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## THE MOVIE IS ON!: PRAGMATICS OF THE VIDEO JOKER IN WHO KILLED CAPTAIN ALEX?

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*THE MOVIE IS ON!:* PRAGMATICS OF THE VIDEO JOKER IN *WHO KILLED  
CAPTAIN ALEX?*

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the  
College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Hunter Skye Hulett

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Dennis Preston Professor of Linguistics

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2024

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

*The Movie is On!:* Pragmatics of the Video Joker in *Who Killed Captain Alex?*

The film *Who Killed Captain Alex?* (WKCA) is a Ugandan film that provides an opportunity to examine the use of pragmatic and specifically deictic features to study the manipulation of borders between the film and reality. A commentator called the Video Joker (VJ) is the film's deictic center, constantly destabilizing deictic relations and orienting the internal and external pragmatics of the film around themselves. As the film's ultimate pragmatic force, they occupy a position blurring diegesis and non-diegesis due to originating as real-time film commentators before being edited into the text. In this unique position, they shift the deixis's organization through both speaking English in a Luganda-language film and their orientation to the film's internal and external pragmatics. The manipulation and destabilization of film's ontological borders is understood by applying Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, that of enregisterment and Deleuze and Guattari's social pragmatics and order word concepts to the VJ. These approaches are framed together with the surrounding cinematic language understood through the framework of Roger Odin's Semio-Pragmatics. This thesis examines how the VJ exerts the ultimate influence on WKCA's internal and external pragmatics through manipulating the film's deictic field, stemming from their unique ontological role between diegesis and non-diegesis.

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatics, Film Studies, African Film, Sociolinguistics,  
Who Killed Captain Alex

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Hunter Skye Hulett

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04/26/2024

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to everyone pursuing their own niche and unconventional interests, and those who hope to use their interests to make their fields reckon with their own assumptions. This work is a testament to our shared perseverance and spirit.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work I have been able to do for this thesis was only possible due to the people on my committee. I want to thank my chair, Dr. Dennis Preston, for opening my eyes to the different analytic possibilities that have potential in linguistics, for guidance in my work's organization, and the hands-off approach to me which allowed my creative and intellectual freedom to flourish. I will also thank committee member Dr. Kamahra Ewing for giving me invaluable insight and resources regarding the history of film in East Africa and for supporting my work while on the other side of the world. I also thank Dr. Rusty Barrett and Dr. Jennifer Cramer for teaching me so much about sociolinguistics during my time at UK and for their constructive criticism and enthusiasm for my project alike. I will also thank all of my dear friends in the MALTT program at UK for standing by me, supporting me, taking an interest in my interests and for helping me rehearse my defense; I could not have done it without you all. Additionally, I thank Katia Davis for booking a suitable room for my defense and Dr. Allison Burkette, whose intellectually stimulating conversations and guidance have helped me immensely. I also thank Isaac Nabawana, VJ Emmie, and the entire crew of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* whose work inspired the very existence of this project and for giving me almost a decade of entertainment with your proudly unconventional, hilarious, and thought-provoking films.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Originating in the Wakaliga slum of Kampala, the Ugandan film *Who Killed Captain Alex?* (WKCA) is a viral 2010 action film made on a budget between \$50-\$200 by the director Nabwana I. G. G<sup>1</sup> that exists as foundationally unique as a piece of media. Produced by the independent studio Wakaliwood, the film's plot concerns the efforts of Ugandan Commandos, under the lead of the eponymous Captain Alex, to vanquish the evil Tiger Mafia and capture their leader, Richard. Even as Captain Alex is killed halfway through the film, the plot continues to unfold by following different individual characters from both the Commandos and Tiger Mafia in a story that culminates in the defeat of the Tiger Mafia in a large-scale battle. Despite this, the mystery of how and by whom Captain Alex was killed, is never resolved.

This film's circulation across the internet via its upload to YouTube in 2010 has propelled it to infamy as a meme where a combination of its sub-par special effects, narrative idiosyncrasies, and production in a Third World country has made it mostly an object of popular, digital fascination. Arguably, most of the humor and bafflement elicited by non-Ugandan viewers is the result of the constant narration by the film's Video Joker (VJ), who constantly reframes the events of the film by adding his own commentary that often contradicts information and tones present in a given shot. The existence of this VJ is rooted in the importance of a voice explaining and translating movies in a social setting

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<sup>1</sup> "Isaac Godfrey Geoffrey Nabwana". His credit as a director is styled in the Ugandan naming format where family names are written first, followed by the personal name and the middle names.

through a common lingua franca and came to encompass playing to the audience in a way that changes the impression of the film as a whole.

Of interest in this thesis is the use of deictic relations - those linguistic ways by which the perspectives of the speaker can be understood - especially in the context of a VJ, who, while part of the viewing experience for audiences today, was not originally part of the film. In *WKCA*, the deictic relations therein are continually subject to the VJ's manipulations towards a performance for the film-viewing audience which de-centers the film's diegetic contents - that which already occurs within the context of the story itself and is available to the characters in the story as they already exist. The inclusion of a VJ has a long tradition in East African cinema-viewing culture, and his unique presence and actions in the film-within-a-film warrant scholarly investigation as a contribution to linguistics, and specifically the nature of deixis and the overall pragmatics, in film. Despite this, there is a dearth of scholarly discussion about this movie through a linguistic and pragmatic lens. Out of the few works, academic and otherwise, that have spoken about *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, those that have found it relevant to talk about the VJ do so without any deeper investigation on the role they play in the film if it is mentioned in any capacity at all. We hope to remedy this neglect through the application of a Semio-Pragmatic framework synthesized with multi-modality, and the notions of enregisterment, heteroglossia, order words, and social pragmatics in order to understand the unique linguistic aspects of the VJ.

Viewing the VJ as a window into the dynamics of language and pragmatics in a world both dominated by different Englishes and proliferated by increasing usages of narrative technology such as cinema is the basic lens we will use to analyze *WKCA*. We

have found that the VJ's presence in the movie as a whole provides an excellent opportunity to examine the use of pragmatic features, particularly those of deixis, as an analytic framework to study the manipulation of borders between the film and real worlds. Coming from a historically non-diegetic (outside of the film's boundaries) occupation as a commenter and translator in video halls, the VJ as edited into the digital version of WKCA is the deictic center in the film, constantly and directly destabilizing<sup>2</sup> deictic relations and orienting the internal and external pragmatics of the film around him. As the ultimate pragmatic force of the film, he occupies a position that already blurs the line between diegesis and non-diegesis, allowing him to operate by shifting the organization of the filmic deixis. These shifts are based on both his usage of English in a Luganda-speaking film and his orientation to the film's internal and external pragmatics. Said manipulation and destabilization of these borders in the film can be better understood by applying the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981) and the more recent theories of enregisterment (Agha 2005) to the VJ in conjunction with the surrounding cinematic language and techniques. This analysis also necessitates a reevaluation of the notion of a deictic locust as classically understood (Bühler 11) and as theorized as part of film as well as a historical contextualization of Ugandan video hall culture.

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<sup>2</sup> This term and its application is adapted from William Brown's blog article *Wakaliwood: Where Supercinema Meets Non-Cinema*.

My analysis is chiefly pragmatic in nature as the VJ in this film can uniquely work as a constant additional force of interaction and embodied source of Bakhtinian dialogue within and without the text of the film. As a facilitator of dialogue, he is an entity who inhabits many linguistic and pragmatic roles sporadically towards the audience and in the film itself; talking over the film by peppering it with jokes and commentary, he serves as a deterritorialized hyper-pragmatic actor across the film's structure and its perception in the audience's field. Largely by working *against* the filmic language (such as shot composition and musical cues) in the movie, though sometimes concordant with it, the VJ is able to orient already established deictic relations diegetically which in turn forces the audience to center him as the *origo* (Bühler 2011), or the reference point on which deictic relations are established, of any scene in which he makes his presence felt. In doing so, the VJ creates a heterogenous cacophony of voices that confronts the viewer as many de-centered centers of dialogue throughout the film. This is an overall pragmatic exercise afforded by the VJ's very position as a part of the film that sits on the border of diegesis and non-diegesis.

By looking at the historical conditions that lead to the role of the VJ in Ugandan video halls, situated in a need for a unified English/Luganda/Swahili-speaking translator locally, we can theorize on the multiple pragmatic roles the VJ undertakes in the film diegetically and non-diegetically: a pragmatic presence that seemingly comes in and out of the film itself to portray the thoughts and actions of various characters while also acting as a presence always in dialogue with the non-Ugandan audience that the film has reached on the internet. My project will shed light on the barely studied area of linguistic production and pragmatic dynamism from the embodied stance of an unorthodox dialogic

force in *Who Killed Captain Alex?*. This is done in the context of the linguistic capital afforded to English (and to a lesser extent Luganda) in a post-colonial, digitally interconnected world of seemingly unlimited pragmatic actors mediating an othered type of film-making based on the interaction in the discourse between the VJ, the audience, and the film itself. Through this, I support my analysis of the VJ as the pragmatic de-centered/de-centering center that dominates the interplays of dialogue and audience perception of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* within an overall Semio-Pragmatic approach (Odin 2021), supplemented with an overarching Bakhtinian analysis and the inclusion of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of socio-political pragmatics (1987). In short, we will show that the VJ is a unique narrative and pragmatic influence on WKCA who is able to affect changes in the pragmatics and deixis of the film itself and between the film and the audience due to occupying a position between the diegetic and non-diegetic bounds of the film. This position allows the VJ to exert a power as the mediator of the film by manipulating differing pragmatic relationships through his speech, which continually strengthens his position as a mediator that determines, or at least strongly influences, how the audience perceives the film.

## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF FILMIC CONCEPTS

### 2.1 Basic Film Concepts: Diegesis and Non-Diegesis

This subsection demonstrates the usefulness of diegesis and non-diegesis as aspects of filmic ontology that are relevant to a pragmatic discussion of *Who Killed Captain Alex?*. By establishing this conception that delineates the internal world of film and how filmic components interact therein, we provide a basic foundation to our analysis.

Any analysis of WKCA necessitates a framing in the relevant concepts of the medium of cinema. In a basic definition devised by French philosopher Etienne Souriau, diegesis is “the world posed by a work of art” with the denotations of diegetic meaning “internal to the storyworld” and non-diegetic meaning is “external to the storyworld” (Hven 15). In terms of film, diegetic elements are those that interact with and have an impact on the self-contained filmic environment, having a reasonable experiential effect on characters/agents within the film. Conversations between characters and logical systems guiding events unique to the world in the film are diegetic, as are material environments, perceptions of sound and smell, verbal monologues of inner thoughts and unnatural colors perceived by the characters. This list is by no means exhaustive.

We can illustrate a more familiar and conventional version of the concept with a specific cinematic example. In John Carpenter’s 1994 film *In the Mouth of Madness*,

starting at 12 minutes and 17 seconds (12:17)<sup>3</sup>, John Trent (played by Sam Neil) and insurance company owner Robinson (played by Bernie Casey) sit down in a cafe. During the scene, they carry on conversing while sipping coffee as people move around them inside and outside the cafe. At 12:48, the shot shifts to a view of people hurriedly leaving a store as a pale and crazed ax-wielding man emerges continually attracting the shock of pedestrians and cars alike as they stop for him to cross the street. All the while, Trent and Robinson are still speaking without physically being in the shot, a pattern of editing that alternates with the original composition of sitting and speaking (though with sometimes only one character in the shot). This pattern shatters with the glass by the ax-wielder's ax at 13:35, sending the cafe into chaos as we see shots of food and plateware breaking on the floor and customers fleeing, leading to an interaction between a shocked Trent and the Ax-Wielder, who asks the phrase, "Do you read Sutter Cane?" The scene ends at 14:15 when police outside of the shot shoot and kill the Ax-Wielder, their guns registered to the surrounding characters and audience alike before their visual inclusion.

Everything described above constitutes diegetic aspects of a film. However, a few elements are non-diegetic. The musical score that builds tension as the Ax-Wielder approaches is not perceived by the characters; there is no verbal acknowledgment of embodied reaction, for example. Neither are the shifted-to points of view via the camera taking up the first-person deictic space of a character, which on the surface may give the

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<sup>3</sup> This notation is what I will use from now on to denote the exact time in a film where a described scene takes place.

impression of an actual character's direct perspective. These aspects are non-diegetic because they do not affect the internal happenings and logic of the film-world; they are non-interactive in the text. Traditionally considered, to be diegetic requires a filmic element to be interactive with internal characters and audience alike. If there is only a sensory effect on the audience and not the characters, an element is non-diegetic.

One discrepancy may be raised with my assertion that diegetic elements include "having a reasonable experiential effect on characters/agents within the film" may be due to a lack of direct confirmation of their effects on others. One may say, in the scene described above, that the background characters are not diegetic since we do not see direct interactions between them or almost any other character, main, supporting, or background. But herein lies the assertion of reasonability; it has been established thus far in the movie that at least the main characters have full use of their basic sensory functions. Therefore, they could easily look out the window by their seats and perceive any of the background characters as long as they are perceptible to the audience and thus potentially perceptible to the characters. This would create an effect or interaction, though miniscule. Since we are not given a reason to believe otherwise, we can also assume the same of the other background characters in shots who do not directly interact with any other characters or material elements that were either actively acknowledged previously (e.g., the coffee cups by their handling by the main characters) or existing as foundational to any shot taking place (e.g., the cafe as the setting, and to a greater extent, the city it is in).

Another area of murkiness regarding the basics of diegesis and non-diegesis is if a previously believed non-diegetic element becomes interactive with the film world. Such an event often happens with music in film, which is ordinarily fully non-diegetic, though



diegetic music can exist in some scenes despite the majority of a film's music being non-diegetic. Around 14:11 in WKCA, there is a transition between the previous track in the film's score to a piano rendition of "Mamma Mia" by ABBA, and while the VJ is talking during this scene, it is not with immediate acknowledgement of the music playing now, or previously. Given that the VJ on YouTube is an edited part of the movie, he has a diegetic presence. Not one second later, the VJ humorously remarks, "And now, Captain Alex: The Musical" as "Mamma Mia" continues to play. In the next few seconds, as the scenes change focus to different characters, he continues to acknowledge the song's presence by singing along onomatopoeically. At 14:19, with an unnamed commando character in focus cinematographically, the VJ says, "Wow, this music is good". Since the VJ is now working in concordance with the subject in frame in a way that embodies said subject through the VJ's actions, the already now-diegetic music is proven to be perceptible to at least one of the more conventional filmic characters. Even though the music became diegetic due to the VJ's speech and pragmatic orientations, it became confirmed as such by his embodiment and role-playing of the commando focused on in the scene. This represents a unique function of the VJ in WKCA, which is the ability to make otherwise non-diegetic elements of the film diegetic through embodying reaction to them from his authoritative, semi-diegetic communicative role. Even if such elements are not literally interactive with the characters in a shot via the actors and their reactions, in accordance with conventional definition of diegesis, they are effectively made consequential to different narrative progression and attempts at characterization that the VJ pragmatically introduces. As this scene ends, the music stops. Throughout the film, acknowledgement of music to make it diegetic by the VJ, whether as himself narrating or a character, is variable and inconsistent.

Most of the rest of WKCA's music is, however, non-diegetic. The VJ's shifting of music into a diegetic form experienced by himself or implicitly by the characters (whom he embodies) is the exception throughout the film. For instance, the VJ does not acknowledge or integrate the track that plays between 8:15 and 9:02 in a way that makes it directly observable in the film's world, whether by him or the characters embodied by his speech. The status of whether the film's music is diegetic or not is completely up to the VJ's acknowledgement. There is no real logic or theme to what he chooses or does not choose.

## 2.2 The Fourth Wall

Intimately connected with the notion of diegesis is the action of "breaking the fourth wall" in film. Metaphorically referring to the side of the stage that faces an audience during theater, the fourth wall separates audience and text in cinema, theater, and television; when it is "broken", this means that the characters in the text directly acknowledge the audience and therefore remove the conceptual barrier between fiction and the real world. Such actions occur multiple times in *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, with the VJ enacting most fourth wall breaks.

We see this happen before the film even properly starts, in the title sequence and producer credits. At 1:22, as the credits start, the VJ introduces himself and informs the audience that they are about to watch the film. He states this in the most blunt way at 1:48, "It's a Wakaliwood film. *Who Killed Captain. The Ugandan (sic.) first action packed movie*". He continues this as the movie starts, verbally introducing the in-frame

character of Captain Alex to the audience even though he is acknowledged as such in the film's opening piece of dialogue from a reporter, "Captain Alex, is it true that you will hunt for (sic.) Tiger Mafia?"

The VJ repeats a similar way of breaking the fourth wall by stating to the audience that they are watching a movie multiple times. Notably, he does this at 8:22 as the Ugandan Commandos approach for an ambush on the Tiger Mafia base ("Now you're gonna see, this is who we do action in Uganda"), which he continues as the scene progresses to 8:53 when he says "Who Killed Captain Alex is the movie, production in action!". Eventually, when the Commandos and Tiger Mafia are in a shootout, the VJ's fourth wall breaks again, perhaps in his most crude and unapologetic way, at 17:41 where he simply screams the word "movie" four times.

Though the vast majority of fourth wall breaks come from the VJ, they can happen through other avenues. We see this at 34:37, when the Tiger Mafia boss Richard looks directly into the camera and asks, in English, "Then who killed Captain Alex? Who?". This fourth wall breach is one quite common to cinema, wherein a character looks directly at the camera to either explicitly, or implicitly, speak directly to the audience.

In collapsing the border between a film and the audience, the stability of both worlds is called into question. Additionally, the very notion of diegesis is destabilized given that what is only internal to the film world is shown to exist outside its bounds by the awareness of characters therein. This also implies that discourse as it exists within a film and without it are more direct and not as separated; self-contained film-internal elements are brought into contact with the non-film world. Simultaneously, the audience

is brought into the “singular systems” of film (Metz 144), and the film is self-consciously brought into the real world. It is the extension of this filmic system through breaking the fourth wall that allows for a larger, common deictic field to become more explicit. Relevant to *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, constant fourth wall breaking by the VJ envelopes the film and audience alike in a trans-diegetic pragmatics in which deictic relations become further destabilized, a holdover from Ugandan video halls. Though we argue later that a common pragmatic field already perforates all instances of viewing a text, something differentiated yet shared between the film-world and reality, we must move to this from the older and more conventional notions of pragmatics based around diegesis and non-diegesis.

## CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 The Historical Cinematic Context of *Who Killed Captain Alex?*

The common movie-going experience in Uganda and most of East Africa involves not going to a movie theater but to a video hall. Consisting of “wooden shacks equipped with a videocassette player and a tv set”, video halls are small locales for watching films for the poor in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, where they became especially established during the 1980s and 1990s (Giukin 198). In these locations, the attendees were often speakers of many different languages, an aspect true for multilingual East African nations like Uganda and their neighbors. This was where the Video Joker (or joker as written by Giukin) arose, a commentator that translated the film and its general events in a lingua franca, which was often Swahili or Luganda.

The consumption of largely English or otherwise non-African-language cinema prompted the innovation of the Swahili-speaking VJs particularly in Tanzania and Uganda (Bakari 11). Though English is official in both of these states, as well as in Kenya, the people in the socio-economic classes who can only go to video halls are unlikely to know English or know it well enough to understand most films in large enough numbers. In Uganda, basing the correlation between some level of L2 English use and education attainment, only 9.6 million out of about 30 million Ugandans speak English. Additionally, although Swahili is often an L2 as well, it is spoken by about “80% of rural communities... [who] have knowledge of Kiswahili as one of the additional languages in their linguistic repertoire” (Meierkord 24). Given that most Ugandans live in rural areas, Swahili is the most intuitive language for VJs to use, though its use is by no means contained to non-urban areas. Luganda is also intuitive for these

purposes, as it is spoken as an L1 or L2 by about 11 million people in Uganda (Ethnologue, Ganda). Mutual intelligibility between Luganda and Swahili also figures into their use by VJs, and as the main diegetic language of films in Uganda, with similar levels of intelligibility between Swahili and other regional Bantu languages of East Africa, their use potentially allows for half of the region's whole population to consume such films (Magara 31).

Amongst the most common films received by video hall audiences and commented on by VJs are English-language Nollywood films, those produced by the Nigerian film industry. It is hard to understate the influence of Nigerian films on East African cinema and the film culture of Africa as a whole. The emergence (or revived growth) of film festivals, institutional support for cinema, and the surge of general film production across different genres in East Africa in the 2000s can be partially attributed to an increase in not just Nollywood films but Ghanaian and American ones (Magara 26). An increase in the availability of digital and video technology for filming and distribution also contributed to both general film production (ibid), an aspect that would make possible the production of films either through studios, state sponsorship or as independent productions (such as WKCA produced by Ramon Film Productions/Wakaliwood). Nollywood, and non-East African films in general created both a cultural and material onus that motivated the creation of unique bodies of cinema in this region. Materially, aside from being icons of films that could be made with institutional social patronage, they contributed to the facilitation of their own consumption; The prestige and cultural popularity of these pictures are cited by Kenneth Harrow as drivers behind the continued emergence of VJs in Tanzania. In quoting Krings

(2003):“In Tanzanian video parlors, narrators are performing live translations of foreign films.. They are also ad-libbing, adding observations and providing personal commentary, and adapting the stories into a local hermeneutical framework.” (Harrow 84).

The influence of Nollywood, much like the importance of Video Jokers, is by no means limited to Tanzania but imminently relevant to Ugandan video halls as well. Bakari also locates the emergence of “veejays” in Uganda specifically to the popularity of Nollywood films. These texts overlaid by VJ commentary are part of a common process in the filmic practices of Anglophone/Swahiliphone East Africa called “remediation”. Bakari, quoting Krings (2010), defines this as “not simply the presentation of a transcription or translation from one language to another, but significantly, the adding of new content” (Bakari 18). Film’s are not communicated, but modified in real time by the figure who monopolizes communicative power, the VJ.

It is in remediation where we see the creativity of VJs contributing to the audience's viewing experience. In this “adding of new content” (ibid), the VJ transforms the film in question for their audience into a kind of pragmatic and deictic arena where the film viewing experience is inseparable from what is immediately occurring in reality. Here is where diegesis is first destabilized. To again cite Bakari’s quotation of Krings, “veejays’ took on a definitive status in the mode of consumption that developed around the event of presenting the film and its new content” (ibid), this being the centering of all filmic events through their representations as well as their additions to said films despite their technical non-diegetic status. The dynamic between audience and film is thus altered in a “transgressive spectatorship” that challenges “the conventional assumption

that ‘the audience in a cinema room must watch the film individually and keep silent throughout the screening...commentary aims to control the film’s discourse’ (ibid). Here we see the adaptation of the VJ as largely a material necessity, a product of a heavily multilingual society in which most of the people therein cannot access conventional forms of public cinema-going nor do they often watch films in the languages they speak. In this context, the VJ is not some kind of redundant accessory to any addition of subtitles but a discursive mediator and an emergent creative sovereign who bridges the film-world and reality together in their actions into “ an ‘Audience-generated commentary’ that ultimately seeks to wrestle the text away from the (or any) authority and to achieve through interaction or identification, a more satisfying or appropriate experience of cinema” (Bakari 19). Audiences in this social relationship now have a new point around which to orient this viewing experience, expanded firmly into the fourth wall where commentary and a VJ’s mediation can lead to new possibilities in understanding the film in front of them, given the VJ’s central position in distributing and adding to information as the film’s source of a lingua franca. Ironically, despite Bakari’s earlier assertion, this separation of a film from any outside interpretive authority, even that of the audience, comes to create a new authority around whom the film becomes ever-more oriented, that of the VJ.

Though this dynamic does not reach its full apex until the publishing of WKCA on YouTube, we can see that the VJ already inserts themselves in the film as part of its pragmatic field. Already in the video shacks are the audience processes of making meaning affected by the VJ. This nascent authority from the VJ in affecting the



pragmatics of the entire affair of viewing a film will increase in prominence as we will demonstrate in our future examination.

### 3.2 WKCA's Production and The VJ's Use of English

The development of VJs led directly to the production of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* as much as the material conditions itself that led to the VJ. According to director Isaac Nabwana himself, WKCA originally did not fit into the general Ugandan and East African practice of having a VJ. He originally only planned to distribute the film locally in his home in the slums of Wakaliga, Kampala where the film was already in the common language of Luganda. In the director's commentary for the film, Nabwana notes that “the Luganda trailer for the film went viral on YouTube because of its over the top apparent parody of action films. . . After learning of this popularity, the director, Isaac Nabwana, reappropriated the local video joker practice for a Western audience and had the locally famous VJ Emmie provide commentary on the film in English” (Sodak 2022). It was thus with the prospect of digital distribution via YouTube that a VJ track in English was recorded to provide a global lingua franca for a much wider audience. The role of the VJ would not fundamentally change from their purpose domestically, being “the first VJ in English” (a line repeated by VJ Emmie in the film itself) is relevant for Uganda's linguistic history and English as one of the only reasons that WKCA became comprehensible, popular, and intriguingly complex for the general online audience in the first place. In order to appreciate the significance of this, we must go over a brief history of film production in Uganda.

The modern nation state of Uganda emerged from the period of British colonialism where it was a protectorate between 1894 to 1962 cobbled together from a

myriad of tribes and kingdoms, such as the Bunyoro-Kitara and Buganda kingdoms and various Luo chiefdoms such as the Acholi and Alur. This territory was previously administered by the British East Africa Company. It was here when English was used as the official language: a colonial lingua franca imposed on a vastly multilingual geographic expanse. This held true for the rest of Britain's African colonies, a fact reflected in the official status of English in many African countries today, including Uganda.

In addition to being a language of prestige and colonial administration, the history of English in Uganda and much of Africa in general is bound up with film. The British introduced colonially-sponsored English-language films to their colonies in the 1920s as a form of propaganda that both sought to instill the values of modern, capitalistic economic labor to Africans and to promote the superiority of the British over the "superstitious and uncivilized" black populace (Magara 9). As also noted by Magara, these films were incredibly simple in their narrative and message, a design motivated by this same British perception of African unsophistication and stupidity. Overall, these Anglophone films served a purpose of inculcating Africans, including Ugandans, against any development of culture that didn't emulate the British or of any consciousness that resisted British domination. In her citation of other scholars, Magara draws a link between this cinematic propaganda and a maintenance of the colonial status quo; they are a force of "indoctrination...to continuously precipitate stereotypes of Africans while simultaneously attempting to justify colonial administration activities" (ibid). Establishments such as the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE) founded in 1935 were some of the most ubiquitous and powerful tools of this ideological and

linguistic propagation that existed specifically in British East Africa. In addition to pushing purely economic and cultural indoctrination and subservience, the larger 1939 Colonial Films Unit propagated films that prescribed African participation in Britain's war industries during WW2 (Slavkovic 192). Post-independence, it would take Uganda a long time to begin establishing a national cinema along the lines of their fellow Swahili-speaking neighbors.

After 1962, a newly independent Uganda experienced a multitude of internal difficulties that hindered the cultivation of a national, non-Anglophone cinema. The administration of Idi Amin severely cracked down on public artistic expression, including snuffing out local Ugandan theaters and film-making initiatives which led to the prolonged proliferation of foreign films, in none of Uganda's indigenous languages, to be the only form of cinematic entertainment. Slavkovic notes that these actions led to the further development and staying power of video halls, and that few short-length and colonial style education films were locally produced in Uganda until *Feelings Struggle* (2005) (ibid). It would indeed be long before the Ugandans and their continued progeny, who honed their skills participating in the production of the colonial films (or those who learned directly from such workers), would be able to create films in their own local steads<sup>4</sup>. The Ugandan voice was still missing in their domestic film consumption, a landscape still dominated by foreign movies.

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<sup>4</sup> Magara notes that a few people throughout British Africa, including the Ugandan Faustine Misanvu, were able to become technical film-makers and actors in their employment in colonial film industries. Much of this can be attributed to how "African personnel received the final edit to be screened at a communal

The exhibition of films containing English and the general prestige of English continues to this day in Uganda as part of its post-colonial legacy. The decades-long proliferation of Nollywood, Bollywood, Hollywood, and other foreign films (with the three named here being the most likely to contain at least partial English) has been the gap-filler for the Ugandan leisurely cinema even though films such as those of Wakaliwood are increasingly coming on the scene. English, as used in higher-end film establishments and general higher institutions in Uganda, remains one of two official languages and one of the primary lingua francas of the nation. Despite efforts to promote Luganda and Swahili, English still offers prestige amongst educated classes across official and upper class recreational domains, to which traditional Western-style exhibition theaters belong.

However, as previously discussed, VJs operating in local screenings almost never perform their pragmatic and narrative duties in English, a fact attesting to the importance of languages such as Swahili and Luganda for the majority of the population's film consumption and otherwise. VJ Emmie, in the case of WKCA and other Wakaliwood productions, only recorded his voice-overs in English in order for distribution on the internet. Due in part to a similar legacy of British colonialism (now replaced by American financial and imperialist hegemony) throughout the world, English has dramatically risen in importance as a global language and as such has become a lingua

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gathering", which may be a partial genesis to the practices that would come to characterize VJs and Video Halls. Despite this, the few narrative films shown to Africans were highly edited and censored in order to not show any flaw in British colonial ways or to show the White Man as anything less than perfect.

franca for the internet. Alongside Hindi and Chinese, the English language dominates online as a plurality; the Observer Research Foundation estimates that English accounts for 61% of all online content, with about 26% of all internet users speaking and using English as their primary language (Ray 2022). English's economic and prestigious role as it exists in our modern globalized world has only been magnified by the internet. In order to reach the broadest audience possible for online content, the medium will have to be in English. This holds true for anything posted to YouTube, a fact known to the crew who published WKCA, as they sought to maintain their film's unique function as mediated by the VJ for a much larger audience, who would likely have English as a common language.

At the moment of its upload, VJ Emmie became a commentator for a much wider audience. As such, his language of transmission had to shift to accommodate this more global configuration both for the general intelligibility of the film (which was also given English subtitles by this point) and so that the pragmatic experience could hold his traditional role intact in order to represent the video hall experience. In this shift into an embedded part of the film via his audio being edited in, the VJ is now able to break the fourth wall from the standpoint of being more literally part of the film's digital fabric itself. No longer is it only performance, but a supremacy over the narrative and pragmatic accessibility concerning both the film's inner dynamics and its ability to communicate anything to the audience in the process of text creation.

The use of English is essential for this process; It facilitates communication from media that is fairly opaque to the majority non-Ugandan audiences who are statistically most likely to use English on the internet. Compared to other countries in Africa as of

2024, Uganda has one of the lowest rates of internet penetration with only about 27% of its population able to access the internet. This is compared to the highest rate in Africa: Morocco with 90.7%, and is much lower than most other Anglophone African nations such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Tanzania who have rates of 45.5%, 69.8%, and 31.9% respectively (Galal 2024).

In examining the local Ugandan and global relevance of using English as the lingua franca of *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, and contextualizing it in the VJ's use of historical lingua francas, we understand one of the basic premises that allow the VJ to assert his deictic and pragmatic influence as an entity operating on a digital, mostly-Anglophone, platform. Indeed, the VJ remains more essential to the film's comprehension as a YouTube movie even with English subtitles, as he is able to add further content to the film via his linguistic and narrative hegemony. These facts underlie our entire approach to studying WKCA and its VJ as a pragmatically unique text, and this will be further elaborated on in the literature review and investigated in the analysis. In further grounding the VJ's nature in the gray area of diegesis, however, we must engage with prior work in order to create a greater ontological understanding for this analysis.

### 3.3 Methodological Grounding

In order to contextualize our literature review and introduce the theoretical basics of our methodology, we will need to contend with previous literature regarding cinematic deixis and pragmatics so that we can argue for a fundamentally different position. This first necessitates a review of the Ontological Gap argument, which we will critique, problematize and build off of in order to further advance our arguments.

### 3.3.1 The Ontological Gap Argument and Filmic Deixis

The East African event cinema in which VJs operate necessarily breach the traditional distinction between diegesis and non-diegesis, film-world and real world. Both the internal deictic relations of the film and the whole notion of diegesis itself are thrown into question. No barrier seems to separate the film, the audience, and the VJ, who inhabits both worlds as a fixture of the viewing and narrative experience. This is part of the decentralizing process that the VJ facilitates by which films shown in video halls are coupled to the social modifications of the VJ and audience, but more so to the VJ. All of this is done through the VJ's speech acts as a translator, the position itself and its purpose disrupts any hitherto conceived traditional barriers in film, deixis and pragmatics. Whether the fourth wall still exists at all, whether in video halls or in WKCA as it appears on the internet, requires an inquiry into the ontology of narrators generally. Given the unique circumstances in which the VJ originated and in which they are employed, any older view on the ontological and linguistic place of narrators/narration in media (specifically film) is in need of critical engagement in order to fully theorize and ground the VJ.

Traditional views on this subject firmly place narrators and other illocutionary agents in the fictional world given that they are most firmly bound in the fictional deixis. Mario Sluga most succinctly articulates this assumption in their chapter *Deixis in Literary and Film Fiction*, saying that "Deixis in literary fiction is intra-ontological, i.e. that deictic reference cannot cross ontological boundaries between fiction and actuality". This is the assumption Sluga's Linguistic Version of the Ontological Gap Argument (LOGA) rests upon, a method of grounding fictional narration in an internal deixis for the

majority of, at least, literary fiction (Slugan 187). In the question of how this affects second-person narration from a text (how it addresses a reader/consumer of the text), Slugan attempts to show the validity of the above assumption with examples of extant literature and film. Given the preponderance of second-person-oriented narration by VJ Emmie in WKCA (“You are now watching *Who Killed Captain Alex?*./ The movie is on!”), we must investigate these examples and contrast them with the unique pragmatic nature of the film.

Slugan first cites a second-person passage from Italo Calvino’s 1981 novel *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*: “You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino’s new novel, *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*” (Slugan 192). Slugan argues that, despite a suggested breach of worlds, the deixis remains intra-ontological. They anticipate the position of David Herman which claims that a “fictional address... which entails address to and/or by the members of some fictional world... (the) ‘horizontal address’... to the ‘actual address’... address that exceeds the frame (or ontological threshold) of a fiction to reach the audience, thus constituting the ‘vertical address’(ibid.). In other words, the horizontal address refers to the pragmatics and deictic relations within the fictional world itself, with the vertical being the real world of the audience; essentially, both pragmatic realms are near-fully brought together onto the same plane of reference and pragmatics (where text and reality occupy a similar ontological space, and where referents from reality are brought close into the pragmatics and deixis of the text) by the inclusion that a direct, second-person addressing enacts. Thus, these horizontal and vertical planes concerning addresses are more perpendicular. Such a position seems to fit the VJ of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* neatly as they relate to the audience physically and digitally.



In this anticipation of our position, Slugan argues that the integrity of the border between the fictional and real ontologies is maintained; that the ‘you’ in question (and in general in literature) is a fictionalized entity that overlaps with a reader at the moment of consumption of the text. They write,

The address to the reader is fictional... the actual reader is prescribed by the text to make-believe herself as addressed and as partaking in the act of fictional reading... the ‘you’ address does not cross ontological borders. The further possibility of confusion stems from the fact that the actual reader is actually reading... If we agree that ‘you in Calvino’s and my example<sup>5</sup> fictionally addresses the actual reader, it would appear that actual ‘you’ fictional acting as the narrator is no different from... one and the same entity with spatiotemporal coordinates within the fictional world. (192-195)

For Slugan, a reification of some kind of fictionally-contingent and bound ‘you’ is the actual addressee of any such second-person reference or narration. The explicit usage of a second-person pronoun is not even necessary, the act of narration itself in literature is always directed towards a fictional entity that overlaps with a real one. In terms of

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<sup>5</sup> As articulated in an example on pg. 193, “Consider a possible opening sentence of a fictional novel: ‘You, yes you, you who are reading these lines at the very moment you are writing them down’. This serves to support their argument that the referent here is still fictional despite overlap with a real person reading. This leads to the refinement of the intra-ontological maxim on the same page, “In literary narratives deictic terms used fictionally refer to: 1) The fictional speaker and 2) the fictional addressee (both of whom may be an actually existing entity)” which characterized their continued position as the go on to discuss film.

pragmatics, an intra-ontological deixis is maintained, according to Sluga, in which interaction through any speech act (directed towards a purely narrative purpose or towards other fictional entities) is necessarily directed towards those things contained in the text's deixis itself.

Understood with reference to Jakobson's model of six communication functions (Waugh 1980), with a focus on the factors of communication, the addressee would primarily be a fictional entity (including fictional 'you' as an explicit referent or as a consumer of the text) instead of the reader themselves. What this means is that "The act of verbal communication<sup>6</sup> is, in effect, *an exchange of signs* between the speaker and addressee" (Waugh 60) primarily on the level between fiction speakers and listeners. The fact that messages, as signs and systems of signs even with texts, signify to both fictional entities and consumers simultaneously to perform according to collective addressee factors in the first place, does not seem to matter in what Sluga argues. This implies a strict border that divides a general fictional and a general actual deixis situated in a greater pragmatic context where due to the strict division in their ontological status never the twain shall meet. Communication itself does not allow for any crossing of this boundary as Sluga has hitherto articulated, despite the seeming transcendence that is the signification through any given verbal act which at least necessarily requires present addresser(s) and addressee(s) in a speech event.

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<sup>6</sup> Waugh is careful to articulate that any speech event with all six factors, including non-spoken literary communication, constitutes verbal communication as per Jakobson's conceptualizations (57-58).

Slugan continues to argue for the position above in their discussion on film's ontological, deictic and pragmatic nature. In general, film occupies the same fundamental ontological status as literature: that all within the text, no matter how it may address or interact with an audience, is ultimately intra-ontological. Deictically speaking, any perceived second-person addressing or enunciation is still located firmly in the film-world; camera looks and direct second-person usage only refer to reified addressee intra-ontologically that are further grounded in cinema's unique visual, narrative and auditory language. Slugan states such by quoting Francesco Canneti, "This [the look]; it comes from the cinema, that is, from me" (197). Similar to their position on literary deixis and narration, film does not truly cross ontological boundaries.

This argumentation, however, rests on a foundation that the film-world, with all its diegetic and non-diegetic elements, is set out on a completely different ontological basis from real from the beginning. It is indeed true that most films are created in a way in which spectatorship does not inherently affect its narrative framework, where the progress of events is wholly self-contained. It is also true that a filmic deixis has a degree separation from any real-world one, one is, after all, a representational medium and the other is not. There is not a one-to-one bidirectional cause and effect that can flow between a film's deixis and a real one. These assumptions are inherently challenged by the evolved format of WKCA.

WKCA as a filmic experience built upon Ugandan event cinema and the work of a VJ involves real-world intrusion into the narrative process itself, by the very fact that the VJ transforms the logic and relations that concern any events of the film. Anything that can happen cinematically can be reframed by the VJ's language insofar that it is put

in direct reference and relationship to the audience. In other words, the VJ is a mediator that moves the filmic deixis into reality, into new sets of relations, information and narrative tailored to an audience who relies on the VJ for what is going on in the first place. This mediation is a bridge between two seemingly separate deictic fields bound together by the common denominator of the VJ and their language onto a single, larger field of pragmatics.

This relationship, as it existed in Ugandan video halls, was a direct breach of any ontological barrier between film and real life. Since video hall audiences were primarily experiencing a film through the orienting and creative actions of a VJ, the audience more directly interacts with a film via a VJ who mediates all the filmic events in a way that subsumes the audience and film alike onto one large deictic and pragmatic plane. We can see this as being either inter-ontological, or indeed intra-ontological in a very different manner: the former as two pragmatic planes where the VJ goes between each in order to feed their function as a part of the audience into the events of the film, creating new internal dynamics to the film more grounded in the audience but still separate (and vice versa, by recasting events of the film towards the audience with speech acts and variant, sometimes fourth wall breaking spatial orientations. The latter would be the full convergence of the film world and real world onto a common and undifferentiated pragmatic field, fully converging around what the VJ does, who becomes an anchor which essentially makes everything and everyone involved diegetic; the VJ is both in and outside the film, making the audience a direct addressee of any cinematic text. Regardless of which specific perspective we take, the ontological boundary is, at the very least, obscured.

This question of ontological separation is complicated again by WKCA's presence as a full digital movie in which the VJ is edited in, performing as a more solidly diegetic aspect. The VJ does still, however, fulfill a very similar role to that of the video hall, being the agent who facilitates the events of the film to an internet audience who similarly encounters language, continuity; Who lack experience with Ugandan cinematic language and cultural unfamiliarity, an issue that the VJ assuages. The deictic and pragmatic boundaries are blurred again. Although the audience is not as active in influencing what the VJ does/says in any immediate instance of viewing that applies to traditional, live video hall audiences (by virtue of a single commentary track being edited in) their presence itself necessitates the VJ to work in their commentative and explanatory role orienting the film and real world pragmatic fields into a closer, nearly unified, context<sup>7</sup>.

WKCA is therefore, foundationally different in its narrative production and orientation towards and fourth wall breaking, non-diegetic embeddedness than most narrative films. The unique basis for this film is inextricably founded on a mutual interpolation of the VJ (and audience at large) in the film as alterers of its internal dynamics for their spectatorship, and of the film's codes, language and signs entering into

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<sup>7</sup> At the risk of jumping the gun, Christian Metz prefigures an alternative viewpoint to Slugan without recourse to a film like WKCA in *Impersonal Enunciation, or the Place of Film* as quoted by Roger Odin, "The enunciator and addressee are "parts of text... the reader only decodes what the writer produces" (43). The VJ works as a kind of auxiliary for the writer, building on the text and creating new pragmatic relations and indexical associations for the audience to engage with, ultimately, directly with the text. Discussions of Odin in Metz will follow in the proceeding sections.

a relation with the audience filtered through the VJ. This is as close as the ontological overlaps between film and real life can get while retaining their unique wholeness, film-world and real world.

Despite Sluga's assertions that texts and those who experience them are always completely separate, we can see with this analysis that WKCA presents a unique case where a common pragmatic field is created through the VJ's linguistic actions that largely collapse the two deictic fields into one; analogous to a large and hollow aluminum cylinder, fixed horizontally between two distant speech partners, that both magnifies and distorts their communication. WKCA does not communicate to a fictional 'you', just to *you* literally and foundationally with the VJ as the main superordinating and discursive locus. This is the understanding of this film most ontologically suited to our discussion of pragmatics.

### 3.2.2 Deixis as Classically Conceived

The notion of deixis in linguistics was conceived by Karl Bühler, who applied the concept of deixis to linguistics by using it to describe the field of indexed places, times, spaces and objects centered around the perspective of an *origo* or locust in his 1934 *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language* (Janney 2012). A deixis is always a field oriented around the locus which is the central point that directs its perception towards other points in the field, thus making relations through indexing based on the locus' subjective, spatial nature. Richard Janney in his review of Bühler's notion of the deixis in *Pragmatics and Cinematic Discourse* notes that the original locus is the subject, as their body and being are "anchor points" around which the stable and "mutually accessible" (in quoting Hanks 2005) deixis forms between the speaker,

addressee and referents (12). Words that are deictic include those such as ‘which, that, there’ all possessive pronouns are any other words that communicate a spatial orientation.

As Janney notes, the importation of the notion of the deixis into film studies has led to much debate over the nature of film’s general deictic locus. The difficulty is in assuming a stable and constant locus akin to Bühler’s egocentric idea of the *origo*, the closest thing to that form in film is the camera, given it allows the audience to actually experience a film and it is through the lens that the film establishes a field for the audience. The difficulty is in assuming a stable and constant locus akin Bühler’s egocentric idea of the *origo*, the closest thing to that form in film is the camera, given it allows the audience actually to experience a film and it is through that literal lens that the film establishes a field for the audience. The camera is immediately identifiable with a perceiving and signifying subject (the viewer), although the camera “is not anchored in a stable discourse position situation” (ibid.). The camera is therefore not a one-to-one match for the egocentric locus in applying the deixis exactly as it is in linguistics to film. Janney explains further, “Cinematic contexts are not static templates or frames surrounding the camera’s references to dramatic events, but evolving contexts in which the camera and its objects are embedded” (ibid.). Janney does not give a concrete answer to what the deictic locus of film is and given the inherent instability of highly-contextualized filmic perspective, there is likely no answer to this question that applies in every circumstance across film.

The stability of the locus originally postulated by Bühler does not necessarily hold true for WKCA on account of Janney’s critiques based on the nature of film, and the VJ’s constant shifting of the film’s deictic center between almost every scene; the only

consistency is inconsistency, the only stability is the VJ's actions and position. It is best, therefore, to assume the general instability of a filmic locust in regards to position and perspective. The VJ is the overriding perspective at most points in the film, as they force the filmic deixis to take them as the axis around which it spins; their perspective dominates whenever present in order to create dialogue (as we will further elaborate on with Bakhtin).

The division of cinematic discourse is always negotiated on the "perceptual field", all aspects and the film's production and encoding merge into the film's internal semiotics and then into a series of pragmatic interactions with the audience. As such, the locus at any point in a film is dependent on how the film itself uses the constituents of its produced medium, everything from shot framing to editing to character perspective. The produced "Ziegfeld" (field of showing/indexing) as Janney quotes Bühler, is always mediated through the audience who incorporates the film's deictic field into their own as the act of interpretation and thus "is to take up a position in a deictic field... through embedding the meaning and force of deictic expressions are reshaped by the field in which they articulate" (14). This notion of a perceptual field is essential to the film-viewing experiences, and it is here where locusts shifts interpretations are constructed, and deictic and pragmatic relations enter into a greater relation with the audience. Given that the VJ is necessarily part of the audience, as it enables him to comment on the film, he also takes up positions on the deixis of WKCA.

Taking the VJ as the mediator of these relations, who is nonetheless fully embedded in them at the same time, is the best way to understand WKCA's unique pragmatic situation has changed from video halls to being on YouTube. As any other part



of a film, the VJ and their actions, “require(s) the constant comparison of audiovisual events in relation to each other in the immediate narrative context, as well as in relation to contexts experienced earlier in the film... Cinematic references are at all times contextually embedded” (ibid). The VJ’s constant presence affirms their pragmatic supremacy in the film and it’s perception by the audience in their repeated positioning as mediators within and without the film’s internal pragmatics; the constancy of these actions as they slowly become apparent as a feature of the film itself solidify their position along with specific linguistic and narrative practices.

Whatever the *origo* of a scene in WKCA as controlled by the VJ is, it is always wholly relational as it interacts with information and action that has unfolded, is unfolding, and will unfold. As so much of this is constantly filtered and initiated by the VJ, where traditional filmic language is underutilized in WKCA, the audience in experiencing his constant semi-diegetic embedding is drawn into a much larger pragmatic relationship between the film and real life. This occurs in a dynamic perceptual field in which new relations constantly emerge in an ever-shifting deixis which is conditioned by altering pragmatic changes.

The communicative nature of the deixis, with the relationality it grounds between all signs and subjects, is immediately relevant to film and especially to the VJ as they cross the deixis as a de-centered locus constantly creating new fields around the characters they speak through/for. Interaction for the VJ is always directly towards the audience. Film is inherently a text recreated in perception, its internal deixis composed of loci, signs, and referents all pointed towards the viewer/addressee outside film who,

through perception and interpretation, grounds the film in their own deixis. It is within this understanding where the VJ's role most neatly fits.

### 3.4 Further Film Pragmatics

It is necessary to create a more full framework that understands the pragmatic and systemic aspects of WKCA insofar as we can understand the intimate and bridged relations between the film's internal pragmatics and its imminence to the audience. Film and its narrative progression is at the same time self-contained and interactive with those who perceive it. Audiences are necessarily engaged in a social relationship with film, or any text, in the pragmatic fact that texts are communicative in their being-perceived and that audiences must make sense of any communication that they receive. Such textual and filmic dynamics are even more explicit with *Who Killed Captain Alex?* since the VJ more often than not communicates directly to the audience as a part of the film in a way that this role communicates and dominates this text's more conventional cinematic language.

The Semio-Pragmatic model as discussed by Roger Odin in *Spaces of Communication: Elements of Semio-Pragmatics* provides the basic canvassing for my framework to analyze the VJ in this film in conjunction with the great filmic language it employs. Odin's model integrates what he deems the two paradigms in film theory, that of the Imminentist and the Pragmatic, into a single model that situates the largely self-contained semiotic landscape of film (imminence) into a contextual dialogue with both audience and the wider symbolic landscape that acts (and acted) on the film (pragmatics).

Odin identifies these as the two major paradigms in the study of cinematic discourse. It is imperative to create an overview of these two perspectives before we investigate Odin's synthesis of them into a cohesive framework that we will use to

understand what occurs in WKCA and how it will provide a basis for our integration of other related pragmatic perspectives into it. This is an effort towards a model and methodology that accounts for all semiotic and interactive aspects of the film as a multimodal enunciative fact.

The imminentist perspective, as defined by Odin, “posits the text or language [language] as an entity endowed with permanent structural characteristics (a system in which each term has meaning only in relation to the system), an entity that it describes without reference to what lies outside it”, a perspective that locates as originating from Saussure’s *la langue* in *Course in General Linguistics*, “a system that only knows its own order” (Odin 41). Indeed, films and other texts exist as a self-contained world with their own internal logics that constitute what they present on the surface and what is possible in the worlds that they establish. This also concerns what they communicate in terms of how texts make use of their constituent communicative and linguistic parts. This is particularly relevant for film as the internal film-world operates on an internal deixis within which its constituent parts interact, and with the fact that the whole notion of diegesis rests on the assumption that a film-world has both an internality and as multiple possible external relationships.

Odin defines the contrastive pragmatic paradigm (or “approaches”) as a school of thought positing “that a sign, a word, a statement and a text make sense only in relation to the context in which they are sent and received... I regard *pragmatics* as comprising those approaches that put the *context* at the starting point of the production of meaning—that posit the context as *regulating* this process” (ibid.). This perspective solidly puts the interactive modes of film in the hands of contextual viewing and consumption, in the

deixis of real life and the psycho and socio-linguistic capacities of individuals as well as collective human audiences; It resembles classical linguistic pragmatics in its emphasis on interactivity that produces meaning external to the text. It is, however, far from a one-to-one analogous process. As Odin relates this with his references to Gianfranco Bettetini, film is only “mono-directional” and thus “does not allow an authentic exchange”, the static<sup>8</sup> and physical nature of a film once it is created is no longer tangibly mutable in any dialogic process (Odin 45). Any relationship between filmic communication and audience perception cannot constitute anything exactly like a human conversation. The way in which film is interactive as a conventional linguistic conversation is that film *communicates* and signifies necessarily for someone’s perception, and that that perception must make determinations on what is meant by what is perceived linguistically and semiotically. In this way, there are at least constituted addressers and addressees as per Jakobson’s model.

The absolute relationality between film and audience is what grounds this perspective; Only the external context allows room for communication outside a film’s bounds. It is by this very emphasis on the film as it relates to the audience, regardless of a film’s internal social and linguistic factors, that the pragmatic view enables a pragmatic process in the first place. The way in which text and audience meet is on a field defined

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<sup>8</sup> Referring to a film as an already-produced, already-edited consumable whole or text. This does not contradict Janney (2012)’s use of static on page 24, referring to a perceived and pedestrian lack of dynamism between a film’s events, filmic language, and its pragmatic relation to an audience. Both Odin (through Bettetini) and Janny fundamentally agree on the co-dependence between film and audience in the making of meaning via a social and pragmatic process.

by the audience, a field that film only passes into without the active, creative and spontaneous linguistic creativity that characterizes human interaction. Film and audience converse, but film is always passive as an addresser, being shaped constantly only by the reference and social orientation from the audiences, who become new active addressers that further situate cinema in a human pragmatic field.

Odin's Semio-Pragmatic model seeks to make use of both these paradigms in an integrated model with the "goal to put this immanentist approach *into a contextualized pragmatic perspective*" (Odin 48). Here, the film's internal pragmatics and external pragmatics that form when the film enters into a communicative relationship with an audience of any size are linked onto a common pragmatic and deictic field. This is where the film's internality is continually contextualized in the physical and mental space of its viewing, as well as the context of its own production.

Whatever happens in a film is always thus in a context involving social action whereby we can both understand the text as it is technically already created and the impressions it makes in the transformative process of audience interpretation as a pragmatic relationship. We can do this without compromising the notion of diegesis, because we recognize the separation of the film-internal world by its medium while recognizing "the construction of the text" as the audience and the film share an ontology in the acting of viewing and communicating. Such an ontology exists between all films and all audiences, despite the claims from Slugan, whether it is as foundationally unique as WKCA or not.

The model prioritizes contextually-embedded enunciation, that is, pragmatic social communication as mediated by film that leads to each viewer's creation of a text.

The denotation of *the* text (T) and *a* text (T') is an important nuance here, given the former is the film itself and all of its semiotic and pragmatic discursiveness and latter is the holistic impression of the original made by the viewer, "that cannot *a priori* be identical to T" (Odin 49). Any text, whether a film, painting, or novel is always in a constant dialogue with what led to its own creation, how viewers perceive it, and what it communicates to viewers, who then integrate it within their contextualized indexical landscape. The created text (T'), and by extension the original text (T) continues to exert its influence further despite its integration. Necessarily, this is a pragmatics at play, though not purely as direct communication but as a further embeddedness in the social field as a contextual artifact in creation and perception; Out from within T, through the pragmatic prism, diffused in nearly infinite rays of T' in nearly infinite discourses.

Film itself is enunciation, an assemblage of acts with a common grounding (film as a medium) that coheres a pragmatic multiplicity meant for perception. It is a the field in which the film transports itself towards interpretation while it is also determined within the larger social field. These are what Roger Odin calls "constraints" within the context of Semio-Pragmatics. Constraints here are much like linguistic constraints, those which act on something that limit and allow possibilities of enunciation, content and form, all that outside world is and how that world influences the text (T). Constraints are perennially relevant to the model in its integration of film's imminence and external pragmatics, "Once the contextual constraints governing the construction have been recognized, the imminentist perspective can be put into action" (Odin 48). External pragmatics always situate a film, or any other text, before its internal dynamics and semiotics fields develop.

These imminentist and pragmatic perspectives are also located in the ideas of French film semiotician Christian Metz, whose ideas are inextricably linked with Odin's theories and our project as a whole. According to Odin, Metz was a thinker who first began to bridge the gap between the two paradigms in his efforts to conceptualize film in a systematic and social fashion, in many ways prefiguring his own work, "Beyond its immanentist proclamations, we can say that the entire work of Metz reflects concerns with pragmatics... Everything happens as though both paradigms were still there, at the same time... the text and its independent existence, and the recognition that the meaning of a text changes with the context." (45-46). As a theorist concerned with language and pragmatics as both a part of film and as a system, Metz necessitates analysis and discussion for our purposes, both separate from Odin's model, and as a vital intellectual contributor.

Metz's entire conceptual metaphor imagines film like Saussure's classic structuralist approach to language, as the quote above shows, and the discursive elements of the film that enter into pragmatics with the audience are the filmic medium's *parole* (speech). Film, therefore, is necessarily dialogical, and herein lies the departure for Saussure's conception. The "singular linguistic system" for Metz is not only applicable to language, but to film as well, as neither language nor film function in isolation or by their own internal logic alone; They both originate in an "original act of abstraction" from the existential, social monad. In quoting Saussure, Metz conceptualizes the immanence of film as a part of a given social field, and as a matrix internal pragmatics and signification itself as "language without a language system" (*un langage sans langue*). This understanding of film as language, but with a uniquely perceptual and signifying system

*vis-a-vis* audience efforts at decoding, grounds this conceptualization as inherently social.

Despite his focus on film's internal semiotics and the enunciations it produces, Metz takes any given texts that are individual films as parts of the filmic paradigm and apparatus. Like how more external aspects determine language than the system of language itself, constraints act on film, what it utters, and what codes within films that an audience reads: Each utterance is constituted... on the basis of several choices... and if the utterance appears nevertheless to the hearer as a coherent and unified whole, it is because... they are organized and combined into an overall configuration which is of a systemic nature but which happens nevertheless to appear in a particular utterance and in it alone. (Metz 147).

These choices and aspects are the very same concept of constraints that Odin integrates into Semio-Pragmatics. For Metz and Odin alike, interpretation as the result of filmic discourse is as contingent as the discourse itself as it flows between the more stable points of interpreter and text. These constraints act on film, its discourse with the audience, and its production alike. The mental frameworks, immediate pragmatic contexts, and lived experiences of audience members also act as constraints in the creation of individual and collective texts (T'). Any given deictic and pragmatic environment in which a film and an audience are engaged exists only within any given constraints. By taking the constraints acting on WKCA, via the VJ, the cinematic language, the production and the close deictic ties between the audience's constantly-evolving T' and the film itself, we can better understand the ways in which the common



deictic field is both underpinned and manipulated in its YouTube publication approximation of traditional event cinema.

To more fully ground my overarching Semio-Pragmatic approach, we must incorporate a multi-modal aspect to our framework. Multimodality is perfectly fit to turn the theory of Semio-Pragmatics into a praxis of contextual, semiotic and linguistic analysis in film. I take Bezemer and Jewitt's socio-historical orientation towards multimodality as what guides my multi-faceted application of theory to the internal and external constraints of the film.

Multi-modality is dialogic and intimately concerned with the pragmatics of meaning in all their semiotic constraints and realizations: the multiform and interactional ways a film engages in pragmatics. The following puts the method as best suited to film analysis in a way akin to Metz's partially linguistic conception of film and its communication, "All forms of communication (modes) have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize historical functions... the meanings realized by any mode are always interwoven with the meanings made with those other modes co-present and co-operating in the communication event" (Bezemer & Jewitt 184). This incorporation of multi-modality represents a more explicitly applied methodology within our theoretical pragmatic framework, given that we must analyze the interactions of the different modes of cinematic language in WKCA in order to understand their interactions.

In our discussion of the direct methods of watching WKCA, shortly preceding the whole analysis, we will elucidate how the direct methods of multi-modal analysis guided our selection of scenes relevant to our research. As an integral theoretical aspect of our

approach, applications of multi-modality require consideration of both the VJ and film's different modes within the contexts of specific scene and sequences, as well as in the film as a whole. Many of the VJ-specific modes of analysis include voice, intonation, framing, status of diegesis, synergy or counter-action to the cinematic languages and the content of their speech and interaction. Each of these modes as they manifest in any pattern separately in themselves will all fit together in the grander multimodal method from which we can make observations and claims about the VJ. Understanding the multimodal nature of film and *Who Killed Captain Alex's* semiotic landscape also help us orient each modal expression in the common pragmatic and deictic field that we have established; It would solidify the place of these modes as properly cinematic, but engaged in a more actively interaction pragmatics with the audience.

In concordance with the premises of Semio-Pragmatics and the multimodality from Bessemer & Jewitt, my larger framework moves from the intertwined position that pragmatics is the basis for all linguistic activity as elaborated on in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari *Postulates of Linguistics in A Thousand Plateaus*. Pragmatics is of a particular importance in this work insofar as it is reconceptualized as the fundamental precondition of linguistics and social language, while at same time, “[t]here are variables of expression *that establish a relationship between language and the outside, but precisely because they are immanent to language.*” (emphasis not mine) (Deleuze & Guattari 82).

Pragmatics, and by an implied extent, deixis, are always under the influence of the wider social world. Given that language use and functions are necessarily social, pragmatic constraints govern and situate language as it exists for itself and how it relates

to outside factors such as custom, politics, culture and medium *et cetera*. Instead of “pragmatics” as that which “historically designated all that is outside linguistics study”, it is pragmatics as “immanent considerations of language... communication presupposes subjectivities prior to it... in terms of socio-political fields”. (Grisham 44-45). This orientation of pragmatics even more towards the social is a grounding that centers it as the dominant precondition for anything having to do with language, inasmuch as language is bound up in social and power relations on which pragmatic conditions and constraints act.

An absolute relationality built on both immediate and more socially-entrenched context, or “extrinsic, non-linguistic factors” is what characterizes a pragmatic field as that which situates “internal variables of enunciation in relation to the aggregate of circumstances” (Deleuze & Guattari 83-85). This is of absolute relevance to our Semio-Pragmatic approach to *Who Killed Captain Alex?* in that the film’s production and logics occupy a shared pragmatic field with real life consumption by virtue of the VJ and Ugandan event cinema.

Odin/Metz’s constraints map onto this idea of pragmatics insofar as they both ground the internal dynamics of either a text or real-life social situation. Each instantiation of language use is always firmly governed by pragmatics in ways unique to what produces said instantiation; as put by the authors, “Linguistics is nothing with a pragmatics (semiotic or political) to define effectuation of the conditions of possibility and the usage of linguistic elements” (ibid) (emphasis not mine).

Applying this to our framework functions to further integrate both the film itself in what led to its very production, as well as the external factors and conditions that led to

how the VJ manipulates audience perception and cinematic language to change WKCA moment to moment; that is, the constraints of the film and its structure itself as well as its internet publishing, as evolved from the video halls, are what contextualize and enable the formation of the pragmatic and deictic field under study. Pragmatics is not necessarily explicitly linguistic in how it acts on language, it is all that can possibly lead to language use and that which governs continuous language use in a context that it helps construct.

We can understand this totalizing view of pragmatics by applying it to a hypothetical real life situation, and to one from WKCA. Say that you're at table, having dinner with your extended family on Thanksgiving. Your father communicates to you the utterance, "Could you please pass the salad bowl?" Assuming that the addressee (you) both understand the literal words and meanings in this request, and are also at least partially socialized in the American cultural norms of table etiquette and familial communication, you pass the salad bowl, perhaps accompanied by an affirmative like "sure", though you know this is not necessary. Not only does this linguistic request establish a temporary relationship (passer and passee of the salad bowl), it builds upon the context of the existing interpersonal relationship that prefigured it, as well as the cultural and social context that not only prescribes this reaction by acting on the participants, but also enables the possibility that it will occur. In the wider pragmatics that grounds everything, there is the explicitly linguistic and the non-linguistic, both are layers of the same function that each condition this specific instantiation of language, "A type of statement can be evaluated only as a function of its pragmatic implications... its relation to the presuppositions, immanent acts, or incorporeal transformations. "(ibid. 83). This

filters down to apply to everything from intonation, voluntary phonetic variability, use of register and all other socially-variable parts of language. This would also include communicative non-linguistic cues. Suppose in the same example you answered your father “sure” in a socially enregistered sarcastic tone, and instead of placing the bowl quietly before your father, you loudly and sloppily slam it down so that it communicates discontentment and spills a little bit of salad to add insult to injury. Your father earlier refused to give you money to pay a large credit bill that you owe interest on. This extra context, both the previous linguistic exchange and all the aforementioned social factors, exerted a pragmatic influence on this linguistic interaction by establishing a condition of possibility; in this case, fulfilled.

We can see these work similarly in film even though there is inherently less variability in the text itself as it is already created and perceived, at least superficially, in one possible way by an audience, and in that it exists as an already constricted site where many possibilities could occur under few conditions, i.e those set by the script and production. This is already pragmatic in the structure of film as a text itself.

We can apply this understanding and concept to a particular sequence in *Who Killed Captain Alex?*. Starting at 6:50, an altercation starts at a bar which is instigated by a villager attacking a drunken commando for dancing with the woman who is singing. The VJ dialogues as the angered and physically confrontational villager that the singer is his wife and that the commando shouldn't dance with her, (“That's my wife, get off my wife.”), to which the VJ as the commando responds, “Wife? I thought that is (sic) a goat”. What follows as a result of this insult is a bar fight between the commandos and villagers which lasts until 7:14, when Captain Alex puts a stop to it by arriving and having the

actor bark, “Where is your discipline?!” Immediately after, a disgruntled commando throws a bottle at the camera which is in Captain Alex’s direction, this prompts Alex to subdue him, while the VJ speaking and embodying Alex says, “Down, get down”. Captain Alex then (through the actor’s own dialogue) chides the commandos for their behavior by citing they way they are supposed to keep composure, that they are expected to exercise discipline in civilian life so as to fulfill their duty as soldiers while in combat, (“If you can’t handle yourselves here, what will happen in combat?”). He continues this when a bloody commando lying on the floor is focused on in the scene, who is lifted up by another soldier to be taken away, but not before more reprimands from Captain Alex (“Look at you. You call yourself a soldier? Back to camp.”). He then forces most of the other commandos out of the bar, implicitly following up on his previous explicit order to the soldier on the floor.

The greater context of the film aside, the pragmatic dynamics at play here depend on and diverge from prescribed norms of military discipline and how one is expected to act in a social setting otherwise. Such norms prescribe not disturbing peace through violence against civilians, or sexual advances towards women, whether drunkenly or soberly motivated. The drunk commando, and then the commandos at large, begin to act against these norms and fight the villagers in spontaneous violence. The discordant relationship between Captain Alex, the soldiers, and the villagers already sets up conditions of possibility for social norms to be broken or otherwise altered. In this case, the breaking of these social norms in this interaction represent the realized potential of a few select possibilities pre-figured by the established pragmatic relations, those immanent to the scene insofar as it is a portrait of people in linguistic and non-linguistic

communication. Here we see context, both implied in isolation and concordant when taken in consideration to the previous pragmatic conditions in the film's diegetic narrative, shaping and allowing for linguistic variation as conditioned by both audience familiarity with established social norms (as well as the presumed familiarity of the characters themselves) and the grounding nature of pragmatics on all linguistic activity itself. Again, the fact that this scene's finitude in language is evident in its being as part of the movie does not negate the pragmatic constraints already implicit in the interaction. In the way that a film simulates real life, there is always a presumed pragmatics immanent to the filmic interactions not counting the constraints of film as a medium.

The conception of pragmatics as what ultimately enables all linguistic activity brings our conception of said activity, especially in film for our purposes, into a wholly social framework. It is within this framework that speech acts come to ordinate and orientate a given pragmatic environment and the social presuppositions therein, what Deleuze and Guattari call "Order Words". As a function that is coextensive with speech acts, order words work as enunciations that affect and change immanent pragmatic social relations per "the relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, in other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement" (Deleuze & Guattari 79). Order-words compose speech acts, which are instantiations of said words and social forces that they change and affect. Order-words are always contextualized and effectual in pragmatics that enable and set the constraints on their possible illocutionary results, working through language with social power. Grisham elaborates that order-words in their usage "arrange(s) social bodies and demand(s) obedience. It is the fundamental unit of the statement connecting it to implicit

presuppositions, collective assemblages... an order always and already concerns prior orders” (Grisham 47-48). Order-words can never be removed from any pragmatic context, because their nature and function is to be pragmatic. They are always bridges between what has happened and was implied and what can possibly be after the usage of order-words. All linguistic interactions from the smallest requests for a salad bowl to the declarations of national policy or reorganizations of a pool of labor function through order-words, which in turn function from the norms, values, authorities and positions that empower them and affect their possibilities towards material and non-material change.

The concept of the order-word as contextualized in our established Semio-Pragmatic framework applies directly to how the VJ functions on their own and compares to illocution in more conventional filmic settings, not to mention the interactions between the two. Returning to the above example from WKCA, the drunken commando’s retort to the villager, “Wife? I thought that is (sic.) a goat”, is a string of order words that provoke a violent response by acting within, yet transgressing, an environment where a more polite and apologetic response is prescribed. Conventions of social politeness give power to this verbal response by the fact that they are ignored; The insult works against them to determine possibilities of violence. The villager, on the other hand is given cause to exact violence on the commando due to these order words suspending normal social expectations, while also giving power towards enacting this violence due to its relation to the gendered social assumption that a man has to defend his wife’s body and status as their partner. As the scene progresses, Captain Alex uses more literal “ordering” order-words to break up the fight, these utterances are given power by his military authority over the commandos and intention to return to a pre-scribed, non-violent, civil status quo.



This intention actualizes out of the pragmatic range of possibilities that have hitherto been established due to Alex's order words working with the immediate and wider social forces and expectations that give him power; the soldiers are chided, punished and expelled.

The function of these lines as order words manifest in his success in enacting changes in the social situation and derive from established and implicit assumptions. In drawing from norms of authority in the Ugandan military hierarchy, these order words produce an outcome concordant with a specific set of possibilities established by the film's inner pragmatics; This successful outcome being a restoration of local civil and military order and a solidification of authority and discipline amongst the commandos. This was pushed by Captain Alex's words, embodiment, and social power. When the VJ uses order words in his speech acts to alter the pragmatics of a scene, he is also using the speech from his position to order the audience on the non-diegetic plane to immediately interpret the scene by his own new parameters. It is in this way is the VJ most able to change the pragmatic contexts and constraints of a scene, because he performs a transformative and communicative function to his audience, thus from his position he is able to reach across the trans diegetic field to alter audience perceptions based on his new, more diegetic creative contributions.

In a context directly grounded and relevant in the reality of these characters, these order words attain power to change outcomes as if they were as fluid and undetermined as real scenarios; The simulation of real-world pragmatics is played out in film pragmatics as if it proceeds like what it emulates. This is because, internal and diegetic to the film, reality is shifting, dynamic and subject to social and linguistic power.

Traditionally this is only applicable most (or exclusively) directly to the filmic deixis and pragmatic field. In this case specific to WKCA, the fact that the VJ principally enacted these order words and speech under the guise of characters is not of importance; If they all had come from the actual actors in linguistic exactitude, the outcomes in the film would play out the same. The extent to which the VJ's pragmatic power is most effective, relevant and transformative will come in the later analyses.

Though speech in film is conventionally thought of as both contained to the diegetic world in its effects, and as only expressive of one character or narrative voice, filmic dialogue is anything but singular in its source. This holds true even if we discount the contributions of different, the actor's performative input, or changes brought about by studio influence. In considering the contributions of different ideas, intentions, assumptions and intertextual relations within a film such as WKCA, it behooves us to engage with Bakhtin's notions of *heteroglossia* and *dialogue* as elaborated on in *The Dialogic Imagination*. While these concepts exist in order to describe how the novel's narrative communicates to the reader, the concepts themselves can serve to supplement our understanding of film discourse as it relates to the VJ.

Bakhtin defines his notion of heteroglossia as, "a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" of which the specific social forces that went into creating a text as well as the perspectives and language of the characters and idea therein are "those fundamental compositional unities" (Bakhtin 263). Novelistic discourse is always heteroglossic, the worldviews of its constituent voices include characters dialoguing with the reader through the novel's semiotic medium as much as the author's own discourse. Simultaneously, the novel manifests the voices of political

institutions, manifold social beliefs and various varieties of one or many languages with all the associations that come to mind in a cacophonous medium filtering the world in and out. Bakhtin characterizes the novel as follows, “Languages live a real life... in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore, they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel, which can unite itself in... discourse” (Ibid. 292). Narrative films function in a much similar way in terms of dialogue and heteroglossia, as it is a medium of many voices literal and figurative in a chain of signification that goes beyond the audience back into the world; it is firmly dialogical.

Bakhtin indeed sees the novel as an exemplary heteroglossic work, a medium where not only the author speaks through fully-realized characters but the characters themselves function as pragmatic participants in creating dialogue, thus not merely serving as an authorial mouthpiece. Dialogue is necessarily heteroglossic, but appears as one concrete act in an illusory fashion. While the two poles of one who speaks and one who listens seem like stable walls containing the churning flow of discourse, every instance of dialogue reckons with what led to its enunciation and feeds into future discourse on some kind of scale outside of a singular interaction or series of interactions between pragmatic participants. Dialogue is that which functions as situated in an “agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements, accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships... (it) cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-historical consciousness around the given object of an utterance” (Ibid. 276). Dialogue as conceived of as such almost describes the VJ’s actions in facilitating WKCA’s narrative and inhabiting diegetic characters to a tee.

The entire role of a Video Joker is to make dialogue: in jokes, in different languages, in descriptions and even in onomatopoeia. Movement from the Ugandan video halls to the internet for *Who Killed Captain Alex?* only changed their diegetic status and their primary facilitating language of dialogue to English in their own voice and in the film's subtitles. Bakhtin's concepts here speak directly to the communication inherent to the VJ and to the dialogue that the film's virality brings between Uganda and the wider world; The VJ being a multi-voiced filmic function navigating the use of a post-colonial English to engage in near infinite pragmatic actors. Counting this and the tendency for the VJ to speak through and on the behalf of characters in the film, much less speaking for the movie's communication itself, is literally heteroglossic. This is without even going into detail about how the actors in the movie primarily speak Luganda with English subtitles, or that the VJ dips into Luganda as well. The entire pragmatic situation of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* requires the VJ to be the vehicle of the manifold factors of Ugandan film development: the dialogue of the spectator in a video hall seeing a film in unideal conditions that create the need for that in-person commentator, the products of past domestic and colonial suppression, and the realities of achieving catharsis through violent fiction and producing art in the geo-political periphery.

Film's internal content speaks in both directions, connecting the internal to externality, integrating past dialogues into latent pragmatics for an objectification into a viewer's deixis. By whatever means it enters in it, "heteroglot opinion, language ... lies on the border between oneself and the other... it is populated— over-populated— with the intentions of others" (Bakhtin 293). As a seemingly singular unity always making themselves the locus, the VJ is transformed into a figure blurring diegesis and non-

diegesis by virtue of the film's presence on the internet. Their larger role is to create and facilitate the polyvocal dialogues of the film's embedded content into a multiplicity of discourses with each of its millions of relatively new, and mostly non-Ugandan Anglophone viewers.

Part of the way WKCA's VJ is able to change deictic relations and put focus on characters and heteroglossic voices he embodies is by relying on certain linguistic choices that are illustrative of what he wants the audience to perceive. For example, at 2:25 during the scene where multiple women are interviewing Captain Alex, the VJ says in a more high-pitched voice "You're so handsome, will you marry me?" as multiple women speak Luganda on screen. It is not made clear which woman in particular is meant to be embodied by the VJ. His ability to speak and embody at least one of these characters in such a register serves a purpose to create an impression for the audience, and thus has implicit social assumptions associated with it. As a part of our analysis, this practice is best understood by applying Asif Agha's concept of "enregisterment".

Enregisterment as defined by Asif Agha is understood as, "(the) processes whereby distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users" (Agha 2005 38). Linguistic features and non-linguistic signs alike proliferate the social sphere, and through exposure and ideological association, they come to be prototypical, stereotypical and representative of particular groups of people who may or may not exist. These features and signs stand in for abstractions of the aforementioned categories of people to which social values become attached. Such perceived linguistic features and signs are as abstract and arbitrary as determinable in a society. They however serve the function of

easily indexing salient social perceptions to a person or people in order for them to be more prototypically or stereotypically conceived. In the context of WKCA, the VJ uses his position of influence in the film's pragmatic field to take on enregistered features when focusing on a character within a filmic shot. This is in order to further modify his narrative performance in a way that the audience will easily recognize. His embodiment is frequently based on enregisterment, and such choices build smaller fictions and perceptions within WKCA's diegetic narrative.

Given that WKCA is now published on the internet and that the VJ mostly does his work in English, the types of enregistered features he invokes do not seem specifically Ugandan but pan-stereotypical for this larger online audience. We see this in the above example with the adoption of a high-pitched voice and dialogue such as "Will you marry me?" in an attempt to provide characterization towards a humorous and performative end. Such a stereotypical marker of "womanness" may have been thought by the VJ as near ubiquitous, at least in Anglophone American culture (the presumed primary audience of WKCA on YouTube), even if such a feature is not as commonly enregistered elsewhere (Sicoli 109). Regardless, this creative and illustrative choice is meant to index stereotypical "womanness" by linking speech to perceived social identity. As put by Agha in *Stereotypes and Registers in Honorific Language* (1998), "Stereotypes personify speech itself. They formulate signs of social identity by linking features of utterance-form with social categories of persons... such stereotypes formulate social standards by which individual acts of language are judged" (152). Though it is the VJ speaking, and the VJ actively enregistering, it is one or more of the women in this who are enregistered.

Despite the large amount of enregisterment the VJ makes use of, he often does not rely on it all in his speech acts performative characterization. On the contrary, he may shift from enregistered speech to speaking more as himself, or vice versa.

We can find an example of this in the very same interview scene as described above. After the VJ says “Will you marry me?” in the female enregistered voice, he then switches his embodied focus to Captain Alex. This makes him the new focus point of the scene and he follows this up by speaking as Captain Alex, he scoffs and says at 2:30, “I prefer men.” After this, he switches his embodiment and his focus back on the female reporters, speaking again in the female enregistered voice, “What? Noooooo (sic.)! We love you! We love you!”. This dialogue briefly continues into the beginning of the next scene, even though none of the previous characters are present in the shot.

The VJ goes between using explicitly enregistered features and seemingly non-enregistered features depending on which character(s) he is embodying. When speaking as and shifting the event cinema focus to Captain Alex, the VJ does speak in any voice markedly different from his own; There seems to be no specific linguistic enregisterment indicating being gay or bisexual in the line “I prefer men” specific to the USA, the wider world or Uganda. This is discounting, of course, the very literal meaning of the statement in the context of being asked “Will you marry me?”, as this line is not registered with any other features that portray social characteristics. It is simply delivered very plainly with the literal meaning as the point of its attestation in this scene. However, further research can analyze the utterance of this line and what kinds of linguistics styles it might draw on. This would require intimate knowledge of the indexing of stereotypes in speech in Ugandan culture and could be understood with reference to Uganda’s harsh anti-LGBTQ

laws, which prominently includes 2014's "Anti Homosexual Act" which had passed by the time WKCA was released on YouTube.

Varying usages of enregisterment often accompany or enable the VJ's pragmatic and deictic manipulations of WKCA around his actions and/or the audience's reception. Throughout the film as it digitally exists, the VJ compensates for the rather sparse subtitles and the primary Luganda dialogue of the diegetic characters by speaking through the use of various enregistered features in order to create a greater impression of specific characters and scenes to the audience. As will become more evident in our ultimate analysis, the VJ makes use of enregisterment so that he can further enact a kind of digital and permanently edited-in version of event cinema during the whole process of endlessly morphing and reforming filmic deictic relations. This specific type of linguistic character embodiment is purposefully socially recognizable so that the VJ continues to determine and mediate how the audience pragmatically relates to the events and personalities of the film. Enregisterment by him depends on his authoritative narrative and pragmatic position, given that it strengthens these in turn as the VJ continues to use varying speech acts and his semi-diegetic position to autocratically de/reterritorialize and override the conventional codes, utterances and technical aspects of *Who Killed Captain Alex?*



## CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS

### 4.1 The Practical Methodology of Viewing

The vast majority of the methods we have hitherto expounded upon are almost purely theoretical and serve to provide an overall framework for approaching WKCA. Our application of this framework is comparatively practical and straightforward: this involves watching the entire film while specifically focusing on instances where the VJ is participating and analyzing such scenes by using Bezemer and Jewitt's multimodality to understand how the VJ works with or against the filmic scenes themselves in ways that changes the overall pragmatic relationship between the VJ, the audience and the scenes themselves.

Multi-modality is dialogic and intimately concerned with the pragmatics of meaning in all their semiotic constraints and realizations; The multiform and interactional ways a film engages in pragmatics. Therefore, its application to both the cinematic language and the speech acts of the VJ alike synthesize with each other and with the entire theoretical background which emphasizes the importance of the dialogic, heteroglossia, and pragmatic cohesiveness of WKCA under the VJ's actions. Applying multi-modality will give us the ability to understand how filmic elements work both independently and within their contexts, equal parts in diegesis, the digital event cinema practice of the VJ, and the general pragmatic and deictic environment under specific material constraints.

As we look at each component of a scene while operating through multimodality, our aim is to examine how they influence each other based on Bezemer and Jewitt's

Three Theoretical Assumptions<sup>9</sup>. With this in mind, the modes that we consider are not just those linguistic ones (tone, intonation, prosody, pitch ect.), but those audio-visual modes that make up the technical parts of a film, those that are representation of and constructed around the linguistic and pragmatic content therein, as well how they are in relations with the audience. These correspond to the internal and external pragmatics respectfully, both separate but intimately linked by the VJ. The modes of technical filmmaking frame the modes of language and semiotics as part of a pragmatic and deictic whole built on specific constraints. In other words, we work to examine the *modal affordance* of the technical film-making components in how these modes frame, contextualize and transform the film's contents and conventional linguistic usages, as these pragmatically and technically-differentiated modes and signifying abilities, “simultaneously... orchestrate complex, “multimodal ensembles” (Bezemer & Jewitt 185). Each mode that would fall under examination must be understood in relation to all others, and when we code such modes in each scene, we will analyze how they all change in their orientation and interaction due to the VJ.

When watching the film in its entirety, we will pick out scenes that illustrate one of the main ways in which the VJ functions in his unique role, these are organized along the following categorizations: direct fourth wall breaking, embodiment of diegetic

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<sup>9</sup> “First... all representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning. Second... all forms of communication (modes) have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions. Third, the meaning realized by any mode is always interwoven with the meaning made with those other co-present and co-operating in the communicative event. This interaction produces meaning (2010).

characters, and providing exposition not evident in the film *sans* VJ. Each of the categories can occur alongside each other in the same scene, and they all are methods by which the VJ shifts pragmatic relations around himself and his actions, making himself the intermittent deictic and informational locus. We will note and reconcile the semio-linguistic and filmic modes specifically relevant to each scene towards an understanding of how they work in relation to the VJ, and thus to the audience. By looking at each mode as it is pragmatically situated and morphed, necessarily both on its own and in relation to all other present modes, we will be able to use our framework thus far established to analyze the way in which the VJ alters the effects of said modes by his speech acts and unique ontological position in a way that is more often than not contradicts the immediate diegetic contents of WKCA.

#### 4.2 Sample Analysis of Scenes

The structure of this section will consist of concise descriptions of the scenes under investigation, the internal and VJ-centric dialogue of said scenes, and coding of the cinematic techniques specifically at play. We will only note dialogue from the VJ that is wholly in English, as some of what he says is sometimes in Luganda. Since we did not have access to appropriate resources for translations while conducting this work, use of other languages will not be analyzed in the current thesis; future work may consider the impact of other languages on pragmatics in WKCA. In order to provide an example of this organization, I will provide the following example scene without a full analysis from the timestamps 22:31 to 23:47. The main component of this scene has the antagonist boss of the Tiger Mafia, Richard, berating his men after they lost a battle to Captain Alex and the Commandos where Richard's brother was captured. The leader of the men, Puffs,

tries to make up for this blunder by pointing out that they saved Richard's briefcase and one of his wives present in the room. This, however, angers Richard, who shoots his wife and assaults some of his men.

[Wide shot of Richard, his men, and his wife in a shelter]

VJ Emmie: *Tiger Mafia Base*

[Focused shot of Richard and Puffs]

Richard: Where is the stuff?

Puffs: The briefcase is safe.

Richard: As the leader of this base, what do you have to say?

Puffs: Alex's soldiers were well trained, there was nothing. we could do

[Richard moves away and looks down in disgust]<sup>10</sup>

VJ Emmie: *Morons*

Richard: What about my brother?

Puffs: I was able to save your briefcase, as well as your beautiful wife. [Camera cuts to and zooms in on the wife.]

[Cut back to Richard and Puffs]

Richard: What did you say? Instead of my brother you saved this bitch?

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<sup>10</sup> The colored conventions are as follows and are outlined as follows: **Red text** denotes a correlation between the cinematic events unfolding and the VJ's dialogue as to express that the VJ is meant to be speaking as (embodying) that particular character, that dialogue is what the character expresses not by the actor themselves, but through the VJ's speech. **Blue text** denotes the former but where it is more ambiguous, the VJ's dialogue is not as strikingly signified to be his embodiment of character in frame, but could be part of general narration. **Pink text** denotes instances of the VJ's speech revealing information that drastically alters the context of a scene without speaking through an embodied character, but solely as himself in his role as a VJ.

[Cut to wife speaking and moving towards Richard]

Wife: [Speaks unsubtitled Luganda] VJ (overlaid): *Who is the bitch?*

[Cut to Richard pulling out a gun and shooting her]

[Cut to wife falling on the ground]

VJ Emmie: *You.*

[Cut back to group of men]

VJ Emmie: *Tiger Mafia*

[Richard starts assaulting his men]

Richard: I want you to bring me Captain Alex.

[Cut to Puffs on the ground after Richard beats him]

Richard: *And you, bastard - I want my brother.*

VJ Emmie: *(strained whining sound)*

With this transcription format, we aim to show how lines from the VJ relate to those from other characters, and how each of those are coordinated with shot editing, shot composition and in some scenes, musical and sound cues. By illustrating when the VJ speaks and the cinematic contexts in which that interact with said lines, we will be able to analyze how the VJ's speech acts work to change the characteristics of characters and scenes through his influence. This formatting and its analytic usage is based entirely on our previous theoretical framework in which we examine the entire pragmatic field shared by the film-world and audience as the VJ orients their narrative structure and contents towards his creative ends. The scenes after this section will include these full

discussions in which everything we have established will be examined according to investigating our thesis.

#### 4.3 Pragmatic Qualitative Data of Specific Scenes

The following scenes from WKCA were coded for the VJ's dialogue, dialogue from other characters, shot composition, usages of a specific cinematic technique, musical and sound cues, and breaking the fourth wall. Here is where we will apply our framework in order to understand the interactions on, and changes within, the shared deixis between WKCA and the audience as continually oriented around the VJ.

In the first of three scenes, we will analyze what constitutes sections of a continuous sequence that is interspersed with different scenes in the film. The analysis of this scene will precede as a sequential investigation into each specific sub-scene, as to demonstrate the many ways the VJ functions in his role with a cohesive subplot as structured in an extended, broken-up scene. Present in the following are many of the practices and characteristics of what the VJ does in WKCA with regards to pragmatics that we have discussed so far. The first part of the scene, starting at 37:17, is about Captain Alex's brother, Bruce U, training his Kung Fu skills in the jungle in order to avenge the Captain. During this sequence, he also meets a wife of Tiger Mafia boss, Richard, who was shot but escaped. The scene's actions and English dialogue (spoken and subtitled) are as follows:

1. [Shot from below of Bruce U laying on a bed of strings in a tree]

VJ: *Hotel Kampala*

[Wide shot of Bruce waking up and stretching in the tree]

VJ: *Time for exercise.*

[Cut to close up of Bruce]

VJ: *A master from Southern Hemisphere ... of Uganda.*

[A sped up section of a tracking shot of Bruce jumping out of the tree and rolling to break his fall, which become normal speed as he walks towards the camera]

VJ: *Ugandan Bruce Lee. We call him Bruce U.*

[Cut and zoom to Bruce walking forward quicker to prepare to cook on a fire]

[A soft and quiet piano melody begins to play, which continues through the rest of the scene]

VJ: *He just want (sic)<sup>11</sup> to be alone... to focus on vengeance. But first, he needs to eat.*

[The camera pans upwards as Bruce squats to the ground to prepare food]

VJ: *After breakfast, then training. A supa master of Kung Fu*

[Cut o close up of Bruce sitting down]

VJ: *A supa master of cooking*

[Bruce dangles a fish over the fire]

VJ: *Oh, whoa, whoa. That looks good.*

[Cut to close up and zoom to Bruce looking to his left]

VJ: [Onomatopoeia signifying inquisitiveness or confusion]

[Cut to wide shot of Bruce and an entity obscured by the bush behind him]

VJ: *Hmm.*

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<sup>11</sup> For the sake of preventing redundancy, I will not write (sic) for every written idiosyncrasy of the VJ's speech. If the reader sees un-annotated non-standard spelling, it is safe to assume that this is the faithful and purposeful transcription from the film and not a spelling error in the paper.

[Bruce walks towards the bush].

VJ: *Crocodile? Dinosaur?*

[The main loop of the piano score re-starts, quietly]

[Bruce removes foliage to reveal a woman lying unconscious]

VJ: *Ohhh Jesus.*

[Cut to close up on woman on the ground]

W: Some water. Please.

B: [Dialogue in Luganda]

VJ: *What's this?*

[Bruce touches the woman, who screams but then laughs as she wakes up]

[Cut to Bruce retrieving a bottle of water and handing it to the woman]

VJ: *I never seen - [laughs slightly] I've never seen a woman.*

[Shot pans upwards to Bruce standing and looking down on the woman, he then sharply turns and walks away]

VJ: *Leave me alone.*

[Series of shots of Bruce going back to cooking, interrupted by a close up of a bleeding wound on the woman, which zooms back out]

[Cut to close up of Bruce, followed by shots alternating between focusing on him and the woman]

B: What happened?

W: I don't remember

B: Is that a bullet wound?

[Close up of woman in pain]



VJ: [Onomatopoeia signifying pain]

[Shot/reverse shot of Bruce throwing clothes to the woman]

B: Put this on. Don't bleed on it.

[Short tracking shot the woman limping to sit on the rock with Bruce]

(Piano score is more audible during sequence)

VJ: [Onomatopoeia signifying pain, whining] *Someone, somebody, help me.*

[Cut to Bruce gathering plants]

[Shot/reverse shot: 1. Bruce hands the woman the plants]

VJ: *Take it.*

[Shot/reverse shot: 2. The woman puts the plants on her wound, exclaims, and then chuckles].

[Cut to Bruce sitting on the opposite side of the rock]

VJ: [Onomatopoeia signifying irritation]

[Pan downwards to the fish Bruce is cooking]

VJ: *Next time for your mouth!*

During this scene, the VJ most notably employs his embodiment of characters through enregisterment and by working (in this instance) concordantly with what shot composition communicates. The former serves to add characterization when nothing firmly diegetic to the film itself otherwise would and the latter is used by the VJ to more firmly ground his actions as congruence within the shot's contents, which though fitting, ultimately are products of his work.

The former occurs when Bruce U begins to wonder what is moving behind him in the bushes and chooses to investigate. As Bruce U looks behind him, the VJ begins to make sounds meant to express confusion or a desire to investigate what is going on even though the actor does not physically try to speak anything of the sort, or anything at all. The sound that he makes ends in a rising tone, a prosodic marker of inquisition in both Luganda (Myers 2023), and to a greater, English (Tench 2009). This intrusion in the character and the film's pragmatic environment is continued as Bruce U moves closer to the woman in the bushes as the VJ, rather nonsensically says, "Crocodile? Dinosaur?" in the same inquisitive tone as to imply that Bruce U is actively thinking, in a way that the audience has to access to, that these things could be in that spot.

We can see the latter (as well as some of the former) occurring during the shot of the woman painfully walking around to sit on the rock with Bruce U. She wears a pained and tired look on her face, and as she moves the camera slowly, slightly and subtly tracks her as the VJ makes noises that sound like a person experiencing the effects of an injury, which he follows with, "Someone, somebody, help me". As he says this, the camera slowly zooms so that the woman becomes more of the shot's focus, given that she is taking up more space. As she sits, the zoomed camera lingers on her while the sad and soft piano score audibly plays non-diegetically in the background. It is here that we see the VJ inserting himself more into the film's deictic space by speaking as if he was giving thoughts and emotions to the woman. His choices are cohesive with both the tone and content of the scene, and he expresses the physical pain and emotional isolation of a woman shot by her criminal husband who is alone and friendless in the jungle; The helplessness implied in this situation by the actors, shot composition and score are

emphasized by the VJ through his choice to speak as the woman in high-pitched, beleaguered voice in order to index agony and femininity.

The VJ continues to exert his pragmatic influence in this scene by creating a characterization of Bruce U as irritated with the woman and reluctant to help her. This characterization begins when the VJ, as Bruce U centered in the shot, says the additional nonsensical and phenomenologically improbable statement of, “I have never seen a woman. Leave me alone.”; This latter part of the line is choreographed to Bruce U’s actor suddenly facing the opposite way and walking away in the shot. This statement is a continuation of earlier similar dialogue of “Crocodile? Dinosaur?” in the humorous mood that the VJ established, which creates a continuous thematic and dialogic relationship in the pragmatics between the film and the audience. The VJ’s linguistic interference is more characteristic of Bruce U is more communicative, illustrative and authoritative than what the film itself presents. Dialogue that would otherwise be more non-diegetic is now diegetic, since it colors the sequence and effects narrative progression and characterization of this scene.

Similarly, the VJ’s portrayal of Bruce U as irritated continues, first in spite of, then concordant with the scenes narrative and cinematographic progression. The cinematographic modes of the specific camera movements and editing choices work as inherent communicative parts of a film, and in this scene, they are key aspects of analysis necessary to understand the VJ’s overall pragmatic, linguistic and narrative influence.

As Bruce U’s actor, in a way that is firmly diegetic to and originating from the film’s internal world, inquires about the woman’s injuries, he does not appear to be speaking with a tone reflective of negative emotions towards her. There is a slight change

in the direction of irritation and distaste however, when Bruce U throws his clothes to the woman and says, via the actor's dialogue, "Put this on. Don't bleed on it". During this, the camera slightly zooms in on him to emphasize his power over her as someone who provides a way to reduce her pain. What follows is a series of tone changes between kindness and irritation/hostility by Bruce U, largely as a result of the VJ enacting characterizations discordant with the content of the actors and scenes as filmed. As the VJ finishes his enregistered embodiment of the woman in pain, the camera zooms slightly to Bruce U so that he takes up half the frame, wherein he turns around and shows a concerned face for a split second. The scene then cuts to a short sequence of Bruce U gathering leaves to heal the woman's wound, and act seeming helpful and selfless but overlaid by the VJ making sounds indicative of frivolous labor, frustration or disgust at having to perform this task. When he returns to give the leaves to the woman, he says rather plainly, "Put it on the wound. It'll stop the bleeding." He is, however, partially drowned out by the VJ angrily and tersely saying "Take it" as Bruce U. The VJ's last line of the scene starts as a sound of both irateness and relief at his interaction with the woman's conclusion and ends with "Next time for your mouth", as the camera focuses on the fish Bruce U is cooking. Despite the subject in frame, it is more likely from the previous interactions in context that the VJ-as-Bruce U's line instead refers to the bundle of leaves from earlier, that because of his dislike of the woman talking and how he had to help her, Bruce U would next time gather a bundle of leaves to shut her up. Again, we see the VJ create a version of the film based entirely on his own additions which mostly act in contrast to the scene's more conventional cinematic language and acting choices.

This last portion of the scene is especially indicative of how the VJ utilizes his linguistic additions as order words that not only to alter the current pragmatic relations imminent to the film-world and between the film and the audience's perception, but also his creation of an embedded field where his previous comments and order words create dialogic and heteroglossic predicates for his continued, film-altering linguistic output. We see this occur both concordant and discordant with the diegetic film itself and its traditional cinematic language. In terms of the former, the VJ's establishment of a mood of humor, confusion and obliviousness being strengthened by the scene where he says "Crocodile? Dinosaur?". Though these questions do not make sense logically, this dialogue compliments the camera movements tracking Bruce U as he walks towards the woman obscured by the grass (centered more in the frame). With this mood established through his dialogue, the VJ is now more sensically enabled to say the humorous line, "I have never seen a woman. Leave me alone", where he even laughs slightly during his first try at saying the first part of this line before trying again.

This is able to function because there is an established dialogue between these two parts of the scene that the VJ draws upon in order to continue to change the pragmatics of the film and between the film and audience. He quotes the previous utterance to form a chain of words ordering a different conception of what happens in the film, a conception rooted in the heteroglossic voices the VJ uses: those literal such as his own embodied speech acts, the supplemental dialogue from the scene's actors themselves, and those non-literal such as the camera movements, and shot compositions. By this process, the VJ is orienting himself as the factor which determines pragmatic relations in the text, and therefore with the audience he plays to, by creating a filmic

context which further supports his creative alterations to the text. These in effect create another text for the audience within WKCA with a specific pragmatic field determined by the VJ, where at first the film's own techniques and language predicate and empower his addition, he now creates his own empowering, trans-diegetic pragmatic field.

The above examples illustrate how the VJ uses specific enregistered voices for the purpose of characterization. These usages draw on recognizable social informations encoded in linguistic choices, as well as the usage of elements of the filmic deixis in order to create new linguistic and discursive associations. When thought of in terms of Odin's Semio-Pragmatic model, we see that the V, is the entity who sits in a blurred area between diegesis and non-diegesis who crosses more into the imminent pragmatic field of WKCA while facilitating an evolving linguistic dialogic relationship with the audience based on his speech acts. The VJ both creates constraints through the what he adds to the shared pragmatic space between film-world and audience and is himself bound by constraints conceived of by Metz and Odin; Both necessarily originate from the outside-film, non-diegetic and non-imminent pragmatic sphere that shape the form and contents of the whole filmic text.

We can see how the VJ both introduces constraints into the filmic deixis and utilizes the non-diegetic constraints on the film itself to reorient the overall pragmatic field around his actions. However, we must first establish the overall constraints working on this scene, which relevantly center on diegesis and audience perception. The full analysis of constraints related to film production rather than form or style will come during discussions of scenes where it is more directly impactful in relating to alterations by the VJ.

During the entirety of the part of the scene comprising the interactions between Bruce U and the Wife, both characters are already operating under a principle constraint of interpersonal unfamiliarity on the diegetic plane. This constraint is within the pragmatics of the film's events and color their general behaviors, operational under the audience's suspended disbelief. In other words, this is their acceptance of believing that they are watching a genuine interaction unfolding in real time and not a constructed sequence. We can see this as a constraint on the audience and their creation of a collective T' and different individual T' plus' for every individual subject to the greater constraint of the narrative form as consumed by humans, that "the production of meaning and affects is *always*<sup>12</sup> carried out in the same way in the spaces of the sender and of the receiver, and that this weakens the separation between those two spaces without, however, making it disappear" (Odin 61).

What the VJ does to introduce additional constraints imminent to the filmic deixis is simply implementing his commentary as order words that create both new relationships between diegetic entities as well as new perceptions and affects of characters to the audience. In effect, the VJ's speech acts work to add further constraints on WKCA within and without the film. This occurs notably when the VJ manipulates the presence and perception of different elements on the diegetic deictic field during the "Crocodile? Dinosaur?" sequence. There is both an awareness to the diegetic characters and the audience (especially to the VJ in partial non-diegetic presence) that a concrete person or

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<sup>12</sup> Emphasis is ours.

thing is obscured behind the grass that Bruce U walks towards. The VJ uses this ambiguity to inform his humorous utterance which, while keeping the overall focus on the unknown woman in the grass, in effect maps the VJ's presence onto the character of Bruce U through embodiment characteristic of traditional video hall event cinema. The original deictic *origo* of the scene is Bruce, but as the VJ speaks according to his embodiment of this role, it is he who becomes the actual origo around which the deixis of the scene is oriented and linguistically expounded upon *via the VJ's commentary achieved through embodiment of Bruce U*.

At the same time, the contents of the entity hidden in the grass is given a heightened pragmatic focus due to the irreverent commentary; the VJ's order words of "Crocodile? Dinosaur?" constraint the expectation of the audience of what it could be into the VJ-as-Bruce's subjectivity. This in turn makes the very fact that an audience is in view of the scene an additional constraint on both their own expectations of formations of T' and their expectations of the scene's future content. In other words, the VJ is able to manipulate existing constraints and create new ones in this part of the scene to override the content's original diegesis with his own humorous and linguistic impositions, which relate the deictic elements of the film to the audience as filtered through the VJ. Essentially, the overall pragmatic situation within the film and between the film and audience is altered by the VJ encroaching on the film-world to relay information and narrativity not otherwise present in therein, but made canon by the VJ's communicative authority.

Each instance of the VJ acting to alter the relationships within the film for the audience, or altering the relationship *between* the film and audience are possible only



because of his position between the diegetic film-world and the real world. Despite the fact that the VJ now occupies a more diegetic position, as he is edited into the upload of WKCA itself, he still functions in the same way as when he was outside the film in the video halls. Because this position is still functional insofar as he provides a narrative and communicative role unique to films like WKCA, the VJ is able to bridge the imminent pragmatic field of a film with the pragmatics of an audience experiencing a film altered and filtered through him. Given his unique ontological status, the VJ is able to moderately or radically change the affect and range of possible interpretations of a scene because he is able to make use of his own utterances to re-contextualize and re-relationize what appears on the filmic deixis. It is in this manner that he is able to constitute himself a deictic origo and define all around him through his action, regardless if it is through embodiment of a character or acting as himself. We will see the more radical changes the VJ can enact through his role in the next scene under analysis.

The following scene under analysis occurs at 46:48 with dialogue between Bruce U and the Tiger Mafia wife that sets up an unconventionally stylized flashback that informs her character's backstory. This sequence was contextualized in an earlier part of the scene where Bruce U notices a Tiger Mafia tattoo on the wife while she is sleeping.

2. [Close up on Bruce U]

B: Why did they try to kill you?

[Cut to close up on Wife]

W: I don't know, but I was in love.

[The scene transitions, fading to white then to gray into a black and white close up of the woman being blindfolded. She has her blindfold removed when the scene cuts to a shot of Richard]

R: Now you must decide. Marry me- or die.

[Cut to slow zoom on the Wife, who is revealed to be tied up, and Richard standing over her. The scene is edited to have a large heart shape framing the scene within the camera's attention]

VJ: *Welcome to Uganda!* [Laughs]

R: Get me an answer.

[Cut to a woman working for the Tiger Mafia approaching and smoking a cigarette. The heart-shaped framing is now gone]

VJ: [Laughs]

[Cut to a wide shot of the two women]

Tiger Mafia Woman: When's the wedding?

Wife: I don't know.

Tiger Mafia Woman: You don't know?

[Cut to a wide shot of the Wife tied up, with the Tiger Mafia henchmen throwing water (or some other liquid) on her to torture her]

W: [Scream]

VJ: *She was caught watching Nigerian movies. This is Uganda!*

[The woman working for the Tiger Mafia walks to up to the Wife and slaps her, followed by a cut to a close up of the Wife]

VJ: *We watch Wakaliwood*

Wife: Here's your invite - [spits at woman]

VJ: [Speech in Luganda]

[Camera pans to the woman]

TMW: That the best you can do? Wanna see what I can do?"

[Camera pans back to the Wife, with the woman forcefully grabbing her face before letting go. The woman screams, with the actress visibly smiling and laughing despite this.]

VJ: *She's serious.*

[Camera lingers on Wife]

VJ: *Forgive me. I'll never watch Nollywood again please.*

[Camera zooms back out, showing the Tiger Mafia Woman grabbing the Wife's hair. The Tiger Mafia Woman then go to the edge of the frame]

TMW: What's your answer?

VJ: [Speech in Luganda]

This scene contains some of the VJ's most radical alterations of the diegetic and non-diegetic pragmatics fields that we have seen thus far. The entirety of these changes occurs in the flashback sequence proper, in which we can identify and analyze several narrative voices and cinematic modes. Through a similar application of our methods and theory for the previous two scenes, we will be able to see how the VJ is able to work with, and against, the different forces in the scene in order to create new pragmatic dynamics based on his position and usage of order words.

The first instance of the VJ at work happens at the moment he says, "Welcome to Uganda!", while the Wife is being tortured, overlaid by the edited-in heart shape. Even

without the VJ's interference, there is already a monstrous dissonance between the choice in editing and the content of the scene; The Wife is held hostage and tortured by Richard until she agrees to marry him under the threat of death. Despite this scene being prefaced with the Wife (in the present movie time) saying, "I was in love", the flashback, edited with the heart or not, does not provide textual support for this statement. It really serves to portray the opposite. The dark irony created by this editing choice already turns a scene that from the outset seems horrifying and tragic, especially given the greater context of the film where the Wife survived (for now) after being shot by Richard and is now in hiding in the jungle, into an array of events that are jarring in their humor and tone. The heart-edit disappears after its initial implementation, but its original usage lingers in the rest of the scene's tone as a foundational voice the VJ draws upon with his comments.

Starting with the line "Welcome to Uganda!" and the following faint laughter, the VJ works in concordance with the ironic editing to create humor for the audience by making light of the implication that Uganda is a place where you should expect women to be tortured into marriage. Already, the VJ is altering the pragmatics between the imminent film-world and the audience by adding a new layer of information that confronts the viewer. Because he made this choice utterance, and because is able to do it in the first place by virtue of his more diegetic communicative function through being edited in the movie, this line and laughter influences what the tone and implications of the scene *should be* in relation to the audience's perception. By intruding more into the film-world's pragmatics, the VJ can override the portrayal of the scene's content with "Welcome to Uganda!" acting as order words that force his own visions and implications

onto the scene, which therefore colors the scene differently to the audience it is presented to. He is able to do this both against the scene's diegetic content, which his commentary contrasts in tone, and concordant with the editing as both provide exploitable pragmatic currents are subject to manipulation by their very contrast. The VJ's actions alter the film-world pragmatics by implying that the scene is initially occurring because of an innate "Uganda-ness"; That it's due to a kind of farcical violent event characteristic of that nation because it exist in Sub-Saharan Africa, which in minds of ignorant and stereotyping viewers is thought of as a region of nothing but atrocities and conflict, rather than the content or necessitation for narrative continuity. These changes alter the pragmatics between the film and the audience who now must reckon with this information because it came from the VJ's authoritative semi-diegetic source. What flowed from the imminent affected the outside pragmatics, said information originating primarily from the VJ.

The initial line from the VJ, however, does not only function in being isolating to this scene, but because it is intra-textual and dialogic with some of his earlier lines that reinforce communicating deprecating humor about Uganda as a pragmatic fact to the audience. Near the beginning of the film at 2:45, the character of the police chief is showing Captain Alex an area where the commandos can set up a base in the village of Wakaliga. This site is an empty lot flooded with sewage and debris. The police chief, through the actor's dialogue, is explaining the limitation of their available space, but the VJ speaking as Captain Alex (who is prominent in the frame) enthusiastically contradicts the police chief's concerns by saying "No, no, no. It is beautiful. Yeah, it's good." The scene then cuts to a wide shot of the site during which the VJ talks over the subtitled

police chief, who says “But this is our sewage” by saying, “I love it. Pearl of Africa”, an old epithet for Uganda<sup>13</sup>.

It is difficult to debate the self-deprecating ironic nature in this line paired with the polluted visual in the frame. The humor in this quote by the VJ as Captain Alex derives from the contrast between the glamourising intent of the epithet and the contents of the shot, and the fact that this line is spoken at the same time as the police chief says “But this is our sewage” draws an inherent rhetorical and analogous link between the country of Uganda and the sewage. The appearance of these two lines as speech acts competing in their communicative intent towards the audience masks their function as complimentary parts of one joke that only exists due to the VJ. This is amplified by the absurdity that the commander of an elite group of commandos is perfectly fine with setting up a base in an open sewer. Even though the contrast of the two lines structures the joke for the audience, the VJ’s delivery on this line as Captain Alex is very non-sarcastic in tone, which also indicates to the audience that he not only has absolutely no concerns about the situation but is in fact enthusiastic about it.

There are multiple pragmatic and discursive layers in this interaction across the diegetic and non-diegetic spaces at play. Firstly, there is the irony conveyed to the audience by VJ’s lines spoken and subtitled simultaneously with those of the police chief while the open sewer is framed. Within that, there is different communication in the

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<sup>13</sup> Sourced from gorillasafariexperts.com, who cite this nickname as originating from Winston Churchill’s 1907 book “My African Journey”.

realm of WKCA's imminent deixis. Because the VJ has spoken this line as Captain Alex, this dialogue not original to the original VJ-less cut of WKCA is not part of the diegetic world and made cannon. We can see this in the fact that the Ugandan commandos begin setting up in the open sewer as the VJ as Captain Alex speaks this line. His dialogue draws a narrative link between the discussion between the characters and the actions of the commandos as the scene progresses; They are linked by him saying "I love it. Pearl of Africa" which function as implicit order words that canonically set the immediate events in motion in the scene's narrative. This line coming from the VJ-as-Captain Alex orders the commandos to work in flow of the narrative, especially given that there is no other command or indication from the actor who plays Captain Alex for them to set up a base. By speaking in this fashion, the VJ has introduced a new pragmatic element to the immediate scene which the audience now must both understand as joke on the surface, and a structural capability of the VJ to orient the narrative towards different deictic objects, actors and spaces in the film by virtue of his speech.

These lines, by being founded on the VJ's alterations of pragmatics via his order words, also set the audience expectation for what a stereotypical image of an African-produced movie is. The mass media-originated popular image of Sub-Saharan Africa in the eyes of the world and the United States (who are likely to be a large part of WKCA's audience) is a very negative one: that of a continent perpetually in poverty, incredibly underdeveloped throughout, "primitive" in ways too multitudinous to list exhaustively and steeped in violence (Wa'Njogu 77). All of these stereotypes are applied to Uganda as well due to the general conflation of all the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in everyday thought. However, the stereotype of Uganda being steeped in violence may be especially

salient, as knowledge and memories of Idi Amin's brutal rule, violence of the Uganda Bush war<sup>14</sup> and the Lord's Resistance Army's use of child soldiers popularly persists, partially due to films such as *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Kony 2012* (2012).

The different media stereotypes of Africa and Uganda are open ends of discourse that the VJ purposefully invokes and leans into in this scene in order to create and perform his utterance. As the VJ as Captain Alex says, "I love it. Pearl of Africa" he uses the line itself to reflect and tap into prevailing and popular stereotypes about Africa, and the somewhat enthusiastic way he delivers this line also suggests that Captain Alex is so used to horrible urban conditions in Uganda, but sees this open sewer as a stand-out good location to use for his base. The VJ's engagement and usage of these attitudes with this line constitutes an instance of dialogism. By engaging with the prevailing stereotypes about Africa and Uganda, the VJ is able to draw upon them in the formulation of jokes and quips at his own country's expense. This repurposing of an ideological and othering view for an ironic narrative transformation on both the diegetic and non-diegetic plane exemplifies Bakhtin's notion that "No living word relates to its object in a singular way... there exists an elastic environment of other alien words about the same object, the same theme" where a "process of living interaction" (1981) always opens up discursive connections between words and concepts where what is past informs the future informs

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<sup>14</sup> Director Nabwana I. G. G notably stated his experience living through the Idi Amin period and the civil strife that followed in Uganda inspired much of the battle scene in *Who Killed Captain Alex?*, including the often memed CGI helicopter chase scene, where he reported to have been by a real helicopter as a child (Soodak 2021).



the future across multiple possible paths which string discursive points together through dialogue. In this case of this scene, the living word(s) constitute this line in context with the scene and latent political stereotypes about Africa. These are both used by the VJ to set up a joke based on familiar stereotypes and as a beginning assumption for the film which is later both reinforced and subverted.

To return to the flashback involving the Tiger Mafia Wife, we can see how the previous “Pearl of Africa” scene prefigured the flashback’s content, tone and the specific speech act choices of the VJ where he is now dialogic in a more heteroglossic fashion with both himself and the earlier part of the film, as well as ultimately the aforementioned African stereotypes. This relationship is effectively established when the Wife character is being tortured with liquid during this scene. In the part of this scene where the Wife screams after being splashed with the bucket of liquid the VJ rather matter of factly says, “She was caught watching Nigerian movies”, after which the characters of the Tiger Mafia Woman splashes the wife again walks up to her and slaps her, at which point the VJ exclaims, “This is Uganda! We watch Wakaliwood”.

These lines in question exist dialogically with those of the “Pearl of Africa” scene, as well as the filming location it corresponded to in that shot. This constitutes part of the intra-diegetic dialogism that the VJ draws upon. At the same time, given that this previous line in the film already existed in dialogue with prominent stereotypes about Uganda and Africa (likely held by a large part of the audience to some degree), the lines above are also indirectly in dialogue with these ideas via their integration into the film’s earlier narrative and structure of humor by the VJ. These jokes from the torture scene necessarily depend on the lines from earlier in the film discursively, which contributes to

the VJ's ability to utilize this familiar trope and instance of humor that constrains both the internal pragmatics of the scene, and the pragmatics between the film and the audience. Even though the context for what is happening is established by its framing as a flashback and the dialogue spoken by the actor's, the VJ's jokes are again able to act as order words that completely morph what motivates the scene's occurrence. By playing on previous jokes, the stereotypes about violence in Africa and the overall absurdity of someone being tortured and forced into marriage for watching Nigerian movies in Uganda, the VJ again overrides the given cinematic codes. In the process, he takes up a place with one foot in the film's deixis and the other in that of instance of viewing, as centered as the *origo* on the border between the two field, from which he is able to creatively leverage his position of narrative authority to re-contextualize this scene as pragmatically motivated by the aforementioned absurd premises. In doing so, he makes his pragmatic framing more relevant to how the audience views the immediate filmic events. In effect, he takes the narrative and contextual power away from the film itself and forces the audience to think that this new pragmatic relationship both exists and makes sense.

In order to fully explore the depth of how the VJ utilizes heteroglossia in creating the dialogic relationship in this scene, we must also examine the threads of discourse the VJ links the scene to that fall outside what is diegetically proper to the film. We do this with reference to an expanded version Bakhtin's concept, what he calls "social heteroglossia", which we will use to expand what we earlier elaborated on in discussing heteroglossia to encompass how the VJ engages in dialogue with other texts as a collective. Applying this concept will also illuminate how the VJ draws on voices and

dialogism from within the deictic spaces of WKCA to engage and subsume the audience with his own pragmatic impositions. It will also show how the social relations as expressed diegetically also partially make up the cacophony of voices that the VJ establishes dialogue with in order to alter the nature of filmic scenes to the audience.

The VJ is at one-part heteroglossic towards the audience, which is non-diegetic proper the film, by speaking from the influence of different voices from within the scene above. We can see this occurring in two different ways corresponding to the lines, “We watch Wakaliwood” and “Forgive me. I’ll never watch Nollywood again please”. At the same time, both parts of this strain of dialogue are useful for exemplifying heteroglossia, the former line with respect to dialogue not all established by an non-VJ diegetic actions or general VJ actions earlier in the film, and the latter line being illustrative of heteroglossia based on the established (but altered by the VJ) social relations already diegetic and made diegetic to the scene. Though these heteroglossic instances diverge in the which stream of inter/intertextuality they originate from, they both relate to scene and come from the VJ’s speech; Both also function despite their differences in altering the entire pragmatic field trans diegetically.

The first line is manifestly illustrative of the VJ’s dialogue becoming heteroglossic in production as it originates from the voices of the scene’s own pragmatic relations. This is first set up dialogically by the VJ when he says, “She was caught watching Nigerian movies” as the Wife’s torture is in the frame. This scene is still pragmatically understood to be a flashback, but because of the VJ usage of this line as a string of order words, the pragmatics of why this scene is occurring is altered to audience, who take the VJ’s assertion that is occurring instead for his reason of how watching

Nigerian movies in Uganda acts as the primary diegetic pragmatic constraints that led to possibility of torture uniquely arising. Because the VJ occupies his position between the pragmatic fields of the film and reality, he is able to orate what he imposes as the pragmatic context of the film. As he positions himself as the deictic *origo* that orients all the other deictic relations around his actions, he is able to change the pragmatic framing of the scene around what he communicates to the audience as order words; He effectively monopolizes the interpretive space coming from the diegetic field so it can be communicated. He does this here by entering into dialogue with a multitude of voices properly diegetic to the film: the antagonistic relationship between Richard and the wife (along with their previous characterizations), the action of the Tiger Mafia Woman torturing the wife and her reactions to it, the framing as a flashback communicated diegetically between the Wife and Bruce U, as well as his own previous commentary in different narrative voices based in what character embodies or speaking as himself (directly dialogic with him as Captain Alex saying “I love it, Pearl of Africa).

We can take this further by mentioning again the indirect discourse with African stereotypes that motivated the line above, which is heteroglossic as collated political expressions originating from a long history of colonialism, corruption and media bias. That, however, is properly outside the diegetic field. In entering into dialogue with this multitude of discourses and voices, even those coming from himself earlier, the VJ is able to continually embody a productive force towards new commentary that shifts all pragmatic relationships, whether diegetic or between the film itself and the audience, around his position.

The latter two lines are indicative of the VJ using diegetic embodiment that uniquely draws a line of dialogism from a historical, non-diegetic source: Uganda's history with Nollywood. As we discussed earlier, the Nigerian film has historically influenced the development of Wakaliwood and other instances of Ugandan filmmaking. This circulation of these films throughout East Africa also heralded the genesis of the very role of the VJ, who now in WKCA invokes references to Nollywood in order to negate through saying "Forgive me. I'll never watch Nollywood again please" as he embodies the Wife character suffering torture for this supposed reason. This line is directly dialogic with the earlier "She was caught watching Nigerian movies" quote from the VJ speaking as himself earlier, as well as "This is Uganda!" as he embodied the woman torturing her. However, these lines as they came exist diegetically due to the VJ are the blocks of context that bring the explicit dialogic relationship between WKCA and Nollywood from non-diegetic historical context into the shared pragmatic field as the VJ orders them.

We can understand the pragmatics of this line as the VJ's symbolic distancing from Nollywood, implying that Wakaliwood now exists on its own as a national cinema. This dialogic relationship pulls in the film's own cinematic and material genesis into the heteroglossia it is plugged into by how the VJ is able to frame it. By situating this joke at the expense of Nollywood in the torture scene through enregistered embodiment of the Wife vowing to abandon the Nigerian film industry, the VJ makes himself (as the Wife) the prime deictic center of the scene who determines the narrative primacy of Wakaliwood. By already having a heteroglossic dialogic dynamic going in order to give this scene context and purpose (as we discussed earlier) the VJ can draw even more

distinct voices into this relationship for narrative and pragmatic effect. As the new diegetic pragmatic context for the scene is that the Wife is being tortured for watching Nollywood and must renounce this practice to escape, we have a non-diegetic pragmatics developing from the scene where the audience is influenced to believe both that these are authoritative diegetic events and that they are consuming a text that has surpassed its origins. The fact that this comes from the VJ's actions is especially relevant, given that VJ came from narrating over Nollywood films. As such, through this framing of a moment of dialogue heteroglossic in its bidirectional connections both diegetic and non-diegetic, the VJ again affirms his position in determining pragmatic relations. He affirms that he occupies a role who mediates and manipulates the flow and content of discourse as well as an ideological function wholly integrated in this uniquely Ugandan cinematic text. To the audience, this scene in how jarring and multi-voiced it is communicated also cements the VJ as their way of at all understanding what is going on.

The final scene we will analyze occurs at 35:00 when Bruce U, after being excluded by the commandos from investigating the death of Captain Alex, goes to the "Ugandan Shaolin Temple"<sup>15</sup> to seek guidance from his Kung Fu master. In the process, he gets into a fight with other acolytes at the temple. In analyzing this scene we will mainly focus on the narrative and pragmatic effects of the VJ breaking the fourth wall

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<sup>15</sup> Earlier, at 31:34, the VJ says that Bruce U. is from the "Ugandan Shaolin Temple". The empty and otherwise nondescript building in the transcribed scene above is presumably that.

while the other aspects of his role, such as embodiment of characters, will largely not be as included as we have previously elaborated on them.

3. [Wide shot of Bruce U walking into a dark building]

Bruce U: Master

VJ: *Brother to Alex*

B: Master

VJ: On a mission. Mission: vengeance

[Cut to Bruce U walking out of the other side of the building to see two people fighting in a courtyard. He is approached by a shirtless man from behind]

Shirtless Man: Where are you going?

B: Who are you?

[Cut to a wide shot of the two men]

SM: What do you want?

B: I want to see the Master.

SM: Master who?

[Reverse cut to behind the shirtless man, Bruce is centered in the frame]

B: Don't be an idiot.

[Cut to front-facing shot of the shirtless man kicking Bruce off the perch of the exit.

Series of quick cuts showing the two men in the courtyard preparing to fight Bruce, who jumps in the air and kicks both of them at once]

[Cut to a slow-motion shot of the Shirtless Man doing a flip in order to confront Bruce]

VJ: *Action packed movie!*

[Series of cuts showing the two of them fighting, until Bruce knocks the Shirtless Man down. The two men help him to his feet]

VJ: *Laughs*

B: Pussy

[Scene of Bruce fighting the man with a blue tank top]

VJ: [Speaks Luganda]

[Bruce punches the man in the mouth. The camera follows and zooms in on him falling down, before cutting to a close up of the man holding his mouth in pain]

VJ: *Ugandan kiss*

[Series of rapidly cut shots showing Bruce fighting all three men at once]

VJ: [Speaks Luganda]

[Cut between a scene of Bruce about to spin kick the other men while in the air and a wide shot showing the Master arriving. Cut back to close up of Bruce's reaction]

Master: Stop! (unsubtitled but audible)

VJ: *Laughs*

[Cut to a wide shot of the men approaching the Master, then a cut to close up shot of Bruce bowing]

VJ: *The Master is here.*

[Zoomed in shot of the Master walking down to the men, Bruce walks up to him from the left out of the frame]

VJ: *The fat master*

Master: Why are you here?

[Cut to close up of Bruce]



B: Master, I need your help.

M: With what?

B: I need to avenge my brother's death.

[Series of cuts between close up of either the Master or Bruce in frame]

M: Please. The martial arts are not for revenge. They are for defense and physical fitness.

[Cut to the Master wagging his finger]

VJ: *No, no, no, no, no*

M: It's impossible, I will not help you.

[Camera begins to pan to Bruce, who is speaking but unsubtitled]

VJ: *Please, I need vengeance*

[Bruce bows and the camera follows him as he leaves through the building]

VJ: *Next time bring me sweets*

The VJ breaks the fourth wall by saying "Action packed movie!"; this is in concordance with the scene, and its framing manifests as an intertextual dialogic relationship with Hong Kong and Chinese martial arts films. The influence of different Sinitic martial arts movies on the style of WKCA has been greatly expounded upon by Nabwana I.G.G himself and has additionally been noted by other who have studied this film, with Cinema Escapists's Oscar Hardin commenting that "Crucially, *Who Killed Captain Alex?* is an African film primarily influenced by Eastern culture. This is another reason it is such an important film. It cannot be categorized as a parody of a certain country's Cinema- it is a truly international film. Nabwana has developed an international outlook far earlier than any of the Hollywood studio moguls ever did" (2018). This

influence is most often felt through the expertly choreographed and shot fight scenes that occur in the movie, as well as the very obvious references sprinkled throughout (“Ugandan Bruce Lee. We call him Bruce U.”).

Considering the above, what the VJ is able to do with this blatant shattering of the fourth wall is a further solidification of his position as the dynamic and consistent pragmatic and deictic *origo* for the film but via incorporating a different dialogic strain of film history into the shared pragmatic field. This is similar to the methods he employed during the Nollywood torture sequence above, but in this case, we see a more blatant fourth wall break that simultaneously emphasizes the spectacular aspect of event cinema to the audience and also orients them to the VJ’s diegetic necessity in the film. Even though the audience clearly sees that it is an “action packed movie”, they are made to *dialogically* experience it as such by submitting to the VJ’s joining of the filmic and real pragmatic fields via the narrative authority he has in his speech acts.

In terms of the narrative and cinematographic modes in consideration for this small part of the scene, what we are looking at is quite straightforward. The shot itself slightly tracks the Shirtless Man who does a flip, and it is edited to be in slow motion so that this movement is emphasized. By virtue of this, the slow motion also emphasizes the VJ’s line, the slowing of the shot lets the audience focus on the fact that he spoke and how it fits with the scene. The shot’s immediate context is the greater fight that occurred seconds before, which continues for almost another 30 seconds afterwards. However, what seems conventional in this shot serves to frame the VJ’s fourth wall break by the very emphasis of the line “Action packed movie!” in concordance with the immediate events.

At this point in the film, the VJ has shown time and time again that he has the ultimate capability of altering the overall pragmatics of the film itself and of the viewing and text-creating experience. It is within this same position that he utilizes the line above as order words that collapse the fourth wall so that the greater shared pragmatic field becomes extended into the very style that this scene is in dialogic with based on how it appears cinematographically. By using this line for this purpose, the VJ is replacing one set of pragmatic constraints with another: those of the bounds of the fundamental fourth wall with an external dialogic relationship that cuts off at where the influence of Sinitic martial arts films depart. The VJ has now positioned himself as a bridge to this end of the cinematic dialogic relationship at play. In the process, he also further solidifies his already functional position as the mediator of the WKCA and its discursive and linguistic codes, bringing the former into the pragmatics of the audience by bringing it into the pragmatics of the scene. Whether an audience is aware of the full depth of this relationship as dialogic with Kung Fu films or not is irrelevant, the VJ invokes it all the same with his speech.

The VJ's usage of this line is directly concordant with the scene's conventional deictic focus, the Shirtless Man as framed in the shot. As such, the VJ does not really change the deictic focus to himself as much as the scenes we have previously discussed, but he shifts the deixis on a more meta level; The deictic focus determined by the VJ is not the character doing the action, but the film itself understood as personified in the character and his actions. This is a momentary pragmatic shift to the moment of intense dialogue between WKCA and its predecessors from Kung Fu films where the film becomes more discursively open-ended. By coordinating his line with the clearly inspired

action that is transpiring, the VJ manipulates an extension of the pragmatic field to encompass WKCA's dialogue with previous films through his order words. He is now not only mediating the film itself as it is perceived, but also the dialogic relationship established explicitly between this scene and previous films to the audience. This audience is now made to pragmatically consider that the VJ controls and orients external and non-diegetic dialogue by abstracting the totality of WKCA as a film into an immediate filmic deixis. Here is where he has brought the entirety of this dialogic relationship into both his immediate sphere of diegetic control and in his role as the ultimate mediator of the film's contents to the audience. As a result, the audience is made to confront this new pragmatic addition to their mental processes of text creation by the VJ making it directly cinematically relevant by his order words and position between diegesis and non-diegesis. This is the position that the fourth wall separates.

The dialogic relationship as mediated by the VJ through his speech act concordant with the cinematic language attests to an ultimately shared and potentially infinitely expanding pragmatic field. With this assertion, we can really see that the supposed deictic and pragmatic separation between text and reality is porous if not altogether artificial; This border being more akin to that of the non-dualism of Advaita Vedanta than Cartesian Dualism (Subramanian & Ghogh 2020) or to the functional non-separation of adjectives (property words) and nouns morpho-syntactically in Hueyapan Nahuatl (Hansen 2011). What we see enacted by the VJ by the line under discussion is heteroglossic across the boundaries of diegesis and non-diegesis, given that he speaks a representation for WKCA as a whole while also framing his speech through the modes of the scene's camera work and the filmic influence from Sinitic action films that he

embodies as a dialogic representative. This specific instance of dialog transgresses boundaries similar to the VJ himself, though the line has no bearing on the diegetic pragmatics of the scene itself, the results of this dialogue are fully visual to the audience. Now because of the VJ's language, the tradition of action and style that lead to WKCA is also brought into a reckoning for the pragmatics between the audience and the film, forced to simmer in the slow motion editing.

This instance of the VJ using his pragmatic position inherited from the video hall tradition is more subtle than other fourth wall breaks in the film in what it accomplishes. It is not the brashness of simply shouting "Movie!" multiple times or "Production in action" or "Action is coming", although these lines break the fourth wall and fit within the video hall tradition of VJs transgressing the bounds of diegesis and filmic ontology for the audience, they do not attest to the unique enregistered and dialogic possibilities the VJ can enact. Concerning the line we have analyzed here, we have a picture of the how, why and what of the latter. The act of establishing this dialogic relationship through using this line as a string of order words is proper and possible to the VJ both because mediating position to the audience and his existence in a blurred line between diegesis and non-diegesis. Despite being more diegetic as an edited-in part of WKCA compared to older video hall practices, the VJ is able to both affect pragmatic and deictic relations within the film and between the film and audience based on his fundamental role. By drawing attention through his speech to the stylistic tradition of Sinitic cinema that WKCA is explicitly dialogic with, the VJ is able to force the audience to confront this fact as embodied in the film's deixis, which is emphasized by the Shirtless Man doing a flip in slow motion. In taking this shot as representative of the entirety of WKCA and its

stylistic history, the VJ has again brought the pragmatics of the audience in their viewing into closer ties to the internal pragmatics of the film by working concordantly with the cinematic language both to establish this particular relationship. This was done by facilitating an extra-diegetic dialogue through breaking the fourth wall. The audience is now further enmeshed in the dialogic moment that is continued through them in their creation of T. By working as this mediator, the VJ is able to extend his pragmatic influence much further across boundaries past the fourth wall and the immediate shared pragmatic field in order to continue orienting all given pragmatic and deictic relations around his actions.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

In the course of this work, we have demonstrated that the VJ of *Who Killed Captain Alex?* fulfills a unique and heterogeneous role in influencing and determining the pragmatics of the film and the viewing experiences by acting as an important mediating force on the shared deictic field between the film and the audience. During this continuous process, the VJ becomes the most important pragmatic entity insofar as the film is being viewed through his overriding and/or support of the given cinematic and linguistic codes of a scene. The person in the VJ position is able to accomplish this due to their ontological status that blurs the bounds between diegesis and non-diegesis, and their editing into WKCA enables them to further manipulate a multitude of pragmatic relations. By focusing on how the VJ uses order words when commentating with his speech acts, we have seen that the VJ is able to take positions in the film's deixis that involve enregistered portrayals of characters that communicate new narrative and characteristic information to the audience, though sometimes against what is diegetically presented.

Other strategies originating from his position also involve mediating larger dialogic relationships within and without the film's boundaries as well as breaking the fourth wall to serve to help the VJ manipulate all given pragmatic relations around either his embodiment or other verbal actions. The VJ strengthens the pragmatic importance of his position through these strategies throughout the film, which solidify his ultimate communicative position as the film's mediator towards the audience who is able to dictate how the film's content is received either against or concordant with the film itself.

We have been able to demonstrate this through careful analyses of many of the film's scenes using our socially pragmatic and multi-modal approach.

WKCA's pragmatics has great implications for how we may continue to understand this very subject and how it specifically may apply to film. Our analysis has shown that a stable deictic *origo* is not characteristic of this film's narrative and that such stability that we assume when looking at face-to-face pragmatics may not be valid when analyzing films or other texts. We saw this perfectly illustrated by the VJ's constant embodiment of diegetic characters and shifting position relative both elements on the film's deictic field and between the film itself and the audience; The only stability is the instability of how the VJ will communicate and re-orient all that the audience experiences around what he does.

This research may open new lines of inquiry regarding pragmatics understood in a way that de-centers the notion of subject-as-origo, or pragmatics which takes into consideration the greater dialogic forces at play outside of a specific interaction. WKCA represents a very unique case in how it communicates a narrative and even subverts its own assumed conventions both in form as a film and regarding the pragmatic codes of its technical and narrative contents. All of this is firmly located in the chaotic functionality of the VJ and how this position grew out of necessity in real-life video halls to the full decentering of the film itself, in favor of how the VJ communicates to the audience. This is by virtue of the VJ's firmer yet still blurred diegetic position as a commentator edited into the film. Further research into WKCA regarding the application of pragmatics, anthropological linguistics, and sociolinguistics will doubtlessly contribute to the understanding of the nature and complexity of the constraints of how language is used in



the film when taken in consideration with the different cinematic modes at play pragmatically and technically. Future research will also highly benefit from a translation of the VJ's Luganda dialogue, a limitation of my study, for comparative purposes to how his English dialogue functions.

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