explicitly debate the same tension between critique and attraction.

Method

Research design

This study uses corpus-assisted interactional-pragmatic discourse-reception analysis. The design combines close discourse analysis with selected frequency counts and public reception coding. It remains a qualitative, case-intensive study rather than a statistically generalizable study of all film voiceover narration. Its purpose is to explain how one influential transgressive narrator is linguistically and pragmatically constructed, and how public reviewers negotiate that construction.

The study is based on two corpora. Corpus A contains the screenplay voiceover units marked as JORDAN (V.O.). Corpus B contains IMDb user reviews. Corpus A provides the primary textual evidence for self-construction, moral neutralization and implied audience positioning. Corpus B provides receptional evidence for how public reviewers reproduce, resist or complicate that audience positioning.

Corpus A: Screenplay voiceover corpus

The source-text data for this study are taken from the screenplay of *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Winter, 2013), specifically the Buff Revised Pages version dated March 5, 2013. *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013) is a biographical crime film based upon the memoir of Jordan Belfort, a stockbroker convicted of securities fraud and money laundering. The object of analysis is not the real Belfort's psychology, but the diegetic narrating-I constructed by the screenplay.

All JORDAN (V.O.)-designated sections were extracted systematically. Each analytical unit was defined as a continuous stretch of voiceover attributed to Jordan from a JORDAN (V.O.) label until the next speaker label, scene transition or interruption by screenplay action. Speaker labels, scene descriptions, page headers and non-voiceover dialogue were excluded from the word count. The final corpus contains 199 analytical voiceover units and 3,664 strict spoken voiceover words. A raw search for JORDAN (V.O.) produces a slightly higher count because screenplay formatting sometimes includes continuation markers; these were not automatically treated as new units unless they introduced a new discrete stretch of voiceover discourse.

Corpus B: IMDb reception corpus

The user reviews were extracted from the IMDb website and comprise 2,063 publicly available user reviews of *The Wolf of Wall Street*. IMDb was selected because it provides a large, publicly accessible and film-specific archive of user reviews attached to a single film page. This made it suitable for examining extended public reception discourse, rather than platform-specific interactional debate, as might occur on discussion-based sites such as Reddit or Letterboxd. For the main qualitative reception analysis, a purposive sample of 200 substantive reviews was examined. Title-only, rating-only and empty spoiler-placeholder entries were excluded. The aim was not statistical generalization to all viewers but receptional triangulation: the reviews were used to identify how public reviewers discuss the same moral tensions identified in the voiceover corpus.

After text extraction and basic cleaning, the exported IMDb review file comprised approximately 298,932 running-word tokens. The full review corpus was also searched for key reception terms associated with the study's analytic categories, including comedy, entertainment, energy, excess, greed, money, morality, glorification and victim absence. These searches were not treated as statistical measures of audience attitude, but as a corpus-assisted map of salient public-reception vocabulary.

Corpus-assisted measures and coding

For Corpus A, the analysis counted first-person singular forms, first-person plural forms, second-person forms, money/success terms, legal/procedural terms, explicit moral vocabulary, drug terms, sex/body terms, numbers/quantifiers and adversative markers. These features were selected because they relate directly to self-reference, audience address, measurable achievement, legal accountability, moral scarcity and transgressive domains.

The analysis proceeded in several stages. First, the extracted voiceover corpus was cleaned by removing speaker labels, page headers, scene descriptions and non-voiceover dialogue. The cleaned corpus and IMDb

review corpus were then imported into NVivo for organization, exploratory word-frequency queries, text-search queries and qualitative coding. Targeted frequency counts were produced and checked through NVivo searches alongside spreadsheet-based and scripted searches. Searches were conducted case-insensitively, and related forms were grouped where analytically relevant; for example, moral-family forms included *moral*, *morally*, *morality*, *morals*, *immoral* and *amoral*. For Corpus A, the analysis recorded both raw frequency and the number of voiceover units in which each feature occurred. For Corpus B, the full IMDb review text was searched for recurring reception terms, and selected hits were checked in context before being used as evidence in the qualitative interpretation.

NVivo functioned as the main qualitative data-management and retrieval tool. It was used to store the two corpora, organize coding nodes, retrieve coded segments and compare patterns across the screenplay and review data. Interpretation, however, remained grounded in close iterative reading of the voiceover units and review excerpts rather than in software output alone.

Qualitative coding grouped the voiceover units into five functional families: self-performance, moral neutralization, legal proceduralization, pseudo-dialogical self-construction and implied audience positioning. Passages could receive more than one code when they performed more than one function. For example, a quantified statement about illegal profit could be coded as both self-performance and moral neutralization. Appendix A provides 30 short illustrative V.O. excerpts from the screenplay voiceover corpus, keyed to the five functional coding families. The appendix identifies the most salient functional family as the main code and records an overlapping pragmatic or social function as a secondary code where relevant.

For Corpus B, reviews were coded for eight reception patterns: charismatic appeal, entertainment/euphoria, comedy framing, moral unease, glorification critique, satire/critique defense, audience implication and victim absence. These categories were developed through iterative reading of the reviews, while also being informed by the voiceover findings. This allowed comparison between textual design and reception discourse without treating the reviews as direct proof of audience effects.

The concept of pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction was developed through an abductive and iterative analytical process. Initial coding was informed by Dialogical Self Theory and moral neutralization, while repeated reading of the voiceover corpus showed that Jordan's narrating-I/acting-I split repeatedly produced apparent self-reflection without sustained moral challenge. The concept therefore emerged through movement between theory, corpus patterns and close reading rather than through either purely deductive or purely inductive coding.

Trustworthiness and reflexivity

Trustworthiness was addressed through transparency, triangulation and peer audit. The corpus extraction process is reproducible because the screenplay marks the voiceover passages formally. A full voiceover index, review sampling log, codebook, frequency tables, representative examples and negative-case examples were prepared as supporting materials. The review corpus is also reproducible at the level of sampling criteria and coding categories. Following corpus-pragmatic practice in film discourse research, coded units retained contextual metadata rather than being treated as isolated quotations (Zykova, 2025).

The initial coding was conducted by the author, who maintained analytic notes on coding decisions, category refinements and borderline cases during the iterative reading process. A peer audit was also conducted. A colleague with a PhD in English linguistics and the rank of assistant professor independently reviewed 20% of the voiceover units and 20% of the IMDb review sample against the coding framework. Points of disagreement were discussed, category definitions were refined and borderline cases were checked again before the final coding was used. This procedure was used as a peer-audit process rather than a statistical intercoder-reliability test; therefore, no agreement coefficient is reported. Its purpose was to test category clarity, identify borderline cases and strengthen coding consistency. To maintain conceptual coherence, each theoretical framework was assigned a distinct analytical role: interactional pragmatics explains participation; Dialogical Self Theory explains the narrating-I/acting-I relation; moral neutralization explains accountability management; and reception discourse explains public uptake.

Ethical and copyright considerations

The study did not collect private participant data. Corpus A consists of a published screenplay used for scholarly analysis, and Corpus B consists of publicly posted IMDb reviews. The review analysis avoids reproducing usernames as evidence and uses only short fragments when necessary. The screenplay is copyrighted, so the full corpus is not redistributed. Supplementary reproducibility materials can instead provide voiceover ID numbers, page references, coding categories and short legally limited excerpts. This approach allows methodological transparency without reproducing the full screenplay or review archive.

Results

Corpus profile: self-centering, quantification and moral scarcity

The screenplay corpus consisted of 199 analytical voiceover units, comprising 3,664 strict spoken words. Most units are brief and compressed. In practice, they tend to work through classification, numerical precision, ironic correction, rhetorical questioning and direct address rather than through extended moral reflection.

Table 1

Corpus-assisted lexical profile of Jordan's voiceover corpus.

Feature	Frequency	Units containing feature	Percentage of corpus units
First-person singular forms	213	122	61.3%
First-person plural forms	36	24	12.1%
Second-person forms	47	24	12.1%
Numbers/quantifiers	87	55	27.6%
Money/success terms	41	32	16.1%
Legal/procedural terms	21	14	7.0%
Explicit moral vocabulary	2	2	1.0%
Drug terms	24	19	9.5%
Sex/body/masculine terms	61	50	25.1%
Adversative markers	34	30	15.1%

Table 1 shows a clear pattern. The voiceover is strongly self-centred and frequently quantified. It contains recurrent language of money, sex/body display, drugs and legal procedure, but comparatively few explicit moral terms. Self-reference, scale and transgressive domains are therefore not occasional features; they are recurring resources through which the voiceover organizes Jordan's narrated self.

The scarcity of explicit moral vocabulary does not mean that morality is absent from the narration. Rather, morality is displaced into other interactional resources: quantification, comedy, legal procedure and direct address. This finding extends interactional-pragmatic accounts of voiceover by showing that participation management can also operate as accountability management.

Table 1 also points to a wider social pattern. The voiceover codes financial charisma through masculinity, bodily excess and class aspiration. Money is not presented only as economic success; it is attached to sexual access, bodily confidence, group worship and the ability to dominate or recruit others. Jordan's narrated self is therefore not simply rich or criminal. It is constructed as a masculinized financial persona whose authority depends on appetite, risk, excess and command over other people's desire.

Transgression is admitted but converted into performance

The coding identified several recurrent mechanisms through which the narrating-I constructs and protects a favorable image of himself while recounting transgressive behavior. These mechanisms can be understood through one broader interactional-pragmatic finding: the narrator repeatedly admits transgression, but he converts it into performance, expertise, comedy or achievement before it can settle into moral accountability.

An adversative concession pivot acknowledges transgression and then immediately redirects it toward achievement, comedy or institutional failure. In these cases, the utterance briefly approaches moral recognition but then displaces it, so acknowledgment functions as a route to neutralization rather than as a move toward accountability.

Voiceover examples include V.O.26, “Though I knew I was selling garbage, within twelve weeks I was making a fortune”; V.O.71, “It was obscene—in the normal world. But who wanted to live there?”; and V.O.94, “The SEC knew I was doing something shady, but they couldn’t figure out what the fuck it was.” In each case, the utterance begins near moral recognition but ends by moving attention elsewhere: fortune, abnormality as freedom or institutional incompetence. The theoretical significance of this pattern is that concession does not necessarily produce accountability. In Jordan’s voiceover, acknowledgement becomes an interactional bridge away from blame and toward performance, humour or institutional failure.

Transgressive actions are also classified using vocabulary associated with expert levels of professionalism - commercial tiers, clinical stages and connoisseurship - and therefore transform transgressions into areas of expertise. The register implies mastery, not culpability. For instance, prostitution services are classified through stock-market categories such as “blue chips,” “NASDAQs” and “pink sheets,” while drug intoxication is organized into “the tingle phase,” “the slur phase,” “the drool phase” and “the amnesia phase.”

Quantification is another central strategy. Precise measures - dollars earned, time elapsed, shares sold and amounts moved - are emphasized without corresponding detail about legality or harm. V.O.2 states, “The year I turned 26, I made 49 million dollars as the head of my own brokerage firm.” V.O.3 immediately adds that this was “three shy of a million a week.” The comic complaint is effective because it converts criminal wealth into a joke about underachievement. Similarly, V.O.121 reports that a stock opened at “\$4.50 a share” and was over “eighteen dollars” three minutes later. The narrative thrill comes from speed and scale, not from the victims of manipulation.

Parallel listing produces a spectacle of abundance. V.O.8 places “Naomi and my two perfect kids” alongside a “mansion, private jet, six cars, three horses, two vacation homes and a 170 foot yacht.” V.O.9 continues the list by placing gambling, drinking, prostitution and federal investigation in the same grammatical rhythm. The syntax gives possessions, family, vices and criminal exposure the same narrative weight. This is one way the voiceover turns moral disorder into stylistic momentum.

Another mechanism is credential and legend construction. The narrating-I does not only claim to be successful; he repeatedly represents success as something already recognized by others. V.O.49 states that word had spread on Wall Street and that he was becoming a legend, while the Forbes profile is first called a “hatchet job” and then immediately absorbed as the source of superstardom. The negative article becomes proof of cultural visibility. The narrator’s self-image is not built through confession followed by repair, but through hostile recognition converted into status. Even criticism is turned into evidence that the self has become too large to ignore. The pragmatic move is therefore double: the narrator reports external judgment while stripping it of its evaluative force and retaining only its credentialing value.

Legal accountability replaces moral answerability

The voiceover repeatedly treats accountability as legal procedure rather than moral answerability. Legal terms appear in relation to the SEC, federal agencies, indictments, proof, arrest, jail, prison, cooperation and charges. Yet the narrator rarely dwells on guilt, harm, restitution or victims. This produces a form of accountability without moral reckoning. In positioning terms, Jordan is therefore not primarily positioned as a guilty moral agent, but as a procedural actor moving through investigation, proof, arrest and survival. The voiceover shifts accountability from ethical relation to institutional process.

All federally serious crimes are constantly referred to by non-formal, casual or professional vocabulary that reduces the seriousness of crime or illegality. V.O.94 refers to securities fraud as “something shady.” V.O.186 describes criminal financial activity as “something about laundering drug money through offshore boat racing and a guy named Rocky Aoki.” The phrase “something about” makes the charge sound vague and almost comic, even though the underlying issue is serious.

This pattern becomes clearer when the screenplay is read against the IMDb reception corpus. Some reviewers notice precisely what the voiceover tends to avoid. One review says the film is engaging but limited by its “lack of morality.” Another says the film “lacks a moral core,” and another complains that “we hardly get the other side or get to see a victim.” Public reviewers therefore register the same problem: the film’s energy can outpace its moral counterweight.

Two additional patterns strengthen this finding: blame externalization and providential attribution. When the Swiss banker is arrested, the narration frames the event as improbable misfortune rather than as a predictable outcome of an illegal concealment network. The later Benihana reference works similarly: institutional exposure is redescribed through comic fate and divine cruelty rather than through causal responsibility. The Qualalude-driving episode also shifts from danger to miracle. V.O.162 calls it an “absolute miracle” that Jordan was not killed and an even bigger miracle that he had not killed anyone. The sentence acknowledges possible death, but the structure makes survival the main point and potential victims a secondary clause. In this respect, the voiceover does not erase consequences completely; it reorganizes them so that their narrative value returns to Jordan’s exceptional survival.

Pseudo-dialogical self-construction: split self without moral transformation

The analysis found four different ways the dialogical relationship between the acting-I and the narrating-I can be configured. These configurations include ironic commentary on the acting-I, second-person self-address in crisis, outcome-only narration and retrospective superiority positioning.

The narrating-I views the acting-I from afar and employs irony or mock bewilderment. The acting-I is made to appear foolish rather than reprehensible. V.O.115 asks, “What kind of maniac abuses eye drops?” V.O.161 says, “Wow. Maybe I hadn’t made it home okay.” In both examples, the narrator recognizes absurdity but not moral responsibility. The effect is comic distance rather than ethical confrontation.

The narrating-I also addresses the acting-I in second-person by name, establishing a coach-client relationship between the two positions. V.O.74 states, “Think, Jordan, think! How can you get up to her apartment?!” The narrating-I says nothing like “I had to think” or “I had to try to get up to her apartment.” Instead, it refers to the acting-I as “Jordan,” placing the speaking position outside the action. The second-person form creates a narrator who observes and coaches instead of a self who acts and answers.

Outcome-only narration also limits moral dialogue. V.O.84-85 says “I felt horrible” and then, “Three days later I filed for divorce and moved Naomi into the apartment.” The emotional sentence is immediately followed by a sequential outcome. What happened to Teresa as a moral subject is not explored. The narrating-I maintains control by moving the story forward before the acting-I can be held in place long enough for moral interrogation.

These patterns produce pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction. The self is structurally divided because the narrating-I and acting-I are distinguishable. However, this division does not become morally dialogical. The acting-I is observed, mocked, coached and explained, but not permitted to challenge the narrating-I’s authority. Self-awareness becomes a rhetorical resource rather than a moral event. This is the main theoretical implication of the split-self pattern: dialogical structure alone does not guarantee moral dialogue. In this corpus, the split between narrating-I and acting-I allows the narrator to display self-distance while retaining control over moral interpretation.

Implied audience positioning as interactional pragmatics

Jordan’s voiceover does not only manage the relationship between narrating-I and acting-I. It also manages the audience’s position. In interactional-pragmatic terms, the narration creates a reception end even though viewers cannot reply. The voiceover asks questions, gives commands, explains how systems work, assumes shared desire and occasionally assigns the audience a gendered body.

The voiceover’s interactional profile can also be described through recurrent pragmatic orientations. Drawing loosely on speech-act distinctions between assertives, directives, expressives and commissives (Searle,

1976), Table 2 summarizes the main orientations coded in NVivo. The categories are used analytically rather than as a rigid count, since many voiceover units perform more than one pragmatic function.

Table 2

Recurrent pragmatic orientations in Jordan's voiceover narration.

Pragmatic orientation	Typical realization	Pragmatic function
Assertive narration	Reports events, numbers, outcomes and business facts	Authorizes the narrating-I and projects control over the narrated world
Evaluative-expressive commentary	Jokes, mock surprise, insults, admiration and charged description	Turns excess and wrongdoing into comic or affective performance
Directive address	Commands, prompts and invitation-like imperatives	Recruits the audience as an addressed recipient or trainee observer
Rhetorical interrogative	Viewer-facing questions that do not request a real answer	Simulates interaction while steering interpretation
Classificatory declaration	Labels, taxonomies, rankings and insider categories	Transforms transgression into expertise or connoisseurship
Sales-oriented promise	Aspirational framing, transformation promises and infomercial logic	Converts biography into a sellable model of success

These orientations show that Jordan's voiceover is not only descriptive. It repeatedly combines reporting, evaluating, joking, categorizing and recruiting. This layered pragmatic design helps explain why the narration can normalize fraud and excess while still sounding vivid, confident and socially engaging. This supports the view that voiceover organizes participation, but extends it by showing that the addressed audience is also positioned morally and commercially. The reception end is not only invited to understand the story; it is invited to consume Jordan's narrated self.

The script repeatedly places the audience in an addressed position before moral interpretation can take shape. V.O.5 asks, "See that humongous estate down there? That's my house." V.O.18 asks, "You want to know what money sounds like? Visit a trading floor on Wall Street." V.O.11 commands, "Check this out." These forms turn the audience into addressed recipients, not distant observers.

The narrating-I also addresses the audience assuming that they participate in similar desires, appetites or value systems. V.O.13 claims that money buys "a better life" and "makes you a better person." The utterance does not invite the audience to debate whether this is true. It performs as if the claim belongs to a shared moral economy. The voiceover also positions the audience as consumers of Jordan's narrated self. The later infomercial passages recycle the origin story, achievement quantification and transformation promise already used in the voiceover. What first appears as autobiography later becomes a product.

This commercial structure becomes most visible in the late infomercial sequence. The origin story, the quantified success and the promise of transformation reappear as selling points in the seminar advertisement. The audience is therefore not recruited only at the moment when the seminar is announced. From the opening voiceover onward, Jordan's narrated self is organized as a product: humble beginnings establish relatability, numbers establish proof, and direct address creates a prospective customer. The screenplay's audience positioning is thus not merely a matter of intimacy or direct contact. It is a sales relation in which the viewer is trained to consume the self before the film reveals that self as a commodity.

This commercial audience positioning is also socially gendered. Jordan's voiceover repeatedly presents wealth as a route to masculine recognition, sexual access and group authority. Finally, embodied substitution assigns a male-coded heterosexual body to the audience. V.O.7 commands the audience to "put your dick back in your pants," while V.O.70 and V.O.81 similarly use second-person bodily substitution. The audience is not merely asked to hear Jordan's story; it is temporarily placed inside a gendered economy of money, sex and desire. This is why audience positioning in the screenplay is not only cognitive or moral. It is also bodily, masculine and commercial.

However, this masculine persona is not fully stable. The same voiceover that sells confidence also exposes bodily failure and comic loss of control, as when Jordan claims he could fly while "seeing two of everything" (V.O.11), classifies his Quaalude collapse through the "drool phase" (V.O.151), and later admits,

IMDb reception: charisma, comedy, moral unease and contested complicity

Table 3

Reception frame in the full IMDb review corpus	Keyword evidence
Money/greed/excess	money: 688; greed: 332; excess/excessive forms: 485
Comedy/entertainment/energy	comedy: 313; entertaining: 307; funny: 280; hilarious: 194; energy: 147
Moral unease	moral-family forms (moral, morally, morality, morals, immoral, amoral): 294 combined occurrences
Glorification debate	glorif- forms: 104; glamor/glamour forms: 35
Victim absence	victim: 49
Charisma and attraction	charismatic: 48; enticing: 4; “swept along”: 2
Audience implication / alignment	rooting: 7; root for: 17; “wanted it for myself”: 2; “swept along”: 2
Condemnation / critique	condemn forms: 20; denounce forms: 4; criticized/criticised: 5
Satire/critique defense	satir- forms: 76
Narration and address-device salience	narration: 45; voice-over/voiceover/voice over forms: 23; narrator: 5; fourth wall: 12

Figure 1.

A word cloud visualization of the plot of 'The Great Gatsby'. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with the most prominent words being 'drugs', 'life', 'story', 'money', 'performance', 'sex', 'greed', 'acting', 'character', 'excess', 'corruption', 'glamor', 'satire', 'victim', 'comedy', 'greedy', 'entertaining', 'debauchery', 'hilarious', 'funny', 'voice-over', 'moral', 'energy', 'narration', 'charismatic', and 'character'. The words are in various colors, including blue, green, yellow, and red, and are of different sizes, indicating their frequency or importance in the plot.

The full-corpus scan indicates that the review corpus is not only a set of isolated striking comments. Comedy, entertainment, energy, excess and morality recur across the reviews as a whole, while the qualitative sample shows how reviewers combine these frames in extended judgments. Public reception is therefore structured around ambivalence rather than simple approval or rejection. The significance of this ambivalence is that reception discourse does not simply mirror the film's moral positioning. It reproduces, resists and

complicates that positioning, which is why IMDb reviews are useful here as evidence of public negotiation rather than as proof of direct audience effects.

The reviews also register the narration device itself. In the exported review corpus, narration appears 45 times, voice-over/voiceover/voice over forms appear 23 times, narrator appears five times and fourth wall appears 12 times. These references are not numerous compared with broad evaluative terms such as money, story or performance, but they are analytically relevant because they show that some reviewers explicitly notice the film's addressive design. Several reviews describe the device as breaking the fourth wall, talking directly to the camera, or using voice-over to explain and inform situations. Others evaluate the same device differently: one praises the film's "superb narration," another calls the voice-overs "tedious," and another describes the voiceover narration as "self-aware, confessional, and dripping with irony." Public reception therefore responds not only to the film's moral content but also to the narrational and addressive mechanism that Corpus A isolates.

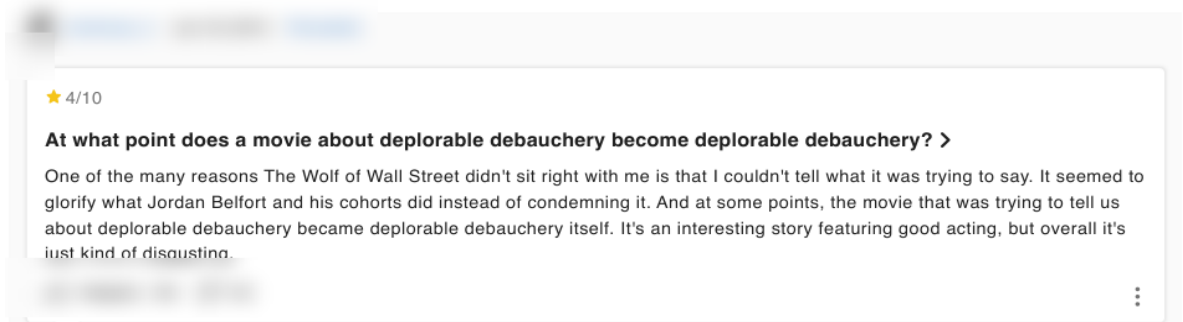
Other reviewers openly describe audience implication. One review says the viewer is "swept along" and that the film shows "how easy it is to get caught up in the grab for success, for money, for status." The same reviewer admits being "glad to be part of it" and wanting it "for myself," before criticizing the film for failing to balance the appeal. The wording mirrors the audience position designed by the voiceover: witness, consumer and temporary participant.

Not all reviewers accept that position. Some resist it. One negative review asks, "At what point does a movie about deplorable debauchery become deplorable debauchery?" and argues that the film seemed to glorify Belfort instead of condemning him. Others take a more ambivalent stance, describing the film as hilarious, excessive and technically brilliant while also noting its "lack of morality" or lack of a "moral core." Such reviews do not simply praise or condemn the film. They publicly negotiate the same moral instability created by the narration.

Figure 2 provides an anonymized example of this resistant reception frame, where perceived glorification becomes the reviewer's central moral objection.

Figure 2

Anonymized IMDb review excerpt illustrating resistance to the film's perceived glorification of transgression.



Taken together, the reviews create a pattern of three parts. Some reviewers (re)create the audience position created by the voiceover through their support for the fast pace, self-confidence, comic excess and Belfort's persuasive energy. Some resist that position by naming the film as glamorizing, shallow, disgusting or morally empty. The most analytically useful reviews complicate the position: they recognize the film as critique while admitting that its form makes critique pleasurable. This last pattern is closest to the voiceover's own logic. It shows that public reception often remains inside the same tension that the narration builds: the film can be understood as an exposure of greed while still being consumed as a fantasy of charisma and excess.

Text-reception synthesis

The two corpora converge without being collapsed into one another. The reviews show that the film’s tension between critique and attraction is not an invented critical problem but a publicly articulated reception problem.

Table 4
Text-reception synthesis across the screenplay and IMDb corpora.

Voiceover mechanism in Corpus A	Receptional uptake or resistance in Corpus B	Analytical link
Self-performance through money, scale, comedy and excess	Reviews repeatedly describe the film as energetic, hilarious, excessive and entertaining, sometimes while acknowledging its greed and corruption.	Quantification and comic framing recur in both textual design and reception vocabulary.
Legal proceduralization and moral scarcity	Reviews that complain about “lack of morality,” “lack of moral core” or missing victims echo the screenplay’s limited moral vocabulary and weak victim presence.	Moral scarcity in the voiceover is echoed by public complaints about weak moral balance.
Pseudo-dialogical split between narrating-I and acting-I	Reviews often recognize the character as corrupt while still praising performance, charisma and narrative energy, which reproduces the split between moral judgment and narrative attraction.	Reviewers separate moral judgment from narrative attraction, paralleling the split-self structure.
Direct address, sales discourse and implied audience participation	Some reviews describe being “swept along,” wanting the fantasy, or being pulled into money/status; others resist this position by calling the film glamorizing or disgusting.	Reception discourse shows both uptake of and resistance to the film’s addressive sales relation.

Discussion

The results confirm and expand upon previous interactional-pragmatic analyses of voiceover narration. Recent work by Dynel (2025) suggests that voice-over narrators can influence participants’ roles in participation frameworks within fictive communication levels, and calls for additional research on other types of voice-over narrators. The current study meets that call for additional research. It shows that comparable participation practices appear in a very different dataset, although the function of those practices differs. In Dynel’s (2025) study on *The Wonder Years*, adult narration of childhood produces memory, commentary and quasi-participation. In *The Wolf of Wall Street*, retrospective narration produces moral management. Jordan’s voiceover does not simply help the viewer understand what happened in the past. Rather, it sells a morally damaged self as energetic, knowledgeable and entertaining. What the voiceover sells is therefore not only a version of past events, but a socially desirable persona: entrepreneurial, masculine, class-mobile, excessive and apparently immune to ordinary moral restraint. The study therefore extends neutralization research by showing that mitigation is not produced only through excuses or justifications. In Jordan’s voiceover, blame is also managed interactionally: the audience is positioned as witness, consumer and occasional accomplice before sustained moral judgment can take shape (Phillips, 2013; Presser, 2004). This sets up the article’s central theoretical contribution. That is, if voiceover can organize participation, it can also organize how moral accountability is distributed between narrating selves, narrated selves and implied audiences.

Pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the concept of pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction. The term does not simply mean that the narrator has a divided self. Split narration, retrospective narration and self-commentary have all been discussed in different forms in narrative and dialogical-self research. The specific point here is different. Jordan’s voiceover creates the appearance of dialogical self-reflection while preventing that self-division from becoming sustained moral answerability. The narrating-I can observe, mock, correct and explain the acting-I, but the acting-I is rarely allowed to trouble the authority of the narrating-I.

This distinction matters for Dialogical Self Theory. Hermans' (2001) model allows the self to be understood as a multiplicity of I-positions, while Harré and Moghaddam's (2003) positioning perspective shows how these positions are produced through discourse and social relations. However, the present analysis shows that multiplicity alone is not enough. A narrator may display several I-positions without creating genuine moral dialogue between them. In *The Wolf of Wall Street*, the narrating-I and acting-I are clearly differentiated, but their relation is asymmetrical. The acting-I is made visible as an object of comedy, excess, desire or foolishness, while the narrating-I retains interpretive control.

This is where the finding extends Raggatt's (2015) warning that multiplicity does not automatically produce dialogue. It also develops Tappan's (1999) argument that moral agency requires a meaningful relation between the authorial voice and the experiential voice. In the present corpus, that condition is only partially present. Jordan's voiceover repeatedly creates the formal conditions for dialogue: temporal distance, retrospective commentary, self-address and evaluative correction. Yet these conditions do not lead to moral confrontation. The past self is not given enough ethical force to accuse the present narrating self. Instead, the past self is contained, stylized and narratively managed.

Pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction therefore has three linked features. First, there is self-separation. That is, the narrating-I appears distinct from the acting-I and speaks from a position of later knowledge. Second, there is self-containment as the acting-I is interpreted before he can become a source of moral demand. Third, there is audience display. This managed self-division is performed for an implied audience, which is invited to read self-awareness as charisma, wit or expertise rather than as moral transformation. These features explain why the voiceover can sound reflective without becoming ethically accountable.

This also extends interactional-pragmatic work on voiceover. Dynel's (2025) account is important because it shows how voiceover reorganizes participation frameworks across communicative levels. The present study adds that such participation management can also become moral management. Jordan's voiceover does not only create a relation between narrator and audience; it creates a relation among narrating-I, acting-I and audience. The audience is positioned as a witness to self-division, but the terms of that witnessing are controlled by the narrating-I. The audience sees the acting-I through a voice that has already classified, joked about or redirected the moral meaning of the action.

The concept also refines moral neutralization theory. Neutralization is not produced only through explicit excuses, denials or justifications. In this corpus, neutralization is also produced through the structure of the speaking self. The narrator does not always need to say that wrongdoing was acceptable. Instead, he can split the self, laugh at the past self, convert harm into anecdote, and move the audience toward performance before moral judgment develops. In this sense, pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction is a form of accountability management built into narration itself.

The theoretical value of the concept is that it helps distinguish between genuine moral reflexivity and performed self-awareness. A genuinely dialogical moral self would allow the past self, harmed others or competing moral voices to challenge the authority of the present narrator. A pseudo-dialogical self displays difference without allowing that difference to transform the narrator's moral position. This distinction is useful beyond the present film because many transgressive narratives depend on narrators who appear candid, ironic or self-aware while still controlling the moral terms of their own wrongdoing.

The findings also refine the idea of unreliable narration. Jordan's voiceover is not always unreliable because it reports false facts. Much of its force comes from apparent candor: he tells us about drugs, fraud, sex, manipulation and law enforcement. The unreliability is more pragmatic than factual: the narration does not depend mainly on false reporting, but on guiding attention toward money, comedy, expertise and legal procedure while pushing victims, harm and remorse to the margins. This extends classic accounts of unreliable narration and voiceover authority by showing how unreliability can operate through framing rather than factual contradiction (Chatman, 1990; Kozloff, 1988). Money is measurable; crime is procedural; excess is funny; victims are mostly absent. In this sense, the voiceover produces moral misdirection without necessarily needing

to lie. This point follows from the pseudo-dialogical structure: the narration is unreliable not mainly because it falsifies events, but because it organizes the relation between self-awareness and accountability in a misleading way.

The IMDb reception corpus shows why this matters beyond the screenplay. Reviewers repeatedly debate whether the film is critique, comedy, glamorization, satire or moral emptiness. Some explicitly describe being drawn into the very desire for money and status that the film seems to critique. Others resist that pull by naming the film's lack of victims or moral balance.

Implications for film-pragmatic analysis

An implication of the current study findings concerns the status of screenplay language. The analysis shows that screenplay voiceover can be studied as a pragmatic resource in its own right, not only as a blueprint for performance. The written labels, transitions and recurring voiceover turns make it possible to treat the screenplay as a structured discourse corpus. It shows how verbal design can organize attention, moral alignment and audience participation before performance, editing or cinematography intensify those effects. The value of the two-corpus design is that it places textual design and public uptake in conversation.

This also offers additional utility for research on communications and screenwriting. The study demonstrates that voiceover functions both as a mechanism for persuasion and as a tool for developing a narrative. Voiceover directs the focus of the audience, prevents interpretation by others (and thereby establishes it), creates interpretive frameworks for the viewer and enables the audience to participate in the development of a story prior to an articulated moral stance. For film criticism, this means that debates about glamorization cannot be limited to plot content or visual spectacle. They must also examine the verbal mechanics through which a narrator teaches audiences how to hear, desire and evaluate what they see. For screenwriting research, the finding is equally important: the ethical force of a script can reside in small linguistic decisions such as adversative pivots, second-person address, lists, labels and quantifiers. These are not decorative details; they are part of how the film's moral communication is built.

Conclusion

This study examined Jordan Belfort's voiceover narration in the screenplay of *The Wolf of Wall Street* and connected it with IMDb reception discourse. By isolating the 199 JORDAN (V.O.) units, the analysis showed how the narrating-I builds charisma while recounting fraud, bodily excess, addiction and legal exposure. The voiceover does not mainly hide wrongdoing. It makes wrongdoing narratable by translating it into numbers, jokes, expertise, sales logic, legal procedure and masculine display. The IMDb reviews showed that this tension is publicly recognizable, as reviewers repeatedly negotiate the film as comedy, critique, seduction, glamorization and moral discomfort at once.

The importance of these findings is that they show how moral positioning can be produced through verbal design rather than through explicit moral argument. Jordan's voiceover organizes what becomes noticeable, pleasurable and narratable before moral judgment fully settles. This matters because popular narratives of financial crime do not only represent greed or fraud; they can also make transgressive ambition sound energetic, comic and socially desirable. If popular Wall Street narratives can shape or intensify viewers' aspirational work selves (Brokerhof et al., 2025), then the verbal mechanisms that make transgression enjoyable are part of how financial ambition and moral judgment are socially organized.

The theoretical implication is that interactional pragmatics should treat voiceover not only as participation management, but also as a mechanism of moral positioning and accountability management. The concept of pseudo-dialogical moral self-construction helps explain this process: Jordan's narrating-I appears self-aware because he can laugh at, correct and distance himself from the acting-I, yet this split rarely becomes moral answerability. The study therefore distinguishes structural self-division from genuine moral dialogue. It also shows the value of linking scripted narration with public reception discourse, not to prove direct audience effects, but to examine how textual positioning is reproduced, resisted and complicated in public commentary. One limitation is that the analysis is based on the screenplay and public IMDb reviews rather than a full

audiovisual analysis of the completed film. Future research can compare script and screen, or apply the same framework to other crime and financial films such as *Goodfellas*, *Casino*, *Boiler Room* and *The Big Short*. These films are especially relevant because reviewers in the corpus repeatedly use them as points of comparison.

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Appendix A. Illustrative Coding Excerpts from Corpus A: *The Wolf of Wall Street* Screenplay Voiceover Corpus

V.O. ID	Short excerpt	Main code	Secondary code	Function
V.O.1	“My name is Jordan Belfort.”	Self-performance	Identity positioning	Introduces the narrating-I as the controlling source of the story.
V.O.2	“I made 49 million dollars.”	Self-performance	Quantification as achievement	Turns criminal ascent into measurable achievement and proof of success.
V.O.3	“three shy of a million a week”	Self-performance	Comic quantification	Makes extreme wealth sound like humorous underachievement.
V.O.5	“See that humongous estate down there?”	Implied audience positioning	Direct address / display	Positions viewers as addressed witnesses to wealth and property.
V.O.7	“put your dick back in your pants”	Implied audience positioning	Gendered embodiment	Assigns the audience a male-coded bodily position.
V.O.8	“mansion, private jet, six cars”	Self-performance	Class aspiration / display	Builds financial charisma through possessions and status signs.
V.O.9	“gamble... drink... three different Federal agencies”	Moral neutralization	Parallel listing	Places vice and legal exposure inside the same spectacular rhythm.
V.O.11	“Check this out... seeing two of everything”	Implied audience positioning	Masculine control undercut	Uses direct address while turning dangerous intoxication into comic competence.
V.O.13	“money... makes you a better person”	Moral neutralization	Shared moral economy	Reframes money as moral improvement rather than greed.
V.O.18	“You want to know what money sounds like?”	Implied audience positioning	Rhetorical interrogative	Stages viewer-facing interaction and draws the audience into Wall Street.
V.O.26	“Though I knew I was selling garbage...”	Moral neutralization	Adversative concession pivot	Acknowledges fraud but redirects attention toward rapid profit.
V.O.28	“my only responsibility was to put meat on the table”	Moral neutralization	Responsibility narrowing	Reduces ethical responsibility to provider logic.
V.O.39	“young, hungry and stupid”	Self-performance	Recruitment / domination	Frames exploitable followers as material Jordan can make rich.
V.O.49	“I was becoming a legend.”	Self-performance	Credential construction	Converts public attention into proof of exceptional status.

V.O. ID	Short excerpt	Main code	Secondary code	Function
V.O.67	“three kinds of hookers... blue chips”	Moral neutralization	Classificatory declaration	Turns sexual exploitation into market taxonomy and insider expertise.
V.O.70	“pray your dick didn’t fall off”	Implied audience positioning	Gendered bodily risk	Uses second-person bodily substitution to align viewers with male sexual risk.
V.O.71	“It was obscene -- in the normal world.”	Moral neutralization	Adversative pivot	Acknowledges obscenity but relocates value outside ordinary moral norms.
V.O.73	“You people’re all shit outta luck.”	Implied audience positioning	Direct audience address	Addresses viewers as outsiders to the narrated drug culture.
V.O.74	“Think, Jordan, think!”	Pseudo-dialogical self-construction	Second-person self-address	Splits the narrating-I from the acting-I through internal coaching.
V.O.81	“your cock went to heaven”	Implied audience positioning	Embodied substitution	Places the audience inside a male heterosexual fantasy position.
V.O.84-85	“I felt horrible” / “Three days later...”	Pseudo-dialogical self-construction	Outcome-only narration	Brief remorse is displaced by rapid movement to the next event.
V.O.94	“doing something shady”	Legal proceduralization	Euphemistic minimization	Reduces securities fraud to vague, casual illegality.
V.O.115	“What kind of maniac abuses eye drops?”	Pseudo-dialogical self-construction	Comic distance	Turns self-recognition into mockery rather than moral confrontation.
V.O.121	“\$4.50 a share... over eighteen dollars”	Self-performance	Numerical precision	Builds narrative thrill through price movement rather than victim harm.
V.O.151	“tingle phase... drool phase”	Moral neutralization	Taxonomy / bodily failure	Classifies drug collapse as comic expertise and undercuts control.
V.O.161	“Maybe I hadn’t made it home okay.”	Pseudo-dialogical self-construction	Retrospective correction	Uses comic correction to expose failed control without extended accountability.
V.O.162	“an absolute miracle”	Moral neutralization	Survival framing	Makes survival the main point while possible harm to others remains secondary.
V.O.181-182	“free seminar” / “I can change yours, too!”	Implied audience positioning	Sales-oriented promise	Converts biography into a commercial model offered to viewers.
V.O.186	“something about laundering drug money...”	Legal proceduralization	Vague legal summary	Makes criminal financial activity sound indirect and almost comic.
V.O.191	“sell me this pen”	Implied audience positioning	Sales pedagogy	Ends with a transferable sales lesson rather than moral closure.

Note. This supplementary table presents 30 short illustrative voiceover excerpts from *The Wolf of Wall Street* screenplay. Each excerpt is identified by V.O. number and coded according to the functional categories used in the analysis: self-performance, moral neutralization, legal proceduralization, pseudo-dialogical self-construction and implied audience positioning. Secondary codes indicate overlapping pragmatic or social functions where relevant.