Trilogy in the Making

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Certificate of Original Authorship

I, *Stefanie Johnstone* declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD Communications, in the *Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences* at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Abstract

The trilogy is an ancient form. The first extant trilogy is almost 2500 years old: Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, first performed in Athens 458 BCE. Recent explorations in multiplicities or serialities include Stephen Henderson's *The Hollywood Sequel* (2014), Perkins and Verevis' edited collection *Film Trilogies* (2012) and Carolyn Jess-Cooke's *Film Sequels* (2009). However, despite the form's age and recent studies made of it, studying the trilogy as a specific type of narrative structure has not been established, particularly from the point of view of the creative practitioner.

A trilogy, by definition, is a group of three related works such as plays, novels or films. Trilogy is often compared to other forms of **multi-text narrative** such as the three-volume novel, threequel or a triptych. Conflating trilogy with these forms leads to the structure either being assumed, dismissed or misunderstood. In this research, I propose trilogy structure as comprising four texts: three individual narratives, and a fourth unifying narrative, that is a text in and of itself.

Accordingly, this PhD is a creative practice examination of the specific act of trilogy creation, drawing on examples from novels, films and plays, and the development of my trilogy narrative, *The Story of Eorthan*. I investigate the trilogy form's fundamental structure framed through my journey as a trilogy creator, from practitioner to practitioner-researcher. Such a creative practice approach to trilogy adds originality to recent literature in the field of multiplicities or serialities.

Introduction

This project is principally concerned with the fundamental narrative structure of the trilogy form. It uses problems or issues with my trilogy, *The Story of Eorthan,* as the primary investigative mode, otherwise expressed as a writerly not readerly or critical approach.[1] Inevitably, critical investigations gravitate to an etymological or nominative approach. Such descriptions are insufficient to describe the form because they neglect the connecting aspect of trilogy.

But just what *is* a trilogy? Do we have a common understanding of its fundamental DNA? Moreover, what happens when the perspective of a student of the trilogy shifts, for example, from a screen studies scholar to a creative writer? This is an important aspect of the PhD, relating to its core research concern. Therefore, before detailing the aims, objectives, and methodology of the PhD, it is useful to provide some underpinning context and assumptions.

The primary aim is to understand the essential structure of the trilogy. Using trilogies from different periods, mediums and genres is key to discovering the form's common, and perhaps essential, features. As a foundational text, this thesis must contend with and understand Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The defining example of *The Lord of the Rings* highlights an important point: what is called a trilogy may not be structured as a one. As a creative practitioner seeking to develop and write a trilogy, this distinction is essential.

In structural terms, trilogy is more than a function of length. Rather, the form contains a dual structure. Trilogy is at once three individual texts that are then connected by a fourth text, which represents the overall structure of the trilogy. In narrative trilogies, with which this thesis is principally concerned, the fourth text (structure) is a complete story – such that it can be mapped using story design models from creative writing and screenwriting. The relationship created between the open, individual texts (three) and the connecting structure

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[1]   The three works are called *Sora* (1), *Morea* (2), and *Eorthan* (3).

(the fourth text) creates a dynamic meaning between texts that offers great storytelling

potential in the trilogy form.

Defining the trilogy

The trilogy is an old storytelling form. The earliest known example comes from Ancient Greece. The form has been utilised since that time in drama, poetry, opera, and novels.[2] In this age of franchises and universes, numerous trilogies are found in films and genre fiction such as science fiction and fantasy.[3] Despite its age and ubiquity, trilogy structure is often assumed, denied or misunderstood. The structure has yet to be described or distinguished from other similar forms of **multi-text narratives,**[4] such as the three-volume novel, threequel or triptych.

This thesis hypothesises a new conception of trilogy structure. It will explore the hypothesis by restructuring my trilogy entitled *The Story of Eorthan*. The first step in my practitioner-researcher journey is to define the form. If you search the internet for 'trilogy definition' the following is provided from the Oxford Dictionary of English:

> **trilogy**/ˈtrɪlədʒi/
> *noun*
> a group of three related novels, plays, films, etc.
> 'J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasy trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*'
> - (in Ancient Greece) a series of three tragedies performed one after the other.
>   'the Aeschylean trilogy'
> - a group of three related things.
>   'a trilogy of cases reflected this development'
> Origin
> mid 17th century: from Greek *trilogia*, from *tri-* 'three times' + *-logos* 'story'.

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[2]   e.g. Dante's *Commedia* (completed in 1230); Beaumarchais' Figaro plays are *Le Barbier de Séville, La folle journée, ou le Mariage de Figaro*, and *La mère coupable* (1775-92); Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876).

[3]   In science fiction, Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* (1951-3) and Frank Herbert's *Dune Trilogy* (1965-76) loom large. In Fantasy, Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000) and, more recently, Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn Trilogy* (2006-8).

[4]   This is my term. Friedman uses the term 'multivalent' or 'multi-volume', his term multivalent novels can also include single-volume novels, which is somewhat confusing (1975). In their book *Cycles, sequels, spin-offs, remakes and reboots: Multiplicities in film and television* (2016), Klein and Palmer use the term 'multiplicities'. The term multi-text narrative highlights the common elements of these terms - they have narratives that take place across more than one text. I use this term to highlight the focus of this research: narrative trilogies.

This definition provides three avenues of inquiry into the structure of the form: etymological or nominative (focusing on *'tri-'*), historical origins (trilogies in Ancient Greece), and sometimes erroneous, modern examples (Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*).

Three and trilogy

A primary concern in defining the trilogy revolves around the number three and extending a narrative beyond the bounds of a single work. Jack Bratich, in his editor's introduction 'What is a Trilogy?', notes that a trilogy triples the possibility of a text (2011:345). Bratich did not elaborate further, and it is a review of another work, however, his sentiments are echoed elsewhere. Lucas Belvaux, the creator of *Trilogie* (2002), is quoted by Dave Kehr in a *New York Times* article as saying, 'two is too little and four is too much … three gives a sense of unbalance, of irresolution, where an even number is too symmetrical, it suggests a conclusion' (2004).[5] Perkins and Verevis, in their edited volume *Film Trilogies*, note that trilogy can be used 'to evade the time constraints of a standard feature film' (2012:9). Finally, in *Aeschylean Tragedy,* Alan H. Sommerstein holds that 'trilogy, like epic, can stretch out its action' (2010:39).

Three is an important number in storytelling. Christopher Booker, author of *The Seven Basic Plots*, says that 'the whole of the way in which the human imagination unconsciously shapes a story is itself rooted in the "rule of three", in that it follows that three-fold rhythm which provides stories with their most basic archetypical structure' (2007:34). Perkins and Verevis, like Sommerstein and Bratich, acknowledge the 'extra' narrative space the trilogy allows. However, they do not acknowledge the uniqueness of trilogy from other tri-part forms and, in doing so, fail to elucidate its unique storytelling potential.

Other multi-text narratives utilise number three: three-volume, threequel and triptych. In his unpublished thesis, Martin Ausmus dismisses the form; he notes that having three texts is the only defining feature of the trilogy (Ausmus 1968). For him, a trilogy is simply a sequence

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[5]   The three films, all released in the same year, are called *On the Run, An Amazing Couple*, and *Afterlife.*

novel that happens to have three texts; it does not have a distinct structure compared to other sequence novels. Somewhat tautologically, Daniel Herbert in Perkins and Verevis' *Film Trilogies* says, 'the trilogy follows a narrative logic, a tri-logic that seeks unity and completion in the number three' (2012:182). How is this trilogy logic distinct from other three-part forms such as a three-volume novel, a threequel, or triptych? These questions are used as departure points for the three discussion chapters of this thesis, but I briefly outline the difference in structure here.

A **three-volume novel** is a publishing format where a single novel is split for length rather than narrative structure. A **triptych** is a collection of three pictures. A **threequel** is a film neologism using the prefix 'three-' and the suffix '-quel' from 'sequel'. In his book, *Film Remakes and Franchises*, Daniel Herbert defines a sequel as typically meaning 'a second film in a series or more generally can mean any film that continues the story of a previous film' (2017:11). Trilogy and threequel share a defining numerical factor, yet the existence of the two terms implies that they can be distinguished from one another. In *Film Sequels*, Carolyn Jess-Cooke says of the threequel that it 'can be distinguished from a trilogy by its refusal to end a sequential narrative, and by the implicit suggestion that a fourth instalment might be possible' (2009:5). Why is a fourth instalment possible in a threequel but not in a trilogy? A trilogy ends. A threequel, in contrast, can be continued. The difference hints at the dichotomy of the trilogy form and the difference between it and a threequel. While trilogy expands on the possibilities of a single narrative, it also has a definitive end.

Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis' 2012 edited volume *Film Trilogies* champion a nominative approach to the form. They note that the 'trilogy precisely demonstrates the conflicting impulses toward limitation and multiplication that characterises the field. The nomination distinguishes and limits a set of films in a manner that is more precise than either "sequel" or "series"' (2012:3-4). I hypothesise that a trilogy has four texts: three individual texts and a **fourth text** that connects them. The four texts provide a structural, as opposed to

theoretical or thematic, definition of the trilogy form.[6] In this way, I challenge the assumption of 'three' as the defining aspect of trilogy.

Trilogy in Ancient Greece

Early trilogies play an important role in not only defining trilogy but also determining structure. In the fifth century BCE Athens, yearly dramatic festivals called the Dionysia were held over three days. It is believed that three tragedians were given a single day to premiere three tragedies and a satyr play and that many of these plays were, or may have been, produced in connected sequences (Sommerstein 2010:13, 29).[7] The only surviving trilogy from this time is Aeschylus' *Oresteia,* which took first prize at Dionysia 458 BCE.[8] The trilogy tells of (1) the fall of Agamemnon at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra; (2) the revenge exacted by their son Orestes; and (3) the trial of Orestes for murdering his mother.

While Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is a defining trilogy text, many other trilogies were produced in Ancient Athens. Given the foundational importance of this trilogy, it is necessary to understand which other plays survive and what they can tell us about the trilogy form. Of Aeschylus' estimated 90 plays, only seven have survived (8%); Sophocles' output has been estimated at 123 plays with only seven surviving (6%). The third great tragedian, Euripides, is believed to have written at least 90 plays, and 18 or 19 (one has disputed authorship) remain intact (21%). The remaining evidence from Ancient Greece is hardly sufficient to build a strict definition of the form. As such, Lihua Gui's assertion in her unpublished thesis on Robertson Davies that ancient Athenian trilogies 'trace a hereditary evil' and 'follow the crime from its

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6   I used the term 'structure' in a similar manner to Lihua Gui in her unpublished thesis, that of an 'arrangement', 'construction' and 'building', which she takes from Rowe's chapter 'Structure' in *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (1990: 23, 28).

7   Satyr plays are shorter in length and named for the goat-like followers of the god Pan They usually had the same characters as the tragedy but adopted a happy atmosphere, they are often considered a kind of 'joking tragedy.' Only one satyr play, Euripides' *Cyclops* survives (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* n.b.).

8   The trilogy texts are *Agamemnon*, *The Choephoroi* or *Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*. Only one line of the trilogy's satyr play, *Proteus*, remains.

original commission down to its final expiation' (1998:58) is difficult to maintain, as Sommerstein also asserts (2010:41).

Nevertheless, there are aspects of trilogy for which Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the primary and enduring example. Essential structures that are still used today were first used in this trilogy. Understanding trilogy origin was also necessary to unpack some of the literature. For example, David Grene misinterprets and conflates the trilogy structure with the three-volume novel to justify his adaptation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. He notes that 'these three plays are three acts in a single play' (1989:1). In doing so, he negates the narrative possibilities of the trilogy form. Daniel Herbert uses Grene's assumption to define the trilogy (2012:181). Thus, understanding the structure and nature of the evidence that remains of Ancient Greek trilogies is relevant and essential for exploring the hypothesis of this thesis.

Ancient trilogies were produced for competition rather than financial gain. As such, they provide an antidote to framing trilogy as a purely commercial enterprise. Carolyn Jess-Cooke takes a similar approach in her monograph *Film Sequels* (2009). She quotes Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg's *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel* (1998b), noting that 'the sequel has developed as a sequential literary format throughout the history of narrative, and can be traced back to oral narratives dating as far back as Homer's *Iliad* in the eighth century BCE' (2009:2). Amanda Klein and R. Barton Palmer, in their book *Cycles, sequels, spin-offs, remakes and reboots,* harken back their multiplicities to Arthurian legend (2016). Like Jess-Cooke and Klein and Palmer, this PhD seeks to understand the storytelling aspects of trilogy, rather than the financial drivers in the industry.

The Lord of the Rings is not a trilogy

What is labelled a trilogy may not necessarily be structured as a trilogy. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is not structured as a trilogy. It is a single novel split into three parts for publication purposes (Anderson 2004; Carpenter 1977 & 1981; Raynolds 2007). Michael DC Drout, in his lecture series '*Tolkien and the West*', notes that while it may not have been written as a trilogy, it can be 'read' as a trilogy (2012). Indeed it can, but the novel was not *structured* as a trilogy. What is more, as we will see below in the discussion on so-called theme trilogies, where trilogy is used as a critical tool to 'read' texts together, almost any work can be 'read' as trilogy.

The distinction between a three-volume novel and a trilogy is an important one, for which Lihua Gui uses Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour* to explain.[9] After writing and publishing the trilogy, Waugh later combined the three texts into a single work, obliterating the chapter titles and pagination of the originals. The criticisms that attend this change are evidence of what is lost in the change of form, something that Grene ignored and so denied the potential for the trilogy form, albeit indirectly.

J.R.R. Tolkien's work looms large for fantasy authors, and Terry Pratchett notes:

> J.R.R. Tolkien has become a sort of mountain, appearing in all subsequent
> fantasy in the way that Mt. Fuji appears so often in Japanese prints.
> Sometimes it's big and up close. Sometimes it's a shape on the horizon.
> Sometimes it's not there at all, which means that the artist either has made
> a deliberate decision against the mountain, which is interesting in itself, or
> is, in fact, standing on Mt. Fuji.

<div align="right">(Pratchett 2015:86)</div>

My creative practice – writing a young-adult fantasy trilogy, *The Story of Eorthan* – forms the basis for this research. *The Lord of the Rings* and its consideration as a trilogy is essential to explore this project. While Tolkien's work is a three-volume novel, Peter Jackson's films are a trilogy. Narrative alterations between the two forms can illustrate the important differences between a three-volume novel and a trilogy.

Theme, narrative and setting trilogies

Other definitions for the trilogy tend to focus on how the individual texts are connected, whether by a creative technique, author, auteur or, most commonly, whether a narrative, theme or setting connects the works. Lihua Gui, in her discussion of Robertson Davies, notes three types of trilogy – narrative, theme and setting – that she uses to categorise the three

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[9] *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961).

trilogies Davies produced (1998:2). Both Gui and Ausmus agree that 'setting' is a relatively weaker cohesive element than narrative or theme (Ausmus 1969:6; Gui 1998:2), and I tend to agree. The narrative element of setting plays an essential role in trilogy. What would *The Lord of the Rings* be without Middle Earth, *The Dark Knight Trilogy* without Gotham, or *The Hunger Games Trilogy* without Panem? However, while setting plays an essential role, it is not sufficient to define the fourth text or the connective tissue of the trilogy.

Theme trilogies are not just confined to film, and they can be found in novels, such as Paolo Coelho's *And on The Seventh Day Trilogy* or Italo Calvino's *Our Ancestors.*[10] They can also be found in plays or dramatic works. Daniel Herbert draws on David Grene's analysis to compare the *Oresteia* and Sophocles' *Theban Cycle,* to describe trilogies from 'within' and 'without', as the latter is considered a trilogy because they deal with the same mythological cycle and are by the same author (2012:181-2).[11] However, trilogy's texts were written some 40 years apart and were not originally intended to be performed together (Fitzgerald 1949).

This thesis will focus on the structure of narrative trilogies. Daniel Herbert notes that 'narrative is a determinate criterion, as it distinguishes the trilogy from the triptych, the triangle, or any other unit based on three' (2012:181). However, theme trilogies demonstrate that a trilogy need not have a narrative to designate it as a trilogy. What is more, triptychs (sets of three collected images) can have a narrative. Instead of being used synonymously to describe trilogy, triptych can be used as a device to describe the form's structure.

While theme trilogies are not the focus of this thesis, the narrative element of 'theme' – a story's underlying message or meaning – is essential to understanding the structure of the form. They reveal a key facet of the form: trilogy – having three individual texts and a unifying fourth text – allows a trilogy creator to compare and contrast themes (and other narrative elements) between the different texts within a trilogy. This comparative aspect of trilogy is

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[10]   *Our Ancestors: The Cloven Viscount* (1952), *The Baron in the Trees* (1957), and *The Nonexistent Knight* (1959). *And on the Seventh Day: By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* (1994), *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998), and *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000).

[11]   Comprised of *Antigone*, *Oedipus Tyranus* (sometimes called *Oedipus Rex*), and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

inherent in its structure and the interactive and self-referential discourse between the texts.

It is what distinguishes the trilogy from other three-part multi-text narratives.

Trilogy structure

What is called a trilogy may not actually be structured as a trilogy. Australian author Garth Nix's first three books in his Old Kingdom series were once referred to as *The Abhorsen Trilogy.*[12] Both Stieg Larsson and Mervyn Peake planned more novels before their untimely deaths (Foreshore 2011; Watkins 1992:357-358 and Winngton 2012). While you can read these works as trilogies, especially the *Millennium Trilogy* and *Gormenghast Trilogy,* they are less useful as a narrative model.[13] For creative practitioners to take advantage of the form's potential, it is imperative to understand its essential structure.

However, without adequate models and dismissive literature, creative practitioners are obliged to utilise other works as models or rely on other sources of knowledge. There are plenty of blog posts, but these too suffer from an over-reliance on non-trilogy material, namely J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, to justify their versions of trilogy structure. Nevertheless, these blog posts are useful to augment the limited academic research that exists on trilogy structure. This section will review what literature is available and consider the evidence for the fourth text that can be found therein. I use various sources, from an unpublished thesis to reader and writer blog posts, structural paradigms, and film theory.

A diagrammatic approach to structure

In his unpublished thesis, Martin Ausmus dismisses the trilogy as merely a critical term and a way of describing structure, noting that the word 'distinguishes nothing beyond quantity' (1968:2). Although this work is an older unpublished thesis, Ausmus' observations are utilised by Luhua Gui (1998), and his dismissal of the trilogy form is echoed in Stuart Henderson's recent work on film sequel structure. Where Henderson's dismissal conflates the trilogy with

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[12]   *Sabriel* (1995), *Lirael* (2001), and *Abhorsen* (2003). Speaking to 'The Garret' podcast in 2018, Nix noted that the first novel stands alone and then following texts are a two-part novel. As of 2021, the seventh novel in the series has just been released.

[13]   *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Swedish title translates to *Men Who Hate Women*) (2005), *The Girl Who Played with Fire* (2006), and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* (2017). The series has since been continued with three new novels by David Lagercrantz. *Gormenghast: Titus Groan* (1946), *Gormenghast* (1950), and *Titus Alone* (1959).

threequel (2014:4), Ausmus suggests trilogy bears no meaning on the practice of creation – it is only a label. Although he dismisses the trilogy, he uses four trilogies to establish forms of the sequence novel that it is useful to relate here as they a pertinent to how *The Lord of the Rings* films are structured as trilogy.[14] His models are based on time and point of view (1969:49). He uses point of view to mean first-person or third-person narrative and identifies four patterns based his two criteria:

1. third-person chronological narrative
2. first-person chronological narrative
3. third-person synchronous narrative
4. first-person synchronous narrative.

A 'synchronous narrative' relates to parallel storylines in an individual text.[15] Martin Ausmus uses diagrams to describe the sequence of novel forms – and this diagrammatic approach, as I explore below, will also feature in this thesis as a way of visualising theory and reflection. For example, below is Ausmus' representation of Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga.*[16] Where 1, 2, and 3 are the individual texts, the 'Ls' are the short interludes that appear between them. The figure on the right is a representation of Joyce Cary's *First Trilogy.* [17]

Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*   Joyce Cary's *First Trilogy*
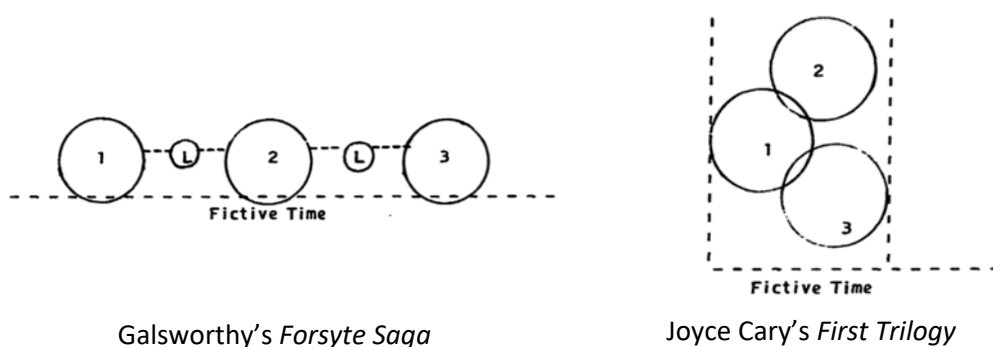
Figure 1: Examples of Ausmus' diagrams

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14   Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* (the first in a **trilogy of trilogies**); Sasson's *The Memoirs of George Sherston*, Benette's *The Clayhanger Trilogy* and Cary's *First Trilogy*.

15   This is used to great effect in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy*: *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), *MaddAddam* (2013).

16   *The Man of Property* (1906), an interlude known as 'Indian Summer of a Forsyte' (1918), *In Chancery* (1920), the second interlude known as 'Awakening' (1920), and *To Let* (1921).

17   *Herself Surprised* (1941), *To Be a Pilgrim* (1942), and *The Horses Mouth* (1944).

According to Ausmus' patterns, the *Forsyte Saga* is third-person chronological sequence novel and Joyce Cary's is first-person synchronous (1969:51, 53). However, Ausmus' classification of sequence novel forms using fictive time and narrative perspective is limited. Other narrative elements and how they are altered or changed in the trilogy form is what the creative writer needs: character, plot and even setting, in some circumstances. Ausmus' approach in denying the trilogy form and ignore the absence of an overarching narrative to distinguish Joyce Cary's work as a theme or non-narrative trilogy means his observations are difficult to apply to the creative process of writing a trilogy. Cary himself later referred to his trilogies as 'triptychs', which aligns him with other theme trilogy creators such as Italo Calvino and even some film auteurs. They use the idea of the triptych to describe theme trilogies. Nevertheless, Ausmus' diagrammatic approach aligns this research in the form of story design models (especially those related to screenwriting) such as the three-act structure and the hero's journey, explored below.

'How to write a trilogy' advice

Before discussing how these models have been used to describe trilogy, it is useful to discuss what trilogy advice is available to creators online. Without books on 'How to Write a Trilogy', these represent some of the current resources for trilogy creators. There are four examples of blog posts below categorise trilogies in a similar way: the 'structures' identified are more appropriately defined as distinct forms of multi-text narrative. That is, the three-volume novel, threequel and theme trilogies. The blog posts highlight the need for my research to provide a more nuanced and distinct understanding of trilogy structure.

Keifer describes three styles of trilogies: dynamic trilogy, static trilogies and anthology series (2017). A dynamic trilogy involves character development (e.g., Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, while a static trilogy does not, e.g., *Indiana Jones*).[18] Her examples of static trilogies – *Indiana Jones* and Larsson's *Millennium* – are not trilogies. *Indiana Jones* is more accurately described as a threequel, and *Millennium* was meant to be a series of ten books.

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[18]   *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010). *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989).

The third trilogy Kiefer describes, the 'anthology series' where 'each book is only loosely related to the others', are 'theme' trilogies described in the section above. Keifer does make some good points about trilogy structure. She describes four potential ways to plot a trilogy:

1. Complex arcs
2. The long arc
3. Individual arcs
4. Two arcs, three books.

For a complex arc, Keifer notes, 'the main conflict in each book is resolved, but threads of tension do carry onto the next book in the series, sparking another central conflict' (2017). This is the structure of the trilogy form: three individual structures and a fourth unifying structure. However, the 'long arc' is based on *The Lord of the Rings* and more accurately describes a **three-volume novel**. Keifer notes that 'there are no individual plot arcs and the books end on cliff-hangers'. There is no interconnecting story for an 'individual arc' trilogy, and therefore, this is a **threequel** structure. The fourth structure, 'two arcs, three books', is described as a stand-alone first novel and a two-part novel with the second two texts (2017). While Keifer asserts that this is a common trilogy structure (at least in publishing), it is not ideal and relates to criticism of trilogies labelled by TV-tropes as a 'two-part trilogy' (n.d.). Rather than balancing the fourth text structure with the individual texts, these trilogies create a fifth narrative structure that ultimately unbalances the trilogy. They are often the result of an unplanned trilogy (or when the first text is released before two and three are conceptualised). But why is this distinction important? Does it matter? Is it just mere semantics? I argue no. It is essential to fully understand the fundamental structure of a trilogy so a creator can realise the full potential of the form.

The story development blog called *Dramatica* (2004) offers another example of how the trilogy's structure is confused with other forms of multi-text narrative, especially three-volume novels (or texts) and threequels.[19] They note the following ways of structuring a trilogy:

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[19]   *Dramatica* is writing software that comes with supporting material, such as a writing manual and a website, that offers tips on writing.

1. Simple segmented trilogy
2. Multi-story segmented trilogy
3. Single-story trilogy
4. Combination trilogy[20]

A simple segmented trilogy 'breaks a single story into three parts' and, is therefore a **three-volume novel** structure. A multi-story segmented trilogy 'breaks a single story into three interweaving parts' such as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (2004). This description goes some way to describe a trilogy in how the texts are unified but neglects the individual text's narrative structure. A single-story trilogy is a 'set of three stories put together in a sequence' (2004) but does not contain an explanation as to how the texts are linked. Like Keifer, the authors stress that a trilogy has 'a core story' with 'two sequels' (2004). Film scholar Barton R. Palmer also uses a similar structure to describe Coppola's *The Godfather* and similarly fails to distinguish trilogy from threequel (2010:66) and why the form is important to a trilogy creator.[21] The website, TV Tropes, calls this structure a 'two-part trilogy', which for them is a criticism and therefore not a desirable way to structure a trilogy (accessed 2016). The implications of this structure and criticism are discussed in Chapter Two.

This 2020 unattributed blog post (via reedsyblog) identifies similar plot structures to Keifer and Dramatica.

1. The complex arc
2. The long arc
3. Episodic trilogies
4. Irregular or atypical trilogies

For the author in a complex arc, each text has a three-act structure, and they identify Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* as an example. Collins' trilogy employs the three-act structure in each book, but the reedsyblog author does not identify the connecting structure of the form (the fourth text). The long arc, like Kiefer's version of the same name and Dramatica's 'simple segmented', is a **three-volume novel**. The author defines it as the 'individual books don't have narrative arcs themselves', and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the*

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[20]   A combination of the three previous forms.

[21]   *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), and *The Godfather: Part III* (1990).

Rings is used as the example (2020). The episodic trilogy consists of 'a series of distinct stories, rather than one long narrative' (2020). This aligns to Kiefer's 'individual arcs' and Dramatica's 'single-story' trilogy, that is, a **threequel**. The reedsby blog's author does expand on the previous two lists in identifying trilogies that do not fit easily into those patterns. The 'irregular or atypical trilogies' are **theme** trilogies.

The last example is from Big Al in his post *What Readers Want – Series vs. Standalone Books* (2015). He identifies three series structures:

1. One Big Story
2. Several Overlapping Stories
3. Stand Alone Episodes

Big Al's 'one big story' aligns to the **three-volume novel**. This is a 'series that could be viewed as a single long story, starting at one point and following the same set of characters over a period of time' (2015). The 'one big story' aligns to Kiefer's and reedsyblog's 'complex arc' and Dramatica's 'single segmented' structure. The 'stand alone episodes' align with **threequel** structures, 'in this kind of series each book focuses on the same protagonist', the setting is the same, yet 'each book stands alone' (2015). Big Al's 'overlapping stories' is a trilogy structure, but he does not identify how this form is distinct from series with more than three texts.

The fourth text: a new way of considering structure

From the perspective of a creator then, trilogy has a dual structure. It is simultaneously three individual texts and a unified connecting narrative, which can also be viewed as a text in its own right. This text is not one just to be read, but rather which is consciously created as an essential feature of the trilogy form. Analysing and describing the nature of this unifying whole as a distinct narrative structure – the fourth text – is my original contribution to knowledge. In basic narrative structure terminology, it has a beginning, middle and end. To reinforce the idea that it can be created by an author, and not something that is magically realised at the end or by an external critic, I have called it 'the fourth text'.

The choice to use 'text' is a conscious one. I use the word 'text' to describe the individual novels, plays and films of a trilogy, and the unifying structure between them, because of the associations and connotations it holds with weaving. The word text comes from the Latin

tex(ere), or 'to weave', and it entered English as a 'pattern of weaving, texture'. The fourth text is contained within or woven into the narrative structure of the individual texts, and those narrative structures must change to accommodate the structural needs of the fourth text.

Creating a trilogy is a dynamic process that involves weaving together the individual texts with the fourth unifying text. Evidence for this structure can be found in attempts to describe the trilogy using scriptwriting development paradigms, such as Field's three-act structure and Campbell's hero's journey. Carolyn Jess-Cooke notes briefly in the book *Film Sequels* that 'the trilogy is often convoluted by the issue of balancing the films' singular three-act structure with the larger three-acts of the trilogy' (2009:5).[22] She continues to say that, in other words, the third film chapter is required to have its discrete beginning, middle and end, while at the same time, each of these acts must wind down, conclude and tie up the concerns of the previous two films (2009:5). Jess-Cooke does not explore the implications of this structural demand for a creative practitioner. Field updated his book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (2005) to include Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* three-act structure. However, he combined and confused the structure of the first film with the structure of the fourth text. Nor does he reckon with a change in story structure from the three-volume novel into a film trilogy. I discuss this further in Chapter One.

The fourth text has been implied or expressed by other trilogy creators, however, the nature and function of the structure is not fully realised in this discourse. It is often compounded with the 'whole trilogy', for example, Patrick Ness, speaking to O'Brien, says of his middle text: 'I also know that it needed to stand-alone and be about something on its own terms … since I had an over-arching story for the whole trilogy in place' (2014). Similarly, Lewis Jorstad, writing on his website 'The Novel Smithy', acknowledges the overarching structure as being like the structure of the individual texts, but he identifies the overarching text as 'the trilogy'

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[22]   Alex Henderson (2013) in her blog post entitled 'Second Book Syndrome' uses the three-act paradigm to describe the problem with the middle text, but she does not consider the three-act structures of the individual texts. Conversely, Deborah Ross (2013) also refers to the three-act structure in each book, but she does not identify the structure of the connecting fourth text.

(2019). Here is evidence from two trilogy creators acknowledging the presence of an overarching structure and, in Jostard's case, identifying that the overarching structure is like the individual texts. In an article about *The Lord of the Rings*, Tally notes that 'a *trilogy*, properly speaking, would require three related books or films that tell a single overarching story, but with the proviso that each book would also have to be "interlegible on its own", to use Tolkien's language (2017:176). Where my original contribution differs to that of Jostard and Tally is two-fold: (1) I differentiate between the fourth text and the trilogy as a whole. This is an important distinction that allows a more nuanced understanding of the trilogy structure; (2) I investigate how the different narrative texts interreact with one another. In Chapter Three I will focus on the potential of the holistic trilogy form that is found in – or results from – the interplay between the fourth text and its three individual texts.

The fourth text being woven into and altering the individual text structure can be expressed by an example from the broader literature on seriality. Discussing Shakespeare's tetralogy of *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part 1 and 2* and *Henry V*, John Elliott says that the usual Shakespearean tragedy structure is 'modified' in the first play. He explains that extra scenes in Acts IV and V are not necessarily relevant to *Richard II* but to the later *King Henry IV Part 1 and 2* (1968:253). Elliot identifies this as an aspect of multi-text narratives found in trilogy: that the fourth text alters the narrative structure of the individual texts.

Carolyn Jess-Cooke and John Elliot both stress how the whole structure, or as I term it the fourth text, will interact and affect the structure of the individual texts. Stuart Henderson, in his book *The Hollywood Sequel: History and Form, 1911-2010* (2014), uses terms derived from formalism, the 'macro-syuzhet' and the 'macro-fibula', by which he means the individual text and the unifying or overarching text, respectively (2014:112). While these terms may be useful for film studies, they are less useful for a practitioner as they are used to critique or apply labels after a trilogy is created rather than give practical story development advice.

When the hero's journey and its relationship to Hollywood filmmaking is considered, George Lucas' *Star Wars* looms large. In his screenwriting manual *Myth and the Movies,* Stuart

Voytilla offers one reading of the hero's journey used in the Original *Star Wars* trilogy.[23] In doing so, Voytilla asserts that Luke has one hero's journey across all three texts. He notes that in *A New Hope,* Luke begins his journey and concludes in 'crossing the threshold'; in the second film Luke continues his ordeal, and it is only the third film which completes Luke's hero's journey (1999:290). This reading of the trilogy is limited because, like Grene, he assumes a three-volume structure. That is, the trilogy is a mono-text structure rather than a multi-text narrative. Luke undergoes four journeys, one in each of the trilogy's texts. This is essential for trilogy creators to understand as it will affect how they develop the narrative threads in their trilogy, asking them to consider what their fourth text is and how they weave it into the individual texts. If a creator does not consider the fourth text, this can lead to problems with their trilogy, such as 'middle text syndrome', the 'third is always the worst', a two-part trilogy or 'trilogy creep'. I will explore these implications in the case studies of *The Dark Knight Trilogy* and *The Hunger Games Trilogy*.

This section has sought to explain my proposed trilogy structure contextualised against other attempted explanations in the literature. This is by no means a complete literature review, and each chapter of this thesis will expand on concepts first introduced here. In the next section, I will detail my approach and thesis outline.

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[23]   *A New Hope* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983).

Approach to and summary of the thesis

This creative practice thesis utilises my trilogy, *The Story of Eorthan*, as a departure point for investigations into the **fundamental structure** of the trilogy form. It employs a creative practice approach, is interdisciplinary (drawing on novels, films and plays), and uses a blended thesis structure. My journey from practitioner to practitioner-researcher has been structured in three phases, presented in three chapters containing critical and creative work. These chapters could be considered a trilogy in their own right. This research is an iterative, cyclical and systematic investigation into the trilogy form. This section briefly outlines my creative practice approach, including the centrality of creating diagrams to visualise theory, practice and reflection. This section also outlines the type of thesis that this PhD takes, and outline the thesis structure.

Creative practice approach
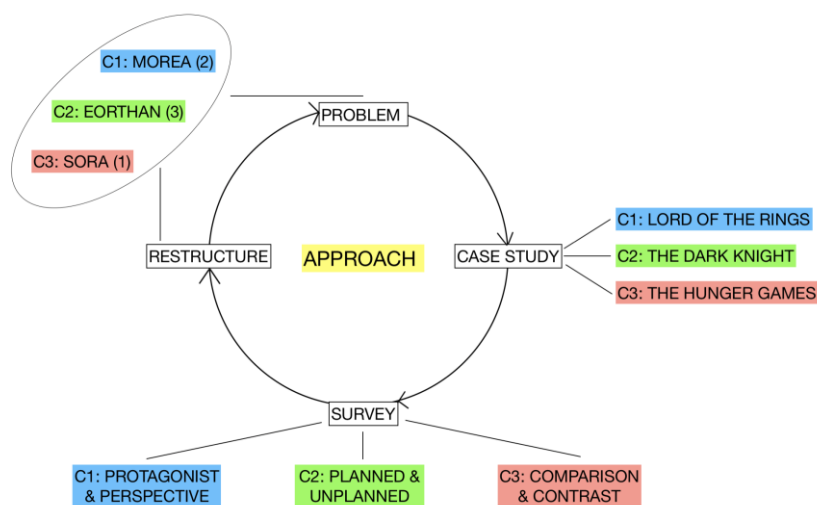
Figure 2: Schematic diagram of my creative practice approach

The figure above is a schematic representation of the systematic methodology of this research. First, I would encounter a 'problem' while drafting my trilogy. I conceptualised the problem through critical reflection and established which other trilogies had similar problems. Using the similar trilogy as a case study, I then explored the different aspects and affordances of trilogy structure. As a bridge between applying the learning from the case study to my creative practice, I surveyed the literature of trilogies (novels, films and plays) to see if other authors or creators had taken a similar approach. These surveys helped by primarily analysing

the use of trilogy in film but were then utilised to also explore similar approaches used in novel-writing to apply to my own novel trilogy. While multiple streams of inquiry were undertaken at different points in time, they eventually coalesced into this exploration method. Following this, I would apply what I had learned about trilogy to see whether it could resolve the 'problem' first identified. My methodology is cyclical, and I repeat the process for my third and first texts.

This cyclical methodology aligns with that described by Smith and Dean in their 2009 edited work *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts.* Reading clockwise from the top of their Figure 1.1 entitled 'A model of creative arts and research processes: the literature cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice' (2009:20), idea generation can take place within creative practice (the 'problem'). I therefore select a trilogy based on both systemic and subjective means. Then use it to 'investigate and extrapolate from the ideas' in the case study (2009:20). Then I 'develop chosen ideas' through the literature survey before applying them to the output (*The Story of Eorthan*).

Using diagrams

Writing a trilogy presents several challenges; one pertinent to this project is a trilogy's length. Trilogies are usually, though not always, long texts, and *The Story of Eorthan* will eventually be approximately 270,000 words long. It was impossible to accommodate the word count within a thesis. Initially, my creative artefact or project would have been abridged versions of the trilogy. However, this failed to demonstrate my research. A new means of demonstrating and illustrating the research was required. As part of this research, I read about and used screenwriting development tools, such as Field's three-act paradigm and the hero's journey first proposed by Joseph Campbell and expanded by Vogler and others (Batty (2011), Murdock (1998) and Frankel (2010), to name a few). What was originally meant to understand structure quickly became a means of illustrating my practitioner to practitioner-researcher journey. Recently Reagan et al., in their article 'The emotional arcs of stories are dominated by six basic shapes' (2016), plotted stories on graphs using an algorithm to produce basic story shapes. While I do not use their illustrative methods in my research, they are useful in mapping story structures via diagrams.

Diagrammatic communication complements my way of thinking and working through structural rationales. The diagrams I have created for this research illustrate the case studies undertaken and embody new knowledge in the form of the structural changes that *The Story of Eorthan* underwent from the research. The 'creative work' here is limited to a particular aspect of writing my trilogy: restructuring the narratives based on the understanding gained from the research (analysis, reflection, practice). The structural changes were noted systematically through version control and comparison. I switched from using a program called Scrivener to draft my trilogy to another program called Ulysses. The process provided me with multiple drafts to compare as well as a reflective diary that I kept during the writing process. In her book, *Writing Fiction: Creative and Critical Approaches* (2007), Amanda Boulter describes three stages of writing: prewriting, writing and rewriting. Prewriting is the incubation stage that can involve charts, plans, notes or endless musings (2012:12). The different versions of my trilogy represent an oscillation between writing and prewriting, but mostly prewriting because the 'problems' with my trilogy inevitably obliged me to return to the prewriting stage. The creative writing aspects of this thesis are not polished writing pieces but rather illustrations of works in progress.

Blended thesis

This project is a creative practice project without a creative artefact; rather, it uses the documentation of writing processes and structural edits to inform a creative, critical and reflective thesis that responds to the research and then looks for new research to further respond to the creative process. Creative, critical and reflective elements are combined as a 'plaited' or 'blended' thesis, as described by creative writing scholars such as Boyd (2010), Krauth (2018) and Robertson, Juckes, O'Rourke & Pettitt-Schipp (2017). The PhD is interdisciplinary in its broad literature review and creative methods but focuses on four key trilogies through detailed structural readings akin to case studies. Interwoven in this structural approach are story design models that provide a common dialogue for describing trilogies found in the literature, such as the three-act structure and the hero's journey.

Chapter 1: The first research cycle

The discussion chapters are in the order of my practitioner-researcher journey. They are out of order in terms of my trilogy. That is, the initial exploration into trilogy structure starts with the **middle text** entitled *Morea*. Using the problem with my middle text, I explore what other trilogy authors have had similar issues, such as Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens in their adaptation of *The Two Towers*. They unanimously agree that the second film was the most difficult to draft (Carpenter 1981, #143:192; Boyens 2001, DVD extras). The Lord of the Rings case study offers tantalising and vital insight into the difference between a **three-volume** and a **trilogy** structure. Several key differences between the two versions of the same story offer concrete examples of the difference. One of those key differences is the development of Aragorn as a protagonist and point-of-view character in the second film. The survey then explores how protagonist journeys and character perspectives are used in trilogy, drawing in examples of novel trilogies as a bridge to my novel. Following this, I map what the case study and survey showed me about the trilogy, and I apply it to resolving the major issues in my middle text. I developed a new protagonist journey and reoriented the novel from her perspective.

Chapter 2: The second research cycle

The different texts within a trilogy are intimately bound to one another. Changes in one text will necessitate changes in the others. Namely, changes to *Morea* involved moving several key chapters and plot points from my third text into the second. So, the second chapter explores my third text *Eorthan*. In turning my attention to *Eorthan,* I noticed another problem, namely, with a new understanding of the fourth-text structure, I realised that the bulk of the fourth text resided within the third text. Should I have written and published my first text before coming to my third, I would have created quite an unbalanced trilogy.

Exploring how a form's structure could be altered by being either 'planned or unplanned' is valuable. Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* was 'unplanned' (Nolan in *The Art of the Dark Knight Trilogy* 2012). It is an adaptation, like the last, but in a different genre: superheroes or comic book films. There are numerous superhero films in the current franchise age, from the Marvel Cinematic Universe to the burgeoning DC Universe.

Christopher Nolan's trilogy can be used to explore planned and unplanned creative practices. However, compared to other superhero films, it can be used to explore the difference between a **threequel** and a trilogy. Other planned and unplanned trilogies are explored in the survey, both in film and novel trilogies. Thus, exploring the external factors the form is subject to allowed me to reflect *The Story of Eorthan*, particularly the third and fourth texts, and restructure it accordingly.

Chapter 3: The third research cycle

My trilogy *The Story of Eorthan* is a collection of young adult fantasy novels. The first two case studies were in film or adaptation of novels and comics into trilogy films. Analysing these trilogies using Field's three-act paradigm and the hero's journey (screenwriting development tools) had an unintended consequence in transforming my story development techniques. I moved from developing action sequences based on where characters were in the world to an act-based structure. This research is interdisciplinary in that it draws on trilogy studies in film, novels and plays. It was intentional. The transformation of my practice was not. However, it was nevertheless welcome.

After developing *Morea*, *Eorthan* and the fourth text using the three-act structure and protagonist journeys, I sat down to write the first text, *Sora* and hit a roadblock. Where the *Morea* roadblock took some three years to resolve, the problem with *Sora* was resolved in days. This is reflective of how I had changed from a practitioner to a practitioner-researcher. Using the methodology of the previous chapters – problem, case study, a survey of the trilogy literature, and application – I was able to work through the problems. Specifically, I use Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. Collins trained as a playwright and worked as a screenwriter before turning to novels. Her work is a successful young adult trilogy, albeit in the dystopian genre, but it also offers an insight into using a three-act structure or screenwriting technique in a novel.

Collins' work is also an example of the potential that resides within the trilogy form. The survey following the novel trilogy case study broadens into film and plays to explore the form's storytelling possibilities. If a novel is an impression, as Thomas Hardy said, then a trilogy is an argument (1874). It is a form in which opposing sides' viewpoints can be presented, contrasted and ultimately resolved. To expand upon Forster, 'The king died and

then the queen died is a story. The king died, and then the queen died of grief is a plot' (1927:loc 917 of 1881). If they left no legitimate heirs, and two claimants to the throne fought an epic war of succession that ultimately transformed their world: this is a trilogy.

Chapter One

middle text syndrome • three-volume novel • *The Lord of the Rings* • protagonist and perspective • *Morea*

> The novelistic middle, which is perhaps the most difficult of Aristotle's
> 'parts' of the plot to talk about …

<div align="right">

Brooks *Reading for Plot* (1985:125)

</div>

It is a complaint almost universally acknowledged that the 'middle of a text is the most difficult to write about or indeed discuss, giving rise to the term 'middle book' or 'second book' syndrome – or in the context of this PhD, **middle text syndrome**. Trilogy readers have used the term to critique trilogies and by creators to explain issues in crafting the form. In my journey from practitioner to practitioner-researcher, I too had problems with my middle text. As such, it is the ideal place to begin the story of my research journey.

Middle text syndrome

What is **middle text syndrome**? In their blog post 'The Worst Second/Middle Book Syndrome Victims', @bookdeviant uses the term to describe when the 'second book is a HUGE disappointment compared to the amazingness of the first book' (Avery 2017, original capitalisation). Other authors feel the expectation of a strong second book as a strain on their trilogy writing process. Concerning her *Possession Trilogy,* Elana Johnson notes that her problem was in 'living up to book one, and the characters were not new and the world wasn't new' (2012).[1] For Caragh M. O'Brien, author of the *Birthmarked Trilogy,* writing book two was 'indisputably more difficult to write than the first;' 'book two is often a gnarly, perilous, fascinating project, with built-in constraints and a backdrop of pressure from deadlines,

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[1]   *Possession* (2011), *Surrender* (2012) and *Abandon* (2013).

critics, and readers' (2011).[2] Both Johnson and O'Brien refer to an audience or critical reception of their middle text, and Avery is an example of how middle text syndrome is used as a critique. While this PhD focuses on the creative process undertaken to devise a trilogy, these concerns help situate this research in a broader critical discourse. While it describes a phenomenon, this research hopes to offer potential solutions or models to narrative solutions for writers and critics alike.

Another trilogy author, Deborah J. Ross, discusses developing her trilogy in the blog post 'The "Middle Book" of a Trilogy' (2013).[3] For Ross, each novel must have its own three-act structure. However, she does not establish how the middle text works alongside the other two, nor does she consider the trilogy holistically (or, in my terminology, how the fourth text is structured). For Ross, the second book 'takes off … from the firm foundation that has been established' in the first book (2013). She notes that 'middle books work when every turn makes the situation exponentially worse and our characters have to work that much harder and suffer that much more' (2013). She neglects to say how the middle text works on its own *and* as part of the whole, or how it interacts with and carries the fourth text, limiting our understanding of the trilogy structure for a creator to follow. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I will discuss the difference between a trilogy and a threequel, and how Ross' structure could be limited to discussing a threequel rather than a trilogy. A threequel structure has three individual texts but lacks a fourth text.

Two other authors take account of the trilogy as a holistic structure, yet their terminology or description of the structure still lacks clarity and exposition. In his excellent blog post entitled 'Middle Book Syndrome', Tim Akers uses the term to describe his issues with conceptualising and writing the second text of his work *The Pagan Knight Trilogy*.[4] Akers (2017) explains as follows:

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[2]   *Birthmarked* (2010), *Tortured* (2011) and *Prized* (2012).

[3]   *The Seven Plated Shield Trilogy*: *The Seven Plated Shield* (2013), *Shannivar* (2013) and *The Heir of Khored* (2014).

[4]   *The Pagan Knight* (2016), *The Iron Hand* (2017) and *The Winter Vow* (2018).

I realised the problem was that I was writing a good book, but not a good
second book in a trilogy. The story I was trying to tell required a full trilogy
to tell, but I wasn't advancing that larger narrative the way I should have
been. I was tracking my novel-sized goals, but not my trilogy-scale targets.

Akers (2017) also describes the aims of the middle text as follows:

You have to balance the larger narrative without ignoring the page to page
motivation of the characters. You have to hint at the final confrontation of
the trilogy without diminishing the final confrontation of the second book.

In summary, the issues he had with his middle text stemmed from an initial failure to consider
the larger plot lines of the trilogy and how they fit within the middle text. According to my
conception of trilogy structure, this can be rephrased as neglecting the fourth text. Akers'
issues arose from not considering the development of the fourth text within the middle or
second text of the trilogy. Conversely, author of the *Chaos Walking Trilogy,* Patrick Ness, did
not have issues with his middle text because he did consider his fourth text. Ness expresses
his innate understanding of the fourth text in that he knew where the second story had to
end (Johnson, 2012).[5] Knowing where the story had to end implies how it is connected to the
whole, or overarching, narrative.

The problem with *Morea*

Before outlining Tolkien and Jackson's problems with their respective middle texts, I will
discuss the issues I had with my middle text - *Morea*. The diagram below illustrates the
plotting status of each trilogy text when I started this PhD. The red is the first text *Sora,* and
the green is the third *Eorthan*. The blue middle text is *Morea*. The colours are used to
distinguish between the novels and will be used throughout this thesis. The numbered
segments represent one chapter each. When I developed my trilogy, I took Dante's

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[5]   *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008), *The Ask and the Answer* (2009) and *Monsters of Men* (2010).

Commedia (1321) as a structural guide and determined that each book would have thirty-

three chapters.[6]
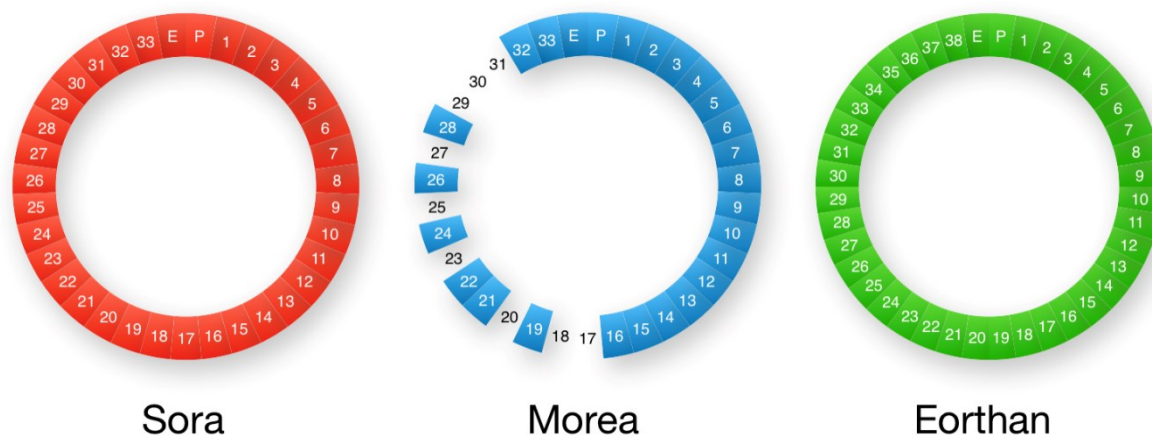
Figure 3: The problem with my second text

I drew the structure of my trilogy to illustrate how underdeveloped the plot of the middle text

was when contrasted with *Sora* and *Eorthan*. The white coloured chapters in *Morea* show

unplotted chapters, and from this, it is evident that *Morea* was the least developed. Why this

was the case was less clear and contributed to my writer's block.

Initially, I put this down to needing to develop more content or to flesh out the plot for

Morea. While undertaking my Master's degree, I took a field research trip to Rouen, France.

One of the main characters in *Morea*, Jene, is based on Joan of Arc, and the climax of the

book was based on Joan's trial. However, during this research trip, what had been a five-

chapter climax was reduced to just one or possibly two chapters. The climax was planned as a

sequence of interlocking events or chapters that would conclude the *Morea* (Laurion would

be thwarted) and bridge the narrative into *Eorthan*. The trial of Jene did not achieve these

aims and therefore led me to question if her character journey was sufficient to hold the

middle text together as a stand-alone narrative. If not Jene, could another character be used

to structure the narrative?

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[6]   It was important to me that each trilogy text was the same length and ensuring each had thirty-three chapters was a way to ensure this. I revisit this in Chapter Three. It was an early exploration of trilogy structure. Over the course of this PhD, the original function of the thirty-three chapters has been replaced by act structures and protagonist journey models.

Why *The Lord of the Rings*?

Are there other trilogy creators who have had a similar issue with their middle texts, and how did they resolve them? To answer this question, I turned to my community of practice. J.R.R. Tolkien and Peter Jackson both had issues with their versions of *The Two Towers* (1954 and 2002), providing an analogy to my problems with my middle text. I have chosen these texts - the novel and the film trilogy - to explore the difference between a three-volume novel and a trilogy. While both creators had problems with the middle text, how they resolved them was distinct. In adapting *The Two Towers* (*TT*) to film, Jackson and his team made critical changes to the narrative that transformed a single narrative into a trilogy. It is valuable to briefly note the problems Tolkien experienced as they are like those Jackson and his team had to resolve.

When preparing *The Two Towers* novel volume for publication, Tolkien noted in a letter to Rayner Unwin that there was 'no real connecting link between Books III and IV' of *The Two Towers* (Carpenter 1981, #143:192). Book III follows Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli as they search for Merry and Pippin. It contains the Battles for Helm's Deep and Isengard. Book IV continues the story of Frodo and Sam as they journey to Mordor and concludes when Shelob attacks Frodo. Peter Jackson, his co-writer Fran Walsh and others involved in *The Lord of the Rings* films publicly stated that *The Two Towers* (2002) was the most challenging story of the three to structure. The difficulty lay in reconciling the two storylines of Tolkien's novel volume. I will detail how they achieved this in the case study below and how this has helped me discover similar structural issues in *Morea*.

The first text in my trilogy, *Sora,* had a single character, Mannec, whose journey was resolved at the end of the book. The third text, *Eorthan,* focused on another character Siera and was told from the perspective of her brother, Lindis. Conversely, the middle text – *Morea* – told the story of two more characters Natalie and Jene from multiple character perspectives. Natalie's story was a continuation of *Sora,* and Jene's story took place in the second half of the text, forming the climax. The combination of Natalie and Jene's stories acted as a 'bridge' or 'hinge' (Peter Jackson 2002, Elenor Johnston 2012) between the first and third texts. In this way, these two stories that formed the plot structure of *Morea* were part of the fourth text, rather than *Morea* itself. Reviewing the two storylines, I realised that they did not give *Morea*

enough of an individual narrative structure to distinguish it from the overall fourth text narrative.

Therefore, creating a trilogy involves an interplay between the fourth overarching text and the individual texts. These texts must work together. It is a fundamental feature of the form and is why the confusion between the trilogy and the three-volume novel format is problematic. The three-volume novel was a publishing format popular in 19th century Britain. It was revived with the publication of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) following paper shortages post-WWII (Anderson 2004, Raynolds 2007, Carpenter 1981 #126:159 & 1977). While people might think of and read Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* as a trilogy, it is essential to recognise that it has a three-volume novel structure. The split between the texts within a three-volume novel is somewhat arbitrary and decided accordingly to length. In trilogy structure, the division between the individual texts is better described as distinct narrative structures that each accommodate a fourth structure.

Peter Jackson's adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) provides an ideal case study to understand the structural differences between a three-volume novel and a trilogy. There are fundamental plotting changes to the three texts that illustrate their transformation from a single text into three individual texts connected by an overarching narrative. *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) screenplay was re-worked to focus on Frodo's perspective; Boromir's death was moved from *The Two Towers* (2002) into the first text, resulting in a meaningful climax. In *The Two Towers* film, Aragorn has a 'hero's journey' that gives it a unique individual structure, while the fourth bridging text – Frodo's journey to Mordor – functions as a subplot. Finally, the radical changes wrought to *The Two Towers* necessitated an equally significant reworking of *The Return of the King* (2003) to accommodate what could not be included in the second film. Thus, this case study is ideally placed to investigate three things: the difference between a three-volume novel and a trilogy because the same story is used in each; how a creator resolves 'issues' with their middle text; and as an example of how character journeys and perspective are used to create unique individual texts within a trilogy.

Before detailing the restructure of *Morea*, I will explore my community of trilogy creators for different protagonist and point of view structures. I am particularly interested in trilogies that

utilise **power trios**, such as Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking Trilogy,* Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials,* and Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy.*[7]

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[7]   *His Dark Materials: Northern Lights* (1995; published as *The Golden Compass* in North America), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). *MaddAddam Trilogy: Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2009).

Three volumes

When I tell people that I research trilogy, I am most commonly asked about J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. These interactions and the reliance on the novel to describe trilogy structure, noted in my introduction above, represent a critical misconception of the trilogy form: it is synonymous with the three-volume novel. Tolkien's work is not a trilogy, but a three-volume novel divided into three due to paper shortages after WWII (Anderson 2004; Carpenter 1977 & 1981; Raynolds 2007). Prof Michael DC Drout, in his lecture series *Tolkien and the West*, notes that while it may not have been written as a trilogy, it can be 'read' as a trilogy (2012). Indeed, *The Lord of the Rings* can be 'read' as a trilogy, but Tolkien did not structure it as such. The difference between a three-volume novel as a *format* and the trilogy as a form is vital for trilogy creators to understand. The trilogy as a three-volume novel format is to think of the individual texts within a trilogy defined by their page length, rather than their narrative structures. Tolkien's work is not the only example of the confusion of narrative structure and publishing format. It is helpful to unpack the publishing practices and other examples to understand this difference between the two terms.

Origin of the format

In 19th century publishing, the three-volume novel was a common mode of production. Troy Bassett, the author of *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Three-Volume Novel* (2020), gives an overview of the publishing practice in his 2008 article 'The Production of Three-volume Novels in Britain, 1863-97'. He notes that 'the three-volume (or 'triple-decker' or 'library novel') was the dominant format for new fiction appearing in England' from the 1820s until the 1890s (2008:61). Bassett succinctly details the economic rationale: novels were expensive to print. Splitting the printing into three parts allows costs to be recouped more securely and quickly than publishing an entire novel would allow (2008). When I speak of the three-volume novel, I refer to a publishing format instead of a writerly form.

The three-volume format was so prevalent as to inspire ridicule by both Anthony Trollope and Oscar Wilde. Trollope comments on this trend in *The Way We Live Now* (1875): 'The length of her novel had been her first question. It must be in three volumes, and each volume must have three hundred pages' (1874-5:364-5). Richard Menke details Oscar Wilde's dislike of the form in his online article 'The End of the Three-Volume Novel System, 27 June 1894'. He notes

that Wilde said, 'Anybody can write a three-volume novel, it merely requires a complete ignorance of both like and literature.' His criticism developed into an extended joke in *The Importance of Being Ernest* when Miss Prime accidentally misplaces the infant Jack Worthing for her unpublished three-volume novel (Menke 2013).

Trollope and Wilde were both writing at the end of the popularity of the three-volume format. Rachel Sagner Buurma gives another overview of the practice and its decline in her book chapter 'Publishing the Victorian Novel' in Rodensky's *The Oxford Handbook of The Victorian Novel* (2013). She notes that the format 'had become a cultural symbol of the mechanist causality and commodified fiction'. Such designations may account for some of Trollope's gentle and Wilde's not-so-gentle jibes. Buurma continues that after a time, 'the dominant three-decker lending-library format was replaced by a cheaper one-volume format, and the modification of the "inner form" of the novel itself' (Buurma 2013:90).

The three-volume novel was a popular publishing format in the 19th century, but Buurma notes that towards the 1860s, the three-volume novel trend gradually gave way to serialisation, 'in which a few to several chapters of the novel would appear in each weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly issue' (2013:95).[8] This practice is linked to serialisation and sequalisation in film, and by extension, trilogy, by Carolyn Jess-Cooke in *Film Sequels* (2009). In conjunction with Jess-Cooke relating the practice of Victorian sequalisation to film sequels and serials in early Hollywood, what does this Victorian novelisation format have to do with the trilogy form today? Specifically, it links to the trilogy form through examples that creators may follow. First, I will detail Tolkien's intent and attempt to change publishers before delving into other modern and not-so-modern examples of the interplay between the format and form.

J.R.R. Tolkien

Tolkien did not want to publish *The Lord of the Rings* as a three-volume novel. His letters detail his failed attempt to change publishers, from Allen and Unwin to Collins, to ensure it

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[8]   Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* was originally a series of eight short stories published in *Astounding Magazine* between May 1942 and January 1950 and later collected into a trilogy.

would be published as a single novel together with the second text in the duology: *The Silmarillion* (Carpenter 1971 and Carpenter 1981, #125:161):

> But the whole Saga of the Three Jewels and the Rings of Power has only one nature; division into two parts (each about 600,000 words): *The Silmarillion* and other legends; and *The Lord of the Rings.* The Latter is as indivisible and unified as I could make it.
>
> It is, of course, divided into sections for narrative purposes (six of them) and two or three of these, which are more or less equal length, could be bound separately, but they are not in any sense self-contained.

There are still six 'books' within Tolkien's novel, and these will be an important consideration in understanding the adaptation from a three-volume novel into a trilogy of films. Tolkien's efforts to avoid splitting his novel were in vain, and his novel was published as a three-volume book, which is still the most common format it is printed in today.

Robert Tally, in his article 'Three Rings for the Elven-kings', stresses that 'the original decision to divide the narrative into thirds has had lasting effects on both the text and its readers' (2017:184). He goes on to discuss how this initial publishing format led to three *Lord of the Rings* films and three *Hobbit* films. Yet he does not discuss the specific additions, deletions and alterations to the *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy that render it distinct from Tolkien's novels. His analysis of *The Hobbit Trilogy* is interesting, but this work is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Illustrating the three-volume novel

A similar publishing example to Tolkien, despite its title, *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* (1975) by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, is not a trilogy but a three-volume novel.[9] Like Tolkien, the initial publishers could not take the risk on a complete publication and published it in three volumes. That it retained 'trilogy' in the title, even though it is a three-volume novel,

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[9] *The Eye in the Pyramid*, *Leviathan*, and *The Golden Apple* (1975).

further complicates the structural definition of the trilogy and highlights the need for this research to distinguish between format and form.

Conversely, noted author Haruki Murakami wanted parts of his *1Q84* published as soon as possible (Mainichi Daily News 2010). After their separate publication, the volumes of *1Q84* were published together in a single omnibus edition. The structure of *1Q84* is continuous rather than comprised of distinct individual structures. It follows the same narrative structure from the first to the third volume. They are split by duration. That the narrative flows seamlessly from one volume to the next is characteristic of the three-volume novel format, seen in *1Q84*, *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* and *The Lord of the Rings*. These examples give further evidence to my argument that a three-volume novel has a single narrative structure that is artificially split into three, as opposed to a trilogy, which is three separate narrative structures connected by a fourth and is made coherent through that inherent narrative structure. These differences can be illustrated in the Figures below. The rectangular blocks represent the books, plays or films and the rising lines symbolise narrative structures.
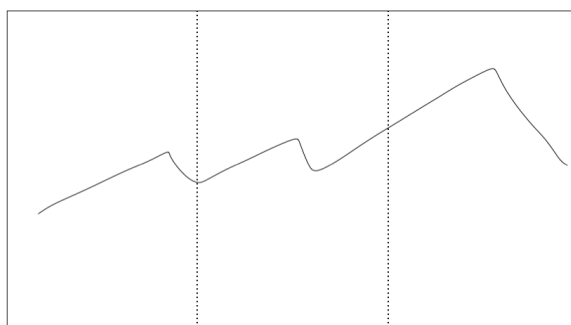
Figure 4: A schematic representation of the three-volume novel structure
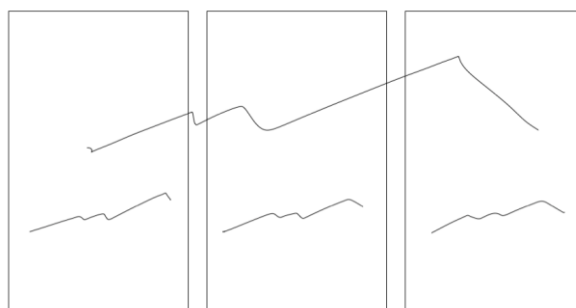
Figure 5: A schematic representation of trilogy structure

The differences between format and form can be found in the interplay between the two, for example, when a trilogy becomes a three-volume novel or, in a dramatic example, when a

trilogy becomes a single play. Luhua Gui, in her unpublished thesis *Robertson Davies'*
Innovative Use of the Trilogy Form in His Fiction (1998), discusses Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of*
Honour, which Waugh combined into a single novel after their initial publication as a trilogy.[10]
The combination contained more alterations than a simple omnibus edition. Waugh even
went so far as to obliterate the titles and distinguished page numbers between the novels.
For Gui, this example suggests that 'the boundary of a novel and a sequence is not defined
and a novelist is free to expand one story into several interlocked ones or to reduce certain
features of a sequence and then transform it into a novel' (1998:44). Gui thinks that Waugh
changed his mind after the initial publication based on Waugh's comment that 'it was
unreasonable to expect the reader to keep in mind the various characters; still more to follow
a continuous, continued plot' (*Sword of Honour* 1966:9). Further, 'the three novels follow one
another closely' and deal with the same war and mainly focus on one protagonist (Gui
1998:45). While Waugh's combination demonstrates the 'plasticity', as Perkins and Verevis
term it, between the forms of trilogy and sequence or three-volume novels, critics have
argued that something was 'lost' in the combination.

William Cook, in *Marks, Models, and Morals: The Art of Evelyn Waugh* (1971), notes the
following: 'to be fully appreciated, the narrative should be read as a unit: but to be
understood … the three novels are best examined separately' (238). Thus, it can be said to
represent the differences between a three-volume novel and a trilogy. While a three-volume
novel is a single work to be read and examined together, a trilogy can be read together and
examined separately. This fundamental difference is underpinned by their different
structures, as represented in the diagrams above. Cook continues noting of the trilogy that
they are separated by narrative time; each novel had different themes and tones (-ibid). Gui
herself notes that this indicates that Waugh 'achieves more; with the trilogy than with a single
novel' (1998:47). This is an essential and pertinent point about the potential of the trilogy
form.

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[10]   *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961).

The interchangeability or plasticity of the three-volume novel and the trilogy is not just the province of novels. Of his modern adaptation of Aeschylus' dramatic trilogy, *The Oresteia*, David Grene notes that 'these three plays are three acts of a single play' (Grene 1989:1). What Waugh did to his trilogy, Grene uses the same technique for an adaptation. That is, to obliterate the individual texts within a trilogy and make a single work instead. This technique erases the form's ability to compare and contrast between the different texts within. Collapsing the trilogy into a three-volume novel discounts the individual texts' narrative structures and gives preference to the homogenous whole. Doing so denies the advantages of using a trilogy structure.

In terms of the problems with the middle text, the three-volume novel structure can be illustrative of viewing a trilogy as a single work, rather than three individual texts that function together and have an interlocking narrative between them. Viewing trilogy as a three-volume novel structure can create an unbalanced trilogy because the individual texts fail to have their own distinct narrative structures. To further examine the differences in this structure and understand how these differences can help restructure *Morea*, I will use J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* novel adaption by Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens into a film trilogy. I hope to show that the key to this adaption was forming individual narrative structures in each of the three films, which were not present in the novel.

The Lord of The Rings

I amar prestar aen…

The world is changed.

Han mathon ne nen…

I feel it in the water.

Han mathon ne chae…

I feel it in the Earth.

A han noston ned gwilith…

I smell it in the air.

Much that once was is lost.

For none now live who remember it.

These are the opening lines of Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* delivered by Cate Blanchett as the elf Galadriel, and form the beginning of a seven-minute prologue that gives the history of the One Ring in Middle Earth. I use it as a clear reference point to open my case study of *The Lord of the Rings* adaptation owing to the line 'The world has changed' because there are significant changes made to Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* by Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens. Though this case study takes the much-used fidelity approach to understand the adaptation, it does so with an important question: what can the differences between the films and novel tell us about the trilogy form?

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a three-volume novel. Conversely, the changes made during the screenwriting, directing, and editing of Peter Jackson's adaptation transforms *The Lord of the Rings* films into a trilogy. Both Tolkien's novel and the trilogy of films tell the same story with relatively few additions or deletions. However, prominent deletions, plus the significant rearrangement of plot points in the film compared to the novel structure offer a demonstration of what trilogy structure entails. The filmmakers create three individual texts in the three films connected by the single narrative of a fourth text. The narrative techniques employed by the creators will be essential to restructuring my trilogy as detailed later in this chapter. These changes include creating new character journeys, such as Aragorn in *The Two Towers* and rearranging the plots from the last two novel volumes into two new narratives.

The development and publishing history of Tolkien's work provides adequate justification for the adaption. Following the success of *The Hobbit,* Tolkien set out to write a sequel. Seventeen years later it was ready for publication, but it was very long, and the publisher stressed that it needed to be split into three. Tolkien's letters detail his failed attempts to move publishers to ensure *The Lord of the Rings* would be published as a single novel together with the second text in the duology, *The Silmarillion* (Carpenter 1981, #126:162).[11] Unable to change publishers, Tolkien was forced to accede and publish his work as a three-volume novel, and *The Silmarillion* was published posthumously.

J.R.R. Tolkien's novel does readily split into three, giving credence to Drout's assertion that it can be 'read' as a trilogy (2012). It is the underlying book structure that precipitates the 'easy' split into three. There are six 'books' in *The Lord of the Rings*; each novel volume contains two books. In *The Fellowship of the Ring,* Book One details Bilbo's birthday party and ends with Frodo's arrival at Rivendell. Book Two describes the meeting of the Council of Elrond and the forming and breaking of the Fellowship. In *The Two Towers,* Book Three contains Boromir's death, the return of Gandalf, the Battle of Helm's Deep, and Pippin looking at The Palantír (these events are split across all three films). Book Four takes up Frodo and Sam's journey to Mordor, from the capture of Sméagol to Frodo being attacked by the great spider Shelob (moved to the third film). In *The Return of the King,* Book Five tells of the Battle of the Siege of Gondor and Aragorn's arrival. In Book Six, the One Ring is destroyed, and they return home to find Saruman has taken over the Shire (which is not included in the film). Tolkien's use of an internal six-book structure allows the novel to be more readily split into three. That there are key changes to the plot structure of these 'books' within the films that demonstrate these changes are necessary for the three-volume novel to be transformed into a trilogy of films.

Peter Jackson and his colleagues use rearrangements, additions, and deletions to alter *The Lord of the Rings* from a three-volume novel to a trilogy of films. Effectively, the adaptation

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[11]   Brian Sibly notes in the 2004 book *The Lord of the Rings: The Making of the Movie Trilogy* how Peter Jackson faced the opposite difficulty in film production. The first film studio, Miramax, was concerned with the budget and 'decided the project should be restricted to a single movie (24). Luckily, they managed to secure alternative funding from New Line, which after being pitched a two-film adaptation, said they would fund the project on the condition it was three films.

creates three texts with individual narratives from what was a single narrative. The single narrative remains within the adaptation as the fourth text. The terms deletion, addition and arrangement come from George Bluestone's *Novels to Film* (1957). My case study takes a fidelity approach. I undertook a close reading of *The Lord of the Rings* novel volumes and films and also drew upon material found in the DVD extras.[12]

For Thomas Leitch, in *Film Adaptation & Its Discontents* (2007:129), a 'fidelity' understanding of *The Lord of the Rings* would be impossible:

> the standard tactics of adaptation – selecting some obligatory speeches, characters, scenes, and plotlines and dropping others; compressing or combining several characters or scenes into one; streamlining the narrative by eliminating digressive episodes … are clearly inadequate.

However, this research does not intend to discuss the inability of adaptation to remain faithful to the original work, but rather to use these differences in the telling of the same story to understand how a trilogy can be structured from a single story. Approaching the adaptation in this way is particularly important for writing my trilogy, *The Story of Eorthan*, as I am writing the three novels simultaneously. Writing distinct individual narratives when creating them simultaneously or from a single story is important for my creative practice.

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[12]   The DVD extras feature screenwriter, director and editor interviews that describe the deletions, additions, and re-arrangements, and why these were employed in terms of the narrative structure. On another note, it is customary to not rely on the theatrical versions for *The Lord of the Rings* scholarship. I prefer to use the extended editions, for the purposes of understanding key plot-points, they are the same for the theatrical and the extended edition.

The Fellowship of the Ring

> Movie Gandalf proves himself much smarter than book Gandalf by realising
>
> immediately that it is a Ring of Power and sets off immediately, thus saving
>
> 17 years. Which is fortunate, because let's face it, who's going to sit through
>
> 17 years and three hours of movie?

<div align="right">Martin Pearson, The Unfinished Spelling Errors of Bolkien (2004)[13]</div>

This quote reflects one of the main changes that Peter Jackson and the other screenwriters and editors made to Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring* - what Bluestone (1957) characterises as 'deletion'. The example above is the deletion of 17 years from when Frodo first inherits the One Ring to when he departs on his journey to Mt Doom. Other key deletions are characters: Tom Bombadil and the elf Glorfindel.[14] These changes are the ones most often remarked upon by the fans. However, other subtle changes from the novel to the film are key to understanding trilogy structure. Namely, changing the film to be more 'Frodo-centric'[15] and moving Boromir's death from Tolkien's *The Two Towers* volume to *The Fellowship of the Ring* (*FotR*) film.

In the DVD extra 'From Book to Film', screenwriters Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Peter Jackson note 'the first one did not work until they focused on Frodo's point-of-view' (Jackson 2001).[16] Minor changes in the film evidence this change in perspective. In the film's opening sequence, Frodo and Gandalf are introduced before Bilbo. Frodo volunteers to take the Ring to Mordor at the Council of Elrond. This dramatic moment is reinforced by Sam planning the

---

13   This case study was a long undertaking and I explored other, less traditional, avenues to understanding the adaptation process, such as Martin Pearson's one-person musical comedy show *The Unfinished Spelling Errors of Bolkien*, which pokes fun of the changes to the adaptation. Pearson's humorous assessment of the adaptation's fidelity offer another view of the changes the filmmakers chose to make.

14   He carried the ailing Frodo to Rivendell (replaced by Arwen in the film) and appeared briefly at The Council of Elrond.

15   A term borrowed from Diana Paxson's book chapter 'Re-vision: The Lord of the Rings in Print and on Screen' (2004).

16   They mean *The Fellowship of the Ring* script.

journey back to The Shire prior to the Council, and the advent of Merry and Pippin bursting in to say they are 'coming too' after Frodo makes his promise. This transformation of an almost inevitable line in the novel into a critical plot point in the film splits *The Fellowship of the Ring* narrative from the fourth text. Additionally, in the film, it is Frodo, and not Gandalf, who decides to take the path through the Mines of Moria. Frodo also solves the riddle to open the door to the mine (in the novel, it is Gandalf).

In Syd Field's hugely influential book, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (2005:47), he describes *The Lord of the Rings* film character plotting as such:

> In *The Lord of the Rings*, do you know who the main character is? Is it Frodo, Sam, Gandalf, or Aragorn? Or is it all of them. If you aren't sure, just ask yourself: Who is the story about? In *The Lord of the Rings*, you could say, with good cause, that Aragorn is the main character because he leads the Fellowship, makes the decisions, and becomes the king. But take away all the trappings and the story is really about returning the ring to its place of origin, Mount Doom, so it can be destroyed. That is what the story is about; therefore, Frodo is the main character.

Field conflates the fourth text plot, the destruction of The Ring, with the plot of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. This designation might seem like a slight distinction, but Field's argument that only Frodo is the main character of the trilogy discounts the structural changes that the filmmakers made to *The Two Towers*, such as featuring Aragorn as the main character as opposed to Frodo. That said, Field's manner of considering or conflating the main character of *The Fellowship of the Ring* as the main character of all texts within the trilogy is to think of the films as a three-volume novel. As a trilogy, the decision to make Frodo the centre of the first film has structural influences on the other two films. The interplay of protagonist and perspective form an interesting structural decision for trilogy creators, which I will explore in greater detail in the next section.

Syd Field's analysis of the three-act structure of *The Fellowship of the Ring* provides a departure point from which to discuss the narrative arrangement or plotting of the trilogy, which is useful for a creator like myself to understand the DNA of the form. The figure below is reproduced from Field's *The Screenwriter's Workbook* (2006:48).
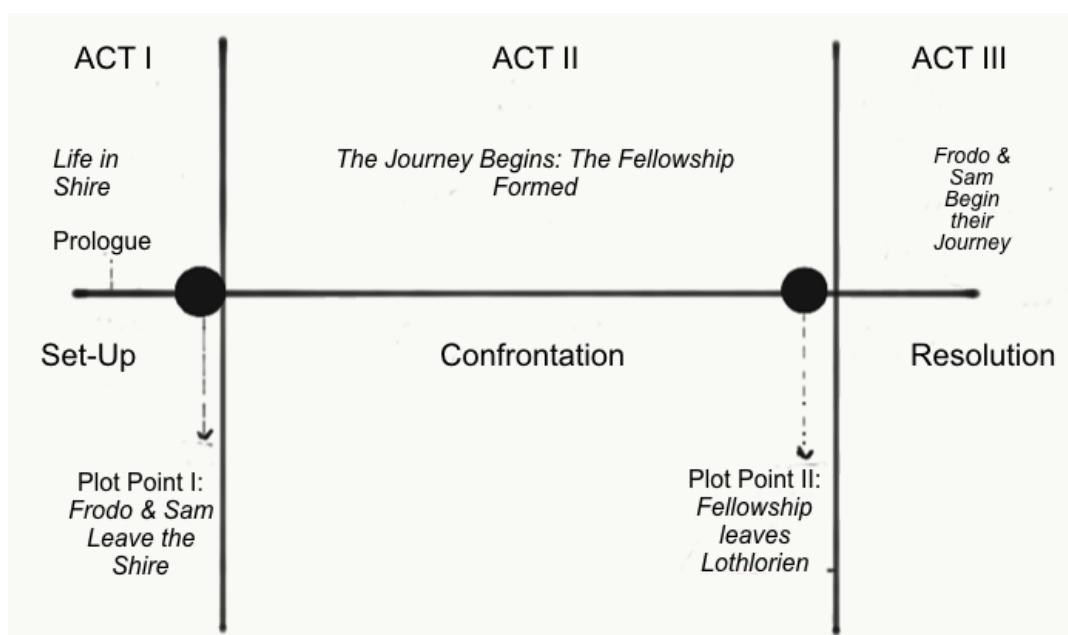
Figure 6: Syd Field's *The Fellowship of the Ring* three-act structure

Throughout this case study, I will use Field's paradigm to describe the structure of the adaptation. I do not suggest that the filmmakers used this structure. Indeed, I think their approach is more akin to a sequence model, and Paul Gulino suggests this in his book *The Hidden Structure of Successful Screenplays* (2008:200). However, Field's three-act plotting of the first film offers an opening to discuss the trilogy structure.

Field's analysis is insufficient to describe *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* for several reasons. First, his three-act analysis only pertains to the first film, yet his expression of this film as the whole leads to confusion for a trilogy creator trying to adopt it as a model. While he analyses *The Two Towers* as a function of Aragorn's character adaptation, he refers to *The Return of the King* (*RotK*) only in passing.

Second, I disagree with his analysis of the inciting incident and plot-point 2, which I believe he determined due to the length of time passed in the film rather than the function of that plot-point. For Field, the inciting incident is the film's prologue, the opening lines of which were quoted at the start of this case study. It is a seven-minute sequence that relates some of the

histories of the One Ring and Middle Earth. The inciting incident, a true beginning to both the trilogy's fourth text and *The Fellowship of the Ring,* is Frodo inheriting the Ring from Bilbo.

The prologue, spoken by Galadriel, is better referred to as a very long narrative hook. It also condenses Tolkien's rich exposition into a few scenes and is repeated throughout the film trilogy.[17] The prologue technique is used in the two subsequent films to set the tone and foreshadow the key narrative of each. Gandalf's battle with the Balrog forms the prologue to *The Two Towers,* the action of which culminates in three battle scenes: Helm's Deep, Isengard, and Frodo and Sam at Osgiliath. Likewise, *The Return of the King* features the sequence of Sméagol murdering his friend for the One Ring and becoming Gollum, which foreshadows Frodo succumbing to the power of the Ring and refusing to destroy it.

I agree with Field that the first plot-point is when the hobbits leave The Shire, but I disagree on the second plot-point: the breaking of the Fellowship. I think plot point two is Gandalf's 'death' when he falls from the bridge. However, the midpoint of the film, the Council of Elrond, with Frodo agreeing to take the One Ring to Mordor, is not considered in Field's structure. Partially due to the original Book I and Book II split in Tolkien's novel, the midpoint of the film version of *The Fellowship of the Ring* – the point on which the narrative hinges – can also be said to form the inciting incident of the trilogy's fourth text. These differences are subtle when considered in the first film, as Frodo's journey to Rivendell and the journey to Mordor are closely aligned.[18] However, in the latter two films, the fourth text will function as a subplot of *The Two Towers* and then forms the second climax in the latter half of *The Return of the King*.

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[17]   In *The Two Towers*, Galadriel provides a summation of events before the Battle of Helm's Deep in 'psychic conversation' with Elrond.

[18]   This is a feature of this trilogy that I think is due to the original source material of a single novel, whereas in other trilogies, first-act narrative structure is more distinct, where they perhaps adhere to the aphorism 'the first must stand alone.' I am thinking here of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, where Lyra's journey in *The Northern Lights* (*Golden Compass*, US title) is very much focused on finding her friend and the wider narrative (fourth text) of the trilogy begins in the climax of the first novel. Lord Asreal's opening a gap between parallel worlds in a challenge to The Magisterium's power sets Lyra off on her wider trilogy journey and has consequences that bring the other two protagonists of the trilogy – Will and Mary – into the story.

To understand the effect this midpoint has on the fourth text, it is important to visualise the three-act structures. As Jess-Cooke noted in *Film Sequels*, the three acts of the whole trilogy need to be considered against the individual three-act structures of each film (2009:5). Drawing this out in Field's paradigm is illustrated below.
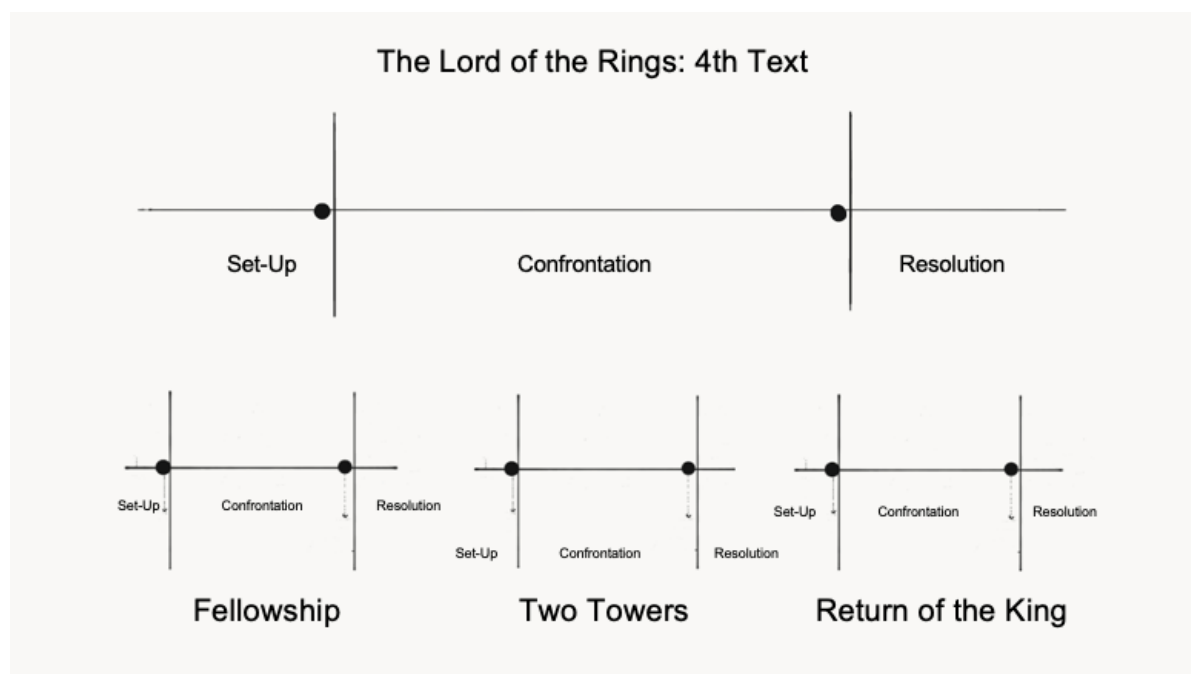
Figure 7: Mapping *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy using Field's three-act structure.

If the plot-points and timings were written out in full on this diagram, it would become large and confusing, so I have broken it into the film sections. The minute timings refer to the extended editions, and the page numbers refer to the screenplays that I was able to source online.

Frodo inherits The Ring
27 m | 31 pg

II

Frodo leaves The Shire
42 m | 59 pg

PP1

*The Fellowship
of the Ring*

MP

Frodo volunteers to take
The Ring to Mordor
99 m | 101 pg

II

The Fourth
Text

PP2

Gandalf falls
141 m | 132 pg

PP1

Frodo leaves The
Fellowship
177 m | 163 pg

C
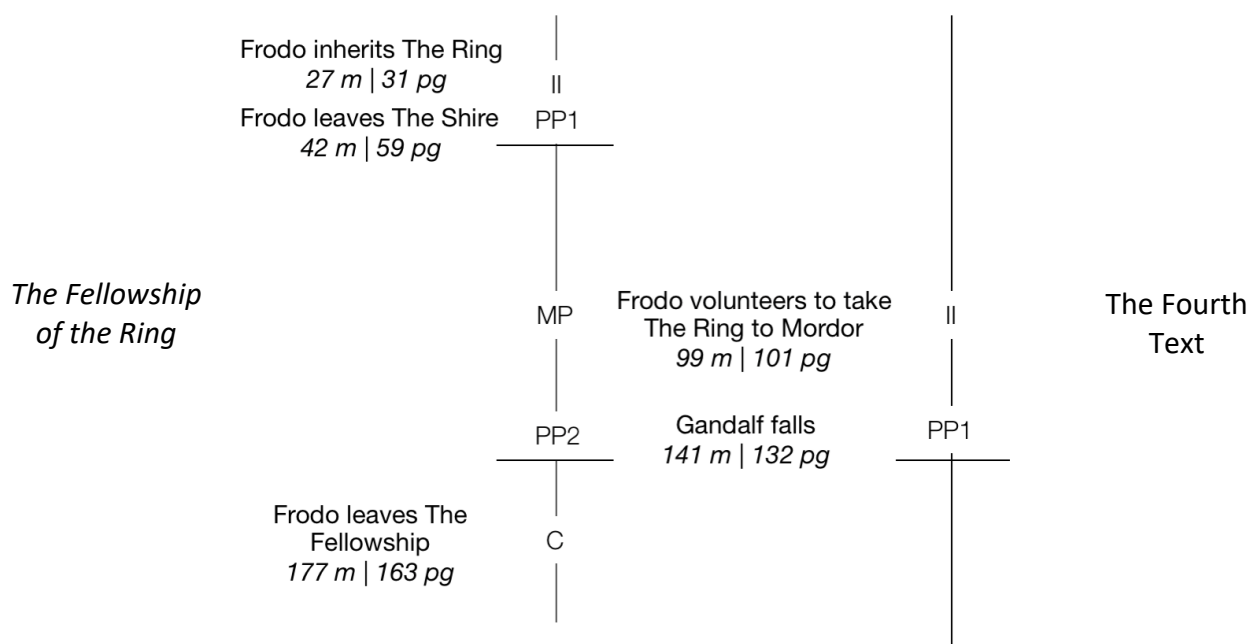
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 8: Three-act structure of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the fourth text

The midpoint of the first film becomes the inciting incident of the fourth text: Frodo's decision to take the One Ring to Mt Doom. Plot-points in a trilogy can take on different meanings, depending on the text in which the plot-point is acting. If Frodo's volunteering is part of the Fellowship, it is the midpoint. If it is considered as part of the fourth text, it becomes the inciting incident. Not all plot-points or scenes in an individual text will be part of the fourth text. This is a demonstration of the dynamic interplay between the individual text and the fourth text. It also shows that that the fourth text is distinct from the entire trilogy. The fourth text here begins at the mid-point of the first text. Therefore, it does not span the entire length of all the trilogy narratives. The whole trilogy is made up of those four parts: the three individual narratives and a fourth connecting narrative.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring,* the distinction between the first and fourth texts can also be demonstrated at Weathertop, before Frodo arrives in Rivendell and the Council of Elrond. In this scene, the Nine Wraiths attack the hobbits and Strider. Frodo is stabbed. This 'death' moment or approach to the innermost cave is repeated in the fourth text when Shelob stabs Frodo (*RotK*). Frodo could be said to have two hero's journeys: the journey from The Shire to Rivendell and then from Rivendell to Mt Doom.

Field ends the second act with the Fellowship leaving Lothlórien. I disagree and mark the end of the second act as when Gandalf falls to his 'death' at the Bridge of Khazad Dûm. It serves as a mini-climax, and there is a depression in the tension after this moment. The film then builds again to the true climax of Frodo leaving the Fellowship. The death of Gandalf presages the breaking of the Fellowship. Frodo loses his protection, and his death exposes Frodo to the danger of Boromir.

Thus far, *The Fellowship of the Ring* film closely follows the novel volume, albeit with some deletions and minor rearrangements to present the film from Frodo's perspective. The climax of *The Fellowship of the Ring* presages more significant rearrangements and departures from the novel. The confrontation with the Uruk, the death of Boromir and his funeral were related in the novel's second volume, but the screenwriters moved it to the end of the first film to form part of the climax. Likewise, Aragorn letting Frodo go, saying, 'I would follow you to the end, my friend,' is an addition to the film. These are both essential changes from the novel that marks the three films as a trilogy because, in a trilogy, each text must have a complete narrative of its own, with its own climax.

Here I am expanding on Jess-Cooke's assertion of the four distinct act structures and Akers statement that the overarching trilogy must follow the structure of an individual novel. Moving Boromir's death into the first film bolsters a somewhat lesser climax of Frodo leaving the Fellowship. In doing so, it gives *The Fellowship of the Ring* a more satisfying ending, for the antagonists are not defeated, the Nine still ride, Saruman is not defeated, but the more immediate antagonist of Boromir is redeemed. He attempts to protect Merry and Pippin from the Uruk and admits his failings to Aragorn. Not only that, but he accepts Aragorn as his king, which forms a key aspect of Aragorn's journey, as I will discuss in the next section. This rearrangement also frees the film *The Two Towers* from beginning on an anti-climax in the narrative structure and allows it to have a different focus on the coming war between Saruman and Rohan as well as Aragorn's protagonist journey.

The Two Towers

> Aragorn, sauntering through the movie with the surety of someone who
> knows the third film is named after him, is startled to fall off a cliff.
>
>   Martin Pearson, *The Unfinished Spelling Errors of Bolkien* (2004)

If *The Fellowship of the Ring* was 'Frodo-centric', the adaptation of *The Two Towers* is transformed by the filmmakers to be 'Aragorn-centric'. This addition of a hero's journey for Aragorn has faced criticism. However, this addition and its attendant drastic rearrangements of the plot from the novel volume (it contains only half of the content from the novel volume) are essential to mark this film adaptation as a trilogy. They give the middle text its narrative instead of just being a 'bridge' between films one and three. In this section, I attend to the criticism of this change before arguing for the film's act structure and main protagonist. I will also discuss Tolkien's original intent and issues with this novel volume.

In the film, Aragorn holds less of a kingly stature compared to the novel. This observation is because the filmmakers constructed a hero's journey for Aragorn to take him from a wandering ranger to the King of Gondor in *The Return of the King*. The changes have been criticised in the literature as weakening the character. In their article 'Council and Kings: Aragorn's Journey Towards Kingship in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*', Ford and Reid compare the two Aragorns as a notion of medieval European kings, i.e. earning the right to be king via ability versus having the divine right to kingship through birth. They argue that Aragorn in the novel has a 'narrative arc [that] traces his attempts to prove his luck and his supernatural qualities in order to be recognised as king' (2009:75). Conversely, the film 'is shown as fearing what he inherited from his lineage as a weakness that might render him unfit to rule' (2009:78).

I disagree that this makes Aragorn a 'weaker' character, but rather see it as a difference in storytelling between Tolkien and the filmmakers. J.R.R. Tolkien wrote in the 'found manuscript' style. Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* form part of 'The Red Book of Westmarch' a book in Middle-earth written by Bilbo and Frodo, with additions from Sam. Author and former student of Tolkien, Diana Wynne Jones, likens Tolkien's style to the medieval romances of King Arthur (2012:10-11). Medieval tales usually bear little character introspection or opportunities to voice inner doubts that a character may feel. They are

externally focused narratives. This criticism or framing of Aragorn as a 'weaker' character is a direct result of the filmmakers changing Aragorn's story. They use a 'hero's journey' to structure that story in *The Two Towers* and the trilogy, but the main character development occurs in the middle text and is essential to its structural success.

The filmmakers used Aragorn's journey to solve their issues and, in a sense, Tolkien's issues, with their middle text. Tolkien's problem with his middle text was that there was 'no real connecting link between Books III and IV' (Carpenter 1981 #144:193). Like Sibly's BBC radio production (1981), the filmmakers chose to cut between the concurrent storylines of Book III and some of Book IV to overcome the difficulty of the two storylines. Overlapping and interconnecting storylines was an issue with my middle text. Where *The Two Towers* film features intercutting scenes, my storylines do not overlap chronologically. Therefore, I felt that interchanging scenes would not be an option for my restructure. There were several reasons for this, which I discuss later in this thesis, but they are worth outlining here. I used a linear chronology in each of the novels and a non-linear chronology in the fourth text (see Figure 19). Prior to this project, I used physical space and travel to develop my story. That is to say, the story stayed in one place, and moving from place to place within the narrative determined the dramatic structure. Natalie and Jene's stories were situated in two different locations. The change from focusing on physical location to a narrative act-structure was gradually achieved through this research iteration and the next, but I was not fully aware of it until the third research cycle of this PhD.

If we plot *The Two Towers* film on the three-act structure alongside the fourth text portions that it produces, it is almost as if Frodo's fourth-text journey becomes the subplot of Aragorn's middle text. The main plot-points – the attacks on Rohan, the return of Gandalf, the Battle of Helm's Deep, and convincing Théoden to 'ride out one last time' – are all functions of Aragorn's story, not Frodo's.

Saruman attacks Rohan   II
18 m | 25 pg

Gandalf returns   PP1
50 m | 59 pg

The Two   Théoden flees to   MP   MP   Faramir captures   The Fourth
                   Helm's Deep   Frodo   Text
Towers   92 m | 99 pg   309 m | 285 pg

Elves arrive at   PP2
Helms Deep
178m | 174pg

Théoden rides out   C
from Helm's Deep
187m | 202 pg
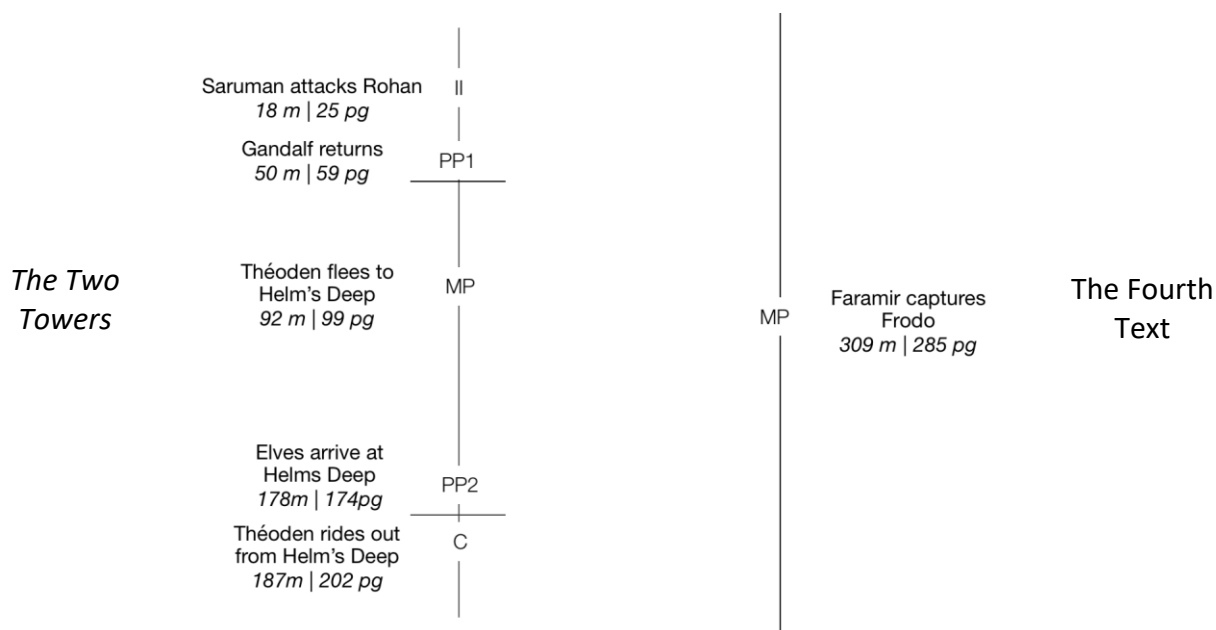
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 9: Three-act structure of *The Two Towers* and the fourth text

This narrative subverting of the fourth text into the subplot is skilful writing and leads the screenwriters and editors to move half of the novel volume into the third film. Phillippa Boyens notes that Frodo's climactic confrontation with Shelob at the end of Book IV was moved to the third film because if it were included at the end of *The Two Towers* film, it would have 'cancelled out' the climax of the Battle of Helm's Deep (2001, DVD extras).

The change to make Aragorn the protagonist, or perspective character, is another means of tying the two separate storylines together. In the documentary 'From Book to Screen', Fran Walsh comments that one of the changes made to *The Two Towers* was to make Aragorn 'more prominent' as a character (2001). There are key additions and rearrangements in the films that point to Aragorn being given a hero's journey. Diana Paxson notes the 'evolution of the character of Aragorn offers a perfect opportunity to examine the process of revision in the book and film' and that 'the film's increased emphasis on his actions and motivation provide one of the most significant changes in vision' (cited in Croft 2004:90).

The changes to make Aragorn 'more prominent', as Walsh terms it, can be categorised as a hero's journey addition and first appear in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. In the novel, Aragorn departs from Rivendell and intends to follow Frodo as far as Gondor on his journey to Mordor. Aragorn carries with him the reforged shards of the sword, a symbol of kingship and acceptance of his birthright. Conversely, in the film, Aragorn rejects the path of kingship, his

'refusal of the call'. Elrond notes that 'he turned from that path long ago' and Aragorn is given a foil in Boromir, son of the steward of Gondor, in saying, 'Gondor has no King, Gondor needs no King'. The reforged sword is brought to Aragorn in *The Return of the King* after he has proved himself worthy of it by defending Helm's Deep (an addition). It is with Boromir's death that Aragorn answers the call and begins his journey. As he lies dying, Boromir acknowledges Aragorn as 'my king', and Aragorn takes Boromir's leather vambraces (arm guards) embossed with the White Tree of Gondor – a symbol of the King.

At the first plot point of *The Two Towers*, Gandalf returns and sets Aragorn on a different path to the quest of finding the hobbits (meeting the mentor). Gandalf says the hobbits have a different path to walk and that Aragorn must travel to Edoras to help the King of Rohan, Théoden, defend against the turncoat Saruman. At the midpoint of the film, Théoden evacuates Edoras with his people and they travel to Helm's Deep. On the way, they are attacked, and Aragorn falls from a cliff, presumed dead (approach to the innermost cave). Unconscious, he dreams of Arwen. This scene, along with other flashbacks in *The Two Towers,* inserts Aragorn and Arwen's love story into the main body of the text. The love story is an insertion developed from material in the novel appendices. When he regains consciousness, Aragorn rides to Helm's Deep. On the way, he sees Saruman's army and brings this knowledge to the Rohan and Théoden. When all seems lost, it is for Aragorn that the elven army comes from Lothlórien (an addition). It is Aragorn who convinces Théoden to 'ride out one more time' to meet the enemy. Encouraging and supporting Théoden in his time of need demonstrates that Aragorn is now ready to become king.

Aragorn's added hero's journey is not fully resolved in *The Two Towers*. There are still elements of his story that appear in *The Return of the King*, but he has little character development, considering the film is named after him. When Elrond comes to give him the reforged sword, he takes the Dimholt Road to summon a ghost army that only he, as the heir to the throne of Gondor, can control. The key part of his return is his healing the sick and wounded after the battle is diminished in the third film, but he plays a crucial role in leading the remaining army to the Black Gates of Mordor to draw Sauron's eye away from Frodo and Sam. The third text gives way to the fourth for the second climax of the third film. In the next section, I will detail how the changes to the middle text affected the third text.

The Return of the King

> Frodo is worried, he knows that the third part of the book is about to start
>
> and he is still in Ithilien halfway through book two. This is causing him
>
> sleepless nights, which Sam misinterprets as the evil of the ring ...they vainly
>
> head off towards book three.

> Martin Pearson, *The Unfinished Spelling Errors of Bolkien* (2004)

The final quote from Pearson directly references the filmmakers' changes to *The Two Towers* that dramatically altered the structure of the third and final film, *The Return of the King*. In his book chapter, Daniel Timmons notes, 'Jackson diverges so extensively from the source text that comparative analysis is difficult' (cited in Croft 2004:141). Timmons notes that it diverges completely from the source material, which is correct if the third volume of the novel is the only source material for the film and Tolkien's work is viewed as a trilogy, as opposed to a three-volume novel. I disagree with Timmons' assessment; comparative analysis of the source material is possible.

The changes made to *The Two Towers* film narrative not only change the nature of Aragorn's character, the climax of Helm's Deep and rendering the fourth text as a subplot, they also have a profound effect on the structure of *The Return of the King* film. The filmmakers use plot-points from Book III and Book VI (at Isengard, the death of Saruman and Pippin looking into the Palantír) to craft the opening of a third text. They augment the new protagonist of Gandalf with a more significant foil in the Steward of Gondor, Denethor. Following the climax of the third text – the Siege of Gondor and Battle of Pelennor - the action turns again to the fourth text and culminates in the destruction of The Ring. The material for the fourth text here is taken from Book IV and Book VI of the novel. To discuss the structure of *The Return of the King* further, I have completed the plotting structure using the three-act structure. The tension between Gandalf and Denethor builds with the battle sequence of Pelennor Fields, and it culminates in Aragorn's arrival with the ghost army. This plot-point is a useful reference marker to see how the third text and conclusion of the fourth text are arranged in the film.
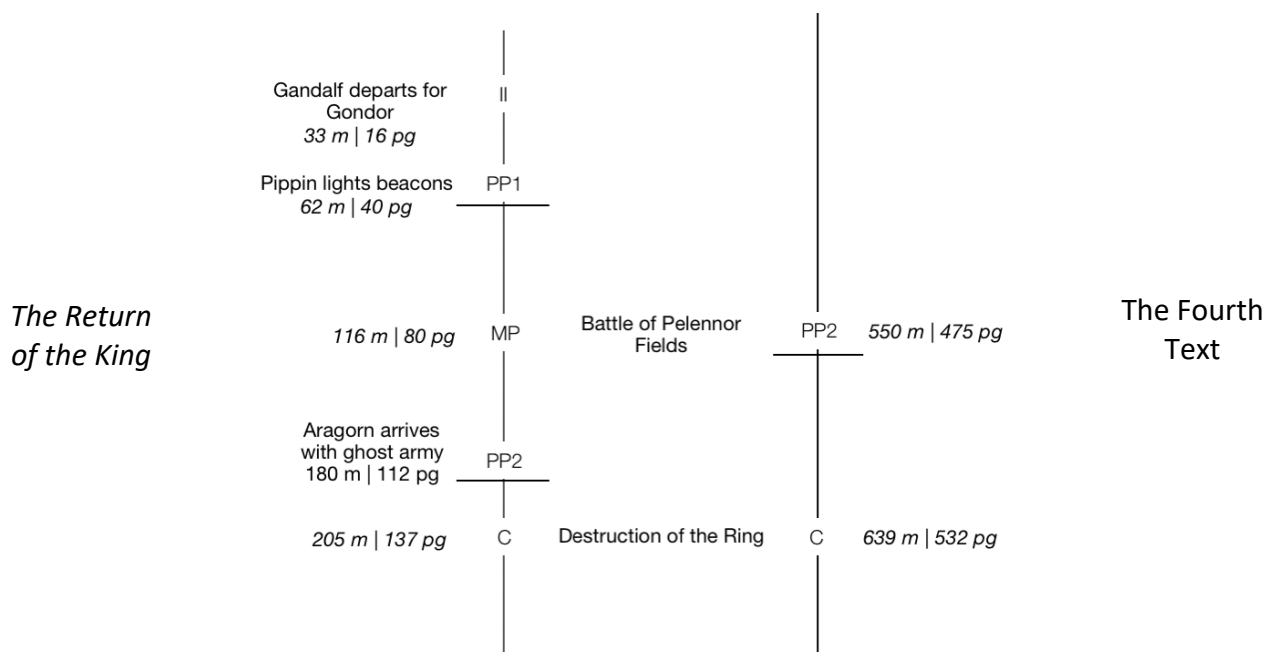
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 10: Three-act structure of *The Return of the King* and the fourth text

After the death of Saruman at Isengard, Pippin looks into the Palantír and sees the Eye of Sauron. This precipitates the inciting incident in which Gandalf departs from Edoras for Gondor, taking Pippin with him. These events are the last chapters from Book III and the opening chapters of Book V.[19] These events from *The Two Towers* novel volume are used to structure the third text if the trilogy. The first act turns when Pippin defies Denethor and lights the Beacons of Gondor (calling for Rohan's aid). This film sequence is a cinematic alteration. The Beacons are already lit in the novel, and they send a red arrow to Rohan for assistance. However, this change also sets up Denethor as a more major foil or minor antagonist for Gandalf. The Siege of Gondor and Battle of Pelennor Fields begins when Gandalf hits Denethor on the head with his staff. Denethor had finally seen the troops of Mordor at the gates of Gondor and sent his men into a minor panic. This event can also be seen as the second plot point of the fourth text. The construction of a third text avoids the

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[19]   Jackson sets the events at Isengard. In Tolkien's novel Saruman's death takes place later in Book VI during 'The Scourging of the Shire'.

pitfall of the novel's third volume, which contains all endings if the novel is 'read' as a trilogy instead of a three-volume novel.

The fourth text: as subplot

Below is another rough sketch to reflect the relative structures of the in3-ividual texts and the fourth text. The first film and the fourth text share plot-points. Conversely, in the middle text, the fourth text becomes a subplot to the main action. Aragorn and the Battle of Helm's Deep is the main plotline of the middle text. In the third text, the Battle for Gondor, as viewed by Gandalf and Pippin, has its climax when Aragorn and the army of ghosts arrive. After the battle, the fourth text becomes the main action line, where Sam and Frodo continue to Mt Doom to destroy the One Ring. The interaction between the different plot structures can be illustrated below.
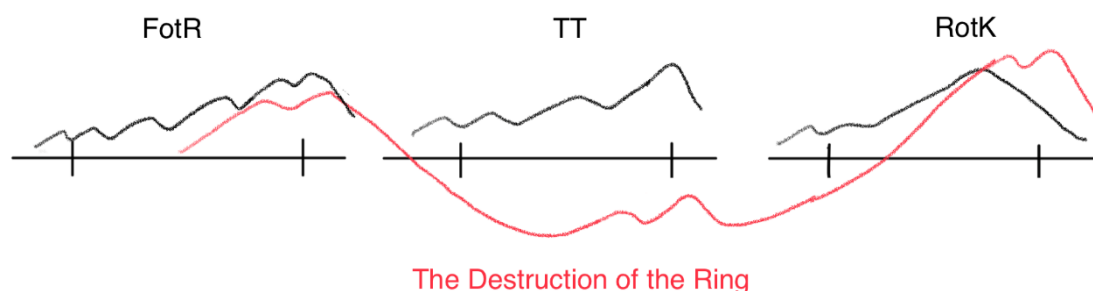
Figure 11: The 'fourth text' as subplot

In this way, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one novel. Splitting it into three films could be thought of in terms of trilogy texts: the fourth text was already present, and it was the individual texts themselves that needed to be created or plotted. Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh, and Philippa Boyens used the adaptation techniques of deletion and minor additions. The screenwriters also rearranged the plots of the individual films in such a way as to create new narrative structures that were not always present or had a different meaning in the novel. While the novel's 'individual volumes themselves do not stand as independent novels and therefore cannot be read and enjoyed as separate works' (Ausmus 1969:6), the films do 'stand as independent' films due to these changes in their narrative structure. To fulfil its narrative duties, each text within the film trilogy must stand on its own, and it must have a

beginning, middle and end as well as accommodating the fourth text. This fourth text may alter the timing of the act structures. The nature of plot-points changes depending on whether they are viewed as part of an individual text or the fourth text. The combined three-act structures of *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* are presented below. I use this to conclude this case study and summarise the points I have learned about the trilogy creation.

Frodo inherits The Ring
27 m | 31 pg
Frodo leaves The Shire   PP1
42 m | 59 pg

*The Fellowship
of the Ring*
           MP   Frodo volunteers to take
The Ring to Mordor
99 m | 101 pg

           PP2   Gandalf falls   PP1
141 m | 132 pg

Frodo leaves The
Fellowship   C
177 m | 163 pg

Saruman attacks Rohan   II
18 m | 25 pg
Gandalf returns   PP1
50 m | 59 pg

*The Two
Towers*
       Théoden flees to
Helm's Deep   MP   *The Fourth
Text*
92 m | 99 pg   MP   Faramir captures
Frodo
309 m | 285 pg

Elves arrive at
Helms Deep   PP2
178m | 174pg
Théoden rides out
from Helm's Deep   C
187m | 202 pg

Gandalf departs for
Gondor   II
33 m | 16 pg
Pippin lights beacons   PP1
62 m | 40 pg

*The Return of
the King*
      116 m | 80 pg   MP   Battle of Pelennor
Fields   PP2   *550 m | 475 pg*

Aragorn arrives
with ghost army
180 m | 112 pg   PP2

205 m | 137 pg   C   Destruction of the Ring   C   *639 m | 532 pg*

Figure 12: *The Lord of the Rings* **three-act structure**

The trilogy form does not have the same structure as the three-volume novel publishing format. A three-volume novel has a single narrative that has been split in terms of length rather than narrative structure. A trilogy has three individual narrative structures and a fourth connecting narrative that brings them together.[20] The adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* into a film trilogy demonstrates the difference between the format and form. While Tolkien's novel is structured in six books that allow it to be readily split into three, there are key differences that reveal the creation of individual narrative structures and transformation of the story from a single novel into a trilogy of films.

The first, moving the death of Boromir into the first text, gives it a more developed climax than is present in the novel. Second, creating a hero's journey character arc for Aragorn and focusing the main narrative line of the middle text on Aragorn. This hero's journey construction effectively creates an independent middle-text narrative. Thirdly, the latter halves of Book III and Book IV from the second novel volume are moved into the third film to create its own individual text before the final act of the fourth text – the destruction of the One Ring and final fight between Gollum and Frodo. Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens' addition of Aragorn's journey gives the middle text its narrative structure, thus demonstrating that the middle text is more than just a 'bridge' between the first and third text.

Additionally, the plot-points may serve multiple purposes in the film, e.g. Frodo's agreeing to take the One Ring to Mt Doom serving as the midpoint of the first text and the inciting incident of the fourth text. From one text to another, the movement of plot-points demonstrates the dynamic interplay between the different texts within the trilogy. For a creator developing a trilogy, especially when constructing the texts simultaneously, this is useful to remember as an available plotting technique. In the next section, I will use the creation of Aragorn's hero's journey and how the protagonist or character point of view is used to structure trilogies.

Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens' adaptation is a very specific example of trilogy. It is a film trilogy that was written and filmed together in a rare fashion. It is an

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[20]   Or connecting/constraining themes as in a 'theme trilogy'.

adaptation of a three-volume novel that through considered plot choices – deletions, additions and rearrangements – is transformed into a trilogy. The case study offers a concrete example of how the three-volume novel format is distinct from the trilogy form. Jackson, Walsh, Boyens (and the film's editors) achieved this transformation through using key storytelling techniques. They conceived each text from a main perspective – Frodo, Aragorn and Gandalf – and then developed separate character journeys, especially in the case of Aragorn. To bridge the knowledge gained from this case study with my restructure, it is necessary to examine if other trilogy examples achieve similar structures using protagonist journeys and perspectives. In the next section, I will detail how different trilogy creators use these tools to create the individual and fourth texts of their work.

Protagonist and perspective

One of the challenges for a trilogy creator is making each text distinct or differentiating the singular narratives compared to the fourth text. This challenge is particularly difficult if, like me, the creator structures and writes all three works in a trilogy simultaneously. In the case study previously, I proposed that one of the techniques employed by the filmmakers to construct three distinct narratives from the fourth text was to write *The Fellowship of the Ring* from Frodo's perspective and develop a protagonist journey for Aragorn in *The Two Towers*. In examining my community of practice in this section, I hope to outline other protagonist and character perspective structures that trilogy creators have employed in a pre-reflection to restructuring *Morea* based on a character journey. This section will focus on multi-protagonist trilogies – two protagonists, power trios and multi-protagonist – as opposed to single-protagonist trilogies. A power trio, adopted from popular music, is when a piece of fiction features three main characters. There can be one main character with two supporting characters, e.g. Neo, Trinity and Morpheus in *The Matrix.*

The adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* showed how perspective was used to transform a single work into a trilogy. Perspective has been considered in terms of the sequence novel by Martin Ausmus, in his unpublished thesis. He uses the term 'point of view', that has also been called 'narrative mode' by Derek Hansson in his writing guide *Story Theory: How to Write Like J.R.R. Tolkien in Three Easy Steps* (2012). The narrative mode here means if the story is told in first person, second person or third person (along with their attendant sub-groupings). For Ausmus, time and point of view are the determining characteristics of the sequence form (1969:49). He identifies four patterns based on this assumption:

1. third person chronological narrative
2. first person chronological narrative
3. third person synchronous narrative
4. first person synchronous narrative.

My main issue with these groupings is that they do not distinguish writing a single novel or a sequence novel and hence their usefulness in structuring a trilogy is limited. That is to say, Ausmus' forms are constrained in their ability to describe the trilogy as distinct from other forms of narrative forms.

As I have argued, a trilogy is better thought of (for a creator at least) as having four texts: three individual narratives and a fourth connecting narrative. Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* films demonstrate how each text within a trilogy can have a different protagonist, a different character journey, *and*, I assert, can be told from a different narrative mode (first, second and third) or a different narrative perspective.[21] A feature of the trilogy form is change, which is endowered by its fundamental structure of four texts.

The Lord of the Rings is one example of how a trilogy utilises distinct protagonist journeys and perspectives to structure its individual texts. The following examples are drawn from vastly different genres, from Western literature to futuristic ecological dystopias and fantasy. Nevertheless, their protagonists and perspective structures are readily comparable and useful for analysing the complexity of narrative structures that the trilogy allows.

Single protagonist

Trilogies do not necessarily need to have a different protagonist for each text. Most focus on a single protagonist. Examples include Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, both of which will be the focus of the proceeding two chapters. Another variation is a single protagonist supported by a power-trio structure such as the *Star Wars* trilogies, the original trilogy with Luke as the protagonist and his sister Leila and Han Solo supporting his journey.[22] Likewise, the 'Sequel' trilogy featuring Rey as the protagonist with the supporting characters of Finn and Poe. The original three *Pirates of the Caribbean* films and *The Matrix Trilogy* also have a power-trio structure.[23] In the latter, Neo's

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[21]   That Hanson defines as 'a combination of choice of the point (or points) of view from which the story will be told' (2012:11). Trilogy texts can also have different fictive time, which I will not discuss here in detail. The narrative time jumps afforded to trilogy are another feature that distinguish trilogy from a three-volume novel. Which do not generally feature large time jumps between narratives.

[22]   Original Trilogy: *Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), *Episode V; The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983). Prequel Trilogy: *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (2005). Sequel Trilogy: *Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (2015), *Episode VIII: The Last Jedi* (2017), and *Episode IX: The Rise of the Skywalker* (2019).

[23]   *Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003), *Dead Man's Chest* (2006), and *At World's End* (2007). *The Matrix* (1999), *Matrix Reloaded* (2003), and *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003).

protagonist journey is supported by Trinity and Morpheus. Gore Verbinski's *The Pirates of the Caribbean* is interesting in that it has two main protagonists, Elizabeth and Will, whose journey ends with the conclusion of the fourth text. However, the individual narratives in the separate films are structured around Jack Sparrow. Thus, this example is an interplay between the power-trio and two-protagonist trilogy structures.

Two protagonists

The two-protagonist trilogy structure can be seen in the earliest extant example, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The first text's protagonist is Clytemnestra.[24] The second text's protagonist is Orestes (Clytemnestra and Agamemnon's son). In the third text, both Orestes and Clytemnestra, or their approaches to justice, are pitted against one another in court. The structure consists of text one's protagonist and text two's protagonist being brought together in the third text. From Ancient Greece to modern times, the *Oresteia* dual protagonist structure is utilised by Cormac McCarthy in his *Border Trilogy* and Patricia A. McKillip's in her *Riddle-Master.* [25] Although they are from very different genres, both feature one protagonist in the first text and a different protagonist in the second, who come together in the third. The latter trilogy is told from a limited third-person narrative mode. This method is one way to structure a two protagonists trilogy. The next is a two-protagonist model that maintained throughout the entire trilogy.

Like *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Marie Lu's dystopian YA *Legend Trilogy* has two protagonists – Day and June – whose first-person perspective is related throughout the three texts in alternating chapters.[26] June is a hot-shot recruit for the ruling class, and Day is a rebel. Another young adult dystopian work, Veronica Roth's *The Divergent Trilogy,* also has two

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[24]   It is more often said that Agamemnon is the protagonist, but he does not drive the action.

[25]   *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998) *The Riddle-Master of Hed* (1976), *Heir of Sea and Fire* (1977), and *Harpist in the Wind* (1979).

[26]   *Legend* (2011), *Prodigy* (2013), and *Champion* (2013).

protagonists: Tris and Four.[27] While Roth has stated she thinks that the main character is Four, she found it hard to write a first-person narrative from his perspective because he is insular and does not like sharing his feelings (Robson 2014). However, the chosen structure – to have Tris as the protagonist and perspective character for the first two texts before switching to alternative chapters for both Tris and Four – creates a trilogy that feels unbalanced and ultimately unsatisfying. My dissatisfaction with this trilogy structure as a reader is one of the reasons that as a writer, I wanted to experiment with writing my texts simultaneously and applying for publication once the whole project was finalised. That way I would have the chance to change things in each text based on what had already been developed in another.

Power Trios

One of the most common ways to structure a trilogy is around three characters. I have labelled these 'power trio' trilogies, of which there are two types: (1) with a single protagonist supported by two main characters (as discussed above); and (2) structured around the journeys of three protagonists. *The Lord of the Rings* adaptation, with the added journey of Aragorn and focus on Gandalf, is an example of the second version. I will detail the structure of three book trilogies to give other examples of how this is achieved. Again, they come from various genres – sci-fi/dystopian young adult, children's fantasy, and futuristic ecological disaster fiction – and provide excellent examples of the versatility of the character journey in the trilogy form.

Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking Trilogy* features three point-of-view protagonists, each with their own journey.[28] In the first text, Todd Hewitt finds Viola, who crash-landed in a colony scout ship, and together they race to the capital of their world – Haven – to escape the Mayor of Prentisstown and his army. Todd's first-person perspective narrates the first text. Both Viola and Todd have point-of-view chapters in the middle text as they each negotiate their

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[27]   *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012), and *Allegiant* (2013).

[28]   *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (2008), *The Asks and the Answer* (2009), and *Monsters of Men* (2010).

respective places in New Prentisstown (the capital formerly known as Haven). Todd manages the Speckle captives (native inhabitants of the planet) and meets a particular Speckle named '1017'. Viola works with an underground organisation called 'The Answer' as they resist the new President Prentiss. In the third text, Todd, Viola, and 1017/The Return/The Sky all have point-of-view chapters as war breaks out in Prentisstown with the impending arrival of the new colonists from off-world. Each text within the trilogy is distinguished by an individual protagonist journey and a additional characters perspective.

Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* is another example, with a slightly different structure of the power trio in a trilogy.[29] In the first text, Lyra uses a golden compass, which allows her to see if people are telling the truth. A limited third-person narrative mode is used. Lyra is not from our world but lives in a very similar parallel universe. Using the compass, she travels to the north pole of her world to save her friend. Her father rips a hole between the parallel worlds, through which Lyra travels, and sets in motion the events that will play out in the latter two texts of the trilogy. The second text is told from the perspective of Will, an orphan from our world who sets off in search of his missing father. He travels from our world to another, where he meets Lyra. Will uses the tool known as the Subtle Knife to cut holes between the worlds. In the third text, the narrative splits between Will and Lyra and a third point-of-view character, Mary Malone, who has her protagonist journey. It is the different points of view of Lyra, Will, and then Lyra/Will and Mary that give the individual texts distinct narratives.

MaddAddam

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* is an exciting example of different point-of-view characters and narrative time, as it offers a further example to the forms listed by Ausmus.[30] The trilogy's individual texts are linear, but the fourth text is non-linear. The first two narratives occur in the past and the present – before the apocalypse and after. The third

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[29]   *Northern Lights* (1995) – *The Golden Compass* in US editions – *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000).

[30]   *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013).

timeline occurs mainly after the apocalypse. The fourth text could be said to be non-linear in that the first and second texts' narratives run parallel to one another. Thus, this work represents a more complex structure than those allowed by Ausmus' categorisation. Atwood's work showcases the complex narrative structures that the form can accommodate compared to a single structure. This is worth describing in some detail below.

Atwood's dystopian post-apocalyptic trilogy starts with *Oryx and Crake* and has both a point-of-view character and a character journey of Jimmy/Snowman. His story is told in two timelines. In the post-apocalyptic future, he travels from his companions to a compound in search of supplies. As he journeys back, the story of the apocalypse is told through his perspective.

In the second text, *The Year of the Flood*, there are two point-of-view characters, Toby and Ren, and we see the events leading up to and after the apocalypse from their perspective. Similar to Ness' style, Ren was a character in *Oryx and Crake*. Like my own trilogy's texts one and two (to some extent), Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* runs along a parallel timeline to *Oryx and Crake*.

The third text, giving the title to the trilogy, is named *MaddAddam,* and its timeline continues from both the first and second texts. It is told from the perspective of Toby (one of the main characters from the second text) and Zeb (a character introduced in the second text). Though Margaret Atwood's trilogy is from a very different genre to my own, Atwood describes it as speculative fiction and 'adventure romance' rather than science fiction because it does not deal with things 'we can't yet do or begin to do' (Atwood 2004). Despite the difference in genre to mine, this trilogy provides a useful example of point-of-view and character journeys interlocking over a complex fictive time structure of parallel and continuing timelines.

Southern Reach

The last trilogy is an interesting example of the use of 'point of view' or narrative modes. Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy* (2014) uses various narrative modes: first, second and third-person narration with multiple character perspectives. The first text, *Annihilation,* is a first-person point of view from The Biologist's perspective. It tells the story of an expedition team into Area X, an anomaly filled with strangeness and unusual creatures. The second text, *Authority,* uses a third-person limited perspective from a character named Control, who takes

on the directorship of the agency that investigates Area X. Conversely, the third text employs multiple narrative modes and character perspectives. We learn about the origin of Area X from the first-person perspective of the Lighthouse Keeper. There is also a second-person narrative mode that tells the story of the former Director (who was part of the expedition in *Annihilation*). In the present, the narrative of Control and 'Ghost Bird' (a clone of the Biologist made by Area X) continues in the limited third person.

As a trilogy reader and creator, I found the third text was less coherent when compared to texts one and two, and I think this is directly related to the multiple narrative modes and perspectives. The first text's use of the first person and unreliable narration reflected the changing nature of Area X and how it can fool those who dare to enter the anomaly. The limited third-person view of the second text provides great dramatic tension as Control realises that he has been the victim of hypnotism. Conversely, I felt that the different points of view used in the third text did not work together, and the story felt disjointed. The first two texts were focused. The narrative in the third text, although somewhat linear, was not as interlinked in the climax of the fourth text. Restricting the point of view to a single person would have provided the needed clarity and tension in the third narrative. This example is particularly pertinent to my process and specially to restructuring *Morea*. My second text, in contrast to the first and third, had eight points of view.

In summary, there are trilogies with a single protagonist (with first-person or third-person narrative mode), dual protagonists (with alternating characters throughout the work, or one protagonist for text one and two that are brought together in the second). Power-trio trilogy structures can be summarised as follows:

1. Single-protagonist trilogy with two supporting characters (*Star Wars* and *The Matrix*, or the exception being *Pirates of the Caribbean* with dual protagonists in the fourth text and a single protagonist for each text).

2. Three protagonists – one added per book (*Chaos Walking* (alternating first person perspective) and *His Dark Materials* (limited third-person perspective that also continues the others' journey).

Multiple protagonists

Some trilogies feature no single protagonist, such as Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*, which hosts a cast of many thousands and, using a third-person omniscient point of view, describes the three revolutions of a Martian colony.[31] In doing so, it can show the changes in society over more than one lifetime. Trilogies that employ multiple character perspectives, either in the third person or first narration, are common to the form; sometimes, they may stay within one family, such as John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy*.[32] While the narrative often focuses on Soames Forsyte in the former example, it nevertheless describes the lives of the rest of the Forsyte family during the changing times from Victorian to Edwardian Britain at the turn of the 20th century.

Conversely, at its present stage of development, *The Story of Eorthan* has four protagonists, one for each text, who each tell their own story. As part of this project, I have refined the location of the fourth perspective into the fourth text. It has been a development of restructuring my third and fourth text, as I will detail in Chapter Two, but it is worth mentioning here because I have yet to find an example structured this way. I write in limited third-person narrative mode. As I wanted to keep tonal consistency across the texts (similar to Pullman), and some chapters need other characters to relate the events (usually related to the fourth text) and using limited third person allows the creator to focus on a single character and include chapters away from their perspective when necessary.

My first text, *Sora*, is told from the perspective of Mannec and is structured on his character journey. As I will detail below, the second text, Morea, has been restructured from the perspective of Emilia and contains her character journey. The third text, *Eorthan*, has been refined to focus on the perspective of Lindis. As I will detail in Chapter Two of this thesis, there was confusion between my third and fourth text where too much of the fourth text took place in the third. Like Atwood, my fourth text is non-linear. The first two-thirds of

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[31]   *Red Mars* (1992), *Green Mars* (1993), and *Blue Mars* (1996).

[32]   *Palace Walk* (1956), *Palace of Desire* (1957), and *Sugar Street* (1957).

Eorthan take place before *Sora* and *Morea*. As part of this project, I have removed parts from *Eorthan* that belonged to Siera's journey and put them into *Sora* and *Morea*. The result of this is that I have clarified the fourth text's narrative and made the fourth text distinct from the third. It balances the length and significance of the third text with the first and second.

My community of practice exploration has allowed me to detail a myriad of trilogy structures using the number of protagonists, the narrative mode and narrative point of view, and narrative time. Despite the plethora of genres, there are similarities in the trilogy structure when described in these terms. The narrative techniques of protagonist journeys, point-of-view and perspective, through *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy and these trilogies discussed above, demonstrate a key aspect of the trilogy form that distinguishes it from other forms of multi-text narrative, namely the three-volume novel. In constructing a trilogy, a writer has the freedom to change protagonists, narrative mode, perspective, and the interplay between protagonist, narrative mode and narrative perspective offer multiple permutations of trilogy structure that can be utilised. This understanding, together with the case study, gave me the structural understanding that I needed to restructure my middle text.

Morea

This chapter began with a problem with my second text. It explored possible solutions by seeking to understand the difference between a three-volume novel, *The Lord of the Rings* detailed adaptation case study, and a survey of my community of practice that explored multiple trilogy structures. In this section, I take what I learned about the trilogy from these various methods and restructure my middle text.

Restructuring my middle text first is perhaps a little confusing, but it was causing the writer's block and derailment of my trilogy development, so it was important to deal with it before the other texts in *The Story of Eorthan*. The central part of this section details restructuring *Morea* along the lines of a new protagonist, Emelia, and her narrative perspective. This section will finish with the reworked version of the synopsis as a comparison between how far the development has come and how I resolved the horrendous writer's block I was experiencing at the beginning of this PhD.

The Story of Eorthan has a large cast of characters, and to assist with orientation for the synopsis, I have developed a character map.
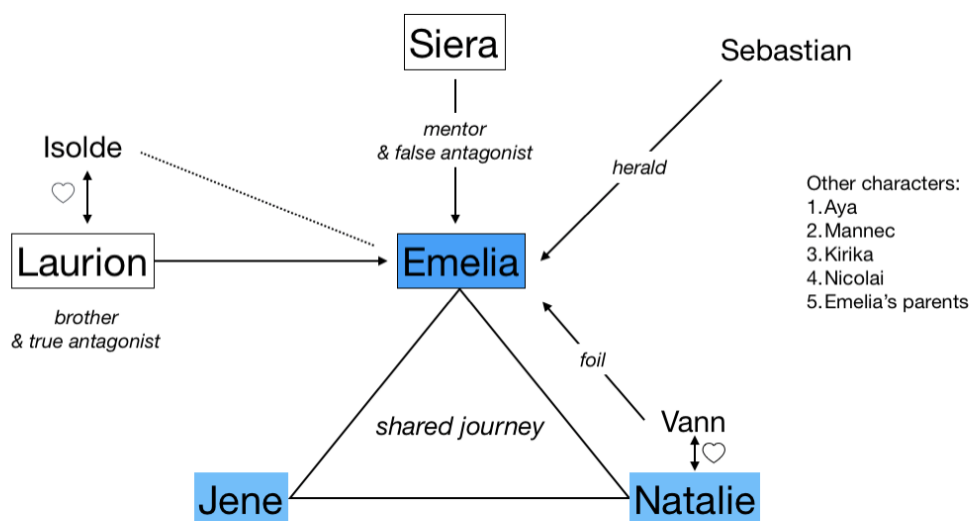
Figure 13: *Morea* key character map

Morea pre-research synopsis

Morea begins as Sora ended. Kirika, having fallen from the great island in the sky, floats beneath the sea. She has a choice: to sink or swim. She decides to swim to the surface. When she returns, one of their group, Natalie, has been captured by the Dresdain Guards.

Far away, Sebastian arrives at Øre City, looking for his mother. He remembers the last time he was in the city. The time of the Great Fever. When he arrives at his old house, his mother is gone. He senses someone behind him and turns around. A woman is standing in the doorway. She holds a lantern aloft.

Emelia looks at the boy by the light of the lantern. She remembers him from the night of the Great Fever but pretends otherwise. She takes him to his mother underneath the palace. As they walk up the Illurian Way, Emelia douses the lanterns. The same task she has performed every night since the Great Fever. Emelia is the elder sister of Laurion Dresdain.

While Sebastian waits in Øre City, Natalie is brought before Laurion Dresdain. The pain she experiences in his presence forces her to tear off her wings. Afterwards, Sebastian confronts Emelia for not helping her.

Siera, Vann and the others arrive in Øre City to rescue Natalie. Vann plays music to distract Laurion. Siera carries Natalie away. They all escape to an island known only as The Farthermost. Siera tries to heal Natalie, but she is gravely injured. In her pain, Natalie breaks up with Vann. When Emelia arrives, Vann attacks her, blaming her for what happened to Natalie. Siera stops him. Afterwards, both Siera and Vann leave.

Emelia tells the others of a girl, Jene, who came into her powers and was captured by the Dresdain Guards. Emelia asks the others for help. She knows Jene will be put on trial. They agree and travel to Illuria, Emelia's home city in the Laventine. All except Natalie.

Jene is put on trial, found guilty, and sentenced to burn at the stake. Laurion Dresdain possessed the judge. Emelia witnesses Siera make a deal with Laurion. Siera will not help Jene and Laurion will leave the body of the judge. Siera tells Emelia to help Jene instead.

Two interlude chapters focus on two different characters: Vann in the wilderness, as he decides to travel to Øre City to seek revenge upon Laurion Dresdain. And Nicolai, in laying down to sleep in the forest under glowing souls hanging from branches.

After Emelia and Aya save Jene from her sentence, Jene has a terrible premonition: that The Aral Forest will be burnt down. They all race to the forest. But they are too late. Black flames are consuming it. It was Laurion. Aya flies into the flames and quenches the inferno.

Morea ends where it began, underneath the water. Aya remembers her parents, who fall through the ice and drown just after she was born. A stranger rescues Aya.

Another ending.

Morea structural edit

My middle, or second text, has been restructured along the line of Emelia's protagonist journey and narrative perspective. It is worth briefly noting how I concluded that a) this was necessary or would solve my development issues; b) this was the right approach; c) Emelia was the right character. After choosing the protagonist, the next step was to restructure the text itself. I conceptualised my middle text using a skeleton of only the chapters of the original text in which Emelia was already present. These became the three-act structure plot-points. Then I used the hero's journey model to rebuild *Morea* and reimagine the two former storylines from Emelia's perspective. Part of this process included taking chapters from the third text and putting them into *Morea*.

My middle text had two issues: no single protagonist or narrative and multiple character perspectives. I identified these issues by comparing the other two texts in my trilogy, *Sora* and *Eorthan*. In the introduction to this chapter, I used this figure to show a comparison between the three texts:
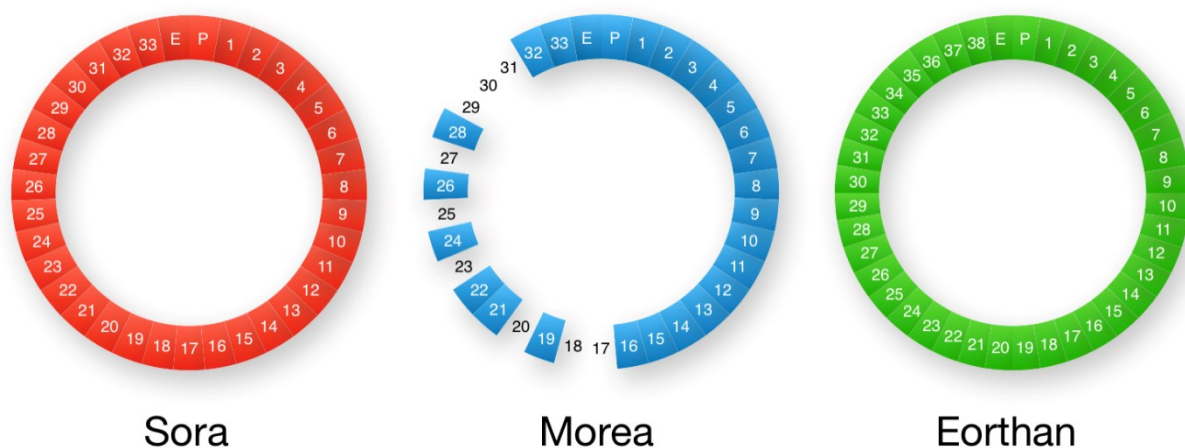
Figure 14: *Morea* chapter outlines pre-PhD

The figure was intended to be a simplified representation of the underdevelopment of my second text. However, as the above synopsis showed, I used many different point-of-view or perspective characters in *Morea* to tell the story. Where *Sora* (in red) had one protagonist, and for the most part, one character perspective and *Eorthan* also had one protagonist and

one perspective. In contrast, *Morea* had two main protagonists and multiple character perspectives, which can be illustrated in the following diagram.[33]
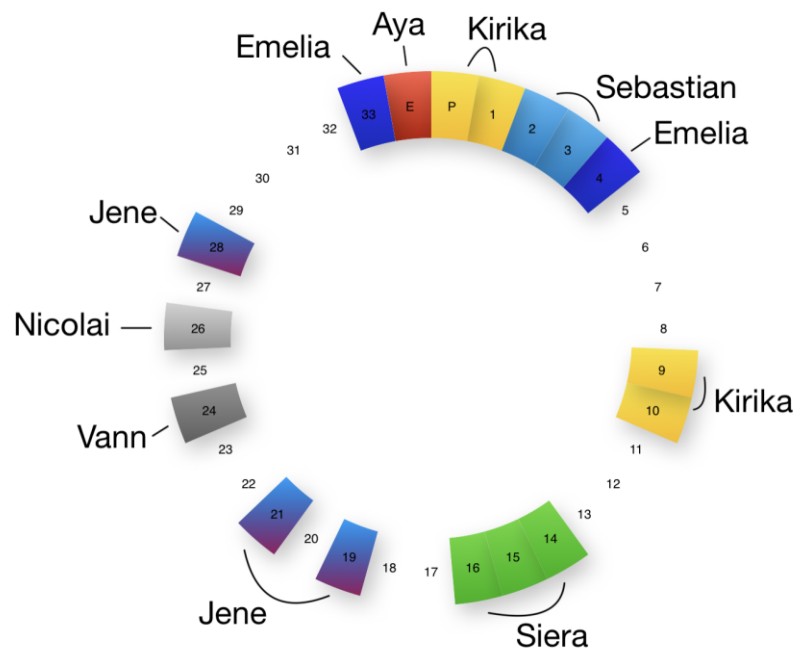
Figure 15: *Morea* character perspectives

On reflection, I could have retained the multiple perspectives as detailed in the diagram above. A previous iteration of *Sora* and *Eorthan* had contained multiple perspectives in the sections representing the fourth text. The latter half of *Sora* and the latter half of *Eorthan* featured multiple character perspectives. When reading VanderMeer's *The Southern Reach Trilogy* – with its alternating points-of-view, from first, to second, to limited third- and third-person narration, and different character perspectives – as a reader I became very confused. Considering this example in light of the structure of *Morea* above and the older versions of *Sora* and *Eorthan*, I felt that a single character perspective and journey would be clearer and would assist me in building a stronger structure. Identifying these character perspectives and drawing them out in this fashion, together with the comparison with *Sora* and *Eorthan*,

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[33]   The protagonist changed from Siera to Lindis during the third text restructure in Chapter Two.

helped me realise that a path forward to resolving the problems with my middle text was similar to those utilised by the filmmakers of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Namely, utilising four key plotting techniques: overlapping parallel storylines, displacing half the story into another text, adding a character journey, and reframing the perspective through which the story is told. Using Emelia's perspective, I reworked the two storylines of the old *Morea* (Natalie and Jene) from the perspective of Emelia. These are the 'bridging' elements or the fourth text of my trilogy.[34] I needed to recreate the middle-text narrative in the way Aragorn's was, and the middle-text narrative would also need to accommodate the narrative of the overarching fourth text. I am affirming the points made by Carolyn Jess-Cooke, Tim Akers and Patrick Ness as related in the introduction to this chapter.

After realising the novel required a different protagonist, I needed to decide which one. Should I use a character I had created already, or should I develop another? Initially, I thought of using either Natalie or Jene and perhaps Kirika – who witnessed part of Natalie and Jene's stories. However, Kirika would not be suitable because her character journey resolution came at the end of *Sora*. She learns to control her powers and uses them to help both Natalia and Jene. Natalie could not tell Jene's story because she is gravely injured halfway through the novel and is too ill to travel to where Jene's story is set.

It was somewhat a 'lightbulb moment' to choose Emelia. Her story has a redemptive arc. She is the villain's sister and had helped Laurion murder the Old Nine many years ago, which incited the fourth text narrative. She must learn to forgive herself and take her place as one of the New Nine. She, like Natalie, also lost her wings and magical powers. Emelia and Jene are from the same region. Emelia's family was important in that region and played a role in its governance and justice. Jene's trial in the climax of the novel could be related from Emelia's perspective. Emelia's story, like Aragorn's, originally stretched across the three individual texts of the trilogy. Therefore, some of the content in *Eorthan* (3) has been moved into

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[34]   The fourth text of my trilogy is finding the 'New Nine' who will replace the 'Old Nine' who were murdered by Emelia's brother Laurion Dresdain.

Morea, as I will detail later. As part of the restructure, I have also strengthened the references to Emelia in the first text, *Sora*.

Emelia was the most suitable character to tell the story of *Morea*. The second step in the restructure was a kind of priming step. To develop her character journey and 'see' Natalie/Jene's stories, I first needed to strip away the chapters that were not currently written from Emelia's perspective. It would allow for a fresh slate to build Emelia's character journey and ensure that I could reimagine or integrate old scenes from her perspective. The diagram below illustrates this preparation:
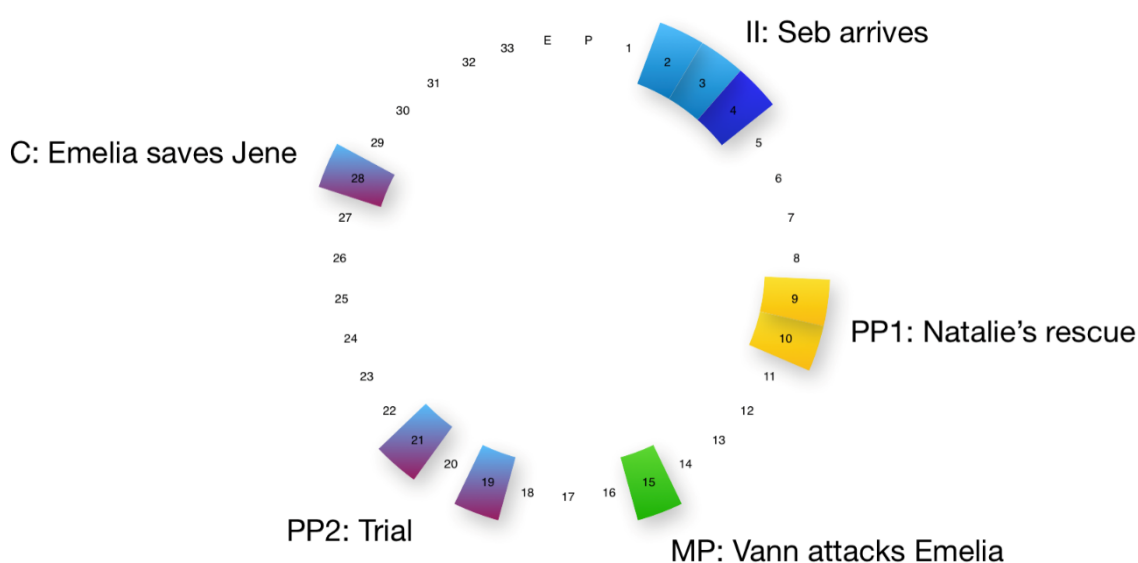
Figure 16: Preparing *Morea* for structural redevelopment

The chapters remaining from the revision were Chapters 2 and 3, where Emelia meets Sebastian while lighting the lanterns on the Illurian Way. The first time was during the Great Fever 10 years ago, when Sebastian escaped from Øre City. The second time is when Sebastian returns to the city to find his mother (linking the middle text to the first). These were the connecting three events or plot points in the narrative: Emelia and Sebastian meet, Emelia witnesses what happens to Natalie, and when Vann confronts Emelia. There then remained 24 chapters to develop Emelia's character journey and reimagine the two major events (Natalie's and Jene's stories) from her perspective. The 'prologue' (now Chapter 1) would still open with Kirika under the water and choosing to swim to the surface, as this still

reflects the overall themes and Emelia's journey. Chapter 2 would open *Morea* proper and would need to start with Emelia's journey.

The main plot-points that remain are meeting Sebastian; Natalie meeting Laurion; Vann's attack on Emelia; Jene's trial. These form the anchor points and on reflection, form a three-act structure, which is shown below.
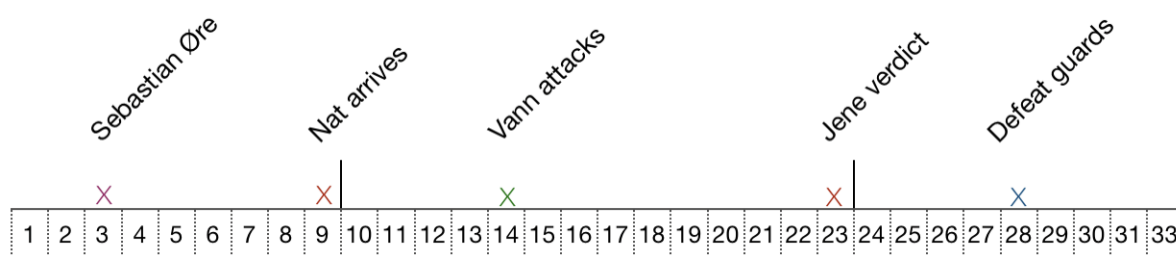
Figure 17: *Morea* three-act structure

Now that I had a rough three-act skeleton, I used Aragon's revised hero's journey to develop Emelia's journey. Looking back to Aragorn's reformed character journey in *The Two Towers* (and *FotR* and *RotK*), the first thing I needed was a 'call to the adventure' and 'refusal of the call'. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, this is represented by Aragorn's reluctance to take up the broken sword Narsil. Emelia's refusal to the call was during the Great Fever that took place ten years previously. Emelia's refusal is related in *Sora* (Sebastian tells Mannec about his experience during The Great Fever), *Morea* (Sebastian reflects on the river as he arrives, which Emelia then remembers as well) and in *Eorthan* (the cause of the Great Fever was a spell cast by Aya). I simplified this moment by including Sebastian's viewpoint in *Sora*. Then having Emelia do the same thing that Sebastian witnessed ten years ago in the present, to show that she had not changed in the intervening years. Extinguishing the lanterns every night represents her refusal to the call. Sebastian's arrival is then a new inciting incident or a reminder of that call, except this time, she will be forced into answering the call to adventure. These events occur in Chapters 2 and 3 of *Morea*.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of *Morea* give reasons for Emelia's refusal of the call and details her back story. Here we learn that she has no wings but great unhealed scars on her back. By the end of the middle text, Emelia must overcome this limitation and regain her wings and powers. We learn about Laurion as a young man and the early death of their mother. These memories come to Emelia unbidden as if someone is making her see them. It is Siera who becomes an

antagonist to Emelia in this novel. In each text, Siera subtly changes her archetypical characteristics. She is a mentor/friend to Mannec, an antagonist to Emelia, and the sister of Lindis. The change in character relationships or archetypes is an important aspect of trilogy that is reflected in the different character structures allowed for in 'Protagonist and Perspective' above. Changing the protagonist changes the nature of relationships with other characters. The memories are of Emelia's meeting her mentor of sorts. Chapters 5 and 6 formerly in *Eorthan,* and their transposition is similar to the filmmakers of *The Lord of the Rings* moving content between the different films compared to the location in their respective novel volumes.

In Chapters 7, 8 and 9, Emelia witnesses Natalie being brought before Laurion (end of the first act). In this version of the middle text, Emelia is now linked to Natalie through shared trauma. When Siera and the others come to rescue Natalie, the call to adventure is repeated. Emelia is forced to choose, which sets up a major confrontation with Laurion, previously depicted in *Eorthan*. Like this confrontation, Emelia's conversations with Isolde (also moved from *Eorthan*) have been moved here.

In Chapter 10, Laurion throws the wingless Emelia from Øre City. Like Aragorn falling off the cliff (an unintentional link), Emelia enters a dreamlike state where she witnesses Siera healing Natalie in the Other World (called Morea, it is Eorthan's moon or twin planet). This event is much earlier in this version of the middle text. Previously this took place in Chapter 15, now Chapter 10. In telling this part of Natalie's story from Emelia's perspective, it forms part of Emelia's 'road of trials'. Emelia wants to die, but she cannot. She must return to life, just as Natalie chooses to.

In Chapter 11, Emelia wakes up in Eorthan on the island next to Øre City. The land caught her as she fell. The land moves in response to people who can become one of The Nine - rulers of Eorthan. Emotionally, Emelia is not ready to understand this yet. She still has a long road to travel. An ethereal set of lanterns then light along the road. They are a message from Siera and lead Emelia to Jene. Laurion had flung Jene's soul free with Emelia and Emelia takes the soul along the road (a reversal of her extinguishing the lanterns in the book's opening) to The Laventine, where it encounters its physical self: Jene. Suddenly beset with magical powers, Jene is overwhelmed and reveals herself unknowingly to the Dresdain Guards. Emelia still does not think she is strong enough to take them on, and hurries to The Farthermost Isle.

A vestige of the previous version of *Morea* (Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16) remain much the same. However, the perspective changes in how they are conveyed, and their significance to Emelia is distinctly different from the previous version. Chapter 13 remains being told from Lindis' perspective: he sees Siera heal Natalie in the physical sense. In Chapter 14, from Emelia's perspective, she arrives at The Farthermost and is attacked by Vann. To increase the surprise and shock to the reader, I have removed Vann's motivations.[35] Showing the attack from Emelia's perspective and her refusal to protect herself is part of her trial and 'death moment', or 'approach to the innermost cave'. It represents a turning point for Emelia: she thinks she deserves death, but Siera saves her.

In Chapters 15 and 16, with Siera and Vann gone, Emelia realises what Siera is trying to do: find the New Nine, those who will replace the Old Nine whom her brother murdered. Emelia asks them for their help to save Jene. Before she leaves, she and Lindis talk to Natalie about their wings. Both Emelia and Lindis lost their wings at the hands of Laurion. Lindis has regained his wings. However, Emelia has yet to regain hers. Adding Laurion and Emelia's shared pasts transforms what was a 'lull' and explains how Lindis and Emelia lost their wings. It was previously related in *Eorthan*, but like Frodo and Shelob being moved to the third text in order not to cancel out the climax of the Battle of Helm's Deep, Emelia and Lindis' experiences paled in comparison to the murder of the Old Nine in the third text. Moved to *Morea*, it therefore serves to further link Natalie to Emelia, foreshadowing the danger to Jene (she is at risk of losing her wings at the hands of Laurion), and it gives Emelia her resolution (she must reclaim her wings and Defeat the Dresdain Guards).

I have also linked the fourth text to Chapter 16. Siera and Vann both leave after their fight. While I could explain Vann leaving, I was at a loss to explain how the other characters would experience Siera leaving. Instead, I extended the effect of a spell that Siera had cast some years ago. Related in *Eorthan*, Lindis asked Siera to take away everyone's memories so they

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[35]   Natalie ended their relationship because of her illness and he directed his anger and blame at Emelia. There is a single remaining chapter from Vann's perspective in this text and I have moved this information to that chapter.

would not be at risk of Laurion and his frightful anger. This spell, a 'mist of memory', is still active, and when Siera leaves, the other characters forget her, saving Emelia and Lindis.

Chapters 17, 18 and 19 have events that further link Emelia, Natalie and Jene, and detail how the world is awry. It is not meant to float in the sky, beset by haunting speakers and the hunting Dresdain Guards. These chapters lead to the climax of Jene's trial. Originally Natalie was not present, but I brought her to Illuria for the trial. Chapters 20 and 21 relate to the trial. Emelia used this trial to stand up to her brother (who magically possessed one of the judges), and this is still true in the new version, but it now becomes a key moment in Emelia's journey. She is starting to take a stand. It will lead into the novel's third act and climax, where she will regain her powers, challenge her brother, and destroy the Dresdain Guards.

Just as Jackson's *The Two Towers* intersects between Aragon in Rohan, Merry and Pippin in the Entmoot and Frodo and Sam as they continue towards Mordor, *Morea* intersects with other perspectives to continue the fourth text. Chapter 21 starts the trial, Chapters 22 and 27 cut away from the main action and tell of Vann's journey to Øre City to get revenge on Laurion. And this sets up two key facts: Vann's guilt over what happened to Natalie and that Laurion Dresdain has left Øre City. Where he has gone will be revealed later. It also situates Vann where he needs to be in the third and final novel.

Chapter 23 returns to the main plot of the action. Jene is inevitably found guilty, and her sentence is to have her wings removed. This links to the third great tragedy all those years ago, the creation of the Dresdain Guards. It was when Laurion cut off both Emelia and Lindis' wings, stealing away their powers – there were other people there too. They did not survive, and their corpses were reanimated into the Dresdain Guards. In order to overcome her past, destroy the guards and help Jene, Emelia must regain her powers, 'to return with the elixir', and return to life. It is a crucial choice that sets up the main climax of *Morea*. In Chapter 24, Emelia witnesses Siera making a deal with Laurion to release the judge.[36] Emelia then asks why Siera does not give her what she wants, a release from life. In Chapter 25, Siera unsubtly

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[36]   Walden, a character from *Sora*. He looked after Aya at the orphanage. He is also a key link to Emelia's redemption, as he was partially responsible for the death of Aya's parents. This will be related in the final chapters of this novel.

hints that Emelia must take back her wings and powers to be released from her self-imposed torment. She must save Jene directly.

In Chapter 28, Jene is subjected to her punishment. As Emelia's character is partially based on Chiron, the ferryman who ferries the dead across the River Styx to Hades in Greek mythology, I have changed the location. It is not the town square where Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake (and where I undertook my research trip detailed earlier in this chapter) but now an old outdoor theatre like those in Ancient Greece. It links to the earlier memory in Chapter 5 of Emelia's brother singing and her father asking her to take care of him. Now Emelia, together with Aya, fight the Dresdain Guards. Emelia is almost defeated because she has yet to take back her powers.

In Chapter 29, the action again cuts away to Nicolai in a forest. What the reader is supposed to assume is The Aral Forest. Siera is with him. It foreshadows the destruction of The Aral Forest at the end of this text and sets up Nicolai where he needs to be in *Eorthan*. Like Vann's chapters, this too is part of the overall fourth text.

In Chapter 30, Emelia takes back her powers, and with them, she destroys the Dresdain Guards. Jene is saved, but suddenly, she is struck by a terrible burning vision. A forest is set aflame by a dark black fury. They fly as fast as they can to The Aral Forest but are too late: Laurion Dresdain has burnt it to the ground. They fear for those who were living there. Aya flies into the black flame and puts it out with her magic fire.

As the others walk through the blackened and charred remains, they make a promise never to let this happen again and become the leaders of the land. They take the oath to become part of the New Nine. Emelia and Jene tell them what they need to do. It concludes Emelia's story and links it into the fourth text. This oath-taking was originally in *Eorthan*; moving it to the middle text gave it a satisfactory ending and gave me another spare chapter in *Eorthan*, which was sorely needed, as I will relate in the following chapter. This move reflects what I learnt from moving Boromir's death into *FotR* (from *The Two Towers*) to bolster the weak climax of that film. Being able to move this plot-point from one text to another illustrates the strengths of having a fourth text. The other instances of moving plot-points were because they formed part of Emelia's journey. However, speaking the oaths is part of the fourth text (to find the New Nine).

Now that Emelia's journey was concluded, and I had more chapters to use in my structure, I was also able to move another chapter from the third to the second text. Chapters 32 and 33 relate to the story of Aya and her parents, which are part of the fourth text and Siera's story. Originally, Aya's rescue was contained as a small scene at the end of *Morea.* In the new version, Chapter 32 relates what happened to Aya's parents in more detail. Towards the end of the second text, alterations started to impact on and interact with restructuring the third text, which forced me to confront the issues with my third text. In chapter, long ago, Aya's parents carried their newborn child as they ran across the snowy wilderness. They were looking for a place to hide. The Walden turned them away. They kept running, wanting to keep their child from the Dresdain Guards and the dreaded dark baptism that would take her soul and turn it into a spectre. Aya's parents run across an icy bridge. Its wood, unrepaired, rotten and brittle from the ice, gives way beneath their feet. They fall through the ice below. Before they sink beneath the rushing water, they call out a name in one last hope.

In Chapter 33, a dark figure descends from the stars, crashes through the ice, rescuing Aya, but it is too late for her parents. The figure emerges from the water cradling the little bundle in its arms. Only hours old, the baby's lungs know to hold their breath underwater. The figure looks down upon her and says her name: Aya. These events both take place and foreshadow the third and final text. They also bookend the water/drowning theme that began in Chapter 1 with Kirika beneath the waves.

Like the filmmakers of The Two Towers, I took an existing story and reworked it from a different character's perspective using a protagonist journey. I utilised the three-act structure to plot a skeleton shape and rework the old aspects of the novel into the new narrative. As a middle text in a trilogy, I was able to move some events back into the first text and take four chapters from the third text and put them in the second. A trilogy text, by nature of its fundamental structure, does not stand alone. It operates using both the individual texts and the fourth text connecting them. These final changes conclude the restructuring of Morea and bridge into restructuring Eorthan. The four chapters I removed from *Eorthan*, plus the three chapters of *Morea* (17, 18 and 19) that could be condensed into one chapter, will be explored in the following chapters. In Chapter Two, I problematise the issues with my third and fourth text. The missing chapters of *Morea* will be considered in Chapter Three when I restructure the number of chapters in my entire trilogy. To close off this chapter, I use the redeveloped

synopsis of my middle text to demonstrate how distinguishing the structure of a trilogy from a three-volume novel has helped solve the problems with my middle text.

Morea post-research synopsis

Kirika floats beneath the waves, and she chooses to swim to the surface.

In Øre City, Emelia sits in darkness on a bench in front of the now abandoned orphanage. Before the sun rises, the lanterns light themselves along the Illurian Way. Emelia makes her way back to the palace, putting them out. On the way, she remembers the first night the lanterns were lit – during the Great Fever ten years ago. This night is different, however. She finds a boy. She knows who he is but does not tell him. She takes him to his mother beneath the palace.

Emelia sleeps. She dreams. She dreams of the boy her brother once was. A gentle soul whom her father made her promise she must protect. She remembers her mother. Unwell most of her life, she draws her final breath. She remembers walking with her mother in the otherworld, the twin planet: Morea. That night when she wakes. Someone is standing at her bed. Someone who should be dead. Isolde. Emelia knows it is Isolde who has been sending her the dreams. Isolde tells Emelia that she is not like her; she can still live. She has a choice.

Sometime after, Emelia witnesses a girl being brought before her brother. The girl screams in pain and rips off her own wings. Soon after, Emelia hears music; it is the others who rescue the girl. A dark-haired boy plays music to distract her brother, and she goes under the palace, sees Siera taking the girl away. It is a mirror image of the Great Fever in the past. Emelia is given a choice to leave Øre and her brother.

Emelia comes back to the surface, where she finds her brother, Laurion who confronts her. She is unable to fight him. He throws her over the edge of Øre City. She cannot fly and falls. Emelia wakes up in Morea, the Other World. There she sees someone with the girl (Natalie) in the river. She tries to walk through the river, away from life but instead sinks beneath the water.

Emelia wakes up, back on Eorthan, and feeling sore from the fall back to Eorthan. Beside her is her lantern, smashed. She picks it up. It reforms and catches alight. She looks up to see the road is lit with lanterns hovering in the air along the old Illurian Way. Emelia walks along it. On the way, Emelia witnesses a girl with blonde hair struck down by her own powers. Emelia can see she is overwhelmed by these powers. The girl walks the wrong way down the Illurian

Way and is captured by Dresdain Guards. Emelia wants to help, but she does not feel she can. Instead, she decides to travel to The Farthermost, intending to ask for Siera's help.

The point of view shifts for a chapter to an old man on The Farthermost Isle. He witnesses Siera heal Natalie. Emelia arrives at The Farthermost and is attacked by Vann. Siera saves her. Emelia does not try to save herself. Siera and Vann disappear into a strange mist. When they are gone, the others forget who Siera is. This is caused by an old spell that is still active.

Emelia asks for the others' help to save the girl from the field. She knows that her brother will want to make an example of her, put her on trial, inevitably find her guilty and, in punishment, have her wings removed. Emelia and Lindis talk to Natalie. Lindis, too lost his wings long ago, but he got them back.

On the way to Illuria, they stop off at Emelia's old house. Emelia dreams again of the time her brother burnt their orchard. In the burnt remains are Natalie and Jene (the girl from the field). They talk of what Eorthan should be: not separate islands, but one land—not floating in the sky but resting in the sea.

Jene is put on trial and found guilty. Emelia meets Siera again. Siera bargains with Laurion, who is possessing the judge, for the judge's life. Laurion leaves the judge. Emelia asks Siera what she should do. Siera draws a symbol of wings.

Two interlude chapters focus on two other characters: Vann in the wilderness as he decides to travel to Øre City to seek revenge upon Laurion Dresdain and Nicolai, laying down to sleep in the forest under glowing souls hanging from branches.

Emelia tries to help Jene. The Dresdain Guards beat her down. She remembers when her brother cut off her wings. The earth cracks beneath her. Emelia vows not to let it happen again. A vow to Eorthan. She stands up with new wings protruding from her back. She quickly dispatches the Dresdain Guards. But there is something wrong with Jene; black flames are in her eyes. She is having a premonition of The Aral Forest burning.

Emelia and the others, together with Natalie, arrive at the forest to find it aflame. They are too late. Aya flies into the black flame and extinguishes it using her red fire. The others follow and walk through the burnt-out city among the trees. Emelia knows that it is her brother who burnt the forest. In the middle of the forest, sitting on the roots of Omberos is Aya.

The others demand that something must be done about Laurion. Emelia and Jene explain that they must do something more. They must become the New Nine to lead the land. They agree, and each makes their vow to Eorthan.

'So cold,' Aya says in response. Her eyes are clouded over.

The last two chapters go back into the past to tell the story of Aya and her parents. It was a cold night filled with snow on the night she was born. Her parents fled from Dresdain Guards when they fell through a rotting bridge into the water and ice. They drowned, but a stranger rescued Aya.

Another ending.

Chapter Two

third text • fourth text • threequel • *The Dark Knight Trilogy* • planned and unplanned trilogies • trilogy creep • two-part trilogies • *Eorthan*

> Well, at least we can all agree the third one's always the worst.
>
> Jean Grey in *X-Men: Apocalypse* (2016)

Trilogy syndromes and aphorisms focus on 'middle-text syndrome' or that the first text must stand alone. There is no comparative example with which to commence a discussion on the third text, but there has been consistent criticism from various authors – Meth (2009), Tassi (2014), Ifeagwu (2016), Zim and Lee (2020) – that the third text is often the worst. The quote above refers to *The Return of the Jedi*, and refers jokingly to itself and the franchise era in general, as the film is the third instalment of the X-Men prequel films. The problem with the third text can be attributed to a confusion of terms and narrative structures: threequels and trilogies. A threequel is a neologism used to describe the second sequel (or third instalment). I expand this term to mean a collection of three texts linked together but not by a fourth narrative structure.

Trilogy and threequel thus have an important distinct plot structure. A trilogy has a fourth connecting narrative, whereas a threequel does not. This absence is why threequels have the potential for a fourth instalment, whereas trilogies conclude with the third text (Jess-Cooke & Verevis 2012:3). Paul Tassi, author of *The Earthborn Trilogy,* suggests in his blog post 'The Reasons Why It's So Hard to End a Trilogy Well' that plotting difficulties stem from raising the stakes, answering all the questions and not letting go (2014).[1] He notes that the third needs 'to be bigger and badder than anything that's come before it', which I would consider plotting like a sequel or threequel rather than plotting a trilogy as an integrated whole: the three individual texts and the fourth overarching narrative together. Understanding the difference

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[1]   *The Last Exodus* (2012), *The Exiled Earthborn* (2013), *The Sons of Sora* (2016).

between trilogy and threequel structures will be useful for resolving the problems with my third text.

There are common descriptions of trilogy that may prove useful to describe the problems with my third text and provide a more nuanced understanding of the form. They are 'planned and unplanned' trilogies, two-part trilogies and trilogy creep. The first description is often used to describe how trilogies were created: was it conceived at the outset or developed over a period of time? The latter two are both defined by TV-tropes.com and are useful to describe common phenomena with the form: 'trilogy creep' refers to a trilogy expanding beyond three texts and two-part trilogies occur when the second and third texts are more like a single text split to meet time concerns. An unplanned trilogy can lead a creator into creating either a two-part trilogy or render their trilogy susceptible to trilogy creep. If a trilogy expands beyond three texts, is it still a trilogy?

The problem with *Eorthan*

Chapter One described the problems with my second text (*Morea*) and their resolution through a research-assisted restructure. In two ways, I referred to my third text: (1) I noted that the third text had no 'issues' similar to my second text, and I felt I could write it out in full at its current state of development; (2) I moved five chapters from *Eorthan* (third text) into *Morea* (second text). In order to balance my trilogy texts, I adopted an arbitrary number of chapters. This meant that restructuring *Morea* obliged me to also revisit the structure of *Eorthan.* The figure below illustrates how I approached my third text to assess its narrative structure through the chapters. I used the drafts in Scrivener and Ulysses writing programs. While I expected to find fewer than 33 chapters, when I mapped out the chapters, there were close to 40.
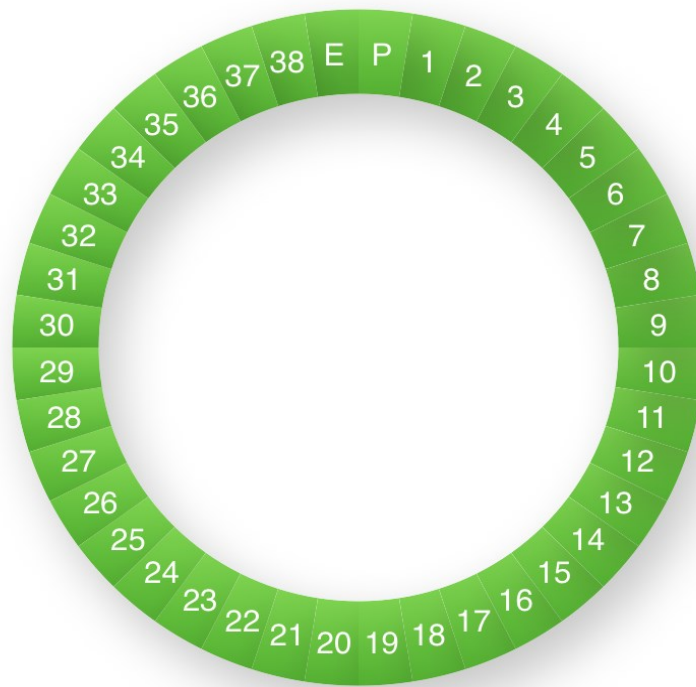
Figure 18: The problem with my third text

My second text was underdeveloped. Conversely, my third text had a greater proportion of my trilogy narrative than it should. One possible reason for this is how the third text is structured chronologically. The first two-thirds of *Eorthan* take place before *Sora* and *Morea*. The final third, or the climactic sections, of *Eorthan* take place after *Morea.*[2] The figure below illustrates this non-linear structure.

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2   This is similar to two trilogies: Kevin Kwon's *Crazy Rich Asians Trilogy* (2013, 2015 and 2017), first he had the idea for the third book in the trilogy and wrote two books to precede the third to create the trilogy; Leigh Janiak's *Fear Street Trilogy* (2021), based on the books by R.L. Stine, aired on Netflix after this thesis was examined in June 2021.
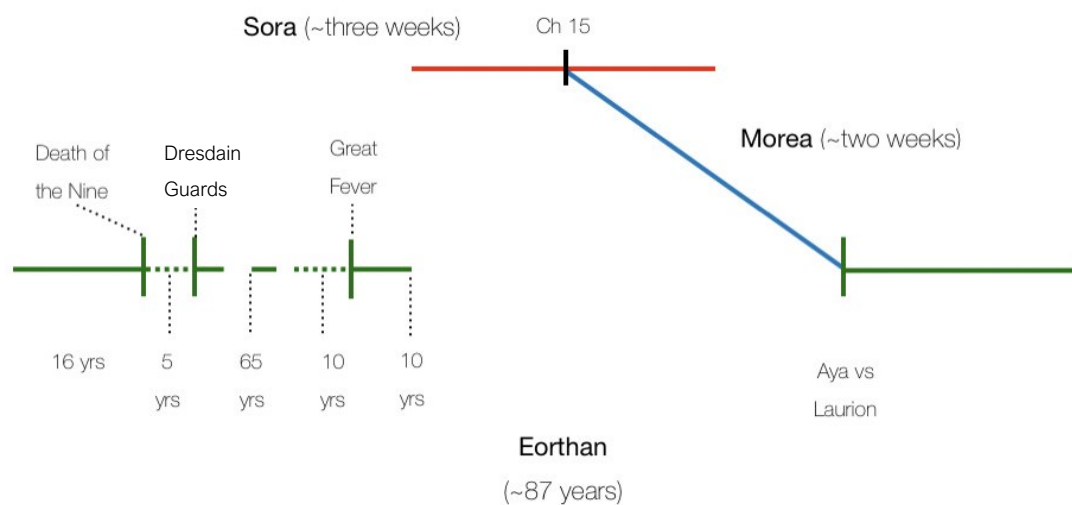
Figure 19: *The Story of Eorthan* chronological structure.

The chronological structure shows that, in terms of my proposed fourth text trilogy structure, the beginning and middle of the fourth text were contained within my third trilogy text. My fourth text is not a linear narrative. Considering Jess-Cooke's assertion of balancing dramatic acts in the individual texts with the acts of what I call the fourth text (2009:5), before this project my fourth text had developed so that the fourth structure did not balance evenly across the individual texts of my trilogy. It was almost solely contained within the third text. This realisation was achieved using Linda Aronson's action and relationship lines from *The 21st Century Screenplay* (2010) to sketch my trilogy. It was a thought experiment and a way to understand Aronson's mode, but it was instrumental in creating a different vantage point and understanding the structural changes needed. Resolving the issues with my third text would mean not only replotting the third text but also replotting, or plotting as it were, my fourth text across my three individual trilogy texts: *Sora* (1), *Morea* (2) and *Eorthan* (3). This alteration would not be possible had I written and published *Sora* and *Morea* before finalising *Eorthan*. Writing a planned trilogy enables me to plot changes that are not available to a creator of an unplanned trilogy.

Planned and unplanned

The terms 'planned' and 'unplanned' have been used to describe trilogy, such as in Wes Craven's *Scream 2*. In a film studies class, Rory states that 'sequels suck' and the original is

always better. The class then attempts to name a sequel that has 'surpassed the original'. George Lucas' *Empire Strikes Back* is an example of Rory states 'not a sequel. Part of a trilogy. Completely planned' (1997). Perkins and Verevis also use 'accidental' or 'organic' to describe the opposite of planned trilogies (2012:1). These are relatively new terms to trilogy; because all Ancient Greek trilogies were planned.[3] These terms are useful to describe trilogy structure as they can denote how outside influences, such as industry conventions or the passing of time, can alter the narrative form.

However, 'planned' and 'unplanned' are not adequately defined or described in the literature. For example, a creator may have the idea for a trilogy, but they may not get the full funding until the first film is released and successful.[4] Is this a planned or an unplanned trilogy? It would have a different effect on the structure than the case of a creator who decided on making a trilogy after two texts had been created. From this point, I will use the terms in the following way: a planned trilogy is either conceived or developed from the outset. In an unplanned trilogy, the creator (or others, such as critics or industry) decides to make a trilogy after the first text has been made or published.

Why *The Dark Knight Trilogy?*

Christopher Nolan did not plan to create a trilogy of Batman films (Nolan cited in Pourroy 2012). Rather the films were created and conceived of 'individually' to 'see what became of them in the end' (2012:22). Nevertheless, all three films were a commercial and critical success. Using Nolan's work as a case study I will explore unplanned trilogy structure as an analytical exercise. In doing so, I hope to showcase not only another way of creating a trilogy but, through contrast, understand my process for structuring and drafting the form.

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3   Three playwrights were given the opportunity to premiere their entire trilogy in a single day at the annual Dionysia festival.

4   As was the case with the Wachowskis' *The Matrix Trilogy* (1999-2003). The second two *Matrix* films were shot back-to-back, as was Gore Verbinski's *Pirates of the Caribbean 2* and *3*, and Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future Part II* and *Part III*.

While Nolan did not plan a trilogy, he was able to draw on Batman franchise material, specifically key comics, such as Frank Miller's *Year One* (1987); Allen Moore's *The Killing Joke* (1998); Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *The Long Halloween* (1996-7); and the two long-running cross-title series collected together as *Knightfall* and *No Man's Land*.[5] Nevertheless, Nolan's trilogy stands as distinct within the Batman franchise, which contains two Tim Burton and two Joel Schumacher films before it, and the recent Justice League and *The Batman* films. Nolan's work also challenges the over reliance of 'three' to define trilogy. If a trilogy can exist as a distinct narrative structure within a franchise, there must be another aspect or structure at play to define the trilogy as distinct from other multi-text narratives.

More than three times

Trilogy structure is more than just 'three times'.[6] Yet, it is often the focal point of questioning trilogy structure or why people create trilogies. Jack Bratich, in his editor's introduction 'What is a Trilogy?' notes that a trilogy triples the possibility of a text (2011:345). Perkins and Verevis denote industrial trilogies, such as *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Matrix* as 'planned tripartite exercises' (2012:2) and state that their edited work seeks to examine the 'plasticity of the form and the value the evocation of the number three brings to a set of films' (2012:1-2). By focusing on the number three as a determining aspect of the form, and by extension its structure, the essential nature of trilogy is obscured. Trilogy structure is more than just three texts. It is three individual narratives as well as a connecting structure. This concept can be readily understood by comparing trilogy and threequel structures. A threequel does not have a fourth text.

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[5]   Perkins and Verevis consider trilogies as an 'Industrial' category in their edited work *Film Trilogies* (2012). They use this category to define trilogies without a single 'author' or 'creator' and as such, could be considered 'franchises'. In *The Frodo Franchise* (2007), Kristen Thompson gives an in depth overview of the industrial forces at play in the development of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. In this project, I am interested in how external forces may influence trilogy structure, but I limit the discussion of franchises to this aspect. Other works of note on franchise studies include Amanda Klein's *Film Cycles* (2011), Amanda Klein and R. Barton Palmer's edited work *Cycles, Sequels, Spin-offs, Remakes, and Reboots* (2016), and Dan Golding's *Star Wars after Lucas: A Critical Guide to the Future of the Galaxy* (2019).

[6]   This is the title of Perkins and Verevis' introduction in *Film Trilogies* (2012).

In 2009, Dan Meth produced an infographic called *The Trilogy Meter* in which he measures the 'success' of each text within the trilogy 'rated purely on my enjoyment level of each film and nothing else'. He continues, 'frankly, I'm surprised by how many sequels were better than the original. And I'm not surprised that the 3rd movie is never the best' (2009). However, most of the 'trilogies' Meth plots have a threequel structure rather than a trilogy structure.
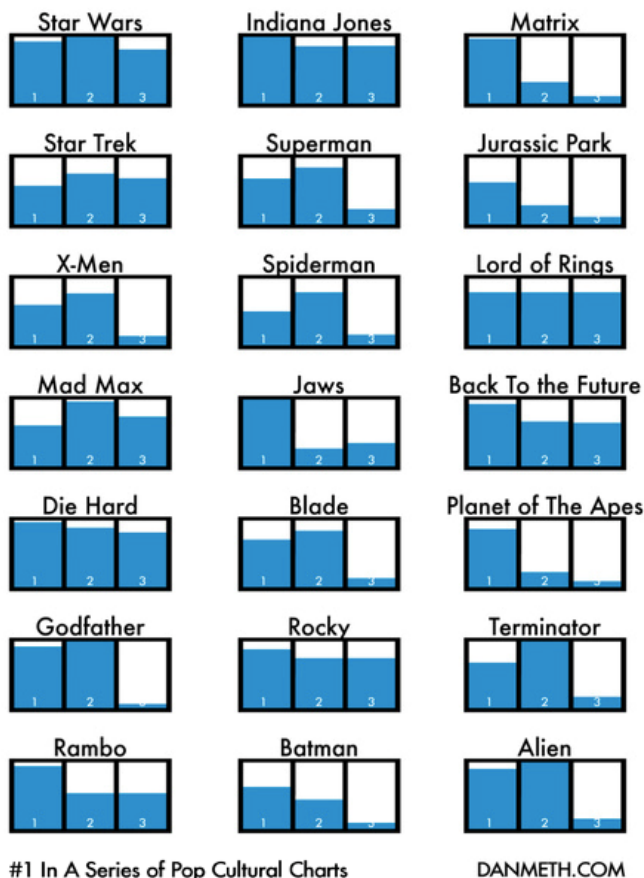
Figure 20: Dan Meth's Trilogy Meter[7]

Some trilogies he ranks are *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Back to the Future*, and *The Godfather*. In the following section, I will plot these five trilogies using other rating metrics, such as IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes, as a means to explore the difference between a threequel and trilogy. Specifically, I argue that trilogy structure exists on a spectrum between a three-volume structure and a threequel. Trilogy has a dual structure. It is both a whole

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[7]   See Appendix 1 for the full breakdown of Meth's graphs and a detailed exploration of other ratings – IMDB, Rotten Tomatoes: Critics and Audience scores, to augment Meth's infographic.

interconnected text and three individual narratives. This structure is what gives trilogy its dynamic narrative potential.

'Threequelisation'[8]

> One becomes two; two becomes three; and out of the third comes the
> fourth
>
> 'Axiom of Maria', in alchemical literature

The above quotation opens Christopher Booker's 'The Rule of Three' chapter in his book *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (2007:229) on the importance of three in storytelling: three witches, three bears, three billy goats. Three also forms the earliest proposed basic structure of a story: Aristotle's beginning, middle and end (Poetics, c. 335 BCE). Three is a defining feature of trilogy, yet it is not the only feature that distinguishes it from other forms of multi-text narratives. Other forms also rely on the numerical distinction: the three-volume novel, threequel and triptych. The first was discussed in Chapter One. Here I turn my attention to the difference between threequel and trilogy. I demonstrate that the distinction between threequel and trilogy is structural rather than purely semantic, adding further nuance to the latter.

To a critic, a reader or a reviewer, the distinction between a threequel and a trilogy is perhaps less important, but for a creative practitioner, it is essential. In *Film Trilogies*, Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis note the 'plasticity' of the trilogy form and the power that evoking 'the number three brings to a set of films' (2012:1-2). Broadening their scope to all the possibilities that 'three' brings to understanding films allows a wide-ranging discourse of myriad forms, even to the point of the critic becoming an author of the 'trilogy' they are discussing. Yet, such encapsulating critiques obscure the narrative possibilities and make it more challenging to understand trilogy structure for a creative practitioner.

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[8]   This term is borrowed from Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis' *Second Takes* (2012). I use this instead of 'threequel' as a title to show that the tendency to define trilogy as only defined by three is demonstrated by many stakeholders, such as trilogy or threequel creators, publishing editors and studio executives, as well an audiences or readers.

Sequel

There are disconnected debates concerning the definitions, classifications, and differences between a sequel, series and threequel. In his monograph *The Hollywood Sequel*, Stephen Henderson notes that 'we have to accept that sequel status is a historically dynamic designation, and that the boundaries of any definition between the sequel, the series, the serial and the saga will always be highly porous' (Henderson 2014:5). Perkins and Verevis also note that 'within the broad categories of sequels and series, the film trilogy is a form that is practised and perceived as distinct' (2012:1), but they do not elaborate exactly *how*. There are enough structural similarities between these terms such that trilogy, threequel and three-volume novel exist on a structural spectrum.

In her monograph *Film Sequels,* Carolyn Jess-Cooke defines the sequel from the Latin for 'to follow' and that it 'usually performs as a linear narrative expansion, designing the text from which it derives as an "original" rooted in "beforeness"' (2009:3). She notes the distinguishing features of the sequel are 'repetition, difference, history, nostalgia, memory and audience interactivity' (2009:6). Daniel Herbert phrases it another way, noting that a sequel is typically a 'second film in a series or more generally can mean any film that continues a story of a previous film' (2017:11). Sequels can go on seemingly without limit. Trilogies are finite.

Sequence Novel

In studies on novel trilogies, researchers have determined they arose from sequence novels. Ausmus references Joseph Warren Beach's work *The Twentieth Century Novel* (1932) for his references on the sequence novel. Beach, in turn, refers to Elizabeth Kerr's unpublished Master's thesis, which I was unable to locate (1932:247). However, in a subsequent publication Elizabeth Kerr defines the form in the following way: a 'sequence novel is used to designate a series of closely related novels that were originally published as separate, complete novels but that as a series from an artistic whole, unified by structure and themes that involve more than the recurrence of characters and some continuity of action (1950:3). In her thesis on Robertson Davies, Lihua Gui develops the history of the sequence novel and notes that the 'English trilogy emerged together with the European novel sequence, a comprehensive term referring to novels written in series, such as trilogy, tetralogy or series of more than four volumes' (1998:5). His trilogies demonstrate knowledge of Ancient Greek

drama. Gui fails to explore the fact that Davies was a playwright before becoming a novelist. Instead, she establishes the sequence novel as the basis for Davies' trilogy structure, but without exploring the potential impact of dramatic structure on his trilogies, Gui misses the potential link between novel trilogies and dramatic trilogies. If her aim was to establish how Davies is 'innovative' in his use of the form, her analysis of his technique is limited due to her narrow focus. Gui's approach was part of the reason why this research drew on trilogy examples and literature from a broad cross-section of media, genre and history. My research approach aligns with Carolyn Jess-Cooke in *Film Sequels,* she links the production of early film sequels to contemporary sequence novels in the late 19th and early-20th century, to Christopher Marlow plays and to Homer's poems (2009:2-3, 17).

Series

For Jess-Cooke, while 'the sequel champions difference, progress and excess', series 'defy change' (2009:5). The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines a series from the Latin 'row or continuous line' as 'having certain features in common, published successively or intended to be read in sequence'. In *The Legend Returns and Dies Harder Another Day*, Jennifer Forrest distinguishes sequels from series by noting that the sequel occurs 'in a semblance of real time' whereas the series seemingly 'belongs to an eternal present' (2008:7). Forrest's definition of series as temporarily fixed aligns with Umberto Eco's definition in his book *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990). Eco says, 'the series works upon a fixed situation … [it will] give the impression that the new story is different from the preceding ones while, in fact, the narrative scheme does not change' (1990:86).

Daniel Herbert phrases it another way: a series is a 'term from films or tester texts that tell ongoing, continuous stories in the same diegesis or story world, without indicating when that story may end; hypothetically, a series can go on forever' (2017:11). For Jess-Cooke, never-ending qualities are part of a sequel; they 'are transitional, not conclusive. By definition, the sequel has no end; it is a perpetual diegesis with which consumer can engage as many times in as many ways as possible' (2009:8).

Series or Sequel?

For Herbert, 'the terms "series" and "sequel" can be used interchangeably by critics and still be understood by general readers' (2017:32). However, Henderson categorises the series and sequel differently:

> The distinction between the sequel and the serial is more overtly marked, although the difference here is less one of narrative form than it is of the content of distribution and consumption. Like the sequel, an individual episode within a serial tends to explicitly follow or build from events in previous episodes. Unlike the sequel, however, whether printed in a newspaper, shown at a cinema, or broadcast on a radio or television, the serial format is defined by its regular and relatively frequent supply for short episodes (2014:4).

I agree with Henderson here because he offers a structural difference in the modes of storytelling. One might compare a film sequel to novelisation in television (see Iannellio & Batty 2021; Mittell 2015; Sotoris 2020) compared to a procedural series such as a detective or hospital drama. Such structures are beyond the scope of this work, but they offer a useful distinction between the terms series and sequel that align with Forrest's 'eternal present' narratives.

Threequel

Formed by combining three with 'sequel', from the Latin 'to follow,' the OED defines threequel as 'the third of a sequence of films, a second sequel; the third book, event, etc., in a series'. It opens space for the question: why is an additional or new term required? Are the myriad of terms such as series, sequel, sequence novel, trilogy, chronicle and saga not enough? Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Con Verevis, in their edited volume *Second Takes*, note that in the threequel, as opposed to trilogy, the third instalment 'does not close the series' (2012:3); a threequel refuses 'to end a sequential narrative, and by implicit suggestion that a fourth instalment might be possible' (2012:1).

Daniel Herbert says of the threequel and the trilogy:

Whether linked by narrative or theme, as a production strategy or as a

critical and audience category, film trilogies have a sequential nature of

series and sequels but have a limit – until someone makes a fourth

instalment, confusing the entire situation yet again (2017:34).

As a relative neologism, the term threequel has arisen because of a plotting structure difference between the trilogy and a collection of three sequels. While the threequel is defined as the third text, here I expand the term to mean a collection of three works that are not connected by a narrative structure. A threequel does not have a fourth text, and its absence allows a threequel to refuse an ending and enables a fourth instalment. Examples such as *Toy Story* or *Mission: Impossible* were at one time trilogies but have been expanded without needing to reboot or change the franchise. When a fourth instalment is introduced, a true trilogy structure will reveal itself: either the three previous works will remain distinct from the new instalment, or the original trilogy status is dissolved.[9] In the latter case, only the number three defined the 'trilogy' or threequel.

Spider-Man as threequel

Why is the distinction between threequel and trilogy important? A real-world illustration of the importance of a creative practitioner to understand the structural differences between a threequel and a trilogy can been illustrated unpacking Henderson's assertion that there is no difference between *The Lord of the Rings* – a trilogy – and Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* – a threequel (2014:4). His rationale is stated in full below:

while it is important to distinguish between a preconceived trilogy such as

The Lord of the Rings and one which was created ad hoc, the manner in

which the narratives of *The Two Towers* (2002) and *The Return of the King*

(2003) are interlinked is not fundamentally different from the manner in

---

[9]   The fourth instalment is either a reboot or remake. Such as Wes Craven's *Scre4m* draws on the reboot in their meta-narrative. In this film, Sydney's young cousin is revealed to be the killer. She was trying to re-create Sydney's experience to become the famous victim. Conversely, *Toy Story 4* seamlessly continued the narrative from *Toy Story 3*.

which *Spider-Man 2* (2003) and *Spider-Man 3* (2007) function in relation to

Spider-Man (2002).

Indeed, both *The Lord of the Rings* and *Spider-Man* can be considered sequel structures, but the distinguishing factor between these two is the inclusion or absence of a fourth text. While *The Lord of the Rings* is a trilogy, Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* is a threequel. The final film of this set of Spider-Man films did not prevent the possibility of the fourth text, Raimi was planning a fourth film before he departed from the franchise (Agar 2019). There is no connecting narrative between the three Raimi Spider-Man texts.

Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* is a unique trilogy and it is not ideal to compare it to other trilogies for two reasons: (1) it was adapted from a single novel and (2) the three films were written, filmed and produced together.[10] There are few examples of trilogies that have had that luxury, or indeed, novelists who can write their trilogy in full before publishing. It is more useful to compare like with like.

Spider-Man is a well-storied character with multiple film, tv and comic book series. Batman has a similar profile as a franchise character.[11] Sam Raimi's Spider-Man threequel and Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* can be compared for a nuanced difference between their structural forms. Both have the same director for each of the films and both feature a single character. However, the third texts – *Spider-Man 3* and *The Dark Knight Rises,* reveal a crucial distinction. Christopher Nolan links the villains Bane to The League of Shadows, and therein connects his antagonist to the first film, which allows Bruce Wayne to revisit his choice of becoming Batman. Conversely, Raimi's Sandman is 'ret-conned' as the real killer of Uncle Ben. 'Ret-con' is an abbreviation for retroactive continuity. This term stems from comic book narratives and refers to 'a literary device in which the form or content of a previously established narrative is changed' (Merriam-Webster 'A Short History of Retcon'

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[10]   There is only one other example that replicates the narrative and industrial process of *The Lord of the Rings,* and that is *The Hobbit*, but an analysis of those trilogies will be included in future research.

[11]   From Merriam-Webster online dictionary, a franchise is 'a series of related works (such as novels or films) each of which includes the same characters or different characters that are understood to exist and interact in the same fictional universe with characters from other works' (accessed 2021).

n.d.). Changing Uncle Ben's murderer utterly undermines the premise of Peter becoming Spider-Man – over the guilt for his role in his uncle's death – and thus undermines the connective elements of the threequel. Ret-conning is detrimental to the trilogy as it disrupts the integrity of the fourth text.

The disrupted narrative integrity of the fourth text in *Spider-Man 3* may explain why Dan Meth was so unsatisfied with this third text (see Figure 20). Dan Meth plotted the success of 'trilogies' in his infographic according to his impressions of the films. Yet, only five of the 'trilogies' were structured as actual trilogies. The rest, including *Spider-Man*, have a threequel structure. This success factor was Meth's opinion, and his conclusions denounced the third text (2009). Hence, the remaining trilogies are Lucas' *Star Wars*,[12] the Wachowski siblings' *Matrix Trilogy*,[13] Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*, Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy, and Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future*. I have plotted the review scores from IMBD and Rotten Tomatoes (Critic and Audience) in the following diagrams.
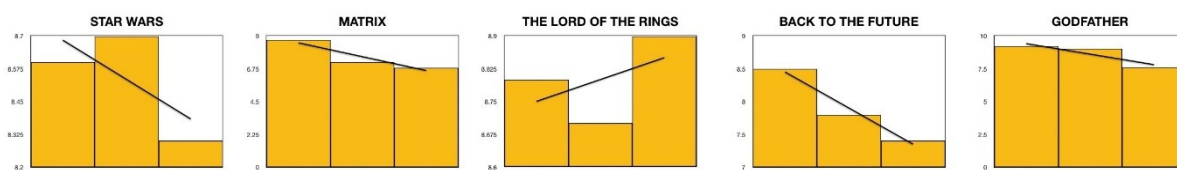
Figure 21: Dan Meth Trilogies with IMDB metrics
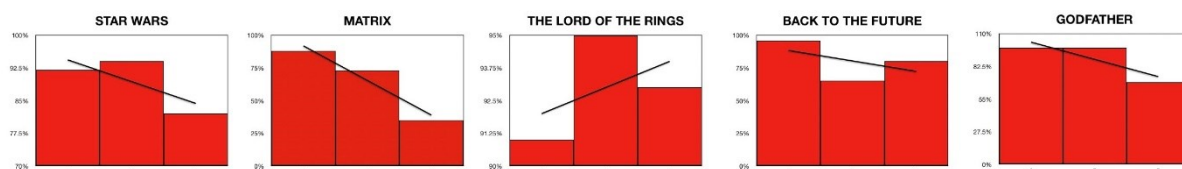
Figure 22: Dan Meth Trilogies with Rotten Tomatoes Metrics – Critics

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[12]   He only directed the first Star Wars of the original trilogy, but this serves as a shorthand of referring to the authorship of the different trilogies in the *Skywalker Saga*. They are not the main texts under consideration.

[13]   As of the time of writing, a fourth *Matrix*, written and directed by Lana Wachowski and starring Keanu Reaves, is in production and due to be released in 2022.
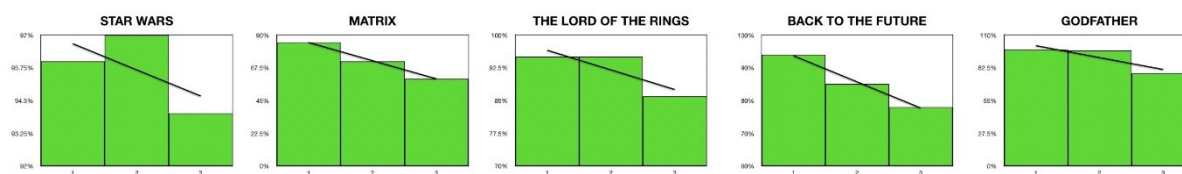
Figure 23: Dan Meth Trilogies with Rotten Tomatoes Metrics – Audience

For IMBD and Rotten Tomatoes (critic), all but *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy have a downward trend; and in the Rotten Tomatoes (audience) scores, they all have a downward trend, as evidenced by the trend lines. It is interesting to note that these graphs are similar to Meth's assessment. A full reckoning of the different metrics is beyond the focus of this thesis. Yet his approach is like another readily available resource for trilogy creators: *Empire Magazine's* article entitled 'The 33 Greatest Movie Trilogies'. Since its publication in 2010, many of those on the list have new sequels/series in the works, such as *Mission: Impossible*, *Terminator* and *Spider-Man,* to name a few. What this means is that they were temporary trilogies, only classified as such until a fourth instalment was released. Closer interrogation of these new instalments reveals whether they fit into the trilogy or threequel structure. Is the trilogy structure maintained after a new instalment? For example, with *Star* Wars, the subsequent films were part of their own trilogy. This can be contrasted with the *Mission: Impossible*, for which the first three films are in no way distanced from the ever-expanding franchise. In the *Empire* article, there are seventeen trilogies and eighteen threequels. The full list can be found in Appendix 2.

Illustrating the threequel

Michael DC Drout noted in his lectures on Tolkien that while *The Lord of the Rings* was not a trilogy, it could be 'read' as a trilogy (2012). However, a three-volume novel is a format. It has a single narrative structure that is split for reasons of length. In comparison, a threequel is three separate texts that lack a connecting fourth text which is finite. Henderson notes that 'most sequels can be placed somewhere in the middle of a spectrum of causation ranging from close-know to their predecessors to those only loosely connected' (2014:118). It can be expressed in terms of a structural continuum, where the three-volume novel (or single text) is at one end, and threequel or three stories are collected together in three because there are currently three in the series. Trilogy sits in the middle.
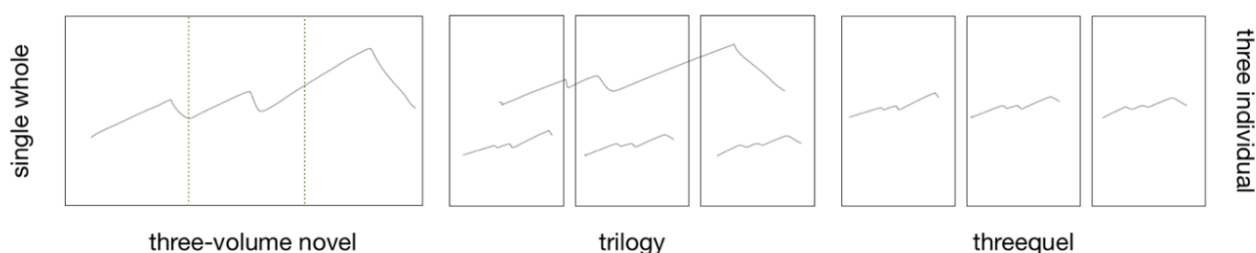
Figure 24: Three-volume novel, trilogy and threequel structural continuum

There are some trilogies that, due to the nature of the individual texts' connections, may be structurally more similar to a three-volume novel (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings*) and others that, due to the nature of their fourth text (i.e. a more tenuous narrative), may tend towards a threequel (e.g. Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future Trilogy*).

Trilogy of Trilogies

Trilogy has a dual structure of three individual texts connected by a fourth, is more nuanced than a numerical designation, and can also be detected in series that have gone beyond their original three texts. Derek Landy's *Skulduggery Pleasant* series is, as he has said, nine books structured as three trilogies (now four). It is the same structure used by John Galsworthy in *Forsyte* and Lucasfilms' *Skywalker Saga.*[14]

Speaking at the Children's Literature Festival London in 2012, Derek Landy said that he changes genre in each text in his trilogies of trilogies. The first book is a detective story, the second draws on gothic fiction (Frankenstein and Dracula), while the third deals with parallel universes. Changing genres between the texts serves as a rationale to consider trilogy as a structural form before even considering the form with different genres (hence this PhD). As this example hints, a future study that examines how genre – fantasy, sci-fi, dystopia, historical-fiction – interacts with trilogy would benefit from establishing trilogy first as a form.

In the preface to the 1994 reissue of the novel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*, George Lucas says that the Skywalker Saga could span nine films in total. He has been quoted elsewhere as

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[14]   The collective name for all three existing *Star Wars* trilogies.

saying it could be as long as 12 films. In 2019, *Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker* concluded the Skywalker Saga (at least for the time being). Each of these is structured as a distinct trilogy: the Prequel trilogy plots Anakin's downfall, the Original trilogy the story of Luke, and the Sequel trilogy their children and grandchildren. These are examples where the trilogy has been used as a strategic structure, which adds to the argument that the form is more than a simple act of having three texts.

Therefore, rather than 'reading' texts as trilogy, a creator seeks to understand the form in contrast with other forms of multi-text narrative that use the number three as a distinguishing feature. By taking this approach, a more nuanced understanding of trilogy structure can be derived. Understanding the narrative difference between a threequel (that refuses to 'end') and a trilogy that concludes its fourth connecting text in the third instalment can assist a creator in structuring their trilogy and avoiding potential pitfalls, such as a 'two-part trilogy' or 'trilogy-creep' as I will discuss after *The Dark Knight Trilogy* case study.

The difference between a threequel and a trilogy also links to the notion of 'planned' and 'unplanned' trilogy. It makes sense in terms of structure as the fourth text binds a trilogy together. If a trilogy is unplanned or conceived as a threequel structure, the fourth text may be unplanned or absent. The absence of a fourth text (in a threequel structure) or an underdeveloped fourth text may hint at Meth, Tassi, Ifeagwu, and Zim and Lee's dissatisfaction with their third text. Christopher Nolan is quoted as saying he did not 'plan' a trilogy. Therefore, his Batman trilogy makes an ideal case study to understand how a trilogy functions within a larger series or franchise.

The Dark Knight Trilogy

Film director Tim Burton planned a Batman trilogy: *Batman* (1989), *Batman Returns* (1992), and the rumoured 'Batman Continues' (Canfield 2017). The next director, Joel Schumacher, also planned a trilogy *Batman Forever* (1995), *Batman & Robin* (1997), and the unmade 'Batman Triumphant' (Welch 2011). Conversely, in reaction to these previous directors, Christopher Nolan did not plan *The Dark Knight Trilogy*.[15] In Nolan's introduction to the published scripts, he says he could not 'imagine having done them as one project' (Nolan 2012). He means that in a sense they could not have developed *The Dark Knight Trilogy* in a similar way to Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*. In Jesser & Pourroy's *The Art and Making of The Dark Knight Trilogy*, Nolan adds that the only way to create the films was to make them individually and see what became of them at the end (2012:22).

Source material

One advantage of developing a Batman trilogy in this way that other unplanned trilogies do not have is a rich 80-year storied history.[16] Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* does not exist in isolation. There are film and television adaptions before and after Nolan's trilogy, and it firmly resides within the Batman franchise.[17] This is important for two reasons. First, the films are distinct from the rest of the franchise, and its trilogy structure defines those borders. Second, as an unplanned trilogy and an adaptation, there was a wealth of pre-published material from which the writers could draw.

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[15]   *Batman Begins* (2006), *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012).

[16]   Batman was created by artist Bob Kane and writer Bill Finger, Batman first appeared in Detective Comics #27 in 1939 (McMillian 2015). He was originally intended as a competitor to Action Comics' *Superman*.

[17]   Znyder's Justice League films and the newly announced *The Batman* starting Robert Pattinson from director Mark Reeves.

Together with real-life influences, there are key comics that Nolan and the other

screenwriters chose to draw on when creating his unplanned trilogy.[18] Peter Gutierrez

provides a useful summary in his study guide on the trilogy:

> **Batman Begins**
> Frank Millers *Batman Year One* (1987)
>
> **The Dark Knight**
> Allen Moore's *The Killing Joke* (1988)
> Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *The Long Halloween* (1996-7)
>
> **The Dark Knight Rises**
> The story arc now collected as the trilogy *Knightfall* (1993-4)[19]
> *No Man's Land* (1999)[20]

In this case study, I will explore Nolan's story development process, especially the source

material of the comics, to establish how a creator approaches the fundamental structure of

trilogy as he developed each text. I hypothesise that while this trilogy was 'unplanned', Nolan

and his team nevertheless thought about the direction of their Batman films. Their trilogy

premise, combined with a rich pre-existing story world and Nolan's storytelling style, allowed

them to create a well-rounded and successful trilogy.

Hero's journey approach to trilogy

Before I begin the structural analysis, it is useful to introduce another story development

model with which I can use to demonstrate how *The Dark Knight Trilogy* texts work together

as a trilogy. The hero's journey was first developed by Joseph Campbell and later expanded to

screenwriting by Christopher Vogler. Stuart Voytilla used this model to analyse George Lucas'

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[18]   David S. Goyer contributed to all three screenplays and Jonathan Nolan to the latter two.

[19]   *Knightfall*, was originally published in many different Batman titles produced by DC: Batman, Catwoman and Night Wing for example. Subsequently, it was printed in three omnibus editions: *Knightfall*, *Knightsquest* and *KnightsEnd* and called a trilogy. Yet its story structure is more akin to a three-volume novel rather than a trilogy.

[20]   A four-volume collection of a crossover story event. This means the events of *No Man's Land* take place in different comic book titles, e.g. in Batman, Catwomen and Nightwing comics. I phrase it in this way as there are at least 20 authors and comic book artists too numerous to name, unlike the previous comics in this list.

Star Wars. In his analysis, Voytilla proposed that Luke Skywalker undertook a single hero's journey over the course of the original trilogy (1999:290).[21] While this can be seen as an acknowledgement of the fourth text, it is nevertheless a limited reading of the form and compresses trilogy structure into a single text, rather than a work comprised of three individual texts connected by a fourth, much like David Grene does with Aschylus' *Oresteia*. This reading, for a creative practitioner, dismisses and diminishes the storytelling potential of the trilogy form. There are multiple narrative structures at work in Nolan's trilogy. For example, Bruce Wayne undergoes a hero's journey in each text.

In his book *Movies that Move Us* (2011), Craig Batty uses Vogler's hero's journey to refine and enhance the 12 steps of the journey in terms of the dual physical and emotional steps. His model will serve as a valuable tool to analyse and understand the physical and emotional journey that Bruce undertakes in each text and how his fourth-text journey is developed as each of the separate texts is created within the trilogy. Rachel Dawes, an invention of Nolan and the other screenwriters, is essential to Bruce's emotional journey across the trilogy. Beyond being a love interest, she links to his past, is a moral compass and a mentor who first drives Bruce to leave Gotham. She is an external representation of Bruce's internal battle with his alter-ego and hence is essential to the emotional journey presented in the fourth text. Therefore, the emotional journey of Bruce is key to understanding how the fourth text is constructed, tying in with Nolan's statement that while they did not necessarily plan a trilogy, they did think about how Bruce's life would progress as Batman (2012:22).

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[21]   Daniel Calvisi and Robert Rich use their model of '12 main dramatic elements' to discuss Christopher Nolan's filmed in *Story Maps: The Films of Christopher Nolan* (2013). However, while this analysis is interesting, it does not discuss how the trilogy works and therefore is less useful as a comparative starting point for my analysis.

Batman Begins

Frank Miller's *Batman Begins* is a seminal work within the comic book franchise. The caped crusader's revamped origin story focuses on his first year as Batman, returning to Gotham after a seven-year absence.[22] Frank Miller omits how Bruce trained to become Batman. This is a key difference between the comic and the film. The inciting incident of Nolan's film is Bruce meeting with his mentor and later antagonist, Ducard.
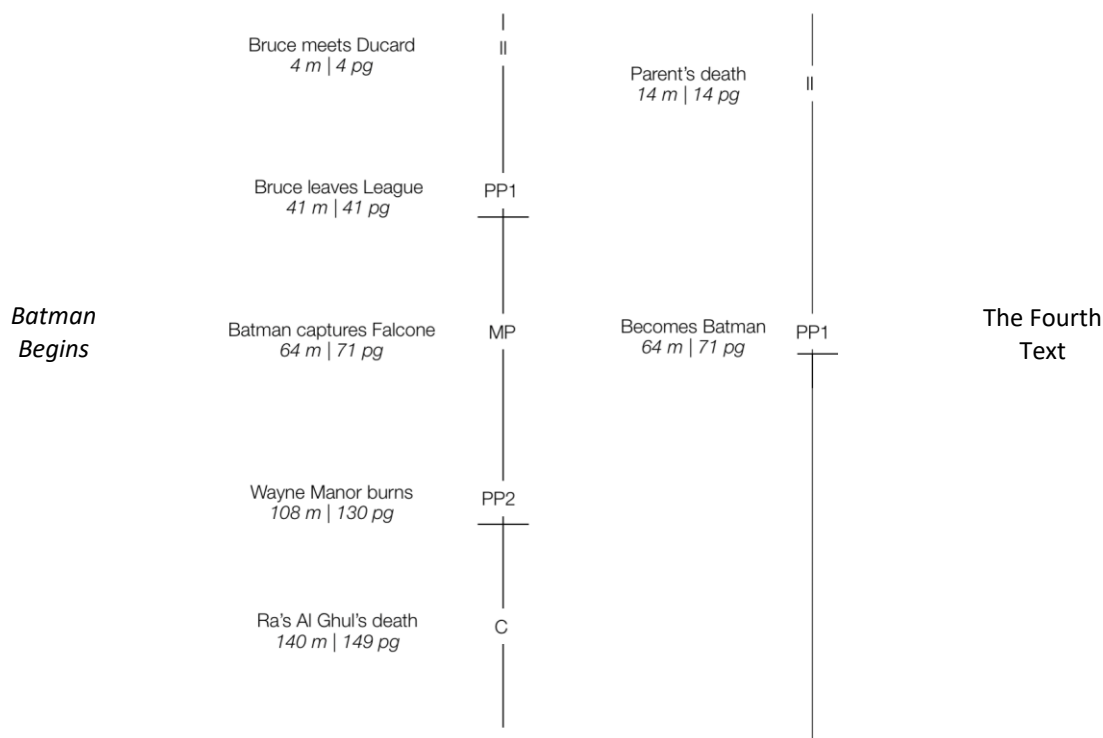
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 25: *Batman Begins* three-act structure

The film opens with Bruce in jail, attempting to understand the criminal underworld he wishes to fight. Bruce has a limited understanding of this world (Batty 2011:90). It is his physical journey. Emotionally, Bruce has a limited understanding of himself: he feels grief and responsibility for his parents' deaths. Bruce is visited by a stranger, Ducard, who offers him

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[22] Catwoman features in this graphic novel, but won't appear in Nolan's trilogy until the third text. The comic concludes with Batman saving Jim Gordon's son in a similar manner to *The Dark Knight* film.

the chance to train to in fighting criminals. At first, Bruce refuses Ducard's call to action. He is reluctant to change. The film then flashes back to Bruce's childhood and his time with his father when he fell down a well, his fear of bats, then the fateful trip to the theatre.

In Miller's *Year One,* the Wayne family attend the cinema and watch *The Mask of Zorro.*[23] However, Nolan alters the show, and this change significantly alters Bruce's motivation as a character. Instead of a film, Bruce and his parents are watching the opera *Mefistofele.* A Faustian story in which a man makes a deal with the devil. Young Bruce is scared by the bats and asks to leave the theatre. Outside his parents are killed. This is a key plotting and structural change that serves two functions, for *Batman Begins* and the fourth text of the trilogy. It reinforces Bruce's fear of bats and makes his inability to control his fear the reason for his parent's deaths. Fear is a key theme of *Batman Begins*: Bruce seeks to make his enemies fear him, and in the final act of the film the League of Shadows induce a drug-fuelled fearful panic in the populace.

The emotional effect of his parents' death and Bruce's assumed responsibility also form a key part of the fourth text. Their death is the inciting incident. Responsibility is a key theme of the next film, *The Dark Knight.*[24] Rather than being inspired by Zorro, Bruce effectively makes a deal with his devil, his darker nature, the 'mask he wears', to become a darker aspect of himself: The Batman. The Bruce Wayne and Batman relationship effectively forms the protagonist and antagonist pairing in the fourth text. Therefore, although this is an unplanned trilogy, aspects of the fourth text are present in the first.

After training with the League of Shadows, Bruce is faced with the final test: killing a man.[25] This is a test, and in refusing the test he makes an enemy out of an ally. He has committed to becoming Batman, but what kind of Batman he will be is still unresolved. Bruce burns down

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[23]   This is similar to the original *Batman* comic volume: Detective Comics issue #27. Zorro, a rich masked vigilante, is one of the influences for Batman.

[24]   Reminiscent of Elliott's assertion of scenes appearing in the first text that will not be fully realised until later texts (1969).

[25]   Christopher Nolan's Batman will not kill and this is a distinction from other representations of the character and one that The Joker will take up in *The Dark Knight*. He will want to make him break his one rule.

the League of Shadows house, but he saves Ducard, after which he returns to Gotham. It is the turning point of the first act. Bruce's time with the League of Shadows is a mini hero's journey. He meets with a mentor, crosses the threshold, approaches the innermost cave and returns to Gotham 'with the elixir'.

Upon returning to Gotham, Bruce enlists several allies – Alfred, Jim Gordon, Rachel Dawes, Lucius Fox – as he creates his batsuit and takes on his first enemy: Jim Falcone, the crime boss. Bruce needs allies to prepare for his big change – becoming the caped crusader and taking up his parents' desire to create a better city. The second act is more action and event-focused rather than exploring Bruce's emotions, such as in the first act. There are many characters to introduce and an action line to continue. Mob bosses are not the real villains of this film; the League of Shadows is, and they plan to destroy Gotham.

The connection between the two groups of villains is revealed when Falcone's legal defence links him to Dr Jonathan Crane (The Scarecrow). Crane has been using his psychiatry to defend the crime bosses in court. When Falcone threatens to talk and Crane poisons him with a fear-inducing hallucinogen. Fear is the primary theme of *Batman Begins* as told by Nolan (2012:22), and each subsequent film similarly has a key theme: chaos and pain, respectively. These themes, together with each film's villains, give them their distinct qualities. As we will see with each of the three-act structures, the plot points are centred on the villains. It is almost as if the plots are antagonist-driven, and these function because the fourth text is structured around the symbiotic relationship between Bruce and Batman.

Scarecrow holds Rachel hostage to draw out Batman. The risk to Rachel's safety represents an 'approach the inmost cave'. It pushes Bruce to his limits and represents his final physical transformation into Batman. He uses 'Bat sonar' to recruit a swarm of bats to disguise his escape.[26] The risk to Rachel, and Alfred's reaction to his 'thrill seeking' behaviour in leading the police on a destructive car chase from Bruce's 'ordeal/attempting big change'. This is to truly confront his 'fear' and either take up his father's legacy to protect the city or fail.

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[26]   The Bat swarm is taken from a panel in Frank Miller's *Year One.*

The fear-inducing hallucinogen linking Crane with the underlying villain of this film, The League of Shadows, resurfaces with a resurrected Ra's Al Ghul/Ducard at the end of Act 2 to burn down Wayne Manor. This scene is Bruce's Approach to the Innermost Cave, his darkest moment. The manor represents his father's legacy and Bruce's shame in playing a role in his parents' deaths. The loss of the manor prepares Bruce to rededicate himself to the change and prevent the effects of the fear-inducing toxin from wreaking havoc in Gotham.

Panic breaks lose in the third act and Batman, with his suit fully realised, attempts to stop the League from destroying Gotham. Bruce saves Rachel again and reveals himself as Batman by echoing her earlier phrase, '...it's not who I am underneath... but what I *do*... that defines me' (2005). After Bruce had confessed to Rachel that he was planning to assassinate his parents' murderer, she told him 'it's not who you are underneath, it's what you do that defines you' (2005). This phrase became a guiding motto of his Batman as he searched for redemption.

The main plot of the first text is resolved when Bruce allows Ducard to plummet to his death as the train crashes into Wayne Tower. In the denouement, Bruce and Rachel talk in the remains of his father's burnt-out house. It symbolises what Rachel makes explicit: Bruce has not really returned from the other world (a subversion) but has instead returned as Batman; his real face is the 'mask he wears'. While Nolan did not plan a trilogy, this moment is both satisfying for an ending. It also leaves the text open to a sequel because it leaves Wayne Manor to be rebuilt, along with improvements to the Batcave and adding the appearance of Joker's calling card at a murder. Bruce decides to continue his role as Batman in working with the police to solve crimes and help round up all the inmates that the League of Shadows released from Arkham Asylum.

The Dark Knight

In the opening eight-minute sequence of *The Dark Knight*, the Joker robs a mobster-controlled bank. This is part of the new ordinary world for Bruce Wayne in which mobsters no longer have absolute control. The corruption in Gotham lingers but is diminished. It is time for Batman to contemplate his legacy – 'I said I wanted to inspire the people' – and potentially hand over his mantle to Harvey Dent – 'he locked up half the city and he did it without wearing a mask.[27] Gotham needs a hero with a face.' It is a test that Bruce/Batman will ultimately fail as the Joker stands in his way.

Nolan's Joker is one side of what I call the 'responsibility triptych'. Like fear in *Batman Begins*, chaos is the main theme of *The Dark Knight* and by extension, who is in charge or who is responsible is key to the structure of the second text. To the Joker, no one is in charge. He is an agent of chaos. For Dent, 'he wants what's fair' and trusts a coin toss or the law, i.e., he thinks that someone must be responsible. Bruce/Batman however, is in charge, feels responsible for his parents' deaths and likewise chooses to take the blame for Dent's actions.

Christopher Nolan's film draws on two key comic book texts: Allen Moore's *The Killing Joke* (1988) – a Joker origin story – and Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *The Long Halloween* (1996-7) – a Harvey Dent/Two-Face origin story. Moore's *The Killing Joke* features both a flashback origin story of the Joker, while in the present, the Joker tries to drive Jim Gordon mad. Nolan omits an origin story for the Joker and, in doing so, renders the character more sinister. Nolan's Joker never answers the question, 'You wanna know how I got these scars?' Nolan lifts two key aspects from the comic: The Joker tries and succeeds in driving Harvey Dent into becoming Two-Face, and Batman ultimately brings in the Joker 'by the book' rather than killing him.

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[27]   This is also the key plot of *Knightfall* where Bruce hands over the Batman mantel to an unworthy successor who he must fight ultimately.

The storyline of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *The Long Halloween* revolves around finding the Holiday Killer.[28] It continues the story of Miller's *Year One*. Gordon, Harvey and Batman make a deal with each other, similar to Nolan's film, to catch the Holiday Killer. In the film, Harvey Dent's campaign – 'I believe in Harvey Dent' – comes from the comic where it overlays the explosion that destroys Gordon's home. The subplot of the comic also focuses on money laundering.

The casting changes can show the unplanned aspects of this trilogy and how it affects the story development. Katie Holmes left the franchise by her own choice, not Nolan's, and needed to be replaced (Guerrasio 2016). It sets out potential narrative continuity issues for the audience, which are not as much of an issue for this trilogy, as with the pre-franchise era Hollywood sequels. This is partly due to how Maggie Gyllenhaal's Rachel is introduced from afar – the audience first sees a photograph of the character. The Joker presents another unplanned plotting issue with the third film: Heath Ledger's untimely death shortly before the release of the second film prompted Nolan to not include the character at all in the third text out of respect for the actor and instead continue Bruce's story with a new set of characters (Nolan in Martin 2012).

From plotting the three-act structure of *The Dark Knight,* it is clear that the first three plot-points (II, PP1 and MP) focus on The Joker and then the narrative pivots to Dent/Two-Face in the final third of the narrative (PP2 and C). The individual texts within this trilogy focus on distinct villains/antagonists, while the emotional journey with Batman and Rachel is used to construct the fourth text. Even so, Bruce Wayne still undergoes a distinct hero's journey in the second text of the trilogy.

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[28]   They murder on holidays such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, Halloween, etc.

Joker robs mob bank
6 m | 6 pg

ll

Joker makes deal with
mob
26 m | 28 pg

PP1

Batman captures Joker
82 m | 83 pg

MP

Rachel's death
236 m | 243 pg

MP

*The Dark
Knight*

The Fourth
Text

Dent becomes Two Face
90 m | 108 pg

PP2

Harvey falls to his death
140 m | 137 pg

C
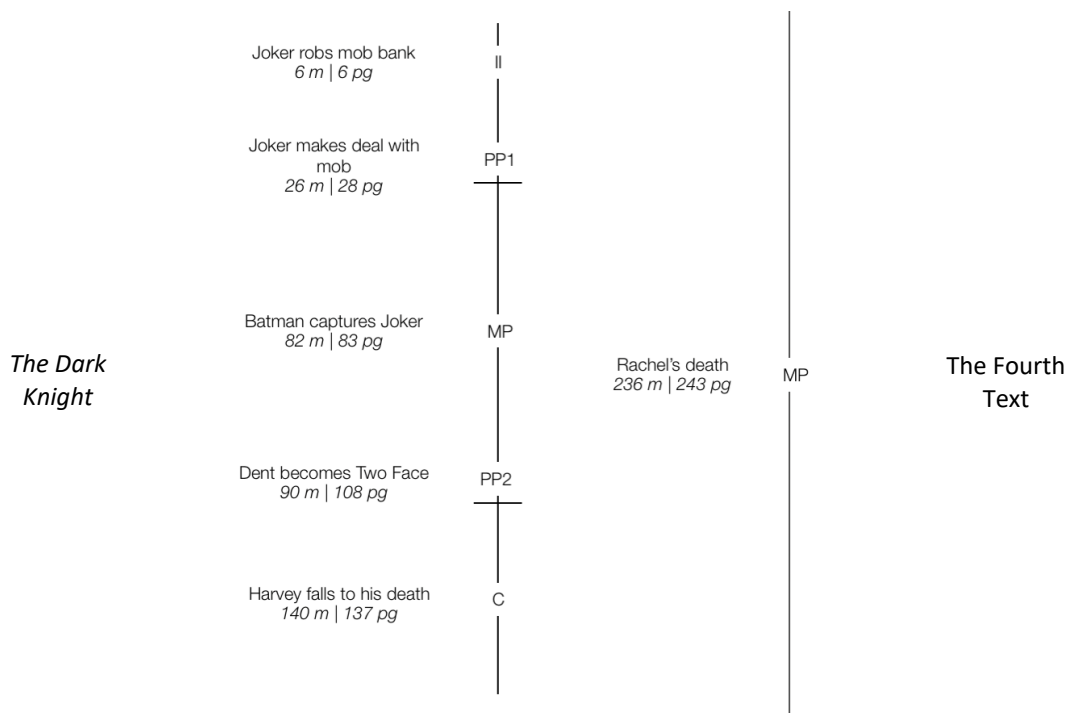
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 26: *The Dark Knight* three-act structure

The Joker robs a mob bank and Bruce Wayne investigates with Jim Gordon. While Bruce and Jim are successful in taking down the mob, they have limited awareness of who their new foe is and what he is capable of. The appearance of the Joker is Bruce's 'call to adventure'. Bruce's reluctance to change is demonstrated in Alfred's assessment of the Joker and the mob:

> **Bruce Wayne** [while in the batcave]: Targeting me won't get their money back. I knew the mob wouldn't go down without a fight, but this is different. They crossed the line.
>
> **Alfred Pennyworth:** You crossed the line first, sir. You squeezed them, you hammered them to the point of desperation. And in their desperation, they turned to a man they didn't fully understand.
>
> **Bruce Wayne:** Criminals aren't complicated, Alfred. Just have to figure out what he's after.
>
> **Alfred Pennyworth:** With respect Master Wayne, perhaps this is a man that *you* don't fully understand, either.

We also see the fourth text aspect of Bruce's narrative in the film's early scenes through Alfred. Bruce has inspired Batman imitators and Alfred suggests that Bruce let them take on the Batman persona. After meeting Harvey Dent, Bruce commits to this suggested change and

possibly retiring as Batman to live his life with Rachel Dawes (Dent and Wayne's shared love interest). In this way, they both have the same goals but different ways of achieving them, so while Dent is the true antagonist of the film, the Joker is the villain or trickster.

Both Jim Gordon and Bruce underestimate the corruption in Gotham and it will cost them dearly. After capturing the Joker, it is revealed that both Rachel and Harvey Dent have been captured. The Joker is determined that Batman will 'break his one rule' and forces him to choose whom to save. The Joker lied about their locations and in trying to save Rachel, Bruce arrives just in time to save Dent. The police are too late to save Rachel. While the capture of The Joker forms the midpoint of the second text, Rachel's death is the 'approach to the inmost cave' and 'the ordeal' for both the second text and the fourth text.

Bruce's road to redemption involves stopping the Joker from forcing innocent people to blow up a ferry. In doing so, Bruce is forced to attack police officers. In his final attempt to master the problem of the Joker, he needs to become 'a silent guardian, a watchful protector, a Dark Knight'. In taking the fall for Dent's crimes, he will be hunted by the police and haunted by his role in turning Harvey Dent into Two-Face. His 'return with the elixir' is to protect Dent's legacy rather than his own.

The Dark Knight Rises

In the third and final film, Gotham becomes isolated from the rest of the world by The League of Shadows (taken from *No Man's Land*). This storyline is combined with events in another comic, *Knightfall.* In *Knightfall,* Bane defeats Batman and breaks Bruce Wayne's back.[29] While these two comic books form the initial premise and some of the action sequences of the third text, Bruce's emotional journey continues from *The Dark Knight*. Eight years have passed since Rachel and Harvey Dent's deaths and Bruce has withdrawn from the world. In *Knightfall*, Bane works alone, but he now works for The League of Shadows in Nolan's film.[30] The villain of *Batman Begins* has returned to finish the work started by Ra's Al Ghul and destroy Gotham once and for all. These are key aspects of Nolan's approach. While he may not have planned a trilogy, in order to construct one, he uses plot points and continues character arcs from the previous films.

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[29]   Like the swarm of bats from *Year One*, this scene is adapted directly from a panel drawing in *Knightfall.*

[30]   Bane is introduced in an eight-minute opening sequence that sets the tone for the film and is reminiscent of The Joker's introductory sequence in *The Dark Knight*.
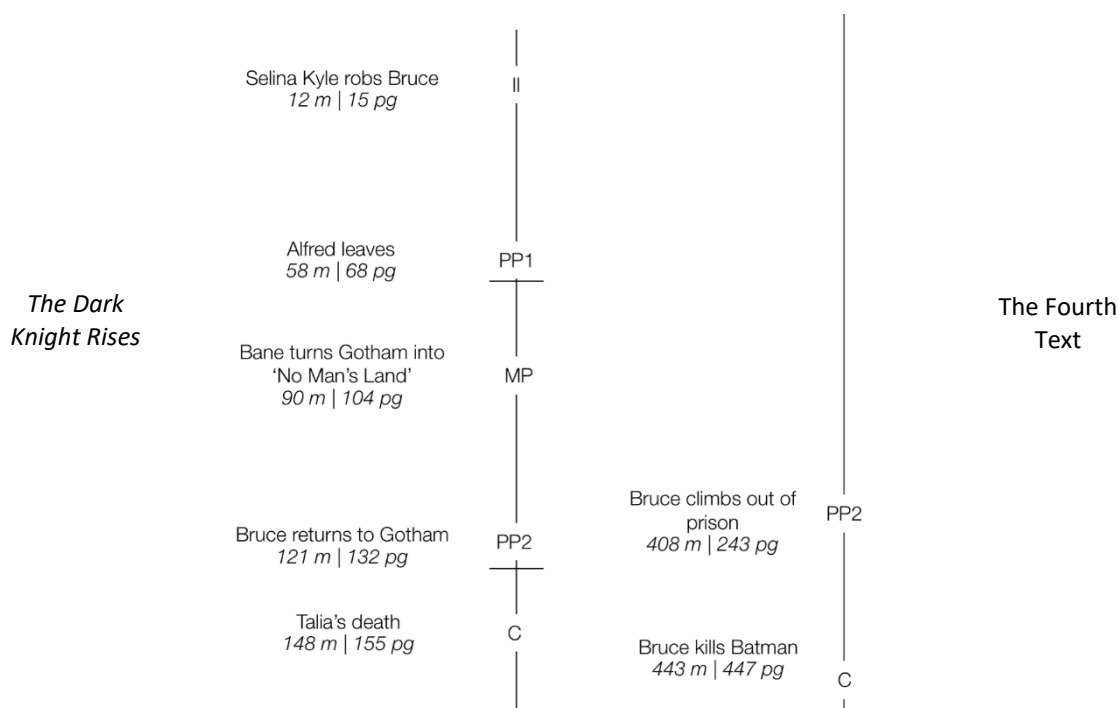
Key: II = Inciting Incident; PP1 = plot point 1; MP = mid-point; PP2 = Plot Point 2; C = Climax.

Figure 27: *The Dark Knight Rises* three-act structure

The third text's inciting incident introduces a new character: Selina Kyle (a.k.a. Catwoman). While she has been featured in all of the comic book sources used for this trilogy, this is her first appearance in this particular collection of films. In robbing Bruce, she acts almost like a new mentor, a 'call to adventure', for Bruce to leave his secluded ordinary world and restart his life emotionally. Alfred echoes this when he stresses that he never wanted Bruce to return to Gotham but wanted Bruce to leave and start anew. Instead, Bruce refuses the call to return to his life as Bruce and instead returns to life as Batman. It sets up a key portion of the hero's journey for Bruce. The call to become Batman once more is the third text and the call to return to real life with a different future is the fourth text.

After revealing that Rachel was going to move on, Alfred leaves Bruce. His departure leaves Bruce emotionally vulnerable – to manipulation by Miranda Tate and Selina - and it is the first step in 'crossing the threshold' and 'committing to change.'[31] Bruce meets new allies (a police

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[31]   Tate is Ra's Al Ghul's daughter and new leader of the League of Shadows.

officer named Blake) and enemies. Blake and Miranda offer new potential for passing on his legacy as Batman. Blake is an orphan, like Bruce. Miranda is seen as a potential ally and Bruce gives her access to a nuclear power device. The League of Shadows turn this device into a radioactive bomb and use it to hold Gotham hostage and seal it off from the world.

In the midpoint, Bruce is betrayed by Selina and, defeated by Bane, is thrown into a literal expression of 'the inmost cave': an underground prison. The prison resembles the well that Bruce fell into as a child. It is a key aspect of the third text and the fourth text. Bruce is forced to rebuild himself physically and mentally to climb out of the hole and return to Gotham. Emotionally, Bruce can attempt the big change of both the third and fourth text. In the third text, Bruce can return to save Gotham and in the fourth text, Bruce has learned to finally escape his Batman persona and mental prison of his own creation las Alfred wanted him to.

However, first Bruce must return to the Gotham 'no man's land' and become Batman one more time. With Catwoman, Blake and Gordon's help, Bruce defeats Bane and the League of Shadows. The defeat of the League forms the climax of the third text. Then Bruce's pretend sacrifice is the climax of the fourth text. Emotionally, Bruce sacrifices Batman so he can live a normal life.[32]

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[32]   Conversely, *Knightfall* ends with Bruce reclaiming the Bat mantle.

The fourth text: protagonist journey

This three-act structural analysis determines that while the individual texts are structured around Nolan's themes of fear, chaos and pain, with associated villains – Ra's Al Ghul, the Joker and Bane – the fourth text is structured around Bruce's 'hero's journey' and, in a way, Batman is his antagonist. That is to say, the emotional inner journey is the source of his major conflict. It is not to say that Bruce does not go through a journey in each text, but the overall journey holds the three texts together. The fourth text is Bruce's journey and this is what distinguishes this trilogy from the other Batman franchise texts.

Craig Batty's model for the hero's journey, found in *Movies that Move Us* (2011), is useful to determine the different lines of action and emotion that run through the trilogy. In this way, it offers a hero's journey model for a creator to follow, regardless of whether they plan a trilogy at the outset or during the process of writing. The model represents a creative method of distinguishing the individual texts from one another (through distinct journey structures) and developing the fourth text across the trilogy. Nolan and his team achieved this in conceptualising how Bruce's life would play out across multiple texts (Nolan et al. 2012: vii).

Batty's model is instrumental in analysing this trilogy because the fourth text's emotional line, Bruce's internal conflict, is what binds this trilogy together. It can be seen most in *The Dark Knight Rises*: Bruce's reclusive nature and suffering from the emotional fallout resulting from the deaths of Rachel and Dent in the preceding film. Conversely, while the emotional fallout comes from the preceding film, the 'action' line comes from the threat posed by the first film's villain: The League of Shadows. Batty's model can help create a 'better understanding of how the protagonist's emotional transformation is generated in direct relation to him undertaking physical action' (2011:91), which for the trilogy's fourth text means that Bruce develops emotionally across the trilogy. It is distinct from a series structure, which 'takes place in the eternal present' (Forrest 2008) and repeats the same story in a familiar way. It is a complicated structure, and I will discuss the individual texts and fourth text in tandem, which will help me better understand how these two structures work together.

Bruce meets Ducard
4 m | 4 pg

Parent's death
14 m | 14 pg

Bruce leaves League
41 m | 41 pg

PP1

*Batman
Begins*

Batman captures Falcone
64 m | 71 pg

MP

Becomes Batman
64 m | 71 pg

PP1

Wayne Manor burns
108 m | 130 pg

PP2

Ra's Al Ghul's death
140 m | 149 pg

C

Joker robs mob bank
6 m | 6 pg

Joker makes deal with
mob
26 m | 28 pg

PP1

*The Dark
Knight*

Batman captures Joker
82 m | 83 pg

MP

Rachel's death
236 m | 243 pg

MP

*The Fourth
Text*

Dent becomes Two Face
90 m | 108 pg

PP2

Harvey falls to his death
140 m | 137 pg

C

Selina Kyle robs Bruce
12 m | 15 pg

Alfred leaves
58 m | 68 pg

PP1

*The Dark
Knight Rises*

Bane turns Gotham into
'No Man's Land'
90 m | 104 pg

MP

Bruce climbs out of
prison
408 m | 243 pg

PP2

Bruce returns to Gotham
121 m | 132 pg

PP2

Talia's death
148 m | 155 pg

C

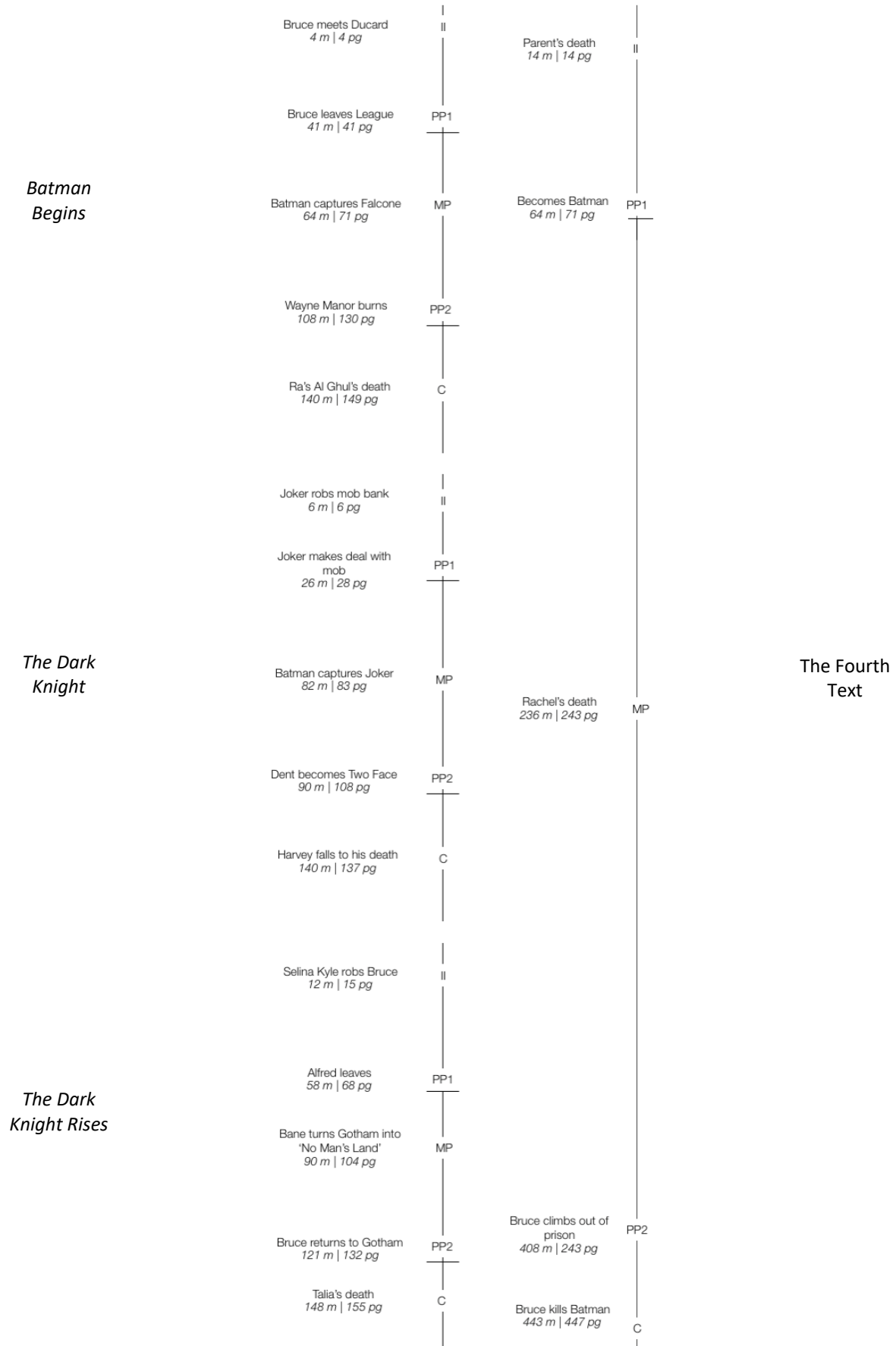Bruce kills Batman
443 m | 447 pg

C

Figure 28: *The Dark Knight Trilogy* three-act structure

In the first text, *Batman Begins*, there are two beginnings, two inciting incidents (Bruce meets Ducard and the death of Bruce's parents), but four mentors (Ducard, Alfred, Fox and Gordon). There are two ordinary worlds: Gotham and the criminal underworld or the world of a vigilante. Bruce does not realise the extent of the corruption in Gotham. His father had tried to show him how they, as a family, could help people. Bruce does not know how criminals think, as voiced by Ducard when he finds Bruce in prison: 'the world is too small for Bruce Wayne to disappear … no matter how deep he chooses to sink.' Ducard, the first mentor to appear in the film, gives him a 'call to adventure' and increased awareness of how to battle the criminal underworld – 'devote yourself to an ideal' to become a legend – but Bruce already has a goal and initially does not follow Ducard. It is a small refusal to the call/reluctance to change, as Bruce has already undergone a previous 'call to adventure' with the death of Chill, his parents' murderer. Ducard's 'call to adventure' is to adopt the League of Shadows' methods.

Bruce crosses the first threshold by finding the flower Ducard requests and enters the monastery where he will learn the skills to become Batman (tests, allies, enemies/experimenting with first change). While this is an approach to the inmost cave/preparing for the big change in *Batman Begins*, seen as part of the fourth text, it is a refusal to the call. It sets up the type of Batman that Bruce will become: one who does not kill. It is at odds with what the League of Shadows wants. Returning to Gotham is, in a way, a road back for Bruce in the first text. It is here that he will set out to recruit Gordon.

When Ducard returns to burn Wayne Manor, destroying the link to his father and, in a way, Bruce's former self, Batman must rise from the ashes and make a final attempt at a big change: overcoming fear incarnate and the League of Shadows. He quite literally returns with the elixir and masters his fear. While Bruce undergoes a hero's journey in the first text, the fourth-text journey is located in this same text, which provides narrative elements that – when looking at the trilogy holistically – are plotted accordingly.

In the second text, *The Dark Knight*, the Joker presents Bruce/Batman with a new ordinary world. This new world has been directly affected by Bruce's actions as Batman. The mob, pressured by Batman and Gordon, is forced to turn to a man they and Batman do not truly understand. Bruce has a limited awareness of the problem he faces. Alfred becomes more of a mentor for Bruce in this film as he, with his army experience, has a greater understanding of

the men who 'just want to see the world burn' (2008). Alfred wants Bruce to give up being Batman. It is a new call to adventure that Bruce refuses.

Bruce finds allies and tests in Dent and Gordon. He prepares for the big change, putting an end to organised crime once and for all and capturing the Joker. In the fourth text, Batman wants to inspire people and gain allies, experimenting with the potential change to let the persona of Batman go, and allow legitimate crime fighters to take over his vigilantism now that the mob and the corruption they represent have been taken care of. Bruce fails. He fails to restrain the Joker and faces the consequences of the attempt (third text), and as a result, Rachel, his link to his childhood self and inspiration, is killed (fourth text). Catching the Joker by the book is Bruce and Gordon's way of staying true to their ideals. For them, it is a road back and rededication to the change (potentially giving up Batman).

Meanwhile, the Joker's dedication to chaos and driving Dent crazy gives Batman a new villain: Two-Face. Bruce's return with an elixir and final mastery of the problem sees him taking the blame for Dent's crimes. In the context of the fourth text, this is the lesson Bruce must learn. His parents' death was not his fault, and the future of Gotham's 'soul' does not rest with him. While heroic, taking the blame for Dent is his false attempt at the ordeal or big change because it avoids what he needs to do to conquer his fear: move on with his life.

The League of Shadows, the villain and action line from the first text returns in the third. It provides a link between the first and third texts that is integral to linking these two texts, hence the trilogy when viewed together. The emotion line, which is the fallout from Rachel and Harvey's deaths, continues to haunt Bruce. He is reclusive and hides away from the world. This is the ordinary word. Gotham is peaceful because of the Dent Act, which allows indefinite imprisonment of the likes of the Joker.

There are two key characters in this film whose conspicuous absence so far has been conspicuous for a Batman film: Catwoman and Robin (Selina Kyle and a proto-Robin in John Blake). Selina serves as an anti-'call to adventure' when she steals Bruce's mother's pearls (a link back to his parents), making him aware of a threat against him that he misinterprets. Bruce's real call to adventure comes from Alfred as he begs Bruce to give up Batman before it destroys him entirely. Bruce refuses. He is not ready to give up Batman yet, or rather, he is not ready to resume his real life.

First, Bane must break him in the 'ordeal' of the third text, which comes far earlier in the narrative than in the first and second texts. The League of Shadows prison is shaped like a giant well and reminiscent of the well Bruce fell into as a child, sparking his fear of bats that would plague him and result in his parents' death. Climbing out of the well is the 'road back' to himself and Gotham.

The young Bruce Wayne had to become the Batman, as an ideal and something to fear, so this Batman returns to Gotham in hope. He rescues and inspires Gordon who is trapped out on the ice of a frozen river. He saves and then helps Blake rescue the rest of the police, now working with them instead of being hunted by them and partly exonerated by Bane's reading of Gordon's confession regarding the events surrounding Harvey's death. Bruce now prepares to face the literal consequences of the decaying nuclear reactor and his final attempt at big change: sacrificing Batman to instil the message of hope in the citizens of Gotham and to get what he desired: a worthy successor in Blake (first name Robin). It harks back to the two previous somewhat open-ended endings: with Rachel's 'mask' speech, the Joker's calling card and Gordon's 'We will hunt him' speech. However, in contrast, Bruce is now happy and free, living the clean-slate life that Alfred wanted for him all along.

So what does Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* teach us about structuring trilogy? In terms of planned and unplanned trilogies, the existing story world's villains are used to form the structure of the individual texts and the Bruce/Batman hero's journey, while occurring four times, is what holds the story together. It is especially the case in Bruce's reliance on Batman as a crutch, a legacy, and an identity. As with Jess-Cooke's assertion that the 'films' singular three-act structure' is balanced 'with the larger three-acts of the trilogy' (2009:5), so too must the overarching hero's journey be balanced and accommodated within the individual film's journey. This is one example of a single protagonist trilogy. Another example, *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, will be explored in the next chapter.

Nolan's *Dark Knight Trilogy* teaches us about the circular nature of the form, where the second text refers to the first and looks towards the third, and the third looks back to the first. As a unplanned trilogy, *The Dark Knight Trilogy* taught me to use the fourth text to solve the issues I had with my third text and restructure elements from the fourth text into books one and two. *The Dark Knight Rises* drew upon story elements established in the first and second texts – the villain and emotional fallout – to develop the third text and conclude an

unplanned trilogy. I will use the advantage of creating a planned trilogy to use my third text to restructure the fourth text back into the first and second texts.

To bridge the knowledge gained from this unplanned trilogy, it is important to consider other examples of unplanned trilogies, in both film and novels, and the potential issues that arise from different approaches. Specifically, I will map some two-part trilogies using the three-act structure and describe how not considering the fourth text until developing the second and third texts creates a fifth, destabilising structure within the trilogy. Unplanned trilogies can also be more prone to expanding beyond the original three texts. While not necessarily a problem or criticism, this reflects the limiting nature of the fourth text that creators need to consider.

Planned and unplanned

Not a sequel. Part of a trilogy. Completely planned.

Scream 2 (1997), Wes Craven

Wes Craven's *Scream Trilogy* is often described as a 'meta' trilogy because the film's characters directly comment upon the horror film genre (Flux 2021). The film buff Randy describes the 'Rules for Surviving a Scary Movie' in the first film and the 'Rules for Surviving the Sequel' and, while Randy dies in the second film, he leaves a video to explain the 'rules of a trilogy' for the third film.

I use inverted commas for 'planned' and 'unplanned', as there is not a concrete or consistent way that they are used to discuss films or trilogies. They can refer to the creative process, similar to a plotter or 'pantser', architect or gardener. A plotter plans their work extensively before writing. A 'pantser' flies by the seat of their pants, i.e. they do not plan and instead makes up the narrative as they go along (MasterClass 2021). G.R.R. Martin, in an interview, uses the term architect (plotter) and gardener (pantser) ('The Geek' 2011). I like to consider myself somewhere in between an architect or gardener. To stretch a metaphor, I consider myself a landscape artist. I plot extensively before writing but I am open to changes in the story as I write. As an industrial practice, planning a trilogy sometimes refers to the process of 'greenlighting' the production of a sequel or sequels after the first film's success. This was the case with Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future Part II* and *Part III*, Gore Verbinski's *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* and *At World's End* as well as the Wachowkis' *The Matrix: Reloaded* and *Revolutions*.

In their edited book, *Film Trilogies* (2012), Clare Perkins and Constantine Verevis quote *Scream 2* to introduce sequels and trilogies. They use the terms 'accidental' or 'organic' trilogies and use examples such as Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* and the Wachowskis' *The Matrix Trilogy,* stating 'these function as planned, tripartite exercises, where the designation (of trilogy status) is a specific prop in the films' production and marketing' (2012:4). They link the notion of 'planned' and 'unplanned' works as a marketing strategy (2012:4):

> Each set of films was initially promoted as a three-part series to build a
> sense of stature and anticipation designed to translate into box-office
> returns upon the release of the first and second sequels. Promotion of the
> trilogy structure builds and encapsulates a sense of intentional and authorial
> agency that, as Timothy Corrigan has identified, works as a 'brand-name'
> vision whose aesthetic meanings and values have already been determined.

This marketing strategy is similar to nineteenth-century publishers and the three-volume novel (Bassett 2008), where three-volume novels are narratives conceived as one and split due to publishing constraints.

There are more contemporary examples of novel trilogies that relate to author intent. In Sue Corbett's article series on trilogies, she asks authors how their trilogies came about (2013). For some, e.g. Rae Carson, they had planned a trilogy; for others, such as Neal Shusterman, it became a trilogy/tetralogy when the writing demanded it (Corbert on Carson and Shustermann 2013). These examples are similar to Lian Hearn's *The Tales of the Otori* and Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Trilogy/Cycle* and an example of 'trilogy creep' that I will discuss below. Marie Lu, the author of the *Legend Trilogy,* states she did not know her work was a trilogy until she started writing book two (Corbett on Lu 2013). For another, Isla J. Bick, the trilogy was the publisher's idea (Corbett on Bick 2013). Likewise, I am interested in what effect 'planned' and 'unplanned' approaches to trilogy creation have on the work's narrative structure. In this way, 'planned' and 'unplanned' relates to authorial intention (which I have touched upon with J.R.R. Tolkien insofar as it relates to structure).

It is worth mentioning that the criticism or the actual creative practice of 'planned' and 'unplanned' trilogies is a contemporary industrial phenomenon (both in publishing and film). Ancient Greek trilogies were written and produced in a single day of a dramatic festival and therefore were completely 'planned' in the sense of creative and 'industrial' or extra-textual terms. It is not to say that trilogies must be 'planned': the success of Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* can attest to that point. Rather, nowadays it is ever more essential for trilogy creators to understand the narrative possibilities and structure of the trilogy text. Using the understanding of the trilogy structure that I propose, creators, whether they plan or not, can use this structure to develop their stories and perhaps avoid some of the issues that are

derived from it, such as what TV-Tropes call 'two-part trilogies' or 'trilogy creep' (Walker 2016).

Two-Part Trilogies

First, an unplanned trilogy can be defined as follows: the first and/or second text is created and produced or published before the possibility of trilogy has been conceived. If a trilogy is unplanned, it can affect how the fourth text is structured. For example, the first text often contains the beginning of the fourth text. Producing, releasing or publishing any text before finishing the remaining text(s) locks the trilogy creator into what was already in the public sphere. This can result in what TV-Tropes defines as 'two-part trilogies', where the second and third texts 'share more direct relation to each other than they do with the original' (Walker, n.d., accessed 2016). I eschew the term 'original' to refer to the first text, as it implies primacy.

For Walker (under his alias 'The Nostalgia Critic'), 'two-part trilogies' occur because the second two films are created together. He notes that 'story seems to flow more from 2-3 while 1 remains standalone' (Walker 2016). The examples here would be the Wachowskis' *The Matrix Trilogy* and Gore Verbinski's *Pirates of the Caribbean Trilogy*. The former example is one of the reasons for my distinction between a planned and unplanned trilogy; the Wachowskis' *The Matrix Trilogy* is often cited as a planned trilogy. Through a brief three-act mapping of the trilogy, I illustrate that a structural basis for the 'two-part trilogy' can be found in the fourth text.
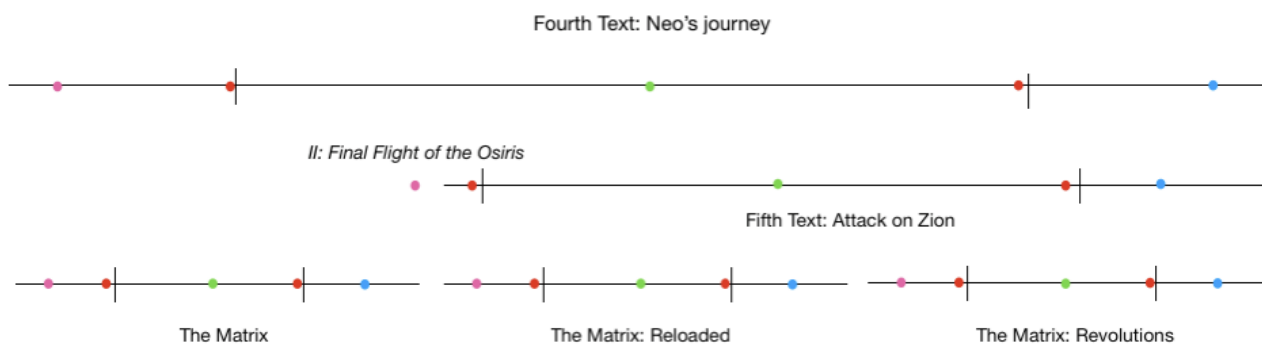
Figure 29: The *Matrix Trilogy* three-act structure

This figure was originally an exercise in mapping how the time designations of Syd Field's paradigm were altered in terms of trilogy.[33] However, the simple mapping of the individual texts of *The Matrix Trilogy* and the fourth text along Neo's protagonist journey was not as successful, for the major threat carries over from the second and third texts: the attack on Zion. Hinted as a possibility in *The Matrix*, it only becomes a real tangible possibility or plot-point when the access codes to Zion are secured by the machines, which takes place offscreen in *The Matrix: Reloaded* but is included in one of the transmedial texts of the franchise, specifically the short anime film called *Final Flight of the Osiris* (2003). It is a real weakness of the fourth text to include a major plot-point outside the trilogy structure. It also hints at the difference between a trilogy and other forms, such as larger story universes. Due to the presence of the fourth text, trilogies are more self-contained and collected as a single whole.

Gore Verbinski's *The Pirates of the Caribbean Trilogy* has a similar structure as *The Matrix Trilogy* in that the threat or antagonist is the same in the second and third text. In *The Matrix*, it is the attack on Zion (where Agent Smith is the antagonist to Neo in the overarching fourth text), and in *Pirates*, it is Lord Becket (where 'normal' life is arguably the 'antagonist' for the fourth text of the whole trilogy). The rough sketch of the three-act structures in this trilogy can be seen below.
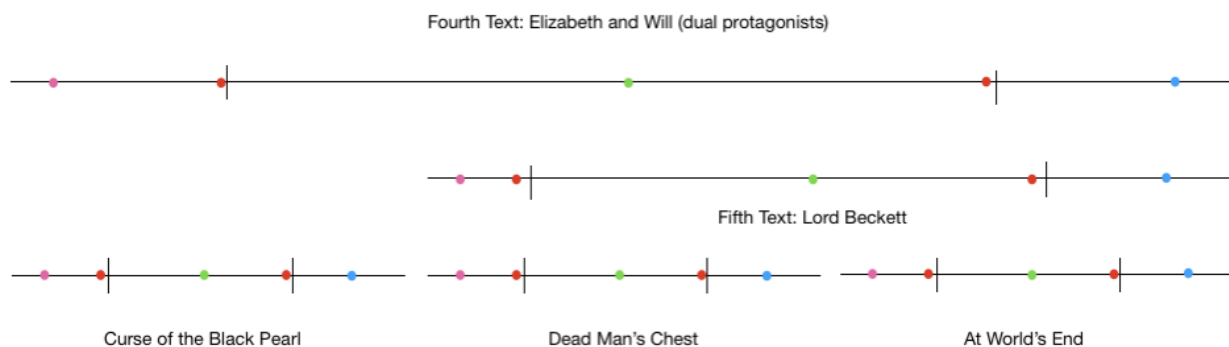
Figure 30: *Pirates of the Caribbean Trilogy* three-act structure

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These two examples of *The Matrix* and *The Pirates of the Caribbean* provide a structural explanation for the 'two-part trilogy' trope. In these examples, the second and third texts contain a fifth narrative structure that disrupts the dynamic balance of the trilogy form. These two examples are why Paul Tassi's 'short, mid and long-range' plotting terms are problematic to describe the forms structure and lack the nuance to describe the balance between the different texts within a trilogy.

An inverse two-part trilogy: *The Godfather* trilogy

The problematic two-part trilogies also support my argument against the often-repeated line with trilogies that 'the first must stand alone'. Yes, the first text needs to stand alone, but so do texts two and three. Francis Ford Coppola's unplanned and undesignated trilogy *The Godfather* arguably provides another example of a two-part trilogy, one in which the first two texts are more closely aligned through the story of Vito Corleone. In these two texts, Don Vito is a mentor and character in contrast to his son Michael. The Don manages to hold his family together and run The Family. Conversely, Michael sacrifices his family – he murders his brother and has his brother-in-law killed – for the sake of The Family. This dynamic structure between father and son is missing in the third and sets the film apart from the other two.

R. Barton Palmer, in his chapter 'Before and After, Before Before and After: Godfather I, II and III' (2010), asserts the films are better analysed as a film with two sequels or a threequel. His rationale contrasts with Browne's argument that they can be considered a trilogy due to a 'continuity of a directorial vision of the century-long working through of economic crime and punishment in the inner sanctum of an American dynasty' (Browne 2000:1). That is to say, they were not planned as a trilogy and that the three singular films 'certainly do not constitute a trilogy in the way Browne suggests, that is, a coherent, step-by-step unfolding of a foundational artistic vision' (2010:68). Palmer adds a further distinction, noting that the trilogy was not a 'planned' tripartite exercise and Paramount Studios greenlit the second film after the first's success. However, a trilogy does not need to be 'planned' or intended as such to emply the form's structure.

Palmer challenges the notions of directorial authorship concerning *The Godfather: Part II* because its producer heavily influenced the final cut (2010:68). Palmer's criticism of Browne's

designation of *The Godfather* as a trilogy is valid in the points that he raises. However, in considering this trilogy in terms of 'theme' or 'authorship' in a commercial or industrial setting, and thus critiquing it as a 'threequel', his analysis fails to consider the narrative elements of *The Godfather* trilogy. Coppola has said *The Godfather* is not a trilogy, and he could easily produce a fourth instalment that focuses on Sonny's illegitimate son Vincent Mancini (Sharf 2020). However, Michael Corleone's death at the end of *The Godfather: Part III* closes off this series of three: the story ends. Michael's life is the fourth unifying text that renders this a trilogy. In the final scene, Michael is sitting in a chair by himself when he slumps to the ground and dies. This is reminiscent of the earlier contrast between Vito and Michael. When Vito had a cardiac incident outside in the garden, he was not alone. His young grandson ran for help. Vito preserved his family, this reinforces how Michael failed. I will discuss this in terms of the trilogy structure in Chapter Three.

The two-part trilogy in the novel

Two-part trilogies are not unique to film and they occur in novels as well. Garth Nix's *Abhorsen Trilogy/Old Kingdom Series* has an intentional two-part structure: the second two texts are structured as one novel split in two (2018).[34] Cornelia Funke's *InkHeart Trilogy* has a two-part structure: Meggie and her father travel into the world of InkHeart in the second two books.[35] This trilogy has a fifth structure that connects text two and three, like *The Matrix* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Marie Lu's *Legend Trilogy* avoids this pitfall by providing another antagonist in the final text and a complication for June and Day's love story (2013). Ransom Riggs *Miss Peregrine Trilogy* has a two-part structure with the kidnap storyline of texts two and three.[36] Miss Peregrin is kidnapped in the second text, and the children do not rescue her until text three. Conversely, Christopher Nolan avoids the two-part trilogy trap in introducing

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[34]   *Sabriel* (1995), *Lirael* (2001), and *Abhorsen* (2003).

[35]   *Inkheart* (2003), *Inkspell* (2005), and *Inkdeath* (2007).

[36]   *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2011), *Hollow City* (2011), and *Library of Souls* (2015). A new trilogy, *A Map of Days* (2018), *The Conference of Birds* (2020).

new antagonists in Catwoman and Bane but links these back to the first text through the League of Shadows.

Trilogy Creep

The second potential pitfall of an 'unplanned' trilogy is 'trilogy creep'. These are trilogies that have gone beyond their original trilogy structure. Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Cycle* became four books when the author was writing the third, and this allowed him to change the narrative structure of the third and fourth instalments to make these books into a complete cycle, as opposed to a trilogy with a sequel (2016).[37] The overarching storyline finishes in the fourth instalment. In Chapter Three, I will discuss the advantages of understanding and using a trilogy structure.

Stieg Larsson's and Mervin Peake's fourth instalments to their three-part works were published posthumously by other authors. Likewise, Robert Ludlum's *Bourne Trilogy* has been expanded into a long-running series by Eric Van Lustbader.[38] This was also a marketing strategy used by Warner Bros when Zac Snyder took over from Christopher Nolan to direct *Justice League*: he went to Nolan to ask for his blessing (Hayes 2016). This was a tacit linking of the new direction of the franchise with the success of the previous trilogy.

The original authors themselves can also continue the work outside of a trilogy. Isaac Asimov' added two sequels and two prequels to his *Foundation Trilogy.*[39] Frank Herbert continued *Dune* with five sequels.[40] He planned to write a seventh book in the series prior to his death (Herbert, B 2005). His son, Brian Herbert, worked with Kevin J. Anderson to complete the original *Dune* series with two books and created a number of prequel novels. Ursula Le Guin continued her *Earthsea* trilogy to six texts, five novels and a collection of stories. Douglas

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[37]   *Eragon* (2003), *Eldist* (2005), *Brisingr* (2008), and *Inheritance* (2011).

[38]   *The Bourne Identity* (1980), *The Bourne Supremacy* (1986), and *The Bourne Ultimatum* (1990).

[39]   Original trilogy: *Foundation* (1951), *Foundation and Empire* (1952), and *Second Foundation* (1953). The first book of which was first published as a collection of short stories in *Astounding Science Fiction*.

[40]   Original trilogy: *Dune* (1965), *Dune Messiah* (1969), and *Children of Dune* (1976).

Adams' *Hitchhikers Trilogy* had five texts and the series has also been continued by Eoin Golfer with *And Another Thing* (2009).

James Dashner's *Maze Runner* has two prequels. Scoot Westerfeld's *Uglies Trilogy* has a fourth instalment in the same world but from a different character perspective. Veronica Roth released short stories focusing on the eponymous character 'Four' following her *Divergent Trilogy*. Ransom Riggs developed a second trilogy after the original *Miss Peregrine's Peculiar Children*.[41] Phillip Pullman is returning to his multiverse of *His Dark Materials* with a new trilogy, *The Book of Dust*. Chronologically, the *La Belle Sauvage* (2017) takes place before the first trilogy*.* The second book, *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019) action occurs after the original trilogy. George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* was initially pitched to the publishers as a trilogy, as was Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* (Hunt 2019 & Walter 2014). The former is currently seven books and the latter, left unfinished at the time of its authors death, was finished with a trilogy from Brandon Sanderson.

What does this mean for trilogy?

Like 'trilogy creep', my story is one that grew in the telling. I began with a single stand-alone novel that grew from a climatic event – the restoration of Eorthan. While developing Mannec and Kirika's story, I developed a scene that I thought would make a powerful climax: Kirika thinks that her powers hurt people, so she tries to end her life. Siera tries to save her and gives her a choice to live or die. I felt that the dramatic significance of this event would be reinforced if it were a cliff-hanger climax. Thus, my standalone novel became a trilogy.

At the time, I did not consider a duology structure. The overarching narrative involved finding The New Nine – the would-be rulers of Eorthan. At the time of Kirika's attempted suicide, two members of The New Nine had yet to be found. The character stories of five of The Nine also needed narrative space in which to be told before the final climax. Succinctly, I reasoned there was enough content for three novels.

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[41]   *A Map of Days* (2018), *The Conference of Birds* (2020) and *The Desolations of Devil's Care* (2021).

I thought about the trilogies I was familiar with: *The Matrix, The Pirates of the Caribbean* and Garth Nix's *Abhorsen Trilogy/Old Kingdom*. What I regarded as the structural weaknesses in these trilogies has been explained above by unplanned film trilogies – resulting in two-part trilogy trope (*The Matrix* and *Pirates*) and that Nix did not structure his as a trilogy, but rather wrote book two and three together as a two-part novel. This pre-research exercise was the reason I chose to write my three texts together, choosing to plan a trilogy due to the perceived structural weaknesses in other trilogies. However, this also raised issues with my fourth text.

In my experience, when a trilogy is written concurrently, the narrative can oscillate along the structural continuum (see Figure 24). Initially, I did not use act-structures or hero's journey models to structure my works and therefore, I struggled to distinguish the individual narratives. That is, my trilogy was tending towards a three-volume novel. I sought other trilogy examples to facilitate developing these individual structures (such as Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, with the different protagonists and perspectives).

However, before this research I was not explicitly aware of the fourth text structure. After establishing this hypothesis as part of this research and undertaking the first iteration of the research, I came to realise that my trilogy's fourth text was overwhelmingly contained within the third text. An advantage of writing a planned trilogy is that I have the luxury to review and fix any issues in the narrative structure without being locked into a text already in the public record. Part of the solution was to relocate parts of the fourth text within the first and second texts. If the first and second had been published prior to my realising this error, I would not have been able to solve the issue with my fourth and third text in the way I am able to now. As Christopher Nolan has demonstrated, a creator does not need to plan a trilogy for it to be successful. However, planning a trilogy can help prevent some of the structural issues that can arise with using the form. If creators understand the fundamental nature of the form – the individual narratives and fourth connecting text – they can also avoid some of the problems associated with trilogy, even if they did not intend to create one in the first place.

Eorthan

This thesis chapter started with a simple problem: the third text in my trilogy, called *Eorthan*, contained most of the narrative plot-points of the fourth text, namely the inciting incident, midpoint, plot-points 1 and 2 and the climax. Understanding this issue resulted in moving some chapters from *Eorthan* (3) into *Morea* (2), as detailed in the previous chapter. Revisiting the structure of *Eorthan* after this restructure, I realised it had close to 40 chapters rather than the 33 in *Morea* and *Sora* (1). This disparity could not have been easily remedied had I written and published the first two novels before writing the third.

Writing a planned trilogy allows me to attend to the necessary plotting change. I can move part of the fourth text into *Sora* and *Morea*, rebalancing the fourth and simplifying the third. In this section, I detail the changes made to *Eorthan* in response to the case studies and literature review above. First, the character map and pre-PhD synopsis provide an idea of the scope of the restructuring challenge. The key relationship is between Lindis and Siera. They are siblings, each other's mentors and sometimes antagonists. As part of this restructure, Lindis has become the protagonist and perspective character of *Eorthan,* and Siera's journey been reconceived as the fourth text.
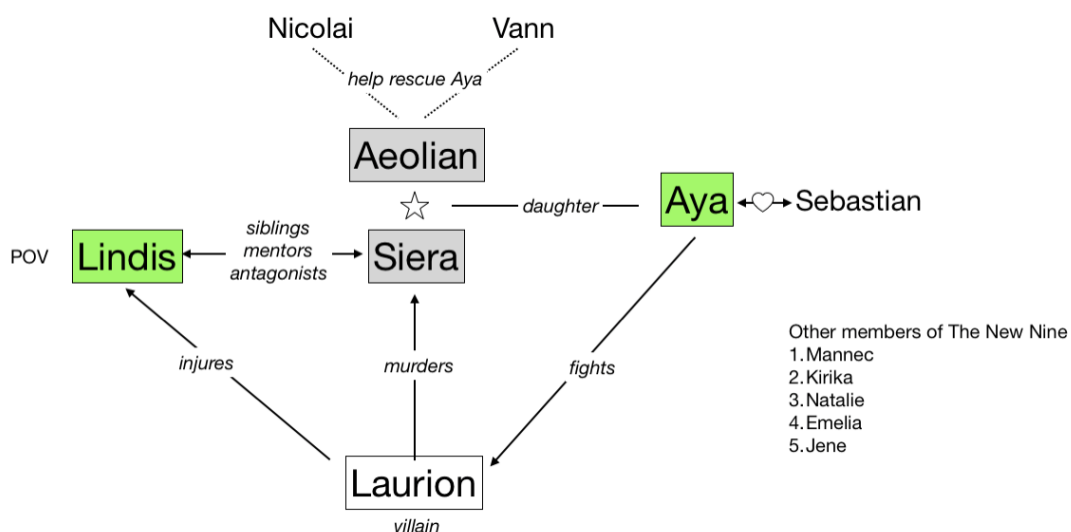

Figure 31: *Eorthan* key character map

Eorthan pre-research synopsis

Eorthan opens with a prologue. A child lives in a midnight-blue world of ever-night and learns to read the stars. A blazing light falls from the sky. He goes to find out what it is.

Eorthan proper opens from a different perspective of a boy named Lindis. When he is five years old, his sister is born, but there is something wrong. She is blind and unresponsive. Sometime later, a stranger comes to visit. The stranger tells them they need not worry about his sister. She will wake when she is able to. The stranger suggests that she will have strong powers.

Five years after the birth of his sister, Lindis is walking home from school. He meets another girl, Maria. Maria is intrigued by his sister. The girl tells him about her brother, who is the same age as Lindis' sister and exists in a similar state. Suddenly a great mist fills the air around them. It is so thick that it appears as though they are in another world. They see a figure made of the mist. A figure that looks like his sister. The figure asks Maria about her brother (Aeolian). Lindis says her name - Siera and the world of mist disappears.

The following day, Siera goes missing. They find her and Aeolian sleeping on the beach. From that day forward, they are inseparable. They share a magic power. Siera, in a world of mist, can see the past and knows people's memories. Aeolian, in a world of night and stars, can see the future. Alone they are trapped in their relative times and blind to the present. Together they can live and see in the present.

A year or two later, Siera and Aeolian's families travel to Elsinore - the capital of Eorthan - where The Nine rule. Siera and Aeolian become part of the Nine. At seventeen, Siera and Aeolian are to be married, but Aeolian leaves unexpectedly. Siera goes to The Ither, a university carved into the side of a mountain, with Lindis. During a powerful snowstorm, Siera finds Aeolian buried in the snow. Lindis realises that his sister is physically linked to Aeolian as well as magically. Aeolian scrawls signs and symbols over a wall in the corridor. There is something in their future that he cannot see. Siera helps him recover, and they are married.

Some months later, at a festival at Elsinore, Siera and Aeolian perform a dance. Strange black flame consumes Siera's eyes, and she tears off her own wings. Aeolian heals Siera in the Elsin pool, and then Siera returns to her home. Not long after, Siera wakes up one day, screams and

quickly flies back to Elsinore. Lindis follows. Laurion Dresdain has mortally wounded all of the Nine, and with the help of his friend and sister, Emelia, has bound them to life. An abominable act writes sorrow in the earth and rends it into islands that begin to float in the sky, while the Mount Elsin sinks beneath the waves as the sea rush in.

While Aeolian is trapped, Siera is free. She faints, and Lindis catches her as she falls into a deep sleep from shock. He takes her back to the Farthermost. Five years pass. Siera is still unconscious. Lindis looks after her. In her mind, she runs through the world of mist back through her memories. In the real world, Dresdain's guards arrive to arrest Lindis, and they throw Siera over the edge. Lindis desperately tries to get her to wake up. In the other world of mist and memory, Siera has returned to the point where she met Aeolian for the first time. Elder Aeolian is there too, and both he and Lindis' get through to Siera. She wakes up falling towards the sea.

Siera travels to Øre, where Laurion has brought all those who still bear their wings. He is cutting off their wings one by one, including his sister Emelia, Lindis and Maria (Aeolian's sister). Of the many people attacked that day, only Lindis and Emelia survive. Lindis asks Siera to cast a spell that will make people forget the past. Siera agrees, knowing that in using and taking this much power, she will, in a way, cease to be herself and become separated from Eorthan. Lindis will not let her take his memory. Siera disappears into the mist.

Many, many years pass, Lindis has grown into an old man. One night he sees a light in the cottage on the hill. Lindis goes to investigate and finds Siera holding a young child with fiery red hair. Siera could not save the girl's parents, but she wants to raise her. The child Aya will grow to be one of the New Nine. If Siera can find the New Nine, they can break Eorthan's curse.

When Aya is about seven, Siera helps with the birth of Kirika. Siera binds the girl's soul to herself as Kirika's powers are linked to Eorthan. As Eorthan is broken, her powers are unbalanced. Siera uses Kirika to create the first sanctuary for people with powers.

When Aya is ten years old, they are attacked by spectres, dispossessed souls controlled by Emelia. Aya destroys thousands of spectres while Siera is unconscious. In her unconscious state, Siera makes a bargain with Emelia. Laurion will stop at nothing to find Aya after her powers are revealed. Siera and Aeolian draw symbols on her and Aya gives up her memories

to Siera. Aya is hidden in an orphanage and Siera discovers all those affected by the fever brought on by the destruction of the spectres. Sebastian and Natalie are among them. Siera hides some of the people in a new forest she grew on the dry seabed. A few chapters tell the story of Siera finding the new Nine from Natalie, Sebastian and Vann during the fever.

In the present, Aya sits on the roots of the burnt-out tree, Omberos. The others make their oaths to Eorthan to become the New Nine. Aya fights Laurion Dresdain. She almost wins, but she is trapped in her body at the last moment. However her soul breaks free to follow him while her body is given to the care of a magical silver stream conjured by the symbols Siera painted on her all those years ago. The other members of the New Nine - Emelia, Natalie, Kirika, Jene, Sebastian and Mannec follow the silver stream.

Meanwhile, Siera flies over the refugees from The Aral Forest who are heading for sanctuary in The Ither. She notices that Nicolai is missing and goes to find him. After this, she takes Nicolai to Øre City, and they find Vann and get Aya's soul. Siera entrusts Aya's soul and Nicolai to Vann, and she leaves. Vann finds Aya's body and the silver stream along with the other members of the New Nine. Together they follow Aya's body as it falls over a great waterfall towards the sea. Vann reunites Aya's soul with her body in time for her to fly down to Elsin beneath the waves. The New Nine meet the Old Nine and the New Nine take a magical copy of the Old Nine's voices. The New Nine return to the islands and find the Nine Horns. They use them to announce the change of the Nine. Siera helps Emelia realise she can become one of the New Nine. After setting the ghost of Isolde free, Siera confronts Laurion and gives him his final wish. The land comes back together and Mount Elsin is connected to the land once more Siera and Aeolian and the rest of the Old Nine are finally released and die. They hold a funeral. Then Aya travels back to the cottage at the Farthermost, and Sebastian joins her there.

The end.

Eorthan structural edit

> The word 'Mentor' comes to us from The Odyssey. A character named
> Mentor guides the young hero, Telemachus, on his Hero's Journey …This
> archetype is expressed in all those characters who teach and protect heroes
> and give them gifts.

<div style="text-align: right">Vogler (2007:39)</div>

Mentors are essential in *The Story of Eorthan*. Siera is the protagonist of the fourth text but the mentor in all three individual novels. Before starting this project and developing an understanding of the fourth text structure, Siera was the protagonist of the third text. By understanding the nature of the fourth text and reconsidering the three protagonists and perspective characters in each text, I changed the third's protagonist from Siera to her elder brother, Lindis. The parts of Siera's story that Lindis' witnesses provide a clearer narrative in *Eorthan* and shortens the third text in line with the first and second. It provides balance to the dynamic structure of the trilogy and avoids an inverse 'two-part trilogy'.

Through this project, I have looked at examples of trilogy and noticed that in multi-protagonist trilogies, the third text's hero does not need a fully realised story arc, as their story will soon give way to the fourth text. For example, in *The Return of the King* (2003), Jackson shifts the hero's journey from Pippin to Gandalf in the film's first part. Mary Malone's journey in *The Amber Spyglass* is a 'smaller' to accommodate Will and Lyra's fourth text journey. Nevertheless, her journey away from the church and towards science mirrors the themes and journey of the fourth text.

In Patrick Ness' *Monsters of Men,* 1017/The Return/The Sky's storyline takes up a third of the book. The other two-thirds of the perspective and journey is with Todd and Viola. Likewise, Bane breaks Bruce's back before the midpoint of *The Dark Knight Rises,* and Bruce's journey back to Gotham is more within the fourth text than the third film. This observed phenomenon can be attributed to the presence of the fourth text in the third. The third text in a trilogy has two third acts and two climaxes. This is the added complexity of the third text and why it is so difficult to end a trilogy well, as identified by Tassi and Meth.

In the introduction to this chapter, I outlined the chronological structure of The Story of Eorthan, noting that the first two-thirds of Eorthan take place before the events detailed in Sora and Morea. The first step in the restructure was to identify the third text. To achieve this, I plotted the third text using the three-act structure. Figure 32 below depicts the chronological structure of *Eorthan* without the other two texts. The overall story spans 87 years, and the number of years at the bottom of the figure represent narrative gaps in time.
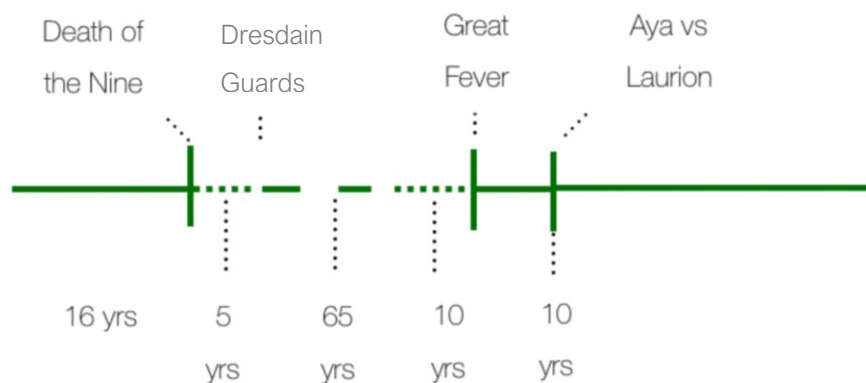
Figure 32: *Eorthan* chronological structure

A new perspective

Figure 33 below is the re-worked three-act structure. The plot-points for the third text have been re-orientated to Lindis' perspective. He witnesses his sister's birth and her becoming one of the Nine. Siera is a powerful magic user, and her link with Aeolian sets her apart from others. It is a call to adventure for Lindis as he must look after her. When Siera and Aeolian become members of The Nine, rulers of the land, this separates Lindis from his sister. He enters the special, wider world. One in which he does not feel entirely comfortable.
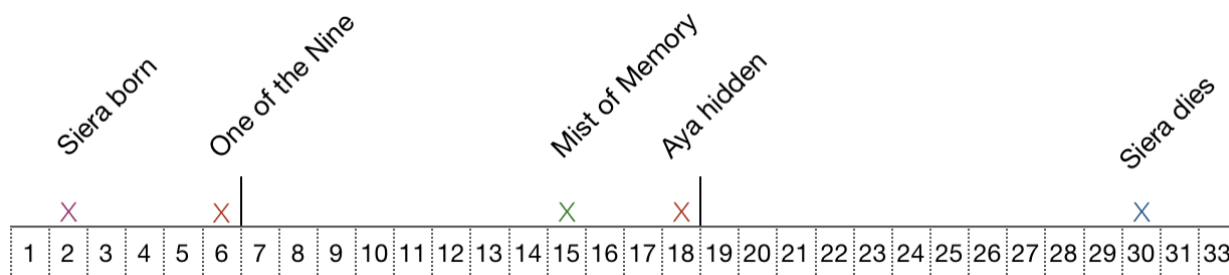
Figure 33: *Eorthan* three-act structure

After The Death of The Nine, Laurion cuts off Lindis' wings, gravely injuring him. This motivates Lindis to force his sister to cast a great spell to keep Eorthan safe. In doing so, Lindis

destroys the last humanity his sister had left. He does not see her for 65 years. I have also deleted Aeolian's sister, Maria, who had been the motivation to cast the great spell. Telling this part of the story from Lindis' perspective tightened the narrative and allowed me to account for large gaps in the chronological narrative.

Lindis meets his sister again when she has found an orphaned child – Aya. The third text then becomes the subplot to the fourth text. The climax of the third text was built around Aya fighting Laurion. But this is part of the climax of the fourth text. When told from Lindis' perspective, the climax of the third text is Siera's death.

Identifying the fourth text

Using the tools of the three-act structure, I have reworked *Eorthan* from Lindis' perspective. However, content, narrative, and story still need to be delivered – namely, the fourth text. In the Chapter One survey: Protagonist and perspective, I realised I had a protagonist and perspective for each of the three individual texts and another one for the fourth. I came to that realisation through a structural mapping of my trilogy using Linda Aronson's action and relationship line as described in *The 21st Century Screenplay* (2010).

I read widely on screenplay strategies and story design models to supplement and contextualise, using the three-act structure and hero's journey models that I had found in the literature which provided a more nuanced understanding of how these models can be used to describe the fundamental structure of the trilogy form. These books are usually written in a questioning style with exercises and I tried them on my trilogy. Initially, this thesis was structured around story design models rather than specific trilogies. The exercises I undertook were a way to describe my trilogy and came to change the way I structured it. It was through this exercise that I realised the fourth text was tied up in the third text.

In exploring the 'planned' and 'unplanned' aspect of trilogy it was interesting to find that problems with the third text could only be fixed by rewriting the first and second, which would not be possible with an 'unplanned' trilogy. Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* is unique in terms of an 'unplanned' work due to the rich story-world source material they could draw on. Bruce's life and pre-existing story world were used to structure the fourth text and they avoided the pitfalls of an unplanned trilogy (either a two-part trilogy or trilogy creep). Now

that I have briefly mapped out the third text using the three-act structure, the next step is to work out what I need to 'move' out of the fourth text. Using Aronson's (2010) 'action' and 'emotion' lines I wrote for my fourth text as a guide, I mapped out *Eorthan* and determined what could be moved into *Sora* and *Morea*.

Before I break down the third and fourth text within my trilogy, it is worth illustrating the three-act structure of the fourth text. It also served as a guide to identifying the elements of the fourth text which I could move into *Sora* (S) and *Morea* (M). The letters and numbers refer to the text and chapters, e.g. E.11 refers to *Eorthan* Chapter 11.
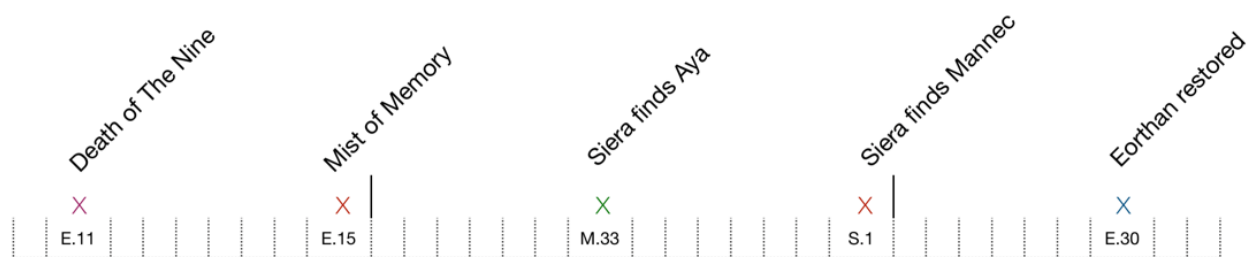
Figure 34: *The Story of Eorthan* fourth text three-act structure

Siera's physical journey across the trilogy is to find the New Nine and restore the world of Eorthan. Their call to adventure was 'death' at the hands of Laurion.[42] Siera tries and fails to restore Eorthan. Then she finally finds the New Nine. Several key characters form the emotional aspects of Siera's journey. Her bond with Aeolian is a key representation of her emotional journey in the fourth text. Siera's brother is both a mentor and mentee. Aya is her adoptive daughter. After roughly outlining Siera's journey across the trilogy, I mapped out what chapters in Eorthan (3) detailed her journey in the figure below. The greyed sections are the fourth text and the green sections are the third text.

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[42]   They are prevented from actually 'dying' and remain in the world in a kind of static unliving state.
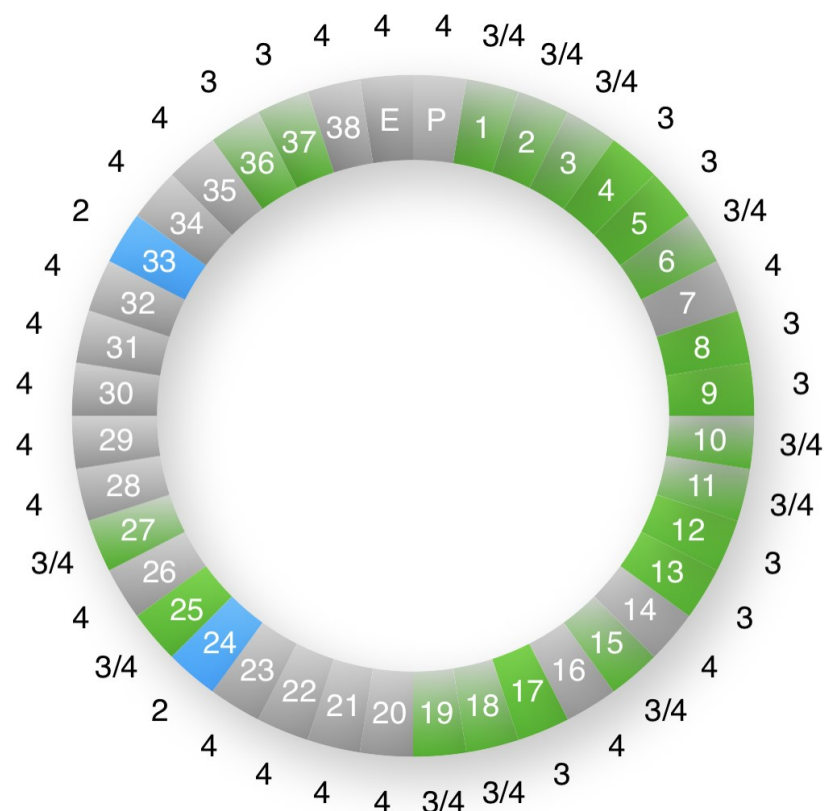
Figure 35: Breaking down the plot of *Eorthan* into third and fourth text (See Appendix 3)

Substantial content in *Eorthan* could not be 'cut and pasted' into *Sora* or *Morea*. Some moments can be shifted to Lindis' perspective, e.g. I do not need to show Aeolian leaving Siera; I can have Lindis refer to it. Nor can I 'show' Aya's childhood because Lindis did not 'see' it. Part of this childhood has been moved into the end of *Sora* with Kirika. Because Aya was there when Kirika was born and became her friend as a child, I can refer to the part of Aya's childhood in *Sora*. Additionally, I can move some parts to Aya's memory and elsewhere in the trilogy. Lindis already thinks Siera is a strange child. I can incorporate this into *Sora*, as Mannec thinks Siera is strange. Therefore, I have added chapters of Siera and Mannec to *Sora*, including her 'strangeness' compared to Aya. There is a fine art to plotting Siera because of who she is in *Sora,* and it is through Mannec's ignorance as a narrator, I can keep her real identity secret from Mannec and the reader until the third text.

Moving the 'oath of the Nine' chapter into *Morea* allowed me to focus the climax of the fourth text on Aya fighting Laurion. This is similar to Philippa Boyen's note about moving Frodo and Shelob to *The Return of the King,* so it did not compete with the Battle of Helm's Deep in *The Two Towers*. Writing a trilogy is a dynamic process, and to achieve the right dramatic effect, plot-points may need to be moved from one text into another. I have also

moved, or rather consolidated, Siera defeating Laurion. Originally Siera met him twice in the climax sequence when she rescues Aya's soul from him and the sounds finally emerge. After moving Emelia's conversation with Isolde into the second text, I also consolidated the issue of Siera finally dealing with Laurion when she rescues Aya instead of during the sounding. It separates these two plot-points.

The other major change during the fourth-text restructure concerns the role of the mentor archetype in my trilogy. Despite its two-part trilogy weaknesses, a strength of Gore Verbinski's *Pirates of the Caribbean Trilogy* is how the archetypes of characters change depending on their relationship to other characters. For example, Jack acts as a mentor for Will. Interestingly, Barbosa is, in a way, a mentor for Elizabeth.

While Siera/Aeolian are the protagonists in the fourth text, their story is revealed through their journey to find the New Nine. As such, they act as mentors to Mannec. This is where I can move their missing their daughter Aya. Mannec can see how they care for Aya and they act as a surrogate teacher for Mannec. This change was relatively easy to rework into *Sora* and aligned with rewriting Mannec's protagonist journey, which I will detail in Chapter Three.

In *Morea*, Siera/Aeolian's mentor relationship with Emelia is demonstrated through their magical powers, namely memory. Emelia is beset by memories – of her parents, aunt and friend. While they were originally ghosts or usual memories, transforming them into memories from a spell gave Emelia and Siera/Aeolian a more complex relationship. It is Siera's spell that causes Emelia to remember so many things.

The use of Siera's powers as a plot device in *Morea* links to the 'spell' that Lindis asks Siera to cast in *Eorthan* and makes Emelia's confrontation with Siera before rescuing Jene more poignant. Through reworking Siera as a mentor in both Sora and Morea and her relationship to Aya in the fourth text, I hope to link all three of my trilogy texts together rather than just the latter two, avoiding the 'two-part' trilogy.

The figure below represents my re-plotting of the fourth text in the *Sora* and *Morea*. There are 33 chapters in each book because before I began restructuring *Eorthan,* I had decided to reduce the length from 35 chapters (including a short prologue and epilogue).
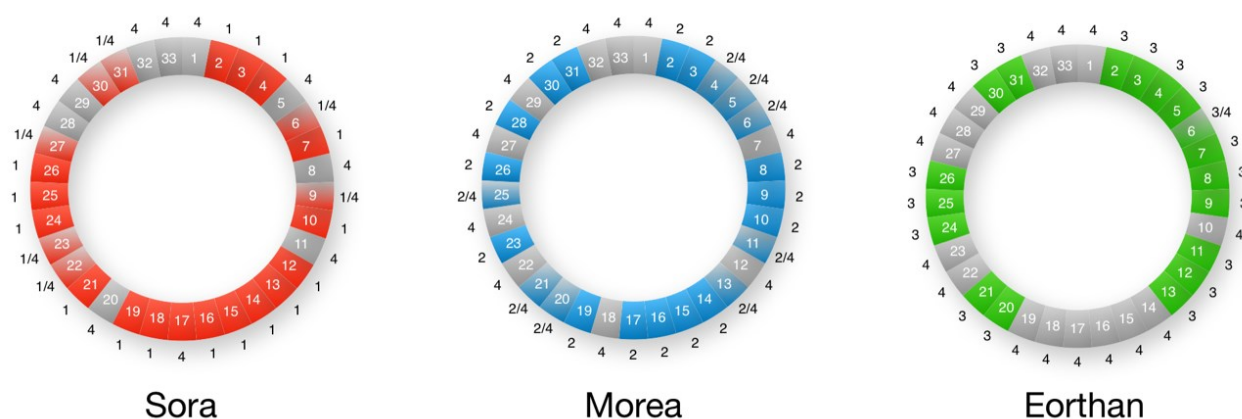
Figure 36: *The Story of Eorthan* **plotting the fourth text**

From the research undertaken for this chapter, I have utilised learning from primarily film trilogies and threequels to refine my understanding of the fourth text. I have explored different approaches to trilogy development, specifically planned and unplanned, using it to further understand the nature of the structure from a creator's perspective. This, coupled with the knowledge gained from studying *The Lord of the Rings*, has enabled me to restructure my third text by distinguishing between the plot lines of the third and fourth and further restructure the two prior texts in my trilogy, *Sora* and *Morea*.

These are changes that would not have been possible in an unplanned trilogy. Now that I have finalised the development of two texts within my trilogy, I must return to the first text and a dedicated thesis chapter to see how it has changed, and how writing my trilogy out in full might reveal further necessary restructures.

Reconsidering the first text in this trilogy now that I understand the form itself more clearly, it is also a good opportunity to explore the question 'Why a trilogy?' What are the storytelling advantages offered by this form? Before I move on to Chapter Three, I provide a post-research synopsis of my third text to demonstrate its development as part of this restructure.

Eorthan post-research synopsis

This is the story of life. Of those who can read the stars and those who become lost in the mists of memory. Lindis was five when his sister was born blind. She sleeps all the time. A stranger visits them. She tells them that his sister will one day be someone very important.

Lindis is now ten. He walks home. His sister is five and has not woken from her sleep since she was born. He hears whispers in the village: there is another like his sister. Lost in his thoughts, he does not notice a mist rising around him. By the time he does, it is so thick that he can not see where he is walking. In the mist stands a figure. They look as if they are made of mist. Lindis knows it is his sister. He calls her name: Siera. The mist dissipates, and the next day, Siera is missing. They find her on the beach with another: Aeolian. Together, Siera and Aeolian share a powerful gift. Aeolian can read the stars and tell the future. Siera can see into the mist of the past, she can 'know' memories.

A year later, the two families travel to Elsin-Øre for the gathering festival. There, a great earthquake rocks Mt Elsin. Siera and Aeolian use their gifts to prevent utter disaster. The people make both of them part of the Nine – rulers of Eorthan.

Lindis is twenty-three. He lives in the Ither, a university in the mountains. One day his sister arrives. Aeolian is missing. However, she does not seem fazed by this. Some months later, there is a great snowstorm. Siera flies out into it. Lindis follows and they find Aeolian unconscious and half-buried by the snow. Aeolian is half-starved. Looking closely at his sister, Lindis realised that they are connected physically and by their gifts. Aeolian's ability to see the future has been damaged.

At Elsin-ore, Siera and Aeolian perform a ritual dance, but something goes wrong. Siera's eyes turn to black ink and pour from her eyes and she rips off her own wings in pain. Aeolian takes her to heal in the Elsin spring.

Later, the future that Aeolian could not see comes to pass: Laurion Dresdain murders the Nine. He uses his friend Amuin and Emelia's powers to imprison the Nine between life and death. These three acts rend sorrow through the earth, great earthquakes tear the land asunder and it falls skywards. Siera was not herself trapped by Laurion, but she is linked to Aeolian. She falls unconscious. With the world in ruins around her, she remains this way for five years.

Lindis cares for her until the Dresdain Guards come to take him away and they throw Siera over the edge.

Lindis is brought before Laurion, and, like many others around him, his wings are cut off – a fate second only to death. A mortal wound. Emelia tries to stop her brother and suffers the same fate. Siera, wakes up, but she is too late. Of the many whose wings were removed that day, only Lindis and Emelia survive. Lindis asks his sister to take Eorthan's memories, so its people will not remember the world that was before. She does so and fades into the mist.

Lindis is an old man. He still lives on the Farthermost Isle. One night he sees a light on the hill. His sister's old cottage. Empty for at least forty years. Lindis finds his sister in the cottage. Siera sits by the fire holding a swaddled bundle that looks like a newborn child. Siera tells him about the child, her parent's deaths and part of her future. Aya will become one of the New Nine, but she doesn't know yet who the others will be.

Ten years pass and when Lindis next sees his sister, it is again at the Ither. A Great Fever has come upon the people of Eorthan. Lindis asks his sister to help them. Aya is gone. Siera tells him about the spectres attacking Aya. The fever was caused by the spectres being freed. Siera has the spectres bound again, for safekeeping.

Aya, now twenty-two, sits on the burnt roots of the tree Omberos. Emelia, Mannec, Sebastian, Natalie, Kirika and Jene have just taken their oath to become the New Nine. Aya's response is to fight Laurion Dresdain. She summons a phenomenal fire hurricane – a tremendous spell that nearly kills her. She splits herself in two. Her fiery soul follows the fleeing Laurion while her body is protected by an ethereal spring that springs from the symbols lining the desert floor and the mist that appeared from nowhere.

Back to ten years ago at the Ither, Siera sketches symbols on the floor of the great bell tower. Aeolian is there too, Lindis realises. The symbols tell the future. It tells of Siera finding the New Nine. Kirika was already found. Natalie is sick with fever in the village near the Ither. Sebastian is in Øre City (as with many others). Natalie will find Vann. Emelia will find Jene. After many years of searching, Mannec's spectre will find Siera. And when the wind turns to fire, Siera will find Nicolai in a forest of changing things.

After Siera finds Nicolai, they witness the end of Aya's fight with Laurion. Nicolai says they should follow the fiery spectre and Laurion. The timeline jumps back to Siera and Aeolian

covering Aya in symbols so they can hide her away from Laurion right under his nose in Øre City.

Vann is now in Øre City. He sees an apparition, Isolde, who shows the life she wanted with Laurion. Her gift was the power to grant wishes. She gives a wish to Vann. Then the light of the vision fades in a much brighter light – Aya's spectral form crashes into the palace. Siera and Nicolai stand behind Vann. Siera offers to let Vann help them by way of an apology. When they take back Aya's soul, Siera entrusts it to Vann. Vann makes his oath to become one of the New Nine. Siera dissolves into a mist that soon dissipates, leaving the night clear to the stars.

Vann and Nicolai follow the silver stream that carries Aya's body. They catch up with Mannec, Sebastian, Emelia, Kirika, Jene and Natalie. Nicolai makes a magic boat so that they can catch up with Aya's body. Just as they reach it, they start to fall into the sea. Vann gives Aya her soul back as they fall and just before they reach the sea, Aya's wings flare out. She is alive. The others follow and dive beneath the sea.

Under the waves lies Mount Elsin. The New Nine meet the Old Nine, including Siera. The New Nine return to the surface to use the great horns to announce their new office. Eorthan starts to fall back to the sea. The New Nine use their gifts to guide it down safely and guide the last of the souls back to their bodies. Meanwhile, Siera grants Laurion his last wish and allows him to die peacefully. Siera walks the short way back to Elsin and on the steps leading to the mountain, she and Aeolian wait for the sunrise as they take their last breaths.

The Old Nine are farewelled in a funeral and their bodies are sent down the river in boats. The people of Eorthan arrive through the natural morning mist, resplendent with their restored wings and knowledge of the world that went before once more. The New Nine return to their homes.

Aya returns to the Farthermost Isle. She sits on the beach where her parents met. She watches and listens to the waves. Sebastian sits beside her.

The End.

Chapter Three

triptych • *The Hunger Games Trilogy* • theme trilogies • Aeschylus' *Oresteia* • comparison and contrast • *Sora*

> Yet, as with Aeschylus' plays, although each drama can stand alone, the trilogy's full value is best seen when viewed as a unit, each play drawing meaning from the other.
>
> Nancy Mayberry (1976:20)

Each component text within the trilogy form – first, second and third – seems to have its own syndrome, criticism, or aphorism. The 'middle-book syndrome'; the 'third is always the worst', and 'the first must stand alone'. While there is not as much literature on the aphorism that the first must stand alone, it is often given as advice to writers or used to critique the first work within a trilogy. At the 'Trilogies, Trilogies, Trilogies' panel session at the Melbourne Emerging Writers Festival in 2014, the concession was that the first in a trilogy should 'stand alone'; that is, it needs to have a complete narrative. Like Jess-Cooke's assertion each text needs to have its own act structure (2009:5). This aligns with my proposed trilogy structure in that the first text should have its own narrative.

However, the distinction is that each trilogy text needs to stand alone or have its own complete narrative *and* they also need to connect to the other texts, either through a narrative or by other means; what are sometimes called 'theme' or 'loose' trilogies. This is Nancy Mayberry's point in linking Aeschylus' work with another dramatic trilogy (1976:20). The dual trilogy structure, texts that have their own narrative *and* are connected by a fourth text, produces a dynamic tension that is the true power of the trilogy form. While three is not the only defining feature of the trilogy, this tension answers the question: why three? This section will outline the development of my first trilogy text *Sora* after the two preceding restructures (discussed in Chapters One and Two). I will touch on the early explorations and how these led to asking the question: what can the trilogy form achieve that other multi-text narratives (such as a three-volume novel or threequel) cannot? I will then outline the reasons for choosing the case study of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy*.

The problem with *Sora*

Figure 38 below is the chapter structure of *Sora* after the restructure in Chapter Two. The red colours represent the stand-alone narrative of *Sora* and the grey portions are the fourth text elements that I had identified and added as part of the Chapter Two restructure. This image represents *Sora's* developmental state at the time the problem with my first text arose. It also illustrates how the first text was affected by the previous two restructures.
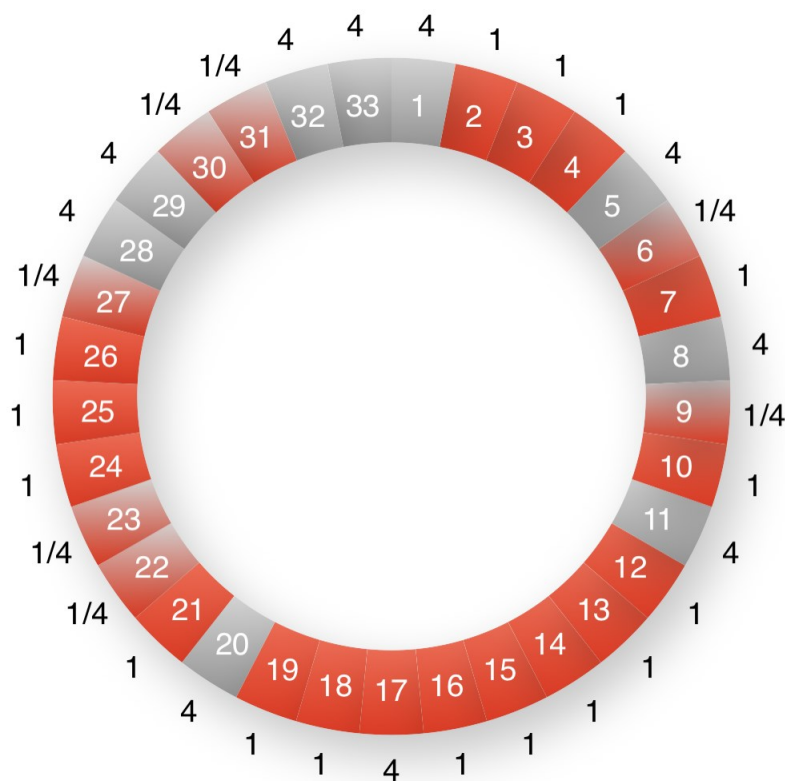
Figure 37: *Sora* after the fourth text restructure

The fourth text portions in Chapters Eight, Nine and 11 were re-worked and emphasised as part of the Chapter Two restructure. The fourth text elements at the end of *Sora* were representative of the problem with my first text that I came to realise after I had completed the second research cycle and sat down to write out the first draft of *Sora*.

There were two 'problems' with my first text that I discovered. One was a result of the two restructures of *Morea* and *Eorthan* – protagonist journeys and character voice. The second was a problem that had been part of my first text since the beginning and it was only through proposing a new structure of the trilogy form (as having three stand-alone texts and a fourth connecting text) that I came to understand this imbalance in my trilogy structure. These

problems are intimately linked and I will discuss them later in the restructure of *Sora*. A potential solution to restructuring *Sora* relied on reducing the number of chapters in the novel. The problems with my first text obliged me to revisit the structural inspirations and choices I made before beginning this research project, namely the number of chapters I chose and how I built the tension within the narrative. New structural models employed in the restructure precipitated revisiting the number of chapters envisioned in each text. The changes directly result from the research and are emblematic of my transition from practitioner to practitioner-researcher.

My trilogy is a collection of novels, yet the structural inspiration is a poem. In 2009 I went on a research year to Norway and was reading Dante's *Commedia* (1320). It was also when, after five years of story development, I chose to begin writing my trilogy. My prewriting process involved thinking of scenes, characters, locations and when I had established a critical mass, I started with a chapter outline.

I chose Dante's 'thirty-three' chapter (or canto) structure. Each part of the *Commedia* has 33 cantos, except for *Inferno (*34 because of the prologue). Each text in my trilogy would have 33 chapters plus a short prologue and epilogue. I chose this structure for two reasons: one, the number 'three' was magically significant in my fantasy world (e.g. the leaders of Eorthan are 'nine' in number, or three squared); and two, from the earliest inception of a trilogy structure, I wanted to develop my novels simultaneously and I wanted them to 'balance' or have the same length as each other. It was based on my reading preference. I would become annoyed if the books within a trilogy did not have a similar length or narrative resolution.[1]

As part of this research and restructuring my trilogy, I was forced to reconsider this 33-chapter structure. The first reduction came after restructuring *Morea*. I had developed 33 chapters, including the prologue and epilogue. Creating trilogy for me has always been about balance. I adopted a 33-chapter structure in each text to ensure they would be the same length. Reducing the number of chapters in Sora, by this logic, would necessitate a

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[1]   At this stage of my reading, I was thinking of Garth Nix's *Abhorsen Trilogy/Old Kingdom Series*. The second book did not 'stand alone' like the first had.

corresponding reduction in *Morea* and *Eorthan.* I explore this in detail in the closing part of this chapter, but it is worth noting that an unanticipated change in my practice also changed which structures I use to balance the trilogy texts.

The restructures of *Morea* and *Eorthan* relied on film case studies. In exploring the structure of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Dark Knight Trilogy,* I read widely in screenwriting manuals, such as Syd Field's three-act paradigm, Robert McKee's *Story* (1997), Craig Batty's *Movies That Move Us*, and Linda Aronson's *21st Century Screenplay*. What began as a means to understand film and screenwriting practices transformed the way I structured my trilogy.

When I came to write out *Sora* in full, I became 'stuck' at chapters five, six and seven (or what could be called the turning point of Act I/II). As I will illustrate, Robert McKee's concept of the 'controlling idea' helped me understand it was balancing the rising and lowering tension in the chapters (or scenes) that was causing my writer's block. The simple option was to remove the chapter that was causing the issue. Reconsidering the structure of *Sora* led me to question the chapter length, bearing in mind that any reduction in the number of chapters would need to be balanced in *Morea* and *Eorthan* and the fourth text. Could reducing the number of chapters in each text help fix the problems with narrative tension (or lack of), character voice, and motivation as well as helping the first text stand alone?

When developing scenes for my novels, I worked in segments or sections based on geographical locations in my world. I would build the tension from when the characters arrived and then based on what forced them to leave the location. This location-based structure is why I thought an overlapping narrative in *Morea* would not solve the problems with that text. The sections and locations are listed below, aligned to the 33-chapter structure.

Sora Sections:
- Prologue/1: The Farthermost
- Chapters 2-7: Øre City (Mannec's ordinary world and call to adventure)
- Chapters 8-9: Journey to The Aral Forest (Mannec's trials begin)
- Chapters 10-15: The Aral Forest (Mannec's trials and false climax)
- Chapters 16-20: The Ither (Natalie and Vann introduced)
- Chapters 21-27: The Neither (Mannec helps find Nicolai)
- Chapters 28-30: The Archipelago (Mannec and company try to find Kirika)
- Chapters 31-33: The Desert (Kirika is rescued)

These sections are distinct from 'acts' similar to Paul Gulino's sequences as described in *Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach* (2012). Although not derived from 15-minute film reels, they are akin to 'narrative movements' as novelist Diana Wynne Jones notes regarding Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (2012). The sections and their plot, using protagonist journeys, are detailed below. This section approach has been replaced by using act structures or protagonist journeys throughout this research project. It was an unintentional change, but one that demonstrates my transformative journey as part of this research.

As part of the restructure of *Morea* and *Eorthan,* I had considered *Sora* with a three-act structure as espoused by Field. I had also considered Mannec's (protagonist) journey (Batty 2011; Campbell 1949; Vogler 2007), yet this was a cursory consideration and needed more attention that I will give it in this chapter. Therefore, the 'sections' approach to the novel structure I had adopted previously was replaced by screenwriting techniques. The change in approach arose gradually and was not something I had considered intentionally; rather, it was a by-product of the case-study research, albeit a welcome one. In this thesis chapter, I consciously reflect on this change in my practice as it was symbolic of my journey from practitioner to practitioner-researcher.

Why *The Hunger Games Trilogy*?

To consciously explore and reflect on the changes to my story development practice as part of this project, I needed to find a similar practitioner. Susanne Collins, author of *The Hunger Games,* was a screenwriter for television before becoming a novelist. Her use of the three-act structure is apparent in her three novels. She also structured each text in her trilogy with 27 chapters each (effectively nine chapters per act). Using *The Hunger Games Trilogy* as a case study allows me to understand the three-act structure in a novel format.

I also asked the question: could I restructure my trilogy texts using 27 chapters? What started as a thought experiment allowed me to restructure *Sora* and move past the block I was experiencing, and tighten the narrative of *Morea*. The limitation of chapters was a blessing for restructuring *Eorthan* as it forced me to further refine the differences between the third and fourth texts.

What can a trilogy do that other forms cannot?

As this chapter restructures the first text in *The Story of Eorthan* and its origins, it should question the very nature of the trilogy form. What kinds of stories does a trilogy enable that other forms of multi-text narrative do not? These are the narrative possibilities contained within my proposed structure of the trilogy form. The two trilogies I have discussed thus far offer a brief illustration of these narrative possibilities.

Dante's *Commedia* is a midlife crisis in which the main character Dante travels through hell, purgatory, and heaven in a story of redemption and restoration. In Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen ignites a revolution through her defiance of the Capitol and will forever change her world of Panem. Each story is a kind of revolution.

In his article on Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*, Daniel Cho describes the revolution in each of the Mars novels and how each reiterative revolution reveals the flaws in the previous one (2010:68). Each text's revolution is there for a comment or a contrast with the previous text's revolution. In this way, the trilogy structure, of three individual texts and a fourth unifying text, facilitate an intertextual communication of comparison and contrast. This narrative possibility is not just the province of modern dystopic fiction or science fiction but can be illustrated by the earliest trilogy extant, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

Furthermore, this possibility of the trilogy form is also exploited or utilised by so-called 'theme' or 'loose' trilogies. These are trilogies such as Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Trois couleurs,* Sergio Leone's *The Dollars Trilogy* and Ingmar Bergman's three films *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Winter Light* (1962) and *The Silence* (1963).[2] These trilogies may not be collected together by their original author (such as with Leone's or Bergman's) but by a critic or academic; what Daniel Herbert terms 'constructed from without' (2012:181-2). These kinds of trilogies are not confined to film but can also be found in novels – Italo Calvino's *Our Ancestors* – and in plays, e.g. Sophocles' 'Theban Cycle'. In this thesis' introduction, I

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[2]   *Trois couleurs: Bleu* (1993), *Blanc* (1994) and *Rouge* (1994). *Dollars Trilogy* a.k.a. *Man with No Name Trilogy* or the *Blood Money Trilogy*: *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For A Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly* (1966).

discussed these types of trilogies to dispel the misapplication of triptych as synonymous with trilogy. While triptych can describe theme trilogy structures or a linking technique between trilogy texts, it is insufficient to describe the full narrative range of possibilities of the trilogy form.

Triptych

Three is synonymous with trilogy. It is often compared to or compounded with other forms of multi-text narrative that involve the number 'three'. I have previously explained how the trilogy is distinct from the three-volume novel format and the threequel structure. The other common comparative form is a triptych. Lihua Gui notes that 'the term trilogy refers only to three interrelated novels. Words such as "triad", "triplet" and "triptych" are used synonymously' (1998:58). When a triptych is used analogously to describe the trilogy form, it is most often used to describe a loose or so-called 'theme' trilogy. The tryptic can be used to graphically demonstrate a type of trilogy structure, both in narrative and theme examples of the form. Understanding the difference between trilogy and triptych will also enable me to provide a more nuanced structure of the trilogy. I begin to explore the types of story that the trilogy allows creators to tell. In doing so, I attempt to establish the storytelling potential of the trilogy form.

What is a triptych? As with 'trilogy', its etymology is Greek. The following definition is from the Oxford Dictionary of English and is also available via Google definitions:

> **triptych**/ˈtrɪptɪk/
> *noun*
> a picture or relief carving on three panels, typically hinged together vertically and used as an altarpiece.
> "a triptych depicting the Crucifixion"
> -   a set of three associated artistic, literary, or musical works intended to be appreciated together.
> "a triptych on the theme of the holocaust"
> Origin
> mid 18th century (denoting a set of three writing tablets hinged or tied together): from tri- 'three', on the pattern of diptych.

Triptych is used analogously to describe trilogy for two interrelated reasons: one, it describes a certain trilogy structure or, more specifically, how the texts relate to one another; two, it describes a type commonly known as a 'theme' trilogy. Ausmus refers to these as a 'panel-novel' (1969:13). Italo Calvino calls his novel theme trilogy, *Our Ancestors*, a 'heraldic trilogy' and says that 'what the three stories have in common is the fact that they had a very simple, very obvious image or situation as their point of departure...' (1998: ix). The departure points of each novel form a triptych or three panels from which the stories derive. Calvino's triptych

structure is similar to that employed by Paulo Coelho in his 'On the Seventh Day' trilogy.[3] This trilogy is named for the seven-day transformation that takes place in each text.

Referring to Roberson Davies' *Cornish Trilogy,* Lihua Gui notes that 'the story of Francis Cornish recounted in the three novels coalesces into a triptych-like pattern. His life story related in the second novel functions as if it were the central panel, with the accounts of him in the first and the third novels serving as the side panels' (1998:2). Figure 39 represents this type of trilogy structure below.

Theme trilogies

Theme trilogies are a prevalent feature in film scholars' considerations of the trilogy form. In *Film Trilogies,* Perkins and Verevis note that 'throughout cinema history the trilogy has consistently been associated with ideas of aesthetics and auteurism' (2012:4). For example, Bergman's trilogy featuring *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Winter Light* (1962) and *The Silence* (1963); Kieślowski's *Trois couleurs* and Baz Luhrmann's *Red Curtain Trilogy*.

Of Lucas Belvaux' *The Trilogy*, Perkins and Verevis note that he 'focuses specifically on the internal dialectics of the trilogy form', while examining three different stories and genres, he explores 'his own theoretical question about what constitutes a secondary character' (2012:8-9). That is each film explores a different theme, like Kieślowski's *Trois couleurs*. For Ausmus each volume may 'have a separate theme and though minor themes may appear in all of the volumes, when considered together, (there) must manifest a greater ultimate theme.' (1969:12). Therefore, in theme trilogies, the fourth text is constituted from a connecting, overlapping or ultimate theme.

The 'Trilogies Trilogies Trilogies' panel at the Emerging Writers festival used the word 'loose' to describe these theme trilogies. *Empire* magazine's 'The 33 Greatest Movie Trilogies' (2010)

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[3]   *Down by the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* (1994), *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998), and *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000).

refs to theme trilogies as 'loose' and uses the following examples Kevin Smith's *Jersey Trilogy;* Ingmar Bergman's trilogy; Park Chan-Wook's *Vengeance Trilogy;* Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Trois couleurs*; and Sergio Leone's *Dollars Trilogy*.[4] While the term 'theme' can serve as a broad category, there are examples of so-called 'loose' trilogies that could be considered bound by a style or technique. Baz Luhrmann's *Red Curtain Trilogy* is bound by a theatre motif (Busari 2008).[5] William Burrough's *The Nova Trilogy* consists of three novels written using the 'cut-up technique', where the novels are drafted from cutting sentences and words from other books and magazines.

Technique in theme trilogies can be seen in some of the earliest auteur trilogies made during the Italian Neorealism period. For example, Roberto Rossellini's so-called 'war trilogy': *Rome, Città Aperta* (1945), *Paisà* (1946), *Germania Anno Zero* (1948) and Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* (1961), *La Notte* (1962), *L'Eclisse* (1962). Perkins and Verevis hold that these can be said to be 'accidental technique' trilogies and share 'common themes related to faith' (Perkins & Verevis 2012:13), as they also feature shared actors and a spare style, due in part to budget and other shortages in post-war Italy. In *Italian cinema* (1990) Peter Bonadella groups many neorealist works produced in the post-war period as 'trilogies', for example Vittorio De Sica's three films *Sciuscià* (1946)*, Ladri di biciclette* (1948) and *Umberto D* (1952) (pg 92). These trilogies reside at the intersection between theme and technique, the analysis of which gives rise to critic trilogies: trilogies that are defined not by their original creator, but by a critical analysis that draws separate texts together. In this sub-set of theme trilogies, the critical analysis forms the fourth text. Before discussing this practice it is worth briefly noting how setting can be used to structure a theme trilogy.

Setting as theme

The terms that describe the form – narrative and theme – are useful because they give a name to what unifies or binds a trilogy together. For this PhD, this is what constitutes the

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[4]   *Jersey Trilogy: Clerks* (1994), *Mallrats* (1995), and *Chasing Amy* (1997). *Vengeance Trilogy*: *Sympathy For Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003), and *Lady Vengeance* (2005).

[5]   *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), and *Moulin Rouge!* (2001).

fourth text. From a content creation point of view, instead of a 'critic' point of view, narrative and theme allude to what gives the trilogy a uniting or coherent structure. For my purposes, it could be said these aspects – narrative and theme – relate to structure, representing the idea of the fourth text. The third element, 'setting', is insufficient on its own to form the fourth text. When a trilogy is dominated by setting, it is usually in the presence of a narrative (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings* and Middle Earth, *The Dark Knight Trilogy* and Gotham, and *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and Panem; not to mention, the essential part setting plays in the narratives of Ancient Athenian tragedy).

While Ausmus notes that of narrative, theme and setting, the latter 'is the least cohesive' (1968:6). Gui draws 'setting' as a mode of structure to discuss one of Davies three trilogies. As she outlines, *The Salterton Trilogy* is 'linked explicitly and chronologically by their setting, *Salterton*, and by the recurrence of some characters' (1998:2). Gui states that this town serves as 'the embodiment both of old and new social and cultural traditions, manners and values and of conflicts among them' (1998:114). Her 'setting' designation here is shorthand for the theme of old and new societal cultural conditions. That is not to say that setting as a narrative element is not essential to the trilogy form. Setting, as I will discuss in the section 'Comparison and contrast', can be used by a creator to create distinct narratives in the individual texts of a trilogy.

Critic trilogies

Theme trilogies can be found in films, novels and plays. Indeed, just as Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is the oldest narrative trilogy extant, the oldest theme trilogy is Sophocles' *Theban Cycle*. Daniel Herbert draws on David Grene's analysis to compare the *Oresteia* and Sophocles' *Theban Cycle* to describe trilogies from 'within' and 'without', i.e. the trilogy's author as a defining feature (2012:181-2). The three *Theban Plays* (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*) are attributed to Sophocles. The works themselves are part of the Theban mythological cycle. The texts were written 40 years apart and were not originally intended to be performed together as a trilogy (Fitzgerald 1949). While the narrative action of *Antigone* occurs after the other two Oedipus tragedies, it was performed around 447 BCE and *Oedipus at Colonus* posthumously in 401 BCE. *Oedipus Tyrannus* was first performed in 429 BCE.

While Sophocles was the original author of the *Theban Plays*, they are collected as a theme trilogy and critiqued together because the other plays have been lost. However, it is a common practice among critics and film scholars to use the form to collect similar films together and 'read' them as a trilogy, e.g. in Perkins and Verevis' *Film Trilogies,* of 12 chapters, nine can be called 'theme trilogies'. Furthermore, in eight chapters, the authors collate the trilogy by discussing the theme(s). The critics use theme trilogy as an analytical tool to discuss a collection of works by an auteur.

Using film criticism to create trilogies extends auteur practice, where the creative effort lies with the critic. R. Barton Palmer collects Sofia Coppola's three first films into the 'Young Girls Trilogy', arguing they are all coming-of-age stories (2012:40).[6] This practice of using trilogy as a critical tool is linked to forming a trilogy from 'without' (e.g. Sophocles' *Theban Plays*). This common trend in trilogy analysis to 'emphasise the director's fixation on particular subjects/s or his/her development and treatment of a theme and/or style' (Perkins & Verevis 2012:17) is sometimes a successful critique and sometimes less successful, especially when an auteur's technique or thematic exploration continues beyond three films.

Another example of a critic trilogy is Quentin Tarantino's early work. R. Barton Palmer notes that Quentin Tarantino's first three films, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Jackie Brown* (1997) were attempted to be collected by their subject matter and overt violence (2012:61), but with ten films planned and the violence rarely abated, it could be said that this was a less successful critic trilogy.

Fan-creator interactions could also be grouped with this practice, such as Edgar Wright's '*Cornetto Trilogy'*.[7] Upon the release of the first two films, fans noted the similar themes of friendship and that they eat cornettoes in each film. Parodying Kieślowski's *Trois couleurs*, they noted that the cornetto's flavours symbolised each film's themes. Peter Howell quotes

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[6]   *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), and *Marie Antoinette* (2006).

[7]   *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), *Hot Fuzz* (2007), and *The World's End* (2013).

Edgar Wright in an article as remarking that what started as a joke turned into a real trilogy with the production of the final film (Howell 2013).

Critic trilogies are found outside of film studies. In *Shakespeare's Roman Trilogy* (2019), Paul Cantor connects *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* as a historical trilogy that 'portrays the rise and fall of the Roman Republic' (2019:8). He continues, 'rather than reading each play separately, I move back and forth among the three to show how Shakespeare builds on a grand scale' (2019:8), and he creates what amounts to a trilogy out of the three plays.

Vertical Readings in Dante's *Commedia*

Before returning to a description of triptych structure, it is worth noting and exploring another academic example, Cambridge's Vertical Readings of Dante's *Commedia*. These were a series of lectures that undertook a 'vertical reading' of the poem. Specifically, Dante scholars compared the same numbered canto in each canticle, i.e. comparing common themes in Inferno 1, Purgatorio 1 and Paradiso 1. The conveners noted that at a narrative level, each reading considers in parallel the three paths through hell, purgatory, and heaven in one journey (Corbett & Webb 2015:1). I read and watched these lectures to reflect on using Dante as a structural guide, but they provide a useful link between trilogy and triptych as a structure. In analysing the identically numbered cantos, the individual authors of the chapters create critical triptychs or trilogies within the poem. They create reference points in the trilogy and link them together.

As a reflection on this research and a thought exercise within my trilogy, I began to transform repeated imagery and dialogue into triptychs within my narrative as an early attempt to rationalise a difference between triptych and trilogy. While a trilogy can contain a triptych or many triptychs, a triptych cannot fully contain a trilogy. A triptych is like individual film posters. While they provide a reference point, they do not present the complete narrative in the way that a trilogy allows. It is like repeated motifs or lines within trilogies. Such as in *The Dark Knight Trilogy,* the line 'Why so serious?' is spoken by Dr Crane in *Batman Begins* and

then becomes the Joker's catchphrase, or, in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss' fires an arrow at three key moments across the trilogy.[8]

For example, as noted previously there are three great tragedies to befall Eorthan: The Death of The Nine, Creating the Dresdain Guards, and the Great Fever. As part of the restructure, I moved these events, so there was one in each text of the trilogy. The Great Fever splits Mannec's family apart in *Sora* (chapters 8, 14 and 17), Emelia was forced to create the Dresdain Guards and must overcome this in *Morea* (chapters 6, 14 and 22), and the Death of the Nine, who are rulers of the land, is the main plot of *Eorthan* (chapters 10, 13 and 18). In each text, information relating to the tragedies is repeated three times, the figure below shows in which chapter they appear.
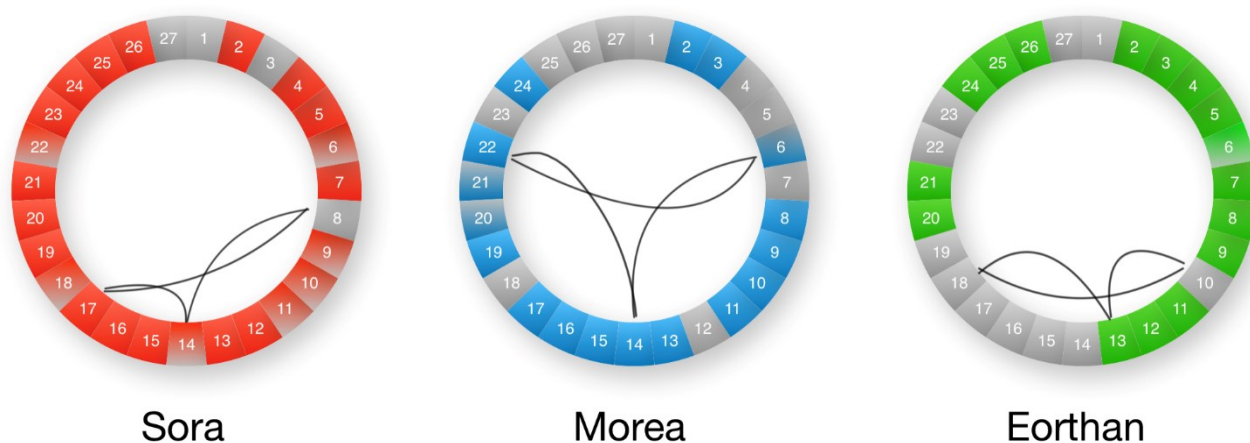
Figure 38: *The Story of Eorthan* linking structures

There are other linking triptychs (one panel per novel) that I have consolidated and seeded throughout my trilogy. They form the connective tissue between the texts and therefore form part of the fourth text.

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[8]   Similarly, in *The Dark Knight*, Harvey Dent's DA campaign slogan is 'I believe in Harvey Dent'. It is repeated several times, to reinforce his 'white knight' persona. Then in the opening lines of *The Dark Knight Rises* Jim Gordon says 'I believed in Harvey Dent', but this the meaning has changed. It speaks of failure, lies and corruption.

Illustrating the triptych

As an illustration, two types of triptych structure can be identified in examples of trilogy and from the literature. They can be linked back to the two definitions of triptych: three pictures connected together, like an old travelling altarpiece, or a set of three associated works, like a tricolour flag. I will illustrate the latter first.
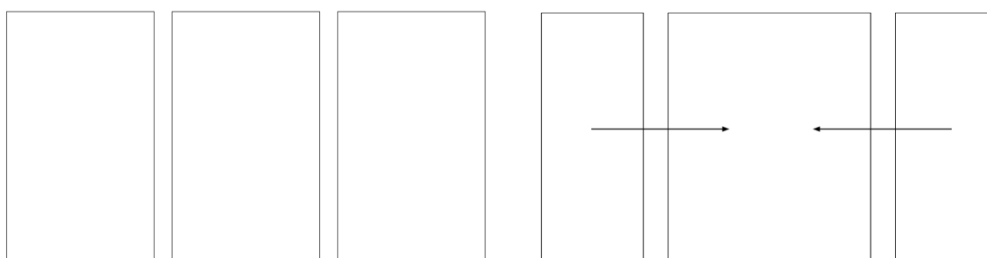
Figure 39: Triptych structures: tricolour and altar piece

An example of this triptych structure used in trilogy is Italo Calvino's *Our Ancestors* with their 'departing images' as inspiration. In film, Krzysztof Kieślowski *Trois couleurs* is named for the French national flag and explores the ideals of the French Republic – liberty, equality, fraternity – in a modern context. Additionally, each film has a distinct genre. The first film, *Bleu,* is an anti-tragedy and explores liberty. The second film, *Blanc,* is an anti-comedy and explores the theme of equality. The final film, *Rouge,* is an anti-romance and explores the theme of fraternity. Each film has a different protagonist; however, they are linked together in the final sequence of the third film. Thus, the triptych structure with three separate yet linked panels is one method of linking together a 'theme' trilogy: the different themes are linked together in a dialogue that forms the fourth text.

The second triptych structure is based on one version of a triptych, the travelling altarpiece. It has a central panel and the two smaller side pieces are connected by a hinge and act as a door to close and protect the painting while travelling. In this structure, there is a central panel to which the two side panels refer directly. This is important because it illustrates how the individual texts relate to one another in a particular manner.

Of Robertson Davies' *Cornish Trilogy*, Lihua Gui notes the following (1998:2):

> Three stories constitute an easily recognizable linear narrative development.
> The story of Francis Cornish recounted in the three novels coalesces into a
> triptych-like pattern. His life story related in the second novel functions as if

it were the central panel, with the accounts of him in the first and the third

novels serving as the side panels.

In that way, the 'central' panel need not be the second novel in the trilogy. Instead, this pattern refers to the intertextual links in the trilogy. The largest panel is the central text to which others refer. It may even be the first text in the trilogy. Joyce Cary's 'First Trilogy' also has this structure, where the first novel forms the central panel to which the two subsequent novels refer.

The 'altar piece' structure can also be seen in film and, more importantly, in narrative trilogies. In *Infernal Affairs* (2002), a member of a triad works for the police, and, vice versa, a police force member, is embedded with a triad. The undercover police officer is killed. The first text forms the central panel to which the latter two films sit on either side temporally. As the second film is a prequel, the action takes place before the first film's action. Then the third film resolves the issues raised in the first two films.

These two examples of triptych trilogy design show how triptych is useful to describe the structure of certain trilogies, especially in how the texts relate to one another in the trilogy form. The latter example demonstrated how although the triptych structure is often used to describe theme trilogies, it can also describe intertextuality within a narrative trilogy. Theme as a storytelling element is also an important aspect of narrative trilogies, either as a cohesive or a differentiating technique between the individual texts within the trilogy. However, this relates to inherent, content-specific aspects of the story, not a thematic reading of a group of texts after they have been written (a critic trilogy).

Theme trilogies make conscious use of one of the fundamental features of the trilogy form. Compared to a three-volume novel (where gaps between them are artificial) or a threequel (a temporary trilogy whose structure is only determined by three, rather than a linking narrative), a trilogy has a dual structure. It is both a whole text and individual texts. Reading trilogy engages directly with the process of comparison and contrast between the individual texts. Theme trilogy creators, whether directors or critics, use this consciously.

However, narrative trilogy creators also use the storytelling potential of the form. This potential is one of the reasons trilogy is often used to tell stories of great change over time, in a society or on a personal level. This storytelling strength of trilogy is often expressed in terms

of a revolution or a restoration of a society or person. In the following case study, I will analyse Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* because while its action line is a revolution, Katniss' emotional journey is one of restoration. Following this, I explore how other trilogies use this fundamental storytelling potential.

The Hunger Games Trilogy

Katniss Everdeen is 'the girl on fire', volunteer tribute, reluctant rebel with a bow, and the protagonist of Suzanne Collins' young-adult dystopian trilogy. She is a 16-year-old girl living in a futuristic dystopic US known as Panem,[9] who 'does not know her own heart' (Jordan 2010). These descriptions of Katniss – tribute, rebel, someone with an irresolute heart – also describe the textual structures of Collins' novel trilogy.

The individual texts: Theseus structure

Katniss' volunteering as tribute for the Capitol's Hunger Games in place of her sister mimics the classical Athenian hero Theseus. Like Katniss, Theseus volunteered as a tribute to Crete and was sent into the labyrinth where the Minotaur dwells. Collins did not want to create a simple 'labyrinth' narrative (Margolis 2008) and so instead the tributes are thrown into a gladiatorial arena. In each book of the trilogy, Katniss faces a new labyrinth in the Games arena.[10]

The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur tells the story of Athens and Crete. In Crete, King Minos kept the part-man and part-bull Minotaur in a labyrinth designed by Daedalus. Theseus, prince of Athens, volunteers as tribute and travels to Crete where he slays the Minotaur. Like Theseus, Katniss volunteers as tribute in place of her sister, whose name was drawn by lot known as 'The Reaping'. Rather than a labyrinth, she is thrown into an arena where the enemy is not a great beast but the other tributes.

However, the arenas of Panem are labyrinthine in their artificial construction and the Game Makers are just like the architect Daedalus in their ingenious capacity for gore and spectacle. Like Theseus, Katniss will make us of use the people she needs to survive. Just as Ariadne is cast aside by Theseus, Peeta is cast aside by Katniss after the first Hunger Games. Theseus'

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[9]   From the Latin phrase *Panem et circenses*, attributed to the Roman poet Juvenal, meaning 'bread and circuses' (or games).

[10]   There are no Games in *Mockingjay*, but the Capitol is rigged up like an arena.

return to Athens was less than sanguine and so too must Katniss face new challenges even when she wins the first Hunger Games. Her defiance of the Capitol sparks a rebellion that will see Katniss return to a new and more elaborate arena. Even when she escapes the physical arena, in the third novel *Mockingjay* District 13 is primarily constructed underground like a labyrinth. As the primary trilogy setting, the arenas are essential to understanding the fourth-text structure and as such will be considered later in this section.

The fourth text: Spartacus and Bathsheba Everdene structures

Collins herself noted that Spartacus, the Roman gladiator and rebel leader, was the model for the 'arc of the three books' (Margolis 2010). Additionally, Katniss' love triangle with Peeta and Gale can represent the 'emotion' line of her journey across the three novels, a journey modelled on Thomas Hardy's Bathsheba Everdene from *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) (Jordan 2010). Spartacus is used to develop Katniss' physical journey and Bathsheba her emotional journey (Batty 2011).

The Greek essayist Plutarch says Spartacus was Thracian and brought to Rome to be sold as a gladiator (1916:315).[11] Reports differ as to his fate, but most agree he was killed in battle.[12] Spartacus and other gladiators escaped and made their camp on the slopes of Mt Vesuvius, where they defeated expeditions sent to recapture them, and more slaves flocked to the cause. Spartacus and the other rebel leaders organised and trained the other slaves until the Spartican revolt was defeated in 71BC.

Spartacus was an active rebel and assumed training his troops, whereas Katniss is a reluctant rebel. She does not have the unbridled fire of Gale in the face of the Capitol. In the first novel, Katniss' motivation is to survive. In the second, she attempts to quell the rebellion out of fear

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[11]   There is another history of Spartacus' rebellion told by Appian in *The Civil Wars*. I am using Plutarch's version as it is both Suzanne Collins' main Roman source for her trilogy and it reveals this inspiration in the character name of Plutarch Heavensbee, Head Game Maker in *Catching Fire* and undercover leader of the Capitol rebels.

[12]   In contrast Stanley Kubrick's 1960 film, which sees Spartacus crucified along with 6000 of his followers along the Appian Way.

for herself and her loved ones, and then when she and Peeta return to the arena, her drive is to keep him alive. She only agrees to become the 'face of the revolution' in the third novel in an attempt to keep Peeta safe from the repercussions of his seeming support for the Capitol.

If this gradual transition to rebel leader is the 'action line' of the fourth text, the question is, what is the emotion line? Are they the same? Thus, we come to the final structural allusion in this trilogy, Thomas Hardy's Bathsheba Everdene. In an interview, Collins noted that Katniss' last name 'Everdeen' directly links her and Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* protagonist (Jordan 2010). Although they are very different characters, Collins notes they are similar in that 'both struggle with knowing their (own) hearts' (Jordan 2010). Katniss' emotion line is given physical form in the dominant trope of young-adult fiction: the love triangle between Katniss, Gale and Peeta. These two love interests could represent the two emotional sides of Katniss and the two opposing sides of the war: The Capitol and the rebels.

Peeta, a blond from the rich merchant class, represents the Capitol in District 12. They have food and do not have to work in the coal mines. He is also vehemently opposed to the war/Hunger Games. He has a good heart that makes Katniss want to protect him (some of the time). Katniss says to herself in *Catching Fire,* 'No wonder I won the Games. No decent person ever does' (2009:56). Gale, on the other hand, is dark-haired and from the coalmining class of District 12. Even before the first Hunger Games, he craves rebellion and war to avenge the Capitol's crimes. As the war progresses, especially in the third novel, he becomes more militaristic. He eagerly allies himself with District 13 and works with Beetie to utilise his hunting knowledge for creating human traps, for example, suggesting they bomb District Two's last stronghold, trapping the citizens in the mountain, reminiscent of the accident that killed both Katniss and Gale's fathers in District 12. Gale's suggestion that they take this course of action further drives him and Katniss apart. It demonstrates how they have both been changed by the Games and the rebellion.

Katniss' mother came from the merchant class, but her father was from the coal mines, like Gale. Katniss is from both of these worlds and oscillates between them and what they represent: the Capitol wanting to maintain the status quo; and the idea of rebellion. Before the Hunger Games, she was reluctant to engage with Gale in his revolutionary talk when they hunted. When she defies the Capitol, it is to survive, and she hunts to feed their family. Throughout the trilogy, Katniss also develops an understanding of both worlds through her

experiences in the Capitol and Arena. She makes friends with people from the Capitol – notably her stylist Cinna – and her experiences in the Games make her reluctant for war. The emotional line of Katniss' journey, represented by the love triangle between Peeta and Gale, plays out similar themes to the action line of the rebellion and Katniss' role in it. This emotion line for the trilogy is a key aspect of Katniss' world and her worldview, and I will return to this when I discuss the fourth text.

Restoration and revolution

Multiple opposing sides in Panem engage in a dialogue with one another: the rebel Districts and the Capitol, Peeta and Gale's opposing points of view. This argumentative structure that is played out across the trilogy is reminiscent of the previously mentioned earliest trilogy, *The Oresteia*. In Aeschylus' work, many aspects of two opposing ideas are pitted against one another: male vs female, Chthonian vs Olympian, *oikos* (household law) vs *polis* (state law) (Meineck 2005:48). This argumentative structure is an essential aspect of the trilogy form and can explain why trilogies are often used to tell stories of rebellion or great social change.[13] It is partly why 'theme' or 'critic' trilogies can be identified. In this structure, creators or critics use an argument to align disparate works into a unified whole. I explore this idea in the next section of this chapter, but here it offers one more rationale for choosing Suzanne Collins' trilogy as a case study.

Similarities in practice

Another reason for choosing this text is that this thesis' first two case studies were both films and adaptations, i.e. Peter Jackson's adaptation of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and

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[13]   Dystopian young-adult trilogies are popular and not just a market reaction to the success of *The Hunger Games*. Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking Trilogy* publication dates matched the years in which Collins' novels were released. Scott Westerfield's *Uglies Trilogy's* first novel was published in 2006. Other trilogies, such as Veronica Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* and Ally Condie's *Matched Trilogy,* were published after Collins' trilogy, however they speak more to the suitability of rebellions and the trilogy form rather than copy-cat dystopian trilogies. Both of their narratives are quite distinct from *The Hunger Games Trilogy*.

Christopher Nolan's use of various Batman comics to construct *The Dark Knight Trilogy*. This case study will focus on Collins' novels and not the film adaptations. All three trilogies explore different genres where trilogy is common: fantasy, superhero and young-adult dystopia.

According to her website, before she became a successful young-adult dystopian novelist, Suzanne Collins worked as a screenwriter on children's TV shows. She also holds a Master of Fine Art in dramatic writing. Furthermore, her father was in the air force for 30 years and fought in Vietnam (Margolis 2008 & 2010). Collins' dramatic training and life experience is an important influence on her novel writing (Margolis 2008 & 2010, Hopkinson 2009).

Collins' background as a screenwriter and her use of the three-act structure to develop her trilogy (Hopkinson 2009) also helps me to reflect on and explore how screenwriting techniques have altered my approach to constructing *The Story of Eorthan*. Collins also uses a set number of chapters (27) in each text that mirrors my 33-chapter approach. I have not been able to establish why Collins chose 27 chapters. She is famously reclusive and does not give many interviews. Nevertheless, understanding the structure of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* through the three-act structure and Katniss' protagonist journey led me to use Collins' 27-chapter structure to remodel my first text and entire trilogy.

The Games, gender and journey

To better understand the structural aspects of this trilogy, it is worth unpacking how it has been discussed in academic literature. First, how has Katniss' protagonist journey been described? Leading on from this discussion, I will consider gender discussions pertaining to Katniss' protagonist journey.

Valerie Frankel in *The Many Faces of Katniss Everdeen: Exploring the Heroine of the Hunger Games* (2013) takes Collins' assertion of Katniss as a futuristic Theseus and maps the three *Hunger Games* books onto this journey, together with a comparison to Campbell and the heroine's journey (established in her book *From Girl to Goddess* (2010)). This is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Valerie Frankel's *The Many Faces of Katniss Everdeen* (2013:114-6)

Campbell's	Theseus	The Hunger Games	The Heroine's Journey
The World of the Common Day	Theseus grows up in the countryside	Katniss grows up in District 12	The World of the Common Day
The Call to Adventure	Theseus claims his father's sword	Prim is chosen in the reaping, so Katniss volunteers instead	The Call to Adventure
Refusal of the Call	He doesn't want to go	She doesn't want to go	Refusal of the Call
Supernatural Aid	Charon tutors him in war and heroics	Haymitch offers advice and sponsor gifts, Cinna makes beautiful gowns.	The Warriors Male Mentors
Supernatural Aid	The king's sword	Her father's bow, her father's book	Bladeless Talisman
The Crossing of the First Threshold	Theseus journeys to Athens, then Crete	Katniss journeys to the Capitol	The Crossing of the First Threshold
Innermost Cave	He enters the Labyrinth	Katniss enters the Games, the Quarter Quell, then the battle in the Capitol	Opening One's Senses
The Road of Trials	With his fellow tributes, Theseus navigates the Labyrinth	She's helped by Rue, Peeta, and Thresh; her Quarter Quell allies; and her Star Squad	Sidekicks, Trials, Adversaries
The Meeting With the Goddess	Ariadne guides him with her magic thread and they fall in love	Katniss comes to care for Peeta, her gentle sensitive side.	Finding the Sensitive Man
		Katniss sees Haymitch betray her and meets deposed Snow. She reconciles with each.	Confronting the Powerless Father.
Atonement with the Father	Theseus battles with the Minotaur	Katniss Understands who Coin is and says what she wants to hear	Atonement with the Mother
Apotheosis	Theseus succeeds and wins the gods' favor	Katniss dreams she is a phoenix, rising from her own ashes	Integration and Apotheosis
The Ultimate Boon	Theseus escapes with Ariadne - the tribute has ended forever	To protect the children of Panem, Katniss shoots Coin	Reward: Winning the Family

Campbell's	Theseus	The Hunger Games	The Heroine's Journey
Refusal of the Return	Theseus is uncertain what he wants	Katniss wants to hill herself, but finally manages to heal	Torn Desires
The Crossing of the Return Threshold	Theseus returns to Athens and is crowned	Back in District Twelve Katniss builds a new family with Peeta and Haymitch	Return
Mater of the Two Worlds	Theseus is now king - he has grown from child to adult	She returns to hunting, marries and accepts the risk of children	Power over Life and Death

Frankel's analysis does not expand further upon the difference between Katniss' journey as described with a hero or heroine's journey. The second difference is that the three texts – *Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* – are conflated and collapsed into one column, creating a mono-text rather than the intricate multi-text structure. Reminiscent of David Grene, she reduces the trilogy form into an amorphous whole and therefore ignores the opportunities that the three individual texts allow. It is a key difference that is essential for trilogy creators to understand if they are to make full use of the narrative possibilities of the form. Frankel's analysis conflating the three Hunger Games texts makes no allowance for the changes Katniss undergoes from text to text, and therefore it obscures rather than elucidates the trilogy structure.

In each text, Katniss' motives or dramatic needs are different. In the first, Katniss only wants to survive and win the Games to return to her sister. In *Catching Fire,* she makes a deal with Haymitch to save Peeta at the expense of her own life. In the third, her motivation is to kill President Snow. In the fourth text, Katniss strives to keep her sister safe. Katniss' tragedy is that she will fail at every single one of these. In winning the Games, she and Peeta are in even more danger from the Capitol and doomed to a life of servitude. Despite her efforts and pledge from Haymitch, she fails to save Peeta from the second Games or stop the revolution. She fails to kill Snow, opting instead to kill Coin. She fails to keep her sister safe. Despite superhuman efforts and plans, Katniss fails because there is no way for her to succeed in the world of Panem. It is the reality of war – someone always loses – and the reality of Panem.

Valery Frankel does not offer a distinction between the hero's and heroine's journey in her discussion on Katniss Everdeen, nor offer a rationale for her decision to use the hero's journey other than Collins' Theseus/Spartacus allusions. However, the Hunger Games and gender,

specifically Katniss' gender roles, have been heavily canvassed in other literature. While this thesis does not intend to discuss this literature fully, it is worth noting that gender is used as an external representation of Katniss' emotional journey in the fourth text.

In a similar vein to Frankel, other authors have noted Katniss' masculine attributes, whether it is her use of the bow or taking to the hunt after her father passes away (DeaVault (2012:192); Green-Barteet (2014:37); Henthorn (2014:54-5); Jones (2014:loc 1366 of 4943); Lem & Hassel (2012:114); Mitchell (2012:129); Pulliam (2014:175)). There is more to Katniss becoming the provider for her family than her father passing away. After his death, Katniss' mother fell into a catatonic depression and could not care for the family, effectively forcing Katniss to assume both mother and father roles to her sister Prim. The hunt is also not just a masculine trait: the Greek goddess Artemis carries a bow and is famed for her vow of virginity. Arguably, therefore, in taking on both roles, Katniss assumes both genders to survive. Katniss' circumstances and the world make her asexual, propelling her into perpetual maidenhood like a futuristic Artemis.

Pulliam notes that Katniss performs 'masculinity' and discusses it in the following manner (2014:171):

> throughout the 'Hunger Games' trilogy, Katniss resists behaving in a conventionally feminine manner. In fact, her boyish figure, tough demeanour, and disdain for stereotypically female activities make her seem more masculine than feminine.

It is no surprise that Katniss exhibits or that Collins attributes these characteristics to Katniss, given the inspirational figures of Theseus and Spartacus. Pulliam also expresses that Katniss' androgyny is a mechanism by which she can survive (her primary motivation for the first novel). Pulliam suggests that Katniss' performance of 'gender lends her adaptive responses to different situations' (2014:181). Of her feminine side, Miller points out that, 'Katniss bends to feminine norms when she must – that is, when the Capitol makes it impossible for her not to do so' (2012:146). For Jones, these two sides of Katniss' gender are 'warring factions' within Katniss and are expressed through her love triangle with Peeta and Gale (2014:loc 1248 of 4943). The internal struggle within Katniss, represented externally by Gale and Peeta, reflects the revolution in Panem.

In aligning her analysis to the hero's journey and grouping together her analysis of the three texts, Frankle misses the essential aspect of the trilogy. While the action line of the trilogy is a revolution or Spartacus storyline, Katniss' emotional journey is more of a restoration. In Frankel's book on the heroine's journey, *From Girl to Goddess*, 'girls emulate that path on their journeys by forming a family circle they can rule as supreme nurturer and protector. Here emerges a different story veiled beneath the hero's that is just as ancient, valid, universal, and empowering. Here is the 'heroine's journey' (2010:4) in which 'when goddesses embark upon heroic journeys, it is to restore what has been broken or injured' (2012:17). While the individual novels are modelled on a more generic or hero's journey, the fourth text represents both models. The action line is a more masculine revolution journey, but the emotion line is a restorative journey.

Michelle Abate argues that Katniss is tomboyish and is reluctant to engage in relationships (2015:414) and that she 'demonstrates emotional reserve' and 'psychological guardedness' (2015:411). This is Katniss' defence against the Capitol. She knows that Victor's children are more likely to end up in the Hunger Games. The odds are not in their favour (*Catching Fire* 2009: 41). So she is reluctant to have children or form emotional attachments as a defence mechanism. Frankel notes that 'the heroine's goal is to become a complete mother, resplendent with power. If her family is shattered, by either grief or remarriage, she cannot become whole without assembling the pieces' (2010:145). In the fourth text, Katniss undergoes a restorative journey that will enable her to finally become a mother. It is not to say that this is the only feminine journey, but this is how Collins demonstrates that all is right with Panem after the war.

Armed with several structural allusions and references – Theseus volunteering as tribute, Spartacus as the reluctant hero and Everdeen's 'love triangle' – we can now plot the *Hunger Games Trilogy* using the protagonist journey and three-act structure to inform my trilogy restructure.

The Hunger Games

The inciting incident of the first novel (and fourth text) occurs in the second chapter. Katniss volunteers as tribute for the Hunger Games.

The first chapter sets up the world: Panem, the Districts and the Hunger Games, and Katniss herself, who hunts to support her family.

These are two key chapters and they resonated with me when I re-read this novel for the PhD. The dramatic speed of the novel's pace seemed to be a perfect model for me to move beyond the sluggish start to my first novel. Essentially, this point suggested that I delete chapters or move their content after Mannec had left the city.

The diagram below has been developed based on a standard number of chapters (27), overlaid with act structures (or parts) and a visual representation of the ordinary and special worlds from the hero's journey. This diagram allows me to plot the three-act structures Collins uses in relation to the hero's journey. As the diagram is similar to those I have developed for *The Story of Eorthan*, it will also assist in restructuring my trilogy.
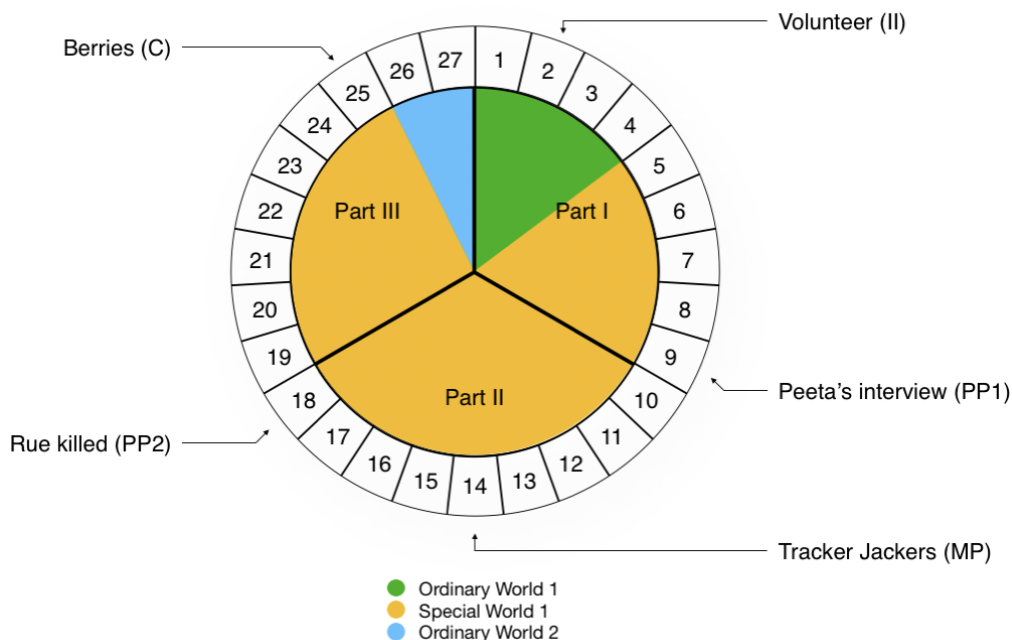

Figure 40: *The Hunger Games* structure

After Peeta is chosen as tribute, he and Katniss say goodbye to their families. They leave for the Capitol in Chapter Four. Once they leave District 12 (D12), Katniss leaves her 'ordinary

world' and enters the 'special world'. It is such a clear demarcation that it is rightly located in Chapter 4, rather than when Katniss enters the Arena in Chapter 10, Part II.

As Katniss and Peeta journey to the Capitol, Katniss tells the reader more of her past and their world. In Chapter Five, Katniss starts her trials. She meets Cinna and is given a makeover where she is given a chance to 'perform' her femininity as Pulliam (2014) and Miller (2012) noted above.

In Chapter Six, we learn about 'Avoxes', slaves who have had their tongues removed for defying the Capitol. They also remind Katniss of a time she and Gale were unable to help save them from being captured by the Capitol in the woods of D12. For my novel, these 'slower' or expositive chapters between periods of rising tension are a lesson that I can apply to *Sora*. In a sense, Collins' work gives me a concrete example that I can use to fix the issues with my first text.

Katniss' bow and arrow, together with when and how she uses them are important symbols in the first novel and trilogy. In Chapter Seven, the tributes train and in a rebellious act, Katniss shoots an arrow at the Game Makers, earning her a score of 11 out of 12 (and essentially putting a target on her back). Katniss employs the bow at key moments: shooting at the Game Makers, then her first intentional kill of the boy from District One to protect Rue, and finally, she kills Cato to save him from the mutts at the Games' conclusion. Like the vertical readings in Dante and the 'linking' structures in Figure 38, this repeated motif forms a key feature of the intertextuality of the trilogy form.

In Chapter Eight, Katniss' high score is announced and Peeta asks to be trained separately. This blindsides Katniss and she is shocked to hear Peeta profess love for her to Caesar Flickerman in a televised interview. Katniss feels this made her 'look weak', but Haymitch stresses that Peeta's confession was a good thing: 'he made you look desirable' (*HG* 2008:129). In this way, Haymitch is schooling Katniss in the ways of the Capitol. Looking desirable (or what Pulliam and Mitchell would stress, feminine) is a means of survival. It will gain her sponsors. Moreover, tributes who win sponsors and hence gifts in the Arena are more likely to survive.

The night before the Games, Peeta and Katniss talk on the roof. It is important for the fourth text, or the connecting strands, of the narrative. Peeta does not want to 'lose himself' in the

Games; however, he will be tortured or 'hijacked' by the Capitol and does lose himself. On the other hand, Katniss wants to survive and keep her family safe and while she will achieve the former aim, the latter she will not.

In Part I, Katniss has accepted her call to adventure, met her mentors and undergone some trials, which has prepared her to enter the Arena. In Part II, Chapter 11, she and the other tributes enter the Arena. Katniss learns that Peeta has joined the Careers (tributes who come from richer Districts and are trained their whole lives for the Games; hence they usually win the Games). At first, Katniss seeks only to survive and runs from the other tributes. She strikes out so far from the others that the Game Makers engineer a fire to push her back to the Career pack. Katniss makes use of tracker jackers[14] to escape the pack, killing one of them in the process. Here, she kills to survive. Katniss is bitten and starts to hallucinate, Peeta saves her. It is Chapter 14 and the midpoint of the novel, at which the plot turns, so Katniss becomes more active in the Games.

When she wakes from the hallucinations, Katniss makes an ally of Rue. Together they plan to blow up the Careers' food. When Katniss reunites with Rue, she is too late. Rue has been fatally wounded by the male District 1 tribute (whom Katniss kills). It is a pivotal moment for the novel and the trilogy. Rue's death is the second plot-point in the novel (Chapter 17), but Katniss' reaction to it in Chapter 18 forms the first plot-point of the fourth text. Katniss preparing a flower burial for Rue is a form of rebellion. She knows the cameras will have to show Rue being carried away. She knows the Capitol will see the flowers, as will all of Panem. Katniss does this to show them who really killed Rue: the Capitol.

Part II concludes with a twist: there can now be two Victors, provided they are from the same District. Katniss knows she needs to find Peeta. She finds him badly injured from a stab wound in his leg. Katniss takes him to a cave. Her next trials make Katniss truly uncomfortable. Following hints from Haymitch, she pretends to be in love with Peeta for the cameras. They receive gifts from the sponsors. Katniss leaves Peeta to attend a 'feast' at the Cornucopia. She risks her life to secure medicine at the feast for Peeta, but until now, Katniss has been

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[14]   Genetically engineered wasps whose sting induces hallucinations.

surviving. When she made allies with Rue, it mirrored the relationship she had with her sister Prim.

Despite being engaged under false pretences, their relationship is nevertheless important for Katniss. In Campbell's model, this is 'The Meeting with the Goddess', but it is more fitting to describe this aspect of Katniss' story with the Heroine's journey. It is 'finding the sensitive man': in Katniss' instance, it is quite literal. In the literature, where Katniss is described as more masculine, Peeta has been categorised as exhibiting more 'feminine' behaviours, i.e. baking (Jones 2014:loc 1435/4943). Yet the love triangle of 'Bathsheba' or the fourth text's emotion line, will remain unresolved until the final epilogue. As we will see in the *Catching Fire* analysis, a relationship with Peeta becomes synonymous with the will of the Capitol.

The Games end quickly, at the behest of the Game Makers. They force the remaining tributes together by Daedalian manipulations of the Arena. A lack of water forces them to the lake and then muttations (genetically engineered dogs) chase them to the Cornucopia for a showdown with Cato. Katniss saves Peeta and then puts Cato out of his misery. But then the Game Makers change the rules … only one tribute can be crowned the victor. Katniss convinces Peeta to end their lives using poisonous 'night lock' berries, forcing the Capitol to backtrack and crown them both victors. While Katniss wins the Games, she understands she was never in more danger than she is now, for she defied the will of the Capitol and, as related in the next novel, sparked a rebellion.

Katniss returns to a new ordinary world (which is coloured differently in Figure 40 above) as a Victor and must face repercussions for her rebellious acts.

Catching Fire

Katniss in *Catching Fire* is a very different person from who she was in the opening pages of the first novel. The changes are essential to the trilogy and an acknowledgement missing from Frankel's analysis. Katniss is suffering from the trauma of the Games (she has nightmares). Her motivations are also different in this second novel. In the first, she fought to survive the Games, and now she must fight to protect her family, Gale, Peeta and even Haymitch. Katniss' ordinary world has changed. She is no longer an illicit hunter supporting her family on the fringes of society. She is a Victor. Gale, too, has a new role working in the mines and can only hunt on Sundays. Both Katniss and Gale are more restricted in the second text than they were in the first. They have fewer freedoms than being a Victor would suggest, which sets up the premise of the novel.

Similar to the first novel, the call to adventure or inciting incident is in the second chapter. In the first, Katniss volunteered in place of her sister. Now, President Snow personally orders her to quell the rebellion. Her 'little trick with the berries' had broader consequences for Panem. President Snow forces her to resume her romance with Peeta, further complicating this relationship with the will of the Capitol. After being made-up by her Prep team, Katniss and Peeta depart on the Victory Tour of the Districts (entering the 'special world') in Chapter Four. This is illustrated in the diagram below and the timing and pacing in this novel are very similar to the first text.
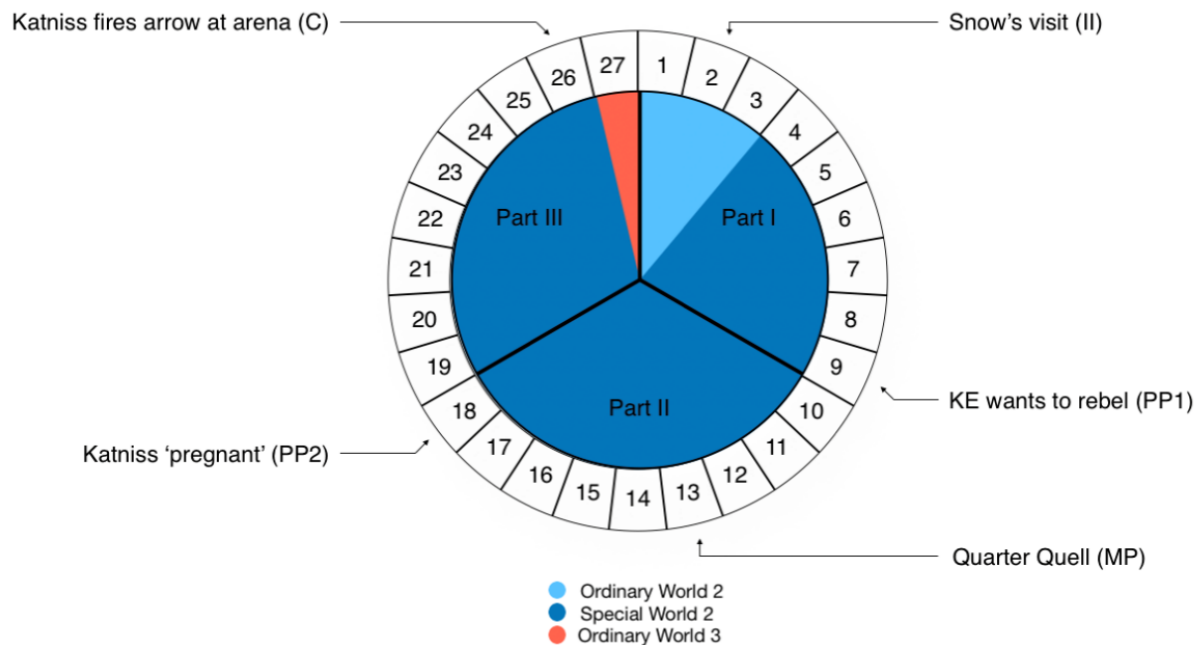
Figure 41: *Catching Fire* structure

While Haymitch is made aware of President Snow's demands, Peeta is kept in the dark. Unaware of the perilous nature of their situation, Peeta engages in his own rebellion: he offers one month's winnings for Rue and Thresh's (District 11 tributes) families. After Katniss' speech, a man gives them the District 12 three-figured salute. The Peacekeepers quickly deal with him.

Katniss' understanding of the situation in Panem is broadened. She senses the undercurrent of rebellion in some of the Districts and that District 8 has revolted. Now aware of President Snow's threat, Peeta proposes marriage because, to survive the Capitol, they will have to get married eventually. So why not now?

Back in District 12, Katniss wants to run away with Gale and their families into the woods. She remains a reluctant rebel until Gale is whipped in the main square by a new Head Peacekeeper. It is another 'meeting the sensitive man'. As Gale is weakened and almost dies from the whipping, Katniss realises she loves him, whereas the Capitol had manufactured her relationship with Peeta.

After the incident, Katniss has faced a key turning point in her narrative. Katniss is in the woods, and there she meets two rebels from District 8 who are trying to escape to District 13. This is a turning point for Katniss and in plot-point one, she decides she wants to start an uprising. Mirroring her meeting with people trying to escape the Districts, Katniss meets two

rebels from District 8 trying to get to District 13. Demonstrating Katniss' change from before the Hunger Games (she was reluctant to rebel or say rebellious things as Gale would) to start an uprising in District 12.

Katniss talks more to the District 8 girls. She realises there was little she could have done to prevent the uprising. Katniss returns to District 12. The new Peacekeepers have turned on the electric fence, heightening Katniss' threat level and cutting off her rebellious act of hunting. Her prep team arrives for the wedding photoshoot. From the shortages of goods, Katniss learns which Districts are in open rebellion. However, the marriage is not enough for President Snow. The Quarter Quell is announced (midpoint of *Catching Fire*), the tributes will be drawn from the current crop of Victors. As the only female Victor from District 12, Katniss is guaranteed a place in the Arena. However, her motivations have changed, representing a key development for Katniss, from survival to making a deal with Haymitch to protect Peeta.

In Chapter 14, Katniss and Peeta travel to the Capitol. They do not get to say goodbye to their families as they did in the first book. On the train, they watch former Hunger Games and the previous Quarter Quell in which their mentor Haymitch was the victor. They arrive at the Capitol and meet the other tributes and start training for the Games. During the scoring session with the Game Makers, Katniss creates an effigy of Seneca Crane (former Head Game Maker and recently deceased) to warn that they are not immune to the threat of death from President Snow. The Game Makers give her the highest score, a 12. The score marks her out for the Capitol-loyal Careers to kill.

The train ride and the training and scoring are all repeated from the previous novel. Yet this time, Katniss is in a different playing field: a more deadly crop of gladiators. She has changed. She is bolder, having committed to the rebellion and to save Peeta. She knows she cannot be saved. In discussion with Peeta, Katniss says she wants to show the Capitol that she is 'more than just a piece in their Games' (*Catching Fire*:198). Here Katniss echoes Peeta's speech in Chapter 10 of *The Hunger Games*, that he did not want the Games to change him (2008:135).

Like the previous chapters that repeat and reflect and contrast with the first text, the interview with Caesar Flickerman is similar yet different. Here, Cinna declares his allegiance to the rebels and dresses Katniss in a Mockingjay outfit (a symbol of rebellion); Peeta announces that Katniss is pregnant, and the Tributes from the Districts hold hands in a show of unity.

Cinna's act is to his cost: Present Snow has him beaten in front of Katniss just before she enters the arena.

The 75th Annual Hunger Games are also a repeat of the 74th in the first novel. The Game Makers' efforts are more evident this time, just as Katniss is more aware of the machinations of the Capitol. This time, the Arena is a clock in which each hour tolls a new deadly threat in a different quadrant, and it has been designed to actively kill tributes. Rather than punish the tributes for the long-forgotten war, these Games are an elaborate execution. A deadly mist attacks the Tributes (Mags sacrifices herself), mutts (a District 6 tribute sacrifices herself to save Peeta) and Jabberjays that repeat the screams of their loved ones.

Katniss needs to break free of the Arena, both literally and figuratively. She needs to become more than a girl fighting for her and her loved ones, but a girl fighting for the whole of Panem. She needs to realise who the true enemy is: not the other contestants, but the Arena and, by extension, Panem itself. In her last defiant moment, she fires her bow not at a contestant but at the Arena itself.

Katniss learns that she has again failed in the last few moments: although she broke out of the Arena, she could not save Peeta and failed to stop the rebellion. Katniss' has returned a new devastating 'Ordinary World'. President Snow has destroyed District 12. The few remaining survivors now reside in District 13.

Mockingjay

> My name is Katniss Everdeen. I am seventeen years old. My home is District
> 12. I was in the Hunger Games. I escaped. The Capitol hates me. Peeta was
> taken prisoner. He is thought to be dead. Most likely he is dead. It is
> probably best if he is dead …

(*Mockingjay* 2010:12)

Katniss, the Mockingjay, the symbol of the rebellion, is broken. The quote above is a mantra she repeats to herself. Two Arenas, the loss of Peeta and the destruction of District 12 have left her in a severely weakened psychological state. Katniss' emotional outlook in her new ordinary world is debilitating. She lives with her sister and mother in District 13 with the Capitol rebels and all that remains of District 12. She goes about District 13 avoiding responsibility and what has been asked of her.

After realising Peeta is still alive, she volunteers to become the Mockingjay and film propaganda for District 13 to save Peeta (Chapter 2), entering the 'special world' that is the wider revolution.
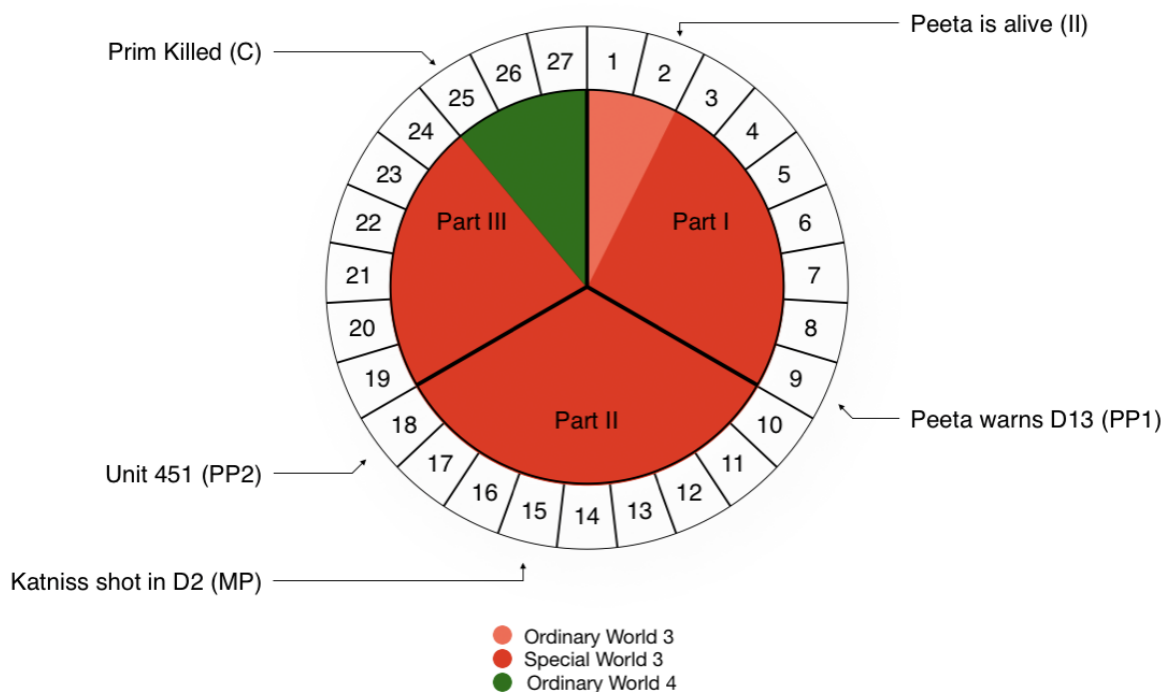
Figure 42: *Mockingjay* structure

Katniss is sceptical about the real motives of District 13 – why did they remain hidden all these years? Why did they not help the other Districts? Gale, on the other hand, commits

readily to the life of a soldier. Peeta, although used by the Capitol, represents a voice of reason and a call for peace. Katniss' concerns are realised when she finds her prep team held captive after they fell afoul of District 13's harsh rules. Katniss uses her Mockingjay status to secure Peeta's pardon, driving a wedge further between her and Gale. This is a wedge that will widen significantly as the novel progresses, as Katniss and Gale's approaches to the war diverge. Katniss is a reluctant rebel and wishes to preserve life. Gale takes to his soldier role with vigour and revenge, or as Collins expresses it, with too much fire (*MJ*:172).

With the Districts in full rebellion against the Capitol in Chapter Six, Katniss re-enters the 'special world'. The Capitol bombs a hospital. Katniss further commits to her role as the Mockingjay. In an updated interview, Peeta is now in worse shape and shows evidence of being tortured. Gale keeps this broadcast from Katniss (thinking she has not seen it).

Gale and Katniss visit District 12. Katniss kisses Gale because 'he is in pain', as he says. She still does not 'know her own heart'. She does not know whether she wants to be with Gale or with Peeta. While Katniss is experiencing the rebellion (physical journey), she cannot resolve her emotional journey. When they return to District 13, Peeta is broadcast once again. This time, he manages to warn them of an impending attack from the Capitol. This marks is the end of the first part or act of the novel.

In Part II, Katniss' real trials begin. Armed with the knowledge that Peeta is being tortured, she can no longer play the propaganda role of the Mockingjay. Gale and a squad of soldiers rescue Peeta, but he has been 'hijacked' into the delusion that he must kill Katniss. Unable to be around him, she flees to District Two, where the rebels are about the take down the Nut, a military mountain compound. In a way, this is Katniss' darkest moment where she realises what the war is costing, and she also loses Gale.

Gale has been changed forever by the destruction of District 12 (not to mention Katniss' two trips to the Arena). He does not hesitate to suggest collapsing the mountainous District 2 stronghold and trapping people inside, like the mine accident that killed both his and Katniss' father. The novel's mid-point turns on Katniss getting shot in the chest.

After they return from D2, Katniss, Gale, and Finnick join Squad451 (plot-point 2). The act ends with Coin sending Peeta to join them. Katniss realises Coin would prefer her dead. As the symbol of the rebellion, Katniss is too dangerous for Coin.

Act III is the final Arena: the Capitol laden with 'pods' (each one a booby trap designed especially by the Game Makers). One by one, each of Squad451 is dispatched, one accidentally by Peeta in an insane rage. Katniss continues with her secret mission: kill Snow. Just as she killed Cato in mercy, Katniss uses the halo, a communication device rigged to explode, to put Finnick out of his misery. The codeword is nightlock, named for the poison berries she was going to eat in the first Arena. This reinforces the intertextual link to the first Hunger Games arena and Katniss' willingness to sacrifice herself. It also foreshadows the final panel of this interlinking triptych, the suicide pills all of Squad 451 carry are called 'nightlock'.

This act of mercy mimics Katniss' act of mercy for Cato in the first Games. Both Cato and Finnick were lost to the Capitol Mutts. Prim is killed by District 13, and when Katniss realises who is responsible, she kills Coin with an arrow instead of Snow (who chokes on his own blood regardless). These deaths tie Katniss' journey together: her mercy in the first and third books, and in each text, she uses a key arrow shot in defiance of the Capitol or what they stand for. After the execution, Katniss returns to District 12 and is soon joined by Peeta, and many years later, she is again caring for her family.

Katniss' call to adventure is different in each book: in the first, she volunteers; in the second, she is asked to stop a rebellion; in the third, she becomes the rebellion's figurehead. Katniss changes dramatically with each book and her motivations change: in the first, to save Prim and survive, the second to save Peeta, the third to save Panem. Over the course of the trilogy, she realises that the only way she will ever be safe is if the world order changes and there will no longer be a possibility of the Games. This is why, when all else is lost, she chooses to shoot Coin rather than Snow. Why she lulled Coin into a false sense of security in agreeing to a new Hunger Games, only when Panem is free from *circensus* that can she return to her home and build a life with Peeta and finally agree to move on with her life and become a mother. Frankel's *Hunger Games Trilogy* analysis and Grene's assumptions about the form obscure this essential feature of the form: the three texts can be compared and contrasted to one another.

The fourth text: revolution and restoration

Valerie Frankel described Katniss' hero's journey using the myth of Theseus. Collins herself noted that Katniss' journeys of the individual novels are like Theseus, but her journey across the trilogy is like that of Spartacus (Margolis 2010) and that Katniss herself was based on Bathsheba Everdene from Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* in that Katniss 'does not know her own heart' (Jordan 2010). As I have established above, Katniss' 'gender' has been considered extensively in the academic literature about the trilogy. While her action line through the fourth text is based on Spartacus and takes a more masculine role in the rebellion, her emotional journey in the fourth text is in contrast a feminine one, and therefore restorative.
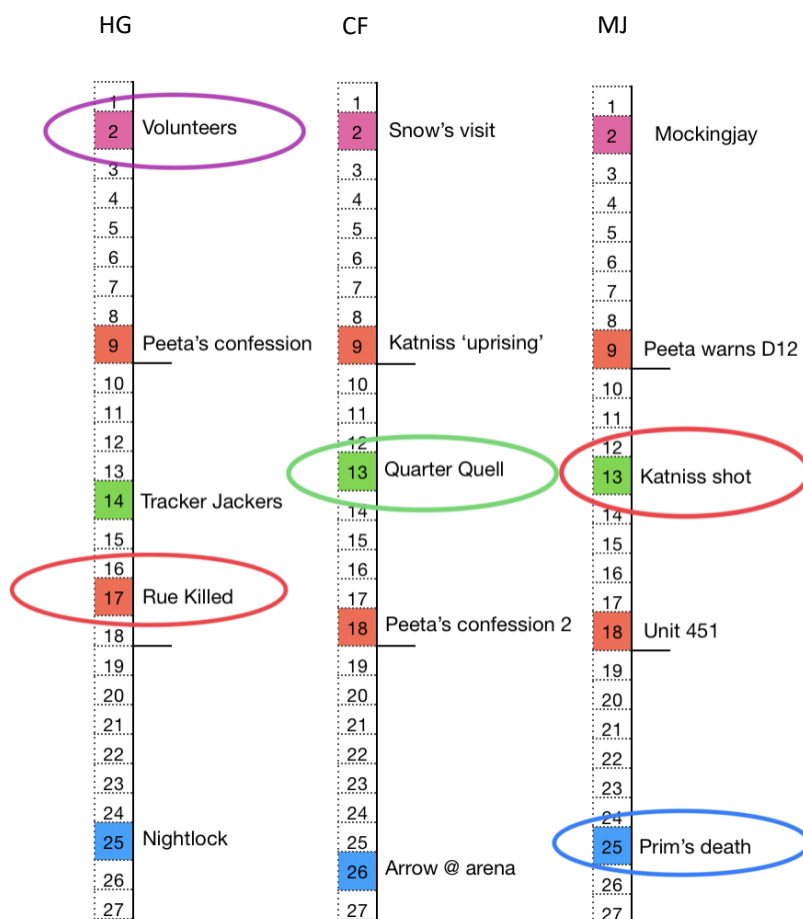

Figure 43: *The Hunger Games* fourth text structure

Katniss volunteers as tribute to save her sister from the Arena, but there are other unconscious acts of rebellion: she allies with Rue and defies the Capitol to bury her in the Arena. These are two key acts (inciting incident and plot-point 1 of the fourth text) that will

incite rebellion in the Districts. The driving force behind the trilogy lies in the act of volunteering. It is the inciting incident for both the first text and the fourth. In the first text, it means saving her sister and going to the Games. In the context of the fourth text, it means inciting a rebellion that will save Panem, but ultimately, not her sister. A single plot point has a different significance when viewed from the perspective of the first or the fourth text. Concerning my trilogy, the fourth text narrative's driving force occurs in the third text. However, through the restructure in Chapter Two, I reworked these fourth-text elements into the first text.

I have used Syd Field's plot-points to map out and understand the three trilogy case studies in this thesis: *The Lord of the Rings, The Dark Knight Trilogy* and *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. I acknowledge that neither *The Lord of the Rings* nor *The Dark Knight Trilogy* screenwriters may have used this structure. However, the paradigm offers a useful means of comparing different trilogies. If you compare *The Hunger Games Trilogy* to *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, the fourth text plot-points are the same plot-points as those in the individual texts. The inciting incident of the first text is the same as the fourth text; plot point 2 of *HG* forms plot point 1 of the fourth text; the midpoint of *CF* is the midpoint of the fourth text; the midpoint of *MJ* is plot-point 2 of the fourth text; the climax of *MJ* is also the climax of the fourth text. This can be contrasted with Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* and Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, where the fourth texts of both shared plot points with the individual texts and had their own distinct plot points. For example, the mid-point of *The Two Towers* is when Théoden flees to Helms Deep, but at the mid-point of the fourth text Faramir captures Frodo and Sam (see Figure 12). The mid-point of *The Dark Knight* is when Batman catches the Joker, but the mid-point of the fourth text is Rachel's death (see Figure 28).

Therefore, *The Hunger Games Trilogy* can illustrate the difference between a 'series arc' and the fourth text. In an anonymous blog post entitled 'Story Structure: The Series Arc vs Each Book's Arc' (2014), its author discusses how a series arc stretches across all three books (see Figure 44 below). This could be said to be similar to trilogy. However, I stress that the fourth text has its own narrative structure: a beginning, middle and end.

Plotting a Series

Series Arc

Book One Arc   Book Two Arc   Book Three Arc

Book One
Protagonist must make it through zombie horde to hospital.

Book Two
Protagonist must fight way into military guarded hospital for meds

Book Three
Protagonist must escape hospital and make it back home

Beginning: brother needs meds

Middle: fighting through zombies

End: arrive at hospital

Beginning: discover guards

Middle: strategize, plan entrance

End: make it inside hospital

Beginning: locate meds, captured

Middle: escapes with meds

End: arrive home with meds

Series Arc: A young man survives a zombie apocalypse and must find medicine to save his diabetic twin who is ailing in another town.

Figure 44: Writing Questions Answered – Plotting a Series (2014)

The true dramatic power of the trilogy form lies in the structure of the fourth text. The fourth text has its own narrative structure, or in Syd Field's terms, its own inciting incident, plot-points, midpoints and climaxes, regardless of which structural model you use: hero's journey, five acts, seven acts, sequence model. or even another narrative structure. The important thing is that, however you structure the individual novels, the fourth text will also have a structure. The fourth-text structure needs to be accommodated within the individual texts. It creates a dynamic balance and storytelling potential that is the real reason a creator uses the trilogy form, more than financial gain or wishing to escape the conventional bounds of a chosen narrative medium.

The subtle difference between the fourth text and a series arc contributes to the imbalance in *The Hunger Games Trilogy.* Although Collins' novels were planned (Hopkinson 2009), her rigid adherence to the three-act structure as she uses it in the novel (27 chapters, nine chapters per 'act') makes the fourth text seem unbalanced in that the presence of the fourth text does not alter the individual text structure. Instead, the fourth text is treated as a series arc. This problem is compounded by the limited first-person perspective (Katniss does not witness most of the rebellion in book two).

The consequence is that the fourth text – the rebellion and also Katniss and Gale drawing further apart – is pushed into the third text. Henthorn notes 'as John Booth observed in his review of *Mockingjay* for *Wired* magazine, "The pacing is different from the first two books", Collins balancing "harried action sequences" with "quiet sections" in which a now more contemplative Katniss attempts to figure out who she really is and what she is fighting for' (2014:30). While I disagree with the last part, this criticism can be attributed to the third novel covering a considerable portion of the fourth text. While I do not intend to discuss this here, the imbalance in the trilogy could be used to analyse the novels adaptation into four films.

Katniss is initially a reluctant rebel. She wants to start an uprising in *Catching Fire* only as a means to protect her family. In the first novel and early parts of *Catching Fire*, she tries not to rebel (she is reluctant to engage in Gale's anti-Capitol talk in the woods), and she takes up President Snow's call to quell the uprising in *Catching Fire*. Her motivation is to survive. Katniss' survival mentality that she has assumed since the death of her father and the catatonic depression of her mother can go some way to explain Katniss 'performing' a masculine gender (Miller 2012; Pulliam 2014). She takes on masculine characteristics; she hunts to survive because she must.

Frankel notes that 'when goddesses embark upon heroic journeys, it is to restore what has been broken or injured' (2012:17). Katniss' journey throughout the trilogy, i.e. the fourth text, is to restore her femininity. Her reluctance to have children is due to the oppression in Panem and the ever-present threat of the Hunger Games. No children are safe from the Reaping. Thus, the restoration of Katniss emotionally is directly tied to the rebellion against the Capitol. Only when the threat of the Hunger Games is extinguished can Katniss ever comprehend anything more than survival.

The plot-points of the fourth text can be summarised from the figure below as follows:

1. Inciting incident: Katniss volunteers as Tribute
2. Plot-point 1: Rue killed
3. Midpoint: Quarter Quell announced
4. Plot-point 2: Katniss shot in D2
5. Climax: Prim killed.

The corresponding emotional consequences from these can be summarised as follows:

1. Katniss ensures her sister's safety

2. Katniss is enraged at the Capitol and the senseless violence perpetrated against the citizens of Panem. It also brings out her nurturing side that she will need to help Peeta

3. Katniss realises that trying to survive is futile. The Capitol will never stop. She gives up in a sense and vows to save Peeta instead

4. Katniss loses Gale just before she is shot. The time she has to recuperate allows her to understand how tentative her life is in the rebellion

5. Katniss is utterly broken when Prim is killed. She understands that it was because of her that Coin chose to kill her. She loses Gale forever. It was his bomb. The fact that Coin wants to reinstate the Hunger Games leads Katniss to assassinate Coin.

Over the course of the novels, the relationship – the clichéd love triangle between Peeta, Gale and Katniss – reflects the rebellion. Gale is for the rebellion, whereas Peeta is against it (he wishes to protect life). Peeta is from the merchant class and a symbol of the Capitol in District 12. With a mother from the merchant class and a father from the Seam (like Gale), Katniss is torn between rebellion and protecting her loved ones. Throughout the trilogy, this love triangle is unresolved. Peeta represents a manufactured love from the Capitol. Gale is a friend who was always there, but Katniss did not realise her feelings towards him until he was threatened (*CF*). Peeta's continued calls for peace and torture at the hands of the Capitol also make Katniss realise she loves him, too. In the end, she chooses Peeta. She says:

> [W]hat I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindled with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that (*Mockingjay* 2010:172).

Far from 'succumbing to the marriage plot' (Pulliam 2014:171), Katniss has restored what was lost when her father died and she was forced to become the protector of her family. Returning to the comparisons with Theseus and Spartacus: Katniss is an Artemis figure, she has found balance and completeness. In summing up, by conflating the three individual texts of the trilogy, Frankel misses the essential fourth text structure: the physical journey – revolution, Spartacus narrative – and the emotional journey – restoration, Bathsheba narrative. The revolution and restoration are made possible by the fundamental structure of

the trilogy form: the three individual texts and the fourth connecting. The distinct parts with an overarching whole give the trilogy an argumentative structure. Different points-of-view of the argument can be expressed in each text. It has been present in the form since the earliest extant example, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. In these plays, the dramatist uses a set of opposing pairs of themes to resolve a moral argument of revenge or retribution.

In the next section, I consider this argumentative structure as a potential of the trilogy form to explain why trilogies are usually used to depict either revolutions or restorations. Here I will bring to a close my analysis of Collins' trilogy addressing the gender arguments raised by Pulliam, DeaVault, Green-Barteet, Henthorn, Jones, Lem & Hassel, and Mitchell. Katniss assumes or performs both genders, sometimes simultaneously. The criticisms surrounding Katniss 'succumbing to the marriage plot' (Pulliam) neglect how Collins treats genre. Like Aeschylus and other trilogy writers, Collins uses genders to perform as symbols in opposition to one another in service of her central argument. In a society where children are sent to their deaths for entertainment, no one can really live for themselves. No one in that society can really be free or have a future. Katniss and Peeta having children in the final pages of the novel symbolise life returning to Panem.

In the next section, I explore other forms of revolution and restoration in the trilogy form. This serves as a method with which to re-develop my trilogy *The Story of Eorthan* alongside Collins' 27-chapter structure. My trilogy is a restoration, so it is important to explore other relevant examples to test this inherent aspect of trilogy.

Comparison and contrast

In the preface to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy asserts the 'novel was intended to be neither didactic nor aggressive, but in the scenic parts to be representative simply, and in the contemplative to be oftener charged with impressions than with convictions' (1891). I took this sentiment this as 'novels are impressions, not arguments'. In his collection of essays, *The Art of the Novel* (1986), novelist Milan Kundera constantly asks, 'What can a novel do that other forms cannot?' Taking my misreading of Hardy's description, and Kundera's question, I ask: What can a trilogy do that other forms cannot?

This is a more appropriate question than asking 'why three'? 'Why three?' focuses erroneously on the number three as being the only thing that defines this form, confusing trilogy with a three-volume novel, threequel structure or a triptych. Rather, a more precise question is: what impact does the presence of four texts have on the types of story the form can tell? Trilogies are arguments or at least can contain arguments because of their dualistic structure. There are three individual texts and one whole text, the connecting narrative I call the fourth text. It can be seen in the earliest trilogy, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (whose third play is a literal argument in the form of a trial) and more modern examples, such as Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy* (that contains multiple revolutions that determine the future of human settlement on Mars), and the case study examples I have used above. Trilogies are often used to tell 'revolution' narratives or stories of restoration. It is an aspect of trilogy structure that is also best represented by the narrative element of 'theme'.

Ancient Athenian Tragedy

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is an adaptation of sorts. It takes an old Spartan myth – the House of Atreus – to show the changing nature of law in Greek and Athenian society. As expressed by Peter Meineck in *Greek Drama: Tragedy and Comedy*, the trilogy has many opposing themes – male versus female, the new ways usurping the old, Chthonic against Olympian, *oikos* (household) versus *polis* (city-state), and familial justice versus state law (2005:48). Professor Elizabeth Vandiver, in her 'Greek Tragedies' course, calls the themes in the trilogy 'a binary system of conflicting and contrasting pairs in which males and females are one part' (2004). The two opposing sides are represented by Clytemnestra and Orestes. In the first play,

Agamemnon, the tragic heroine Clytemnestra kills her husband in revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter. In the second play, *Libation Bearers*, Orestes is encouraged by Apollo to kill his mother in revenge. These are the two opposing sides to the argument. On one side is Clytemnestra, who represents female ways, old justice and Chthonic powers. She was right to kill her husband because he murdered their daughter. It is a subtle yet profound alteration on Aeschylus' part because, in other versions of the myth, e.g. in Homer's *Odyssey,* Aegisthus kills Agamemnon.

Of this change, Alan H. Sommerstein notes that 'what Aeschylus has created here is more than a mere modification of an existing myth: it is fundamentally a new myth with a new meaning' (Sommerstein 2012:145), for these two opposing sides come together in the final play in a trial. Its setting is important – where the first two plays take place in Mycenae in Sparta, the final play takes place in Athens, not far from where the tragedy would have been performed for the first time. Presiding over the trial of Orestes is Athena, patron goddess of Athens. Two points of worldview go head to head. The Furies, representing the fate of Clytemnestra, are the prosecution. To them, Orestes was in the wrong, for he killed his own flesh and blood. They do not hold Clytemnestra wrong because Agamemnon was her husband, not a blood relative. Perhaps this is why Aeschylus has Clytemnestra rather than Aegisthus kills Agamemnon (a cousin and blood relative), as it is in other versions. Apollo represents Orestes. Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, presides over the court as Judge. She casts the tie-breaking vote and absolves Orestes. In doing so, Athena heralds the change of law from the old ways to the new courts or manmade law (*nomos*) practised in Athens. Thus, the two first texts' themes are brought together to inform the third text's theme and act as the two sides of an argument in the third text. Like the altar-type triptych structure from Figure 39, the third play is the central play of the argument.

Katniss' revolution

This shows that trilogy as an argument representing a great change in society through a revolution or restoration dates to the form's earliest example. It is my view that this is due to the fundamental structure of the trilogy form. The individual nature of the texts means they can have competing protagonists, different perspectives, even contrasting themes. The individual texts being brought together to form a single whole means they are brought into

direct comparison and contrast with one another. It can go some way to explain why the young-adult dystopian works as trilogies have come into such prevalence over the last few years. Stories in dystopian YA as a genre often feature to a change or overhaul of society. In *The Hunger Games Trilogy,* the Capitol is brought down and the Games cease. Due to its fundamental structure, the trilogy is the perfect vehicle for telling these kinds of stories.

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* uses Katniss as a character to show an action-oriented revolution to bring down the oppressive Capitol while showing the restorative power of such a revolution for Katniss personally. Henthorn terms it in the following manner:

> Katniss can only fully recover from the trauma she has undergone when she
> finds a way to narrate it, as Kali Tal notes, a 'reconstructive act', that is, an
> act that enables people to reconstruct traumatic experiences in ways that
> gives them master over time, helping them become whole again (2014:137).

The love triangle between Katniss, Peeta and Gale is also a romantic expression of competing ideals and changes to society over time. Likewise, *The Lord of the Rings* features restoration and quiet revolution at its close. After the Ring has been destroyed, Middle Earth moves from a world governed by Elves to a new age of Men. In *The Dark Knight Trilogy,* after Bruce sacrifices himself for Gotham, he finally achieves a great change in the city that his parents had tried to bring about before their untimely deaths.

Literary revolutions

There are also examples in literary fiction from two Nobel Prize winners: John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* (1906-21) details the transformation of upper-middle-class English society from the Victorian to Edwardian period through the life of Soames Forsyte over the course of the first three novels in which competing themes of duty and desire play out. The second trilogy is by Egyptian writer Nagib Mahfouz, of whose work Jolanta Jasinska-Kozlowska notes (1984:77):

> The *Trilogy* carries an immense wealth of information about the everyday
> life of family belonging to the petit bourgeoisie as seen against the

> background of the changes taking place in Egypt in the sphere of socio-
> political life, manners.

Herein the trope of revolution or great social change created using the trilogy form is seen in the literature of the 20th century, whether it is intentional on the creator's part or not.

Mars Trilogy

Kim Stanley Robinson's work uses the trope of revolution extensively. The Daniel Cho article entitled 'Tumults of Utopia: Repetition and Revolution in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*' outlines these revolutions quite succinctly. He argues that Robinson uses 'repetitive technique' to show that 'each recurrence of revolution can be seen as a kind of controlled text run that reveals design flaws that are then corrected in subsequent designs' (2010:68). In this way, each successive text within the trilogy compares itself to the one that went before. The nature and theme of each novel are eponymous. The violent and bloody revolution in *Red Mars* (1992), the environmental revolution in *Green Mars* (1993) and, like water running over the land, eroding and making shapes, the gradual revolution and change in *Blue Mars* (1999).

In the first text: *Red Mars,* the First Hundred (first settlers) ignore the parameters of the UN Charter, each in their own way, causing a bloody revolution – referred to as Revolution 61 – and transform the surface of Mars when one of them melts the polar icecaps. The revolution takes the form of war, and attendant themes are explored. Will they adopt the principles of Earth, or will they forge a new land? As Cho notes, 'in history as in the trilogy, revolution is not without its defects'. Thus, the trilogy form, with its three individual texts and a cohesive fourth text, can explore the defects of revolution.

Like the *Oresteia,* the themes and assertions of different sides of an argument can be contained within the individual texts. In *Green Mars,* the idea of revolution is at the forefront of many conversations. In a great convention of the underground society, one of the First Hundred called Nadia contrasts what they want to achieve now with the Revolution 61. She says 'there can be no such thing as a successful armed revolution on Mars' (1993:359). This resolves a key conflict between Arkady and Boone in *Red Mars*. Mars is changing, the First Hundred have prolonged their lives and a new kind of people are being born. The great convention of people moves to a new revolution type taken from science: phase change. That

is to say, in changing the environment of Mars, they can create societal change. Unlike the Revolution of 61, this takes place in 'non-violence, cooperation, solidarity, coordination, hopefulness, and even exuberance. However, violence erupts at the very end. This model too, is flawed.

In Robinson's third text, *Blue Mars*, the serenity of the colour pervades the theme. As Robinson describes, it is 'more like a shift in an ongoing argument, a change in the tide' (1999:743). As Cho notes, the repetition in the *Mars Trilogy* 'realises a new end to the revolutionary method itself' (2010:76). This in effect is the theme of the fourth text. Through successive revolution attempts and the fallout and discussion amongst the people who took part, the people of Mars break the cycle of revolution itself and in doing so transform their own society.

The Godfather as a trilogy

Understanding the fundamental features of the trilogy form is essential for creators. Trilogies, by their very nature, are self-referential. This inherent quality of the form can be illustrated when a creator did not intend to make a trilogy but nevertheless achieved one. According to R. Barton Palmer in *Before and After, Before Before and After: Godfather I, II, and III* (2010), the films of Francis Ford Coppola are not a trilogy as they do not form 'a coherent, step-by-step unfolding of a foundational artistic vision' (2010:68). What is more, Palmer notes that the trilogy was not planned. The second film was greenlit after the success of the first (2010:68). Sixteen years later, Coppola undertook the third film due to financial considerations. Coppola himself has stated that he thought the first film 'was a complete movie. It wasn't a serial and it didn't lend itself to being a serial' (Smith 2019). As I have established previously, planning and intention are not determining aspects of the form. Rather, a trilogy is a structure.

While Palmer prefers to analyse the films as a series consisting of one original film with two sequels, the protagonist's death at the close of *The Godfather: Part III* effectively closes the narrative of the fourth text. This demonstrates that structurally, the films are a trilogy. Not only are they read as such by Brown and others in his edited collection of essays *Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather Trilogy* (2010), but the unintentional trilogy structure can go some way to explaining why the third film was received poorly and is considered a weaker film

compared to the preceding two. Dika notes: 'In comparison, *Part III* was a box office failure. The attempt to de-glorify the Italian-American gangster, to dismantle his honour, to show him in defeat, was not a popularly received message' (2000:104). While it is not my intent to completely analyse the criticism surrounding the third film, this criticism can support my argument for the essential comparative and contrasting structure of the trilogy form. Rather just its message not being received well, the third film does not compare structurally to the first two and hence is a weaker film in comparison.

A contrasting theme in *The Godfather* trilogy can be summarised by family versus The Family, like *The Oresteia*. That is to say, family ties versus mafia ties. In the first two films, Michael Corleone's rise to power as the head of the family contrasts with his father's. In the first film, Michael is relatively inexperienced and is reluctant to take on the role. His elderly father guides him before his death. Michael's level-headed nature is also compared to his brother Sonny's rash nature.

In the second film, the clever comparison between Vito and his son Michael Corleone is even more apparent as Vito's story is told from the past. As a child, his brother and mother are killed by the local mafia Don, and he flees to America. When he grows up, he takes to the mafia way in order to protect his family. Told in parallel to Michael's story, it charts Michael's decline and his valuing of The Family over his own family. Brown notes that 'Coppola goes further in showing that the cause of Michael's moral disintegration is inseparable from this struggle for social dominance through the elimination of his competitors or any other agent (Fredo, for example) that cooperates with them' (2000:20). In order to protect his mafia interests, Michael kills his own brother. Camon notes that 'the double morality of the mafioso – the absolute ruthlessness against his enemies, but absolute devotion to his family and friends – is, in fact, a radical schism that informs the overall myth to such a degree that it could be seen as its very core' (2000:59). This is Michael's failure and all the more poignant when compared to his father's success.

The third film lacks Vito Corleone as a character. The differences between the father and son form a key narrative drive to the first film, in focusing on passing on the family business from one generation to another as well as enabling direct comparison of methods in the second film. The third film lacks this comparison and fails to compensate for this. Narratively speaking, the film is weaker in comparison to the first two films. One need only look at the

IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes meta-scores (based on Dan Meth's assessment) to see how the third film is regarded.
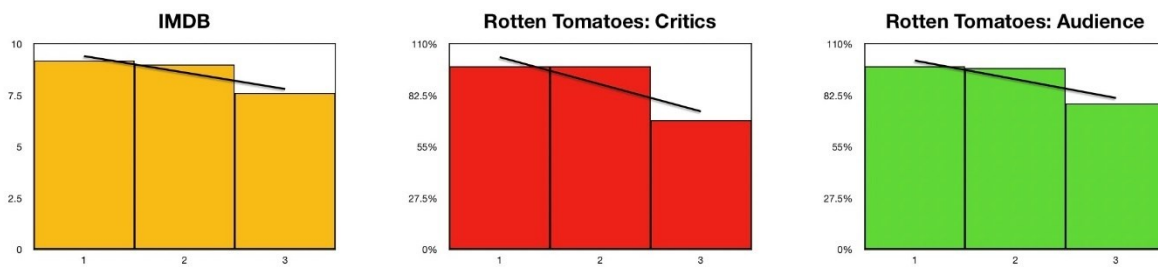
Figure 45: *The Godfather* trilogy IMDB, Rotten Tomatoes – critic and audience scores

The relatively negative reception to Coppola's *The Godfather: Part III* reveals the fundamentally comparative nature of the form. Converse to the aphorism that the first must stand on its own, all trilogy texts are intimately connected. *The Godfather: Part III* demonstrates that all three films need to stand on their own compared to the other films within the trilogy. The dual structure of the form, in that the texts are at once singular and part of a whole, is essential for reading and creating a trilogy. It is one of the great strengths in the storytelling potential of the form. It is the answer to the misleading question: why three?

Sora

When I restructured *Morea* (see Chapter One), it was necessary to compare the middle book of my trilogy with the other texts: *Sora* and *Eorthan*. This was the first step in understanding why I felt as a writer that it was underdeveloped in comparison to the first and third texts. Together with *The Lord of the Rings* case study, I understood its weaknesses in terms of protagonist journey and character perspective. Restructuring *Morea* through Emelia's perspective and protagonist journey aligned the competing narrative structures and gave the novel a clearer and more developed narrative through-line.

As explored in Chapter Two, I undertook a structural edit of *Eorthan*, the third book. This restructure involved simplifying the story to tell it from the character, Lindis' perspective. Before this project, some of the chapters were from Siera's perspective. The edit also realigned the aspects of the fourth text into *Morea* and *Sora*, specifically Siera's journey. This meant that the second, third and fourth texts each had distinct and developed protagonist journeys and perspectives.

In contrast, when I returned to writing *Sora* (first book) in longhand or full chapters, I became stuck at Chapter Six. The restructure of *Sora* took on the now-familiar method of proactive research. I compared my first novel to the recently developed *Morea*, redeveloped *Eorthan* and discovered the fourth text. Two things occurred to me: firstly that Mannec the protagonist of *Sora* had a weaker or less distinct 'voice' than either Emelia (2) or Lindis (3), and secondly that there was stilted narrative tension and pacing in the first six chapters of the novel.

The use of screenwriting paradigms and methods of building a screenplay were first used in this project to understand and diagram the trilogy form. However, over the course of the PhD, the influence of screenwriting techniques fundamentally changed the way I structured and conceived the plot of Morea and Eorthan. This realisation was arrived at following the integration of screenwriting techniques from the three-act structure (Field) and the protagonist journey (Campbell, Vogler & Batty).

Using Suzanne Collins' technique from *The Hunger Games Trilogy* allowed me to understand this process in novel writing and implement some of her techniques into developing my

trilogy. To help me make what was an unconscious borrowing of screenwriting methods, into a more conscious analysis of my new practitioner-researcher writing technique.

The first book of *The Story of Eorthan*, entitled *Sora*, has a relatively simple narrative, albeit with many characters. The protagonist Mannec learns to use his powers and find others like him. The restructure I undertook challenges the trilogy aphorism that 'the first must stand alone' as the latter two texts developed the first and reinforced it, because the fourth text and climax of *Sora* had to be redeveloped as part of Mannec's journey. This shortened the length of the plot and made the ending more complex. Most of the characters are introduced in the first book and so the character map is large. The three main characters are Mannec, Siera and Aya.
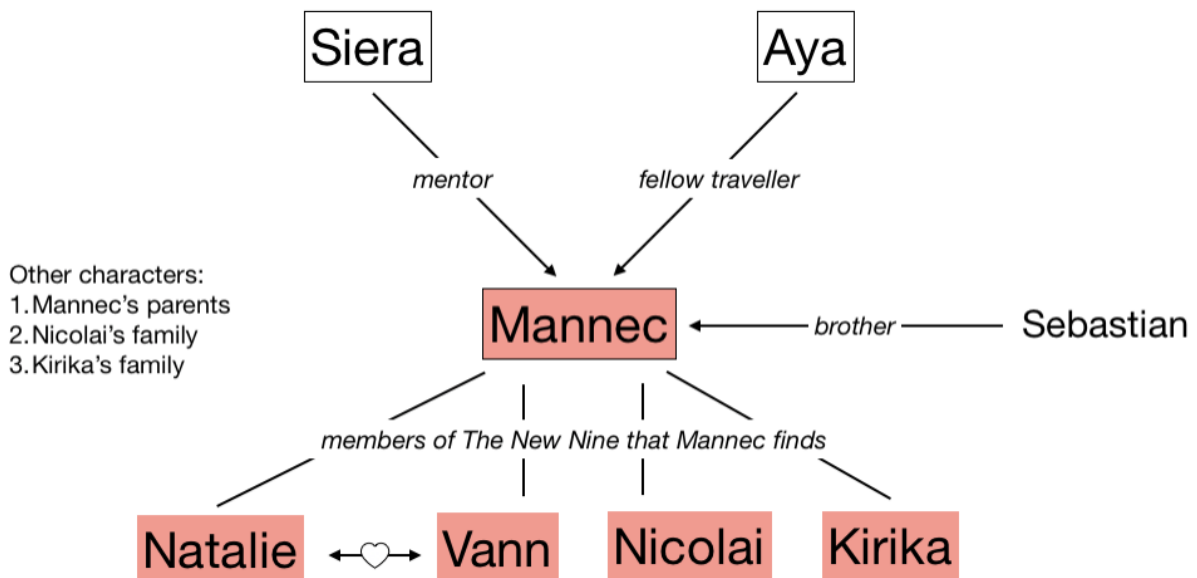

Figure 46: *Sora* key character map

Sora pre-research synopsis

A spectre hears for the first time, sees for the first time and falls.

Far away in Øre City, Mannec wakes from a strange dream that he will promptly forget. It is gone as soon as he thinks of it and leaves only a strange feeling of unease. He says goodbye to his mother, she comments on his lack of a coat in the cold, worrying that he will catch the fever, the same fever that took his brother and father all those years ago.

On the way to the market, Mannec sees an orphan girl on the bridge with dark hair and startling green eyes who seems to be talking to herself, but when he looks away for a moment, she is gone.

Walking home, Mannec hears a delicate sound – like smashing glass – and a sudden force pushes him into a wall, a force that seems to come from within. When he wakes up, the orphan girl from the bridge stands over him. Run, she says. They run through the city and arrive at the orphanage, once a hospital where Mannec last saw his brother and father.

Just before Mannec and the orphan arrive at the orphanage, a man named Walden witnesses Aya, another red-headed orphan, siphon glowing symbols from her arm into a pail of water. When the pail glows, she empties it into the well.

When Mannec arrives at the well, Aya is still there, this time fighting off a horde of spectres. She cuts them down one by one. Mannec wants to help but he accidentally brings down the domed glass ceiling. The dark-haired orphan girl says they need to leave the city. They visit Mannec's mother and, while there, Aya's symbols form a map for them to follow.

As they leave Øre City for the forest sanctuary, Mannec mistakenly destroys the only bridge connecting Øre City to the larger island. Mannec almost falls to the sea below, but Aya catches him at the last moment.

Leaping, flying, but more often falling, Mannec and his orphan companions – Siera and Aya – journey throughout the lands until they come to a place known as The Aral Forest. Mannec has difficulty using his wings. The forest is shrouded in an unnatural mist. It is a place to hide, where people can learn about their gifts and live in peace, safe from listening ears of the Dresdain Guards and the haunting spectres. Mannec is reunited with his brother and father, who, like the rest of those beset by fever, escaped Øre City long ago.

In the centre of the forest, hidden away in a grove, resides a great white oak tree, Omberos. Its branches spread wide and hold thousands of tiny shining glass orbs. Each one is filled with a spirit stolen away from a spectre. During the Gathering, a festival of the changing seasons, Mannec uses his powers to play the drums and draws in all the spectres. This is a very powerful spell, although Mannec is not aware of it at the time. In the forest, they are caught by Siera, Aya, Sebastian and others, and placed in glass jars and hung on the protecting branches of Omberos.

While practising flying, Mannec loses control of his wings and crashes into Omberos, setting two spirits free. The spirits are caught, but once released from the glass, the spirits must be returned to whom they belong or else the fever will take them. Mannec joins Siera and Aya on a magical boat that flies and they journey to find one of the souls while Sebastian travels to Øre City to rescue his mother.

Far away to the north, Natalie makes her way to The Ither, a great building carved into the side of a mountain. Walking through the snow up the mountain, she hears a song, a beautiful tune that could have been played upon a violin. Following the melody, she meets Vann, a wanderer. When they are snowed in, they get to know each other, Natalie telling him the story of her fever and her gift of hearing the song people make. One night Natalie hears a loud drumming sound. It is Mannec at the Gathering, casting a spell across Eorthan.

Soon after, Mannec, Siera and Aya arrive at The Ither. Mannec is drawn to a great horn and blows on it. He is transported to another time and place. It is a great festival in a white mountain, and everyone has their wings. He witnesses a dance that goes horribly wrong, and at its end a girl tears off her black wings. A black fire pours from her eyes and launches itself at Mannec.

Mannec is ripped back to the present. The air is knocked from his lungs. Dazed, he looks down and sees that Siera has tackled him away from the horn. Mannec is terrified to see the black flames pursue them through The Ither as they run to catch up with the others. Statues come to life to protect them from the fire, but they all tumble from the mountain in a cloud of snow.

Some miles distant from The Ither is the Nither, once a grand port city. A woman runs through the falling snow looking for her missing child. She finds him standing beneath a city lamp catching the snowflakes. He is wearing his nightgown and no shoes, but he says he is not cold.

He is hot to the touch. She looks up and sees the Dresdain Guards standing there. She backs away slowly but they seem distracted by something and do not follow. Over the next few days, Nicolai's fever worsens. Before he wastes away, two women come and give him the gift of wings. The Nither is dangerous and they must leave. One night a great aurora shimmers in the sky before it fades.

Siera seems agitated and they make sleds to carry everyone across the eastern archipelago. Mannec uses his magic to propel them across the gaps. Soon they arrive at another sanctuary, but its safekeeping spells have been broken and people are fleeing to The Aral Forest. Nicolai finds a special stone that has been dropped. A girl is missing. They learn about her past from her family and try to find her as Nicolai and his family head to The Aral Forest.

They find the missing girl, Kirika, in the desert. So too have the Dresdain Guards. Frightened by the Guards, Kirika accidentally uses her gifts. These frighten her more than the Guards. She steps backward and falls/jumps over the edge of Eorthan. Mannec, using his powers, helps Siera in her dive to catch Kirika.

Falling, Kirika remembers why she left her family. She hears a question: do you really want to die? And looks up to see Siera holding out her hand. Kirika reaches hers up in answer.

An ending.

Sora structural edit

By design, Mannec has a limited understanding or viewpoint of the world in which he lives. I wanted a character through which I could explain the world of *Eorthan* to my readers or audience. Mannec has little awareness of the world in which he lives. He does not know about magic or how to use it. An unintended consequence of his limited viewpoint was a more 'passive' structure. Things happened to Mannec for the sake of the plot, rather than Mannec driving the action.

In comparison, Emelia and Lindis were more active in the other novels, and therefore those novels could be called 'character driven' narratives. This needed to be resolved. Otherwise, the three novels would seem unbalanced or too different in structure from one another, like Coppola's *Godfather* (the third is missing the contrast between Michael and Vito Corleone that made the first two films a phenomenal success). To strengthen Mannec's 'voice', I needed to make changes to allow him agency. This was the first issue.

The second issue was that the tension and pacing seemed stilted. Here, I draw on Robert McKee's *Story* to demonstrate what I mean. Briefly, Mannec has his powers by this stage, has misused them to destroy the orphanage and meet Siera and Aya. Then, before he leaves Øre City, Mannec goes home to see his mother again (Chapter Seven). Previously I described this as a 'flat' chapter. It seemed to depress the tension so much that it was almost as if the narrative had met a stop sign. McKee uses the following diagram to illustrate rising and falling tension in one story type.
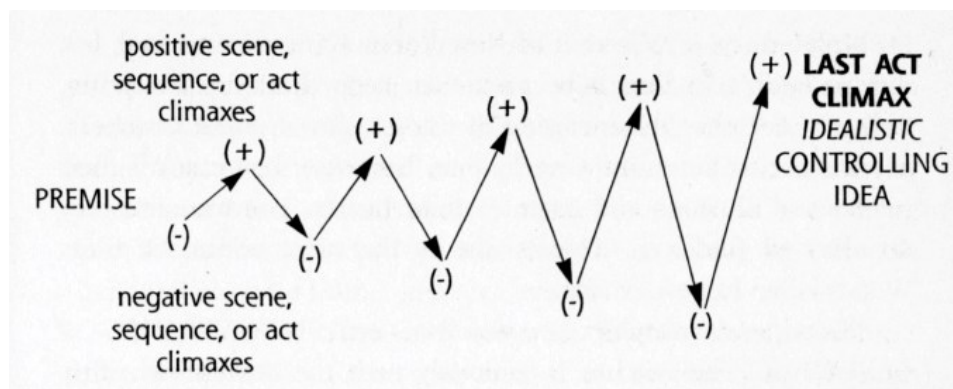

Figure 47: McKee's Idealistic Controlling Idea (1997:123)

McKee's controlling idea is a means of discussing the 'block' I experienced with *Sora*. Chapter One or the prologue is the spectre falling. In Chapter 2 (–), Mannec wakes up from a strange dream, we meet his mother and he goes out into the city. Chapter Three (+), Mannec sees a

strange girl. Also in Chapter Three (–) Mannec gets his powers. Chapter Four (+) Mannec flees the Dresdain Guards. In Chapter Five (–), the new character Aya is introduced (part of the fourth text). In Chapter Six (+), Mannec helps Aya by using his powers to destroy the Dome. In Chapter Seven (–), Mannec goes home to his mother. This 'negative scene' was not what stopped me, but rather that in terms of the relative positive and negative values, it took the story tension too far into the negative.
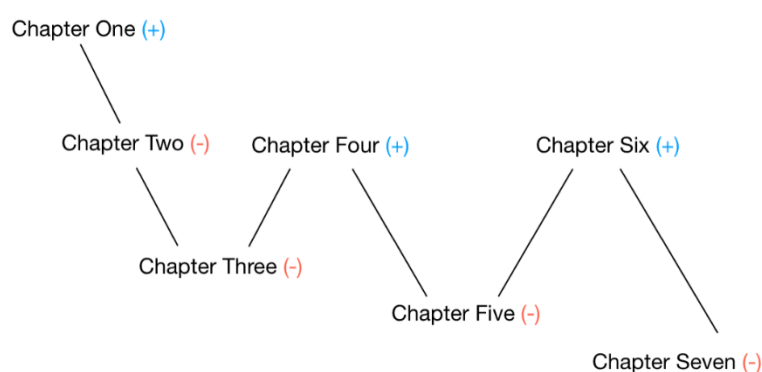
Figure 48: The problem with my first text

The two problems would prove to have one solution. In order to understand this, I was obliged to return to my original structures, such as 'theme' and Dante's *Commedia,* and propose a break from Dante for alignment with Susanne Collins' approach (moving from 33 chapters to 27), to understand how the narrative element of 'theme' works in trilogy and restructure my first book and *The Story of Eorthan* accordingly. As I noted in my discussion of Collins' trilogy, I was surprised on re-reading the first novel that Katniss' inciting incident (her volunteering as tribute) occurs in the second chapter. I thought a solution to the stilted opening would be for Mannec leave Øre City without seeing his mother (by removing one chapter) and I could condense two chapters into one.

I had carefully plotted the novels using Dante's 33 chapters. Now, to develop the narrative structure, I needed to delete two chapters, giving me 31. What is more, after starting a new version of my trilogy, I realised there were fewer chapters than before.[15] I undertook a

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[15]   Using a new writing app called 'Ulysses'.

research trip to Japan, where I researched the final third of *Sora*, which tells Kirika's story, and similarly to *Morea,* which required a reduction in the number of chapters.

As a guide, I sought to use Collins' 27-chapter structure. However, as I have noted above, Collins abides by a rigid three-act structure: the three novels each have three parts that are nine chapters each. In my opinion, consequence of this structure is to push most of the fourth text into the third novel and therefore creates an unbalanced trilogy. Accommodating the fourth text within the individual structures may alter the timings, or designated number of chapters per act, of the three-act paradigm. In Figure 51 which plots all three texts within my trilogy, the alteration of the three-act paradigm can clearly be seen.

Now with 27 chapters, I went about re-plotting *Sora* using a three-act structure and protagonist journey, taking my cues from the previous case studies and Collins' trilogy, while allowing for alterations in the three-act structure. That is, I did not use a designated number of chapters per act or include the plot points in the same or similar chapters in each text. In undertaking this exercise, I realised that Mannec's journey climaxed midway through the book. In the previous version, Mannec destroyed the spectres around Chapter 15. Then when I reduced the number of chapters, this took place around Chapter 10. In this chapter, Mannec fully realises his powers. This needed to change, so I split this climax so that now he destroys the spectres at the midpoint but does not fully realise his powers until Chapter 25, during which climax he gets his wings. I had a rough structure of the plot-points by which I could build the novel around.
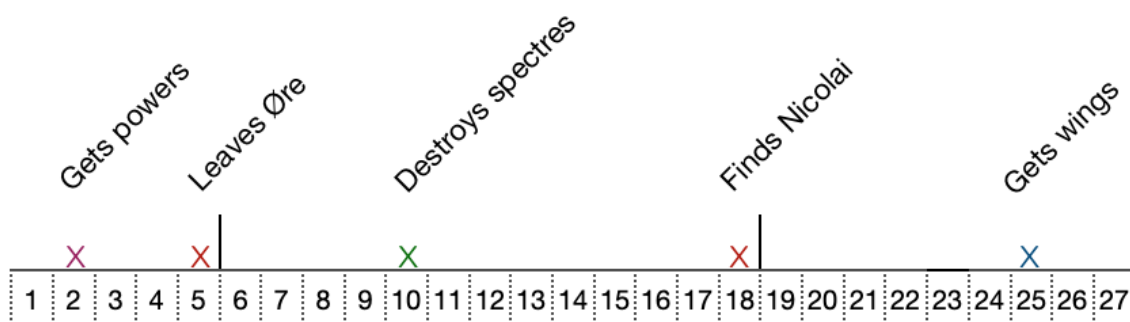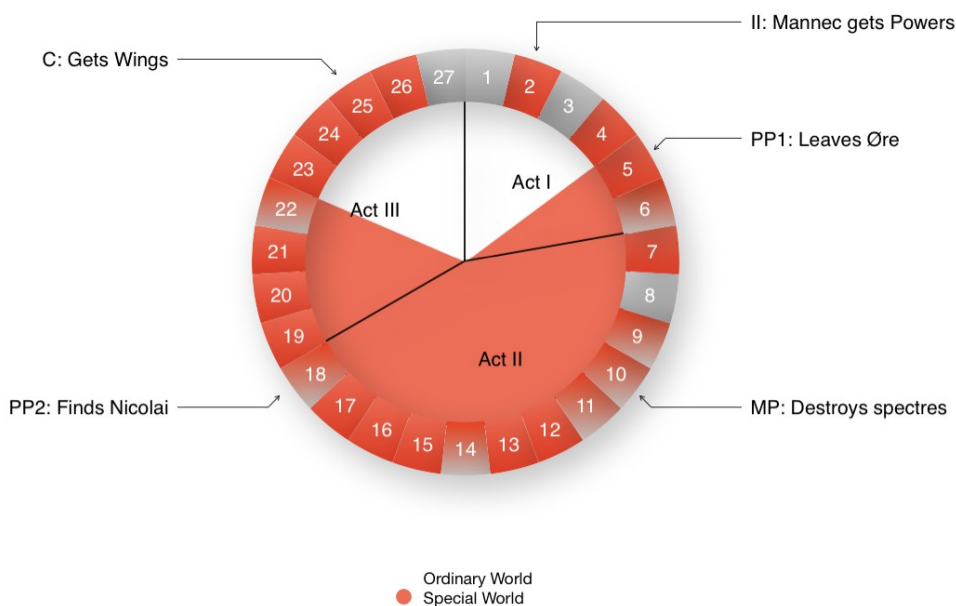

Figure 49: *Sora* three-act structure

Mannec's arc was to understand that his family situation and that of Nicolai and Kirika were because their world was broken. However, Mannec does not initially know this. I needed

another way to represent it. I looked to his 'climax' moment when he gathers in the spectres. How could I make Mannec 'weaker' at this moment? Or show that he has more to learn? Mannec struggles with his powers and they burst out in uncontrolled energy. The gifts or magical powers in the world of Eorthan are reflected in people's wings, e.g. Aya can manipulate fire and has fiery wings. Like Emelia, Mannec cannot use his wings. This is an external manifestation of his difficulty with his own powers. These three changes to *Sora* altered plot-point 1: Mannec leaves Øre City. New midpoint: Mannec gathers spectres, and new climax: Mannec learns about the world around him and gets his wings. These could be said to be the '*Morea* Edits', i.e. changes to *Sora* based on learnings from the restructure of *Morea* along the lines of the protagonist journey and perspective.

I had additional scenes from the fourth text '*Eorthan* Edit', rather than rearrangements or the deletions/combinations of the 27-chapter edit, to accommodate in *Sora*. Specifically, the beginning of the fourth text. Incorporating the fourth text's 'beginning' would be difficult due to the non-linear chronological structure. However, through Siera's mentor role, I was able to add more of these aspects to Siera's story. It is the first time she has seen her adoptive daughter Aya in 10 years. Mannec can relate their interactions to the reader. Siera, who never had to learn magic, becomes Mannec's inept teacher. Sebastian and Natalie talk about their experiences with the fever in their pasts when Siera was present.

Additionally, 'the Dance' (Chapter 15) that Mannec witnesses is Siera and Aeolian many years ago before they 'died'. With the new 27-chapter limit, the Dance becomes more important in *Sora*. Siera was also present at Kirika's birth. This allows me to reveal that she is not all she seems in *Sora* rather than starting this storyline in *Morea*. Now Siera is someone who can tell Mannec that the world is other than what it seems. Added to this is a powerful spell known as The Mist of Memory – cast by Siera to make everyone forget the world of the past. To explain long absences for Siera throughout the trilogy, I turned her into the mist. In *Sora* the mist became a means to 'control' Mannec's powers, giving him something more to contend with and therefore a stronger protagonist journey. In *Morea,* the others forget Siera when she leaves. Emelia and Lindis know what this mist is. It is only in *Eorthan* that the nature of the mist is revealed along with the fact that Siera turns into the mist. This becomes part of Lindis' journey.

Below is a diagram that plots the fourth text elements (grey) and the plot of the first text (red). A chapter with both the first and fourth texts is a gradient fill of red and grey.

Red = first text chapters; grey = fourth text chapters; red and grey = chapters that relate to the first and fourth text.

Figure 50: *Sora* three-act structure, protagonist journey and fourth text

The next approach was to restructure the whole trilogy into 27 chapters. This was sketched out at the Varuna House writing retreat during my one-week stay there. The edit was successful, and I was able to restructure each text and reduce the length by six chapters. Could I then do the same thing with the other two texts? Table 2 below shows the new list of chapter titles for *Morea* and *Eorthan*. These demonstrate my technique for mapping out the reduction of chapters. I went through the 33-chapter drafts on Ulysses, then started new 27-chapter drafts. After using chapter titles to plot *Sora* in twenty-seven chapters, I plotted *Morea*. The challenge was *Eorthan*. Having drastically reduced the text from 40 chapters to 33 in the previous restructure, I thought it might be even more difficult to reduce its length further. However, using screenwriting models enabled me to visualise the essential skeleton of the story. For example, I used the models to identify which chapters needed to be kept as they were, which could be combined and which could be reduced to a description or allusion.

Table 2: *The Story of Eorthan* 27-chapter edit

Sora 27	Morea 27	Eorthan 27
1 - A Shadow in the Dark	1 - Surface	1 - Wind, Sand and Stars
2 - City in the Sky	2 - The Lanterns	2 - Mist
3 - The Light in the Well	3 - A Room with a View	3 - The Visitor
4 - Under the Dome	4 - The Singer	4 - A Song My Mother Sings
5 - Across the Bridge	5 - The Gift	5 - Elsin-Øre
6 - Land in the Sky	6 - Invisible Sound	6 - Ither in the Storm
7 - The Aral Forest	7 - Living Ghosts	7 - Morea
8 - Fever	8 - The Song	8 - The Dance
9 - Omberos	9 - The Storm	9 - Elsin
10 - The Festival	10 - The Other Shore	10 - Øre
11 - Breaking Free	11 - Shadow in the Field	11 - Sora
12 - Changing Wind	12 - Light on the Hill	12 - Aftermath
13 - A Song in the Snow	13 - The Farthermost	13 - Mist of Memory
14 - The Sound of Falling Leaves	14 - The Spell	14 - Brightest Star
15 - The Dance	15 - The Sky Below	15 - Gone
16 - Snowfall	16 - The Choice	16 - Gesture of the Stars
17 - By Street Light	17 - The Trial	17 - The Stranger
18 - Aurora	18 - The Wanderer	18 - Unravelling Eye
19 - The Archipelago	19 - The Verdict	19 - An Old Cloak
20 - The Elsin Stone	20 - A Deal	20 - The Last Wish
21 - Mist and Light	21 - A Choice	21 - Silver Stream
22 - The Invisible City	22 - Burning	22 - The Old Nine
23 -	23 - Weeping Wood	23 - The Horns
24 -	24 - Sound of Fury	24 - Clear Dawn
25 - Mist and Shadow	25 - The Oaths	25 - The Gifts
26 - String Theory	26 - So Cold	26 - Home
27 - The Fall	27 - Under the Stars	27 - Waves on the Sand

The two unmarked chapters in *Sora* indicate that nothing has been plotted for these chapters. I did not indicate these in Figure 50 because, unlike the gaps in *Morea* (Figure 3), the gaps did not represent a problem that affected my writing. Due to the length or amount of story contained within *Morea* and especially *Eorthan*, the two-chapter shortage in Sora does not elicit a further reduction in the number of chapters in each text. It is important to explain why this is the case, given that having several empty chapters in *Morea* caused havoc in my writing process. As I noted in the Introduction, I am a landscaper. In other terms, I reside somewhere between a planned and unplanned process. As a landscaper, I find it helpful to have an outline of what each chapter will contain, but at the same time, I enjoy flexibility and seeing how the narrative will grow as I write. Therefore, I do not anticipate that these unplotted chapters will cause writer's block.

Additionally, these structures and chapter outlines are not necessarily what I will follow to the letter. But rather, they serve as guides to illustrate relative stages in the development of each

text within the trilogy. The diagrams and story design models illustrate how I see each text and my work thus far. Just as the three-act structure can form a loose structure to base a film, play or novel upon, the structures I have employed in this PhD will serve as a context and guide when I am writing my own works.

The following figure represents the completed mapping of *The Story of Eorthan* trilogy with Field's three-act structure, aspects of protagonist journeys and demonstrates the presence of the fourth text.
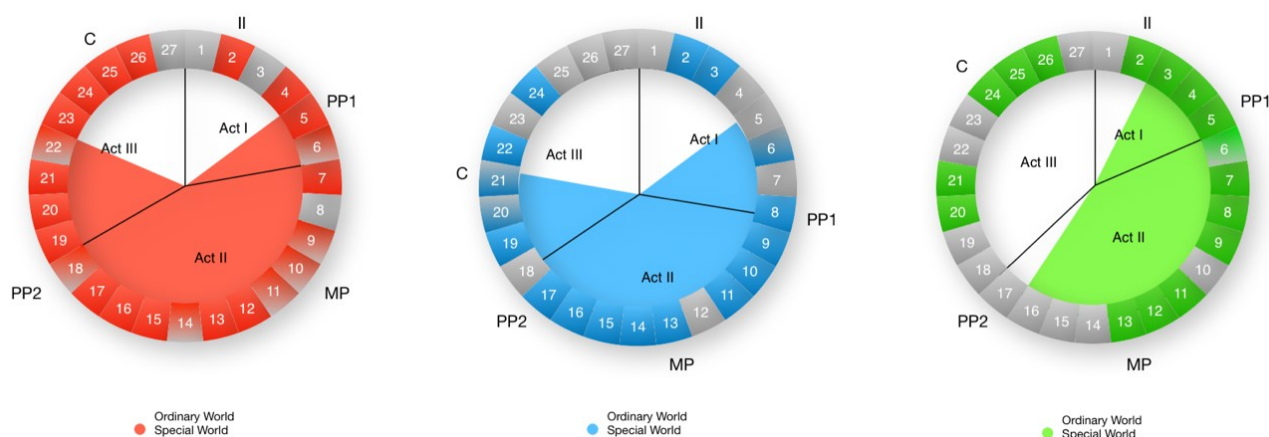
Figure 51: *The Story of Eorthan* **the complete re-development map**

When looking at the complete PhD, it can be seen that the three case studies of Peter Jackson's adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Trilogy* and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* have fundamentally changed the way I work, transforming my practice from a practitioner to a practitioner-researcher. I can quickly understand 'writer's block' when it appears, and I have the tools and process to work through those gaps. The writer's block I experienced with *Sora* was resolved in a matter of weeks instead of the writer's block I experienced with *Morea* before undertaking this PhD (two years). The changes undertaken in this restructure can be seen in the revised synopsis of *Sora* below.

Sora post-research synopsis

A spectre hears for the first time, sees for the first time and then it falls.

Far away in Øre City, Mannec wakes from a strange dream that he will promptly forget. It is gone as soon as he thinks of it and it leaves only a strange feeling of unease. He says goodbye to this mother, who comments on his lack of a coat, worrying that he will catch the fever – the same fever that took his brother and father all those years ago.

On the way to the market, Mannec sees an orphan girl on the bridge with dark hair and startling bright green eyes who seems to be talking to herself, but she is gone when he looks away for a moment. Gone from both his sight and memory.

Soon after Mannec hears a delicate sound – like breaking glass – and a sudden force pushes him into a wall, a force that seems to come from within. When he comes to, the orphan girl from the bridge stands over him. Run, she says. They run through the city, pursued by the Dresdain Guards.

The warden of the orphanage witnesses Aya, a redheaded girl, siphon glowing symbols from her arm into a pail of water. When the pail glows, she empties it into the well for another pail.

When Mannec arrives at the orphanage, Aya is still there, this time fighting off a horde of spectres. She cuts them down one by one. Mannec wants to help, but instead, he brings the building's great glass dome crashing down. The black-haired orphan girl says they need to leave the city – now. Mannec accidentally destroys the bridge as they leave. Like a ship that's lost its moorings, Øre floats higher in the sky.

While Siera and Aya have wings and can fly, Mannec does not and cannot. He uses his powers to launch himself from island to island. Before they reach The Aral Forest, Mannec wakes surrounded by spectres. Siera tells him what they really are. He longs to find the one that is his mother.

They arrive at The Aral Forest and Mannec meets his long-lost brother and father. His brother Sebastian tells him about the night they fled the city.

In the centre of the forest, hidden away in a grove, resides a great white oak tree, Omberos. Its branches spread wide and hold thousands of tiny shining glass orbs. Each one is filled with

a spirit stolen away from a spectre. During the Gathering, a festival of the changing season, Mannec uses his powers to play the drums and draws in all of the remaining spectres in Eorthan. This is a very powerful spell although Mannec is not aware of it at the time. In the forest, the spectres are caught by Siera, Aya, Sebastian and others, then placed in glass jars and hung on the protecting branches of Omberos. Three souls escape the orbs; two are found, one is lost.

Mannec stows away in the flying ship he thinks will travel to find those whose spirits were set free. Specifically, his mother. But when he is discovered by Siera, he learns they are not travelling to Øre City but North.

Far away in the North, Natalie makes her way to The Ither – a great building carved in the side of a mountain. Walking through the snow up the mountain, she hears a song – a beautiful tune that could have been played upon a violin. Following the melody, she meets Vann, a wanderer. While snowed in, they get to know each other, Natalie telling him the story of her fever and her gift of hearing the song people make. One night Natalie hears a loud drumming sound. It is Mannec at the Gathering, casting a spell across Eorthan. Soon after, Mannec, Siera and Aya arrive.

Mannec is drawn to a great horn and blows on it. He is transported to another time and place. It is a great festival in a white mountain, where everyone has their wings. He witnesses a dance that goes horribly wrong. In the end, a girl tears off her own sable coloured wings. A black inky substance pours from her eyes and launches itself at Mannec.

Mannec is ripped back to the present. The air is knocked from his lungs. Dazed, he looks down and sees that Siera has tackled him away from the horn. Mannec is terrified to see the black flames pursue them through The Ither as they run to catch up with the others. Statues come to life to protect them from the fire, but they fall from the mountain in a cloud of snow.

Far away from The Ither is the Nither, a grand port city. A woman runs through the falling snow looking for her missing child. She finds him standing beneath a city lamp catching the snowflakes. He is wearing his nightgown and no shoes, but he says he is not cold. He is hot to touch. She looks up and sees the Dresdain Guards standing there. She backs away slowly. But they seem distracted by something and do not follow. Over the next few days, Nicolai's fever worsens. Before he is about to waste away, two women come and give him the gift of wings.

The Nither is dangerous and they must leave. The Dresdain Guards have new powers – now they can fly. One night a great aurora shimmers in the sky before it fades suddenly.

Siera seems agitated and they make sleds to carry everyone across the eastern archipelago. Mannec uses his gifts to propel them across the gaps. Soon they arrive at another sanctuary, but its safekeeping spells have been broken and people are fleeing to The Aral Forest. Nicolai finds a special stone that has fallen. A girl is missing. They learn about her past from her family and try to find her as Nicolai and his family head to The Aral Forest.

They come to an abandoned city that is split down its centre by a grand canal. Mannec goes to the topmost tower in order to launch himself over the other side. At the top of the tower, Mannec finds another horn. Siera is there and warns him not to blow it. She tells him the world is not supposed to be the way that it is, that and both he and Kirika – the missing girl – have trouble with their gifts because of this.

They find the missing girl, Kirika, in the desert. So have the Dresdain Guards. Frightened by the Guards, Kirika accidentally uses her gifts. These frighten her more than the Guards. She steps backward and jumps off the edge. Mannec, using his powers, helps Siera in her dive to catch Kirika.

Falling, Kirika remembers why she left her family. She hears a question: do you really want to die? And looks up to see Siera holding out her hand. Kirika reaches hers up in answer.

An ending

Conclusion

This thesis began with the premise that a trilogy structure can have four texts when considered as a complete entity: three individual texts and a fourth unifying text. This structure is vitally important for a creator to understand. Otherwise, they risk creating a poorly structured trilogy, resulting in middle-text syndrome, a two-part trilogy, trilogy creep, a weaker third text, or creating an unintentional trilogy.

While the trilogy form has been compared to other forms of **multi-text narratives**, such as the three-volume novel, threequel and triptych, its structural duality distinguishes it from these and other forms. This thesis explored the hypothesis of the fourth text through three research iterations using: my original novel trilogy *The Story of Eorthan*, three case studies and three targeted surveys of the literature. This thesis was presented in a trilogy of sorts; in three discussion chapters. And, like Dante's *Commedia,* it can be read in another way.

This conclusion will represent my thesis argument 'vertically', aligning the similar segments of each chapter together: multi-text narratives (three-volume novel, threequel and triptych); case studies; literature surveys (in a discussion on the limitations and further research); and finally *The Story of Eorthan* with the creative work to be undertaken following this project.

What is the fourth text?

The case studies were chosen for very specific reasons. Peter Jackson's adaptation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* revealed the plotting changes necessary to transform a single work, or three-volume novel, into a trilogy. As opposed to a single story or three separate stories, the power of trilogy lies in the form's fundamental structure. There are four narratives: three individual texts and a connecting fourth text. Nolan's unplanned trilogy *The Dark Knight Trilogy* demonstrated how both the individual and fourth texts were developed. The first two texts were developed one at a time without planning a trilogy. Nolan did consider how Bruce's life would play out as Batman (the fourth text) and when he decided to create a trilogy, he utilised key moments form the first two texts to retroactively craft the fourth. Trilogy creators can utilise these different plot structures to build on or contrast with one another. Therein lies the storytelling potential of the trilogy. It is why trilogies are often

used to tell the story of revolutions, as Susanne Collins does in *The Hunger Games Trilogy.*
Creators use the inherent intertextuality within the form to compare and contrast alternating
points of view. This structure has been utilised since the earliest extant trilogy, Aeschylus'
Oresteia.

What is the fourth text? It is the surprising answer to the misleading question: why three?
While the number three is commonly used to define trilogy, the fourth text is the connective
tissue that binds three individual works together. The fourth text can be constituted by an
overarching narrative or interconnected theme(s). In a narrative trilogy, the fourth text has a
structure similar to the individual texts. It can be mapped using a three-act structure and the
hero's journey. The presence of an extra narrative structure alters that same structure within
the individual texts. This is what renders the fourth text distinct from a series arc. The fourth
text is also not synonymous with the whole trilogy; rather, the story of the whole trilogy is
formed by the dynamic interplay between the first, second and third text, and then the
fourth. The tension formed by the dichotomy of a single whole made up of individual parts
gives the form its storytelling potential. At times, the fourth text may function as a subplot
(*Two Towers*). In the middle text it creates bridging elements between the first and third, but
the fourth text should not be developed at the expense or neglect of the middle text. It is the
presence of this fourth text that distinguishes a trilogy from a threequel structure.
Understanding the essential function of the fourth text within a trilogy can help creators
accommodate it, whether they are planning a trilogy or not, and, more importantly if a trilogy
is not intended, this can be considered by a creator.

Significance of the research beyond my creative practice

Creating a trilogy is a long and difficult process. I hope this research will help creators
understand common problems associated with the form: 'the first must stand alone', middle
text syndrome, 'the third is always the worst'. This research also resides within a growing
body of work on serialities or multiplicities, many of which have been referenced here as well
as up-and-coming works such as the new book series *Screen Serialities* by Edinburgh
University Press and a special issue of *The Journal for Literary and Intermedial Crossing* on
serialities. An understanding of their fundamental structures can be used to 'read' trilogies,
whether created from 'within' or 'without', in the case of a critic trilogy. In industrial terms,

trilogies are costly and do not always come to fruition. For example, *The Golden Compass* (2007) and *John Carter* (2012) – based on book trilogies – both performed poorly, and the studios have both declined to produce sequels (Tally 2017, WENN 2008, Gemmil 2019). The adaptation of the final *Divergent* novel was cancelled (Sims 2020). Understanding the integrated structure of the trilogy form has the potential to support the creation of both unplanned or planned trilogies. However, in a planned trilogy, the fourth and individual texts can become too intertwined and indistinguishable from one another. Conversely, in an unplanned trilogy, accommodating the fourth text can prove challenging when it has not been considered in films released previously.

Limitations and further research

The literature surveys proceeding the case studies in each chapter were designed to bridge the gap between the examined work and to aid in restructuring my own trilogy. The surveys trial new ideas and hence are a starting point for the limitations and further research. This project was a foundational exploration of trilogy. The structure was explored in broad brushstrokes. Avenues of further research include how narrative elements of character and perspective are explored in different trilogies; external influences on trilogy structure, and how the form and genre interact. The case studies themselves could be contrasted with other texts. For example, I intend to write an article on the structural differences between Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit Trilogy.* In terms of genre, the impact of J.R.R. Tolkien's work on fantasy trilogies would also be an interesting post-PhD exploration.

There is still more interesting work to be done, and I intend to continue my research into the trilogy and other forms of multi-text narrative after this PhD, e.g. the patterns found in single-hero trilogies. They often become a hero in the first text, a leader in the second, and then a god or make the ultimate sacrifice in the third. The journey could be linked to exploring expanding threat levels and settings in the fantasy trilogy genre: first the town, then the country and then the world. This thesis has explored the structural patterns of trilogy in a broad sense, but it has not explored all narrative aspects. For example, how subplots work in trilogy could be an interesting aspect to explore. I could develop this list further. However, the first thing I want and intend to do is finish writing my trilogy.

The Story of Eorthan

I had been working on my trilogy for nine years before commencing this PhD. I was experiencing debilitating writer's block that stemmed from a problem with my second text. My methodology used each trilogy text as a launching point for each cyclical research exercise: problem → multi-text narrative → case study → survey of the literature → application ↻. The research journey yielded fruitful transformations in my work. There were also unexpected and unintended transformations of my trilogy and creative practice along the way. It will be useful here to show the development of *The Story of Eorthan* in the reading order of the trilogy.

I did not expect or plan major changes to my first text, *Sora*. When commencing this project, I felt that I could write out the first book in full. Indeed, I had written half of it. However, throughout this project, two issues altered the course of *Sora's* development. One, I should have foreseen as it is inherent in the trilogy form, and the other was a direct result of my practitioner to practitioner-researcher journey. While these are two distinct occurrences, they are intimately linked. The former was the problem, and the latter was the solution. Changing something in one text will have reverberating impacts on for the rest of the trilogy. It is inherent in the interconnectedness of the form. It has three texts related to one another, be it through a unifying narrative or theme. So after making changes to *Morea* and *Eorthan*, particularly in the protagonist journey and perspective, I should have expected those same changes required in *Sora*. Instead, I sat down to write out *Sora*, and I became stuck after the first six chapters.

However, this did not last long compared to previous episodes of writer's block or periods of trilogy inactivity. Using the process I had honed through this project – problem, comparison, case study, literature survey – I quickly moved past the writer's block. Using story design models to unpack and illustrate the structure of trilogies through case studies had altered and enriched the narrative structure of *Morea* and *Eorthan* to such an extent that *Sora* no longer held its own against the latter two novels. Susanne Collins' *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and her use of screenwriting techniques in the novel allowed me to reflect on the changes to my practice brought about by this PhD and gave me a new chapter structure to adopt in my trilogy. The change to *Sora* was more subtle than *Morea* or *Eorthan,* but it was essential to

ensuring the first text operated with an independent narrative. Like Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, I reworked the climax by moving plot-points from the middle of the text to the end and stretching the protagonist's journey to the end of the novel rather than its premature termination at the midpoint.

The new protagonist of *Morea* had always surprised me. Other characters I created were based on myself, people I knew or historical characters: Natalie is Beethoven/Mozart, and Jene is based on Joan of Arc. Emelia, however, was completely and utterly improvised. It took a long time to figure out that she would be a good protagonist for my second text. As the first iteration of this research, it occupied considerably more of this research journey. Early attempts to resolve the issue with my middle text were assisted by the writer's group nicknamed HELP. A fellow student said the middle text 'lacked magic', for which I am forever grateful, as several scenes were reworked because of this. Her suggestion also encouraged the careful consideration that, together with *The Lord of the Rings* case study, helped me restructure *Morea* on Emelia's journey. It was a delightful experience. Emelia has always surprised me as a character. Restructuring *Morea* to focus on her journey has made me excited to write it.

Conversely, I always enjoyed creating and developing content for *Eorthan*. My original contribution, a more nuanced understanding of the form's fundamental structure, helped me understand that I had structured too much of the fourth text in my third. The consequence of this could have been much more severe had I been lucky enough to publish *Sora* and *Morea* before developing and writing the third. Writing a planned trilogy is a blessing and a curse. It allows you independent time and space to construct your narrative. It allows you to make the changes as necessary. Changes initiated in the third or second novel can be worked into the first, for example. However, it is a curse in that the trilogy can tend towards becoming a three-volume novel in structure. That is, the three individual texts can lack their own distinct structure. They start to seem too similar to one another. Hopefully, my proposed trilogy structure – three individual texts and an interconnecting whole – will help other creators and critics alike.

This thesis focused on the redevelopment of *The Story of Eorthan*. It did not focus on novel inception or the actual writing of a trilogy. While I continued to write my trilogy, it has taken a back seat to this project. I am looking forward to getting back to that writing. It took Tolkien

17 years to finish *The Lord of the Rings*. But that was just one book. At the time of finalising this thesis, I have been writing my trilogy for 18 years. Equipped with the transformative skills of a practitioner-researcher, I hope to return to writing my works, secure in the knowledge that were I to encounter missteps, wrong turns or writer's block once more, I have the means to move through and past them.

What is more, I hope to continue this research work, whether privately or through working via an institution. The first will be an overview article on this research and applications using *Star Wars* as a case study. Later, I plan to write an article on how I wrote this thesis. Finally, my website trilogyinthemaking.com requires some attention. As Tolkien once wrote (several times, as it were), 'the road goes ever on…' (1937:126; 1954:46-7; 1955:451).

Appendix

Appendix 1: Dan Meth and other metrics

In Dan Meth's list, by my reading, the following films are threequels:

1. *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). There is a fourth film - *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008), and an as-yet-untitled film is in development and will be released in 2022.

2. *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), *Star Trek II: Wrath of Khan* (1982), *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984). There are at least six films in this series and a rebooted film series. Not to mention numerous tv shows.

3. *Superman: Superman* (1979), *Superman II* (1981), *Superman III* (1983). *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (1987) was the fourth film in this franchise. As with Batman and Star Trek, Superman has had many representations in film. Most recently, *Superman Returns* (2006), *Man of Steel* (2013) and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) and *Justice League* (2017).

4. *Jurassic Park: Jurassic Park* (1993), *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997) and *Jurassic Park III* (2001). This franchise has been continued with the Jurassic World trilogy/threequel: *Jurassic World* (2015), *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018) and *Jurassic World: Dominion* (2021).

5. *Jaws: Jaws* (1957), *Jaws 2* (1978) and *Jaws 3-D* (1983); and a fourth film - *Jaws: The Revenge* (1987).

6. *Die Hard: Die Hard* (1988), *Die Hard 2* (1990), and *Die Hard with a Vengeance* (1995). Further films in this series include: *Live Free or Die Hard* (2007) and *A Good Day to Die Hard* (2013).

7. *Blade: Blade* (1998), *Blade II* (2002) and *Blade: Trinity* (2004). Marvel Studios announced a reboot in 2019.

8. *Planet of the Apes: Planet of the Apes* (1968), *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1971) and *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* (1972). *Battle of the Planet of the Apes* (1973)

finished off this series. Tim Burton attempted a reboot of the series in 2001 with *Planet of the Apes*. More recently (after this Dan Meth infograph was published), the series was rebooted again with a new 'prequel' series/trilogy: *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011), *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014) and *War for the Planet for the Apes* (2017). With the acquisition of 20th Century Fox by Disney, more films are now in development.

9. *Rocky: Rocky* (1976), *Rocky II* (1979) and *Rocky III* (1985). The Rocky franchise has long since 'expanded the trilogy', highlighting a difference between naming a trilogy and a threequel that happens to have three texts at a single point in time. *Rocky IV* and *Rocky V* came soon after the first three films. A steady production schedule saw films released every two to five years in the initial release. Silvester Stallone returned some sixteen years later in *Rocky Balboa* (2006) or 'Rocky VI'. The latest spin-off films feature Michael B. Jordan as Adonis Creed, son of Rocky's first great rival Apollo Creed. There are two films thus far: *Creed* (2015) and *Creed II* (2018). There are currently two more films in consideration, another Rocky and a third Creed film.

10. *Terminator: The Terminator* (1984), *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) and *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003). The later films: *Terminator Salvation* (2009), *Terminator Genisys* (2015) and *Terminator: Dark Fate* (2019).

11. *Rambo: First Blood* (1982), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) and *Rambo III* (1988). *Rambo* (2008) and *Rambo: Last Blood* (2019). Stallone wrote all five screenplays. While Stallone has expressed an interest in reprising his role in subsequent films, Adrian Grunberg has noted that this last film 'closed the circle' on the franchise and left the audience with a 'satisfying' ending (Shephard & Mottram 2019).

12. *Batman: Batman* (1989), *Batman Returns* (1992) and *Batman Forever* (1997).

13. *Alien: Alien* (1979), *Aliens* (1986) and *Alien 3* (1992). *Alien Resurrection* (1997) and the 'Prequel' series *Prometheus* (2012) and *Alien: Covenant* (2017).

Below are these 'trilogies' plotted with other matrices - IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes (Critic and Audience).

Table 3: IMDB Data on Dan Meth's Trilogies

	1	2	3
Star Wars	8.6	8.7	8.3
Indiana Jones	8.4	7.6	8.2
Matrix	8.7	7.2	6.8
Star Trek	6.4	7.7	6.7
Superman	7.3	6.8	5.0
Jurassic Park	8.1	6.6	5.9
X-Men	7.4	7.4	6.7
Spider-man	7.3	7.3	6.2
Lord of the Rings	8.8	8.7	8.9
Mad Max	6.9	7.6	6.3
Jaws	8.0	5.8	3.0
Back to the Future	8.5	7.8	7.4
Die Hard	8.2	7.2	7.6
Blade	7.1	6.7	5.9
Planet of the Apes	8.0	6.1	6.3
Godfather	9.2	9.0	7.6
Rocky	8.1	7.3	6.8
Terminator	8.0	8.5	6.3
Rambo	7.7	6.5	5.8
Batman	7.5	7.0	5.4
Alien	8.4	8.3	6.5
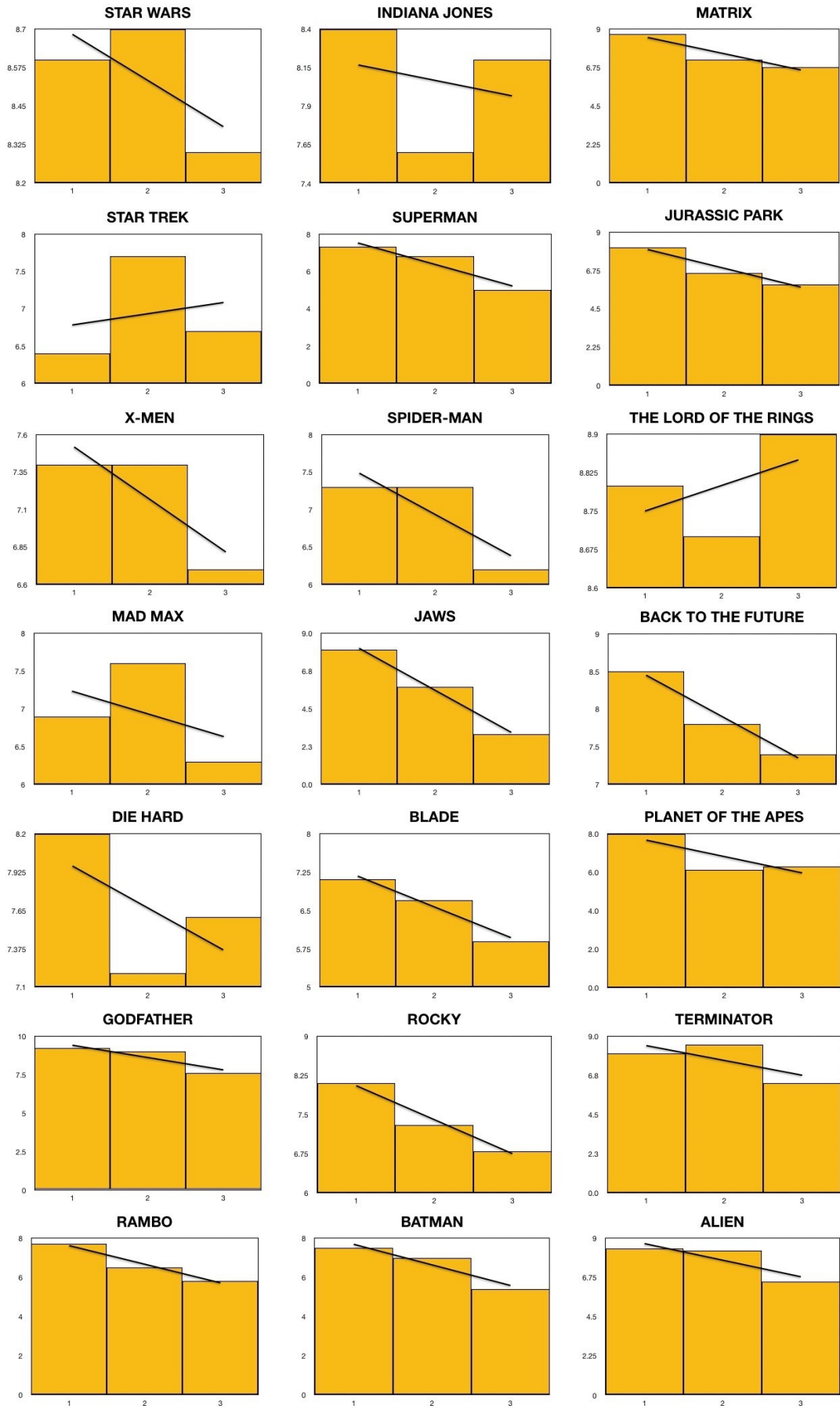
Figure 53: IMDB Data on Dan Meth's Trilogies – graphs

Table 4: Rotten Tomatoes – critic data on Dan Meth's Trilogies

|	1	2	3
Star Wars	92%	94%	82%
Indiana Jones	95%	85%	87%
Matrix	88%	73%	35%
Star Trek	43%	87%	80%
Superman	94%	87%	80%
Jurassic Park	91%	51%	49%
X-Men	81%	85%	57%
Spider-man	90%	93%	63%
Lord of the Rings	91%	95%	93%
Mad Max	90%	93%	80%
Jaws	98%	60%	13%
Back to the Future	96%	65%	80%
Die Hard	93%	68%	57%
Blade	55%	57%	26%
Planet of the Apes	86%	38%	77%
Godfather	98%	98%	69%
Rocky	94%	71%	64%
Terminator	100%	93%	69%
Rambo	85%	35%	37%
Batman	71%	80%	39%
Alien	98%	97%	44%
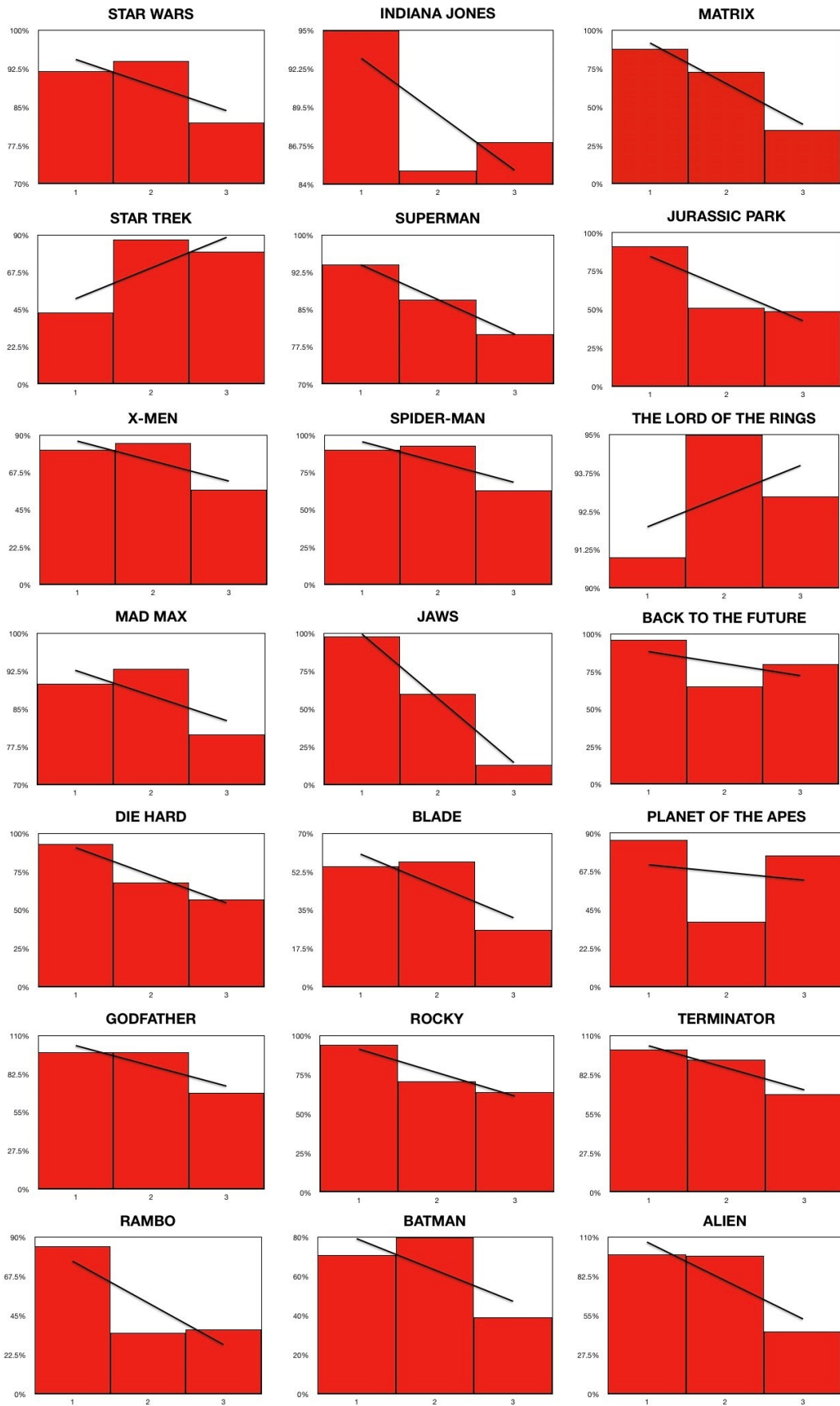
Figure 54: Plotted Rotten Tomatoes – critic data on Dan Meth's Trilogies – graphs

Table 5: Rotten Tomatoes – audience data on Dan Meth's Trilogies

|	1	2	3
Star Wars	96%	97%	94%
Indiana Jones	96%	81%	94%
Matrix	85%	72%	60%
Star Trek	42%	90%	61%
Superman	86%	76%	23%
Jurassic Park	91%	51%	36%
X-Men	83%	85%	61%
Spider-man	67%	82%	51%
Lord of the Rings	95%	95%	86%
Mad Max	70%	86%	49%
Jaws	90%	38%	17%
Back to the Future	94%	85%	78%
Die Hard	94%	70%	83%
Blade	78%	68%	59%
Planet of the Apes	87%	38%	53%
Godfather	98%	97%	78%
Rocky	69%	82%	74%
Terminator	89%	94%	46%
Rambo	85%	60%	45%
Batman	84%	73%	32%
Alien	94%	94%	47%
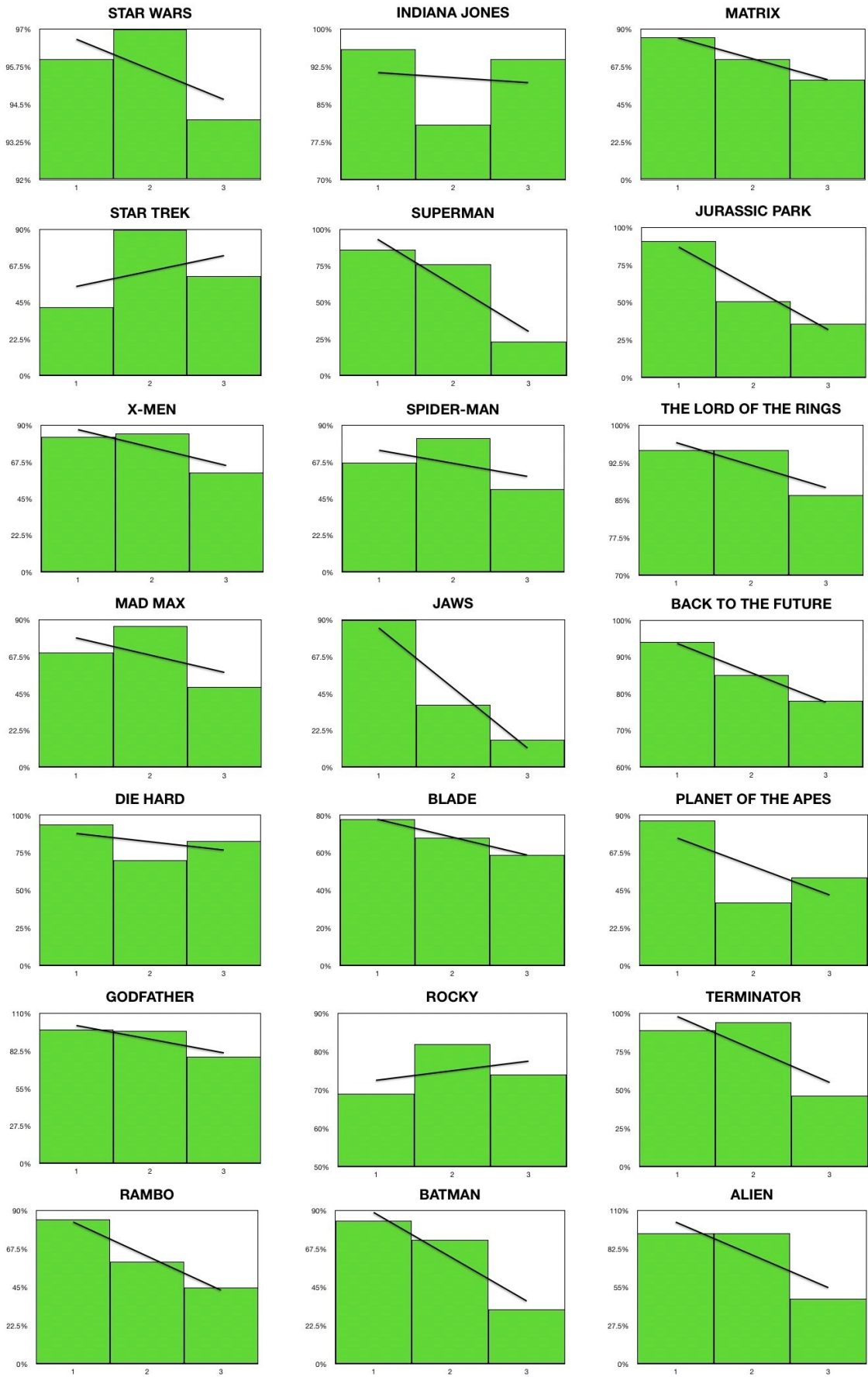
Figure 55: Plotted Rotten Tomatoes – audience data on Dan Meth's Trilogies –graphs

Appendix 2: Empire Magazine's 33 Greatest Trilogies

Table 6: Empire Magazine's 33 Greatest Trilogies

Screenwriters added by this author.

Films	Director(s)/Screenwriter(s)
The Jersey Trilogy: *Clerks* (1994), *Mallrats* (1995), *Chasing Amy* (1997)	Kevin Smith
Hannibal Lecter Trilogy: *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Hannibal* (2001), *Red Dragon* (2002)	Jonathan Demme/Ted Tally (Thomas Harris), Ridley Scott/David Mamet & Steven Zaillian, Brett Ratner/Ted Tally
The Ingmar Bergman Trilogy: *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Winter Light* (1962), *The Silence* (1963)	Ingmar Bergman
Mission Impossible 1-3: *Mission: Impossible* (1996), *M:I-2* (2000), *M:I-3* (2006)	Brian De Palma (David Koepp & Steven Railman (story) David Koepp and Robert Towne), John Woo (Ronald D. Moore & Brannon Braga (story); Robert Towne), JJ Abrams (Alex Kurtzman, Robert Orci and J.J. Abrams).
Trilogy of the Dead: *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985)	George A. Romero/John A. Russo & George A. Romero (1), George A. Romero (2 & 3)
The Mariachi Trilogy: *El Mariachi* (1992), *Desperado* (1995), *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (2003)	Robert Rodriguez
The Millenium Trilogy (2010): *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo, The Girl Who Played With Fire, The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*	Niels Arden Oplev/Nikolaj Arcel & Rasmus Heisterberg; Daniel Alfredson/Jonas Frykberg; Daniel Alfredson/Ulf Rydberg
The Blade Trilogy: *Blade* (1998), *Blade 2* (2002), *Blade: Trinity* (2004)	Stephen Norrington/David S. Goyer, Guillermo del Toro/David S. Goyer, David Goyer/David S. Goyer

Films	Director(s)/Screenwriter(s)
The Mighty Ducks Trilogy: *The Mighty Ducks* (1992), *D2: The Mighty Ducks* (1994), *D3: The Mighty Ducks* (1996)	Stephen Herek/Steven Brill, Sam Weisman/Steven Brill, Robert Lieberman/ (Kenneth Johnson - story) Steven Brill & Jim Burnstein
The Austin Powers Trilogy: *International Man of Mystery* (1997), *The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999), *Goldmember* (2002)	Jay Roach/Mike Myers (1), Mike Myers & Michael McCullers (2 & 3)
The Mad Max Trilogy: *Mad Max* (1979), *The Road Warrior* (1981), *Beyond Thunderdome* (1985)	George Miller/James McCausland & George Miller (1), Terry Hayes, George Miller & Brian Hannant (2) George Miller & George Ogilvie/Terry Haynes & George Miller (3)
The Infernal Affairs Trilogy: *Infernal Affairs* (2002), *Infernal Affairs II* (2003), *Infernal Affairs: End Inferno 3* (2003)	Andrew Lau & Alan Mak (1); Andrew Lau, Alan Mak & Felix Chong (2&3)
Terminator: *The Terminator* (1985), *T2: Judgment Day* (1991), T3: Rise of the Machines (2003)	James Cameron/James Cameron & Gale Anne Hurd, James Cameron/James Cameron & William Wisher, Jonathan Mostow/John Branco, Michael Ferris & Tedi Sarafian (story); John Brancato & Michael Ferris
X-Men: *X-Men* (2000), *X-Men 2* (2003), *The Last Stand* (2006)	Bryan Singer/David Hayter (Tom DeSanto & Byran Singer), Bryan Singer/Michael Dougherty, Dan Harris & David Hayter, Brett Ratner/Simon Kinberg & Zak Penn
The Naked Gun Trilogy: T*he Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad* (1988), *The Naked Gun 2 1/*2 (1991), *The Naked Gun 33 1/3* (1994)	David Zucker/Jerry Zucker, Jim Abrahams, David Zucker & Pat Proft, David Zucker/David Zucker & Pat Proft, Peter Segal/ Pat Prof, David Zucker & Robert LoCash
The Vengeance Trilogy: *Sympathy for Mr Vengeance* (2002), *Old Boy* (2003), *Lady Vengeanc*e (2005)	Park Chan-Wook/Mu-yeong Lee, Chan-wook Park, Jae-sun Lee, & Jong-yong Lee (1), Chan-wook Park, Joon-hyung Lim & Jo-yun Hwang (2), Seo-kyeong Jeong & Chan-wook Park

Films	Director(s)/Screenwriter(s)
Scream 1-3: *Scream* (1996), *Scream 2* (1997), *Scream 3* (2000)	Wes Craven/Kevin Williamson (2 & 3), Ehren Kruger (3)
The Spider-Man Trilogy: *Spider-Man* (2002), *Spider-Man 2* (2004), *Spider-Man 3* (2007)	Sam Raimi/David Koepp (1), Alvin Sargent (2), Sam Raimi, Ivan Raimi & Alvin Sargent
The Star Wars Prequel Trilogy: *Phantom Menace* (1999), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), *Revenge of the Sith* (2005)	George Lucas/George Lucas & Jonathan Hales (2)
Die Hard 1-3: *Die Hard* (1988), *Die Hard 2* (1990), *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* (1995)	John McTiernan/Jeb Stuart & Steven E. de Souza, Renny Harlin/Steven E. de Souza & Doug Richardson, John McTiernan/Jonathan Hensleigh & Roderick Thorp
Pirates of the Caribbean: *The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003), *Dead Man's Chest* (2006), *At World's End* (2007)	Gore Verbinski/Ted Elliot & Terry Rossio
Alien (1979), *Aliens* (1986), *Alien 3* (1992)	Ridley Scott/Dan O'Bannon (Dan O'Bannon & Ronald Shusett - story), James Cameron/James Cameron (James Cameron, David Giler & Walter Hill), David Fincher/David Giler, Walter Hill & Larry Ferguson (Vincent Ward)
Tre Colors: Bleu (1993), *Blanc* (1994), *Rouge* (1994)	Krzysztof Kieslowski/Krysztof Keislowski & Kryzystof Piesiewicz
The Evil Dead Trilogy: *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Evil Dead II* (1987), *Army of Darkness* (1992)	Sam Raimi/Sam Raimi & Scott Spiegel (2), Sam Raimi & Ivan Raimi
The Matrix Trilogy: *The Matrix* (1999), *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003), *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003)	The Wachowskis
The Dollars Trilogy: *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly* (1966)	Sergio Leone Victor Andres Catena, Jame Comas Gil & Sergio Leone Luciano Vincenzoni & Sergio Leone Agenore Incrocci, Furio Scarpelli, Luciano Vincenzoni & Sergio Leone

Films	Director(s)/Screenwriter(s)
Indiana Jones 1-3: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Temple of Doom* (1984), *The Last Crusade* (1989)	Steven Spielberg/Lawrence Kasdan (George Lucas & Philip Kaufman) (1), Willard Huyck & Gloria Katz (George Lucas) (2), Jeffrey Boam (George Lucas & Meyjes) (3)
The Bourne Trilogy: *The Bourne Identity* (2002), *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004), *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007)	Doug Liman/Tony Gilroy & W Blake Herron, Paul Greengrass/Tony Gilroy, Paul Greengrass/Tony Gilroy, Schott Z. Burnes & George Nolfi
The Godfather Trilogy: *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), *The Godfather: Part III* (1990)	Francis Ford Coppola/Mario Puzo & Francis Ford Coppola
Toy Story Trilogy: *Toy Story* (1995), *Toy Story 2* (1999), *Toy Story 3* (2010)	John Lasseter/Joss Whedon, Andrew Staton, Joel Cohen & Alex Sokolow (Story - John Lasseter, Pete Docter, Andrew Stanton & Joe Ranft), John Lasseter/Andrew Stanton, Rita Hsiao, Doug Chamberlun & Chris Webb (Story - John Lasseter, Pete Docter, Andrew Stanton & Ash Brannon), Lee Unkrich/Michael Arndt (John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton & Lee Unkrich)
Back to the Future Trilogy: *Part I* (1985), *Part II* (1989), Part III (1990)	Robert Zemeckis/Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale (1), Bob Gale (Robert Z - story) (2 & 3)
The Original Star Wars Trilogy: *A New Hope* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Return of the Jedi* (1983)	George Lucas (1), Irvin Kershner/Leigh Brackett & Lawrence Kasdan (2), Richard Marquand/Lawrence Kasdan & George Lucas (3).
The Lord of the Rings Trilogy: *Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), *The Return of the King* (2003)	Peter Jackson/Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Peter Jackson; Steven Sinclair (2)

Appendix 3: *Eorthan* plotting the third and fourth text

Table 7: *Eorthan* plotting the third and fourth text

Chapter Titles	Outline	Notes on the revision
Prologue: Wind, Sand and Stars	The child Aeolian exists in another world of darkness, drawing the possibilities in the stars.	4th
1 Birth	Lindis tells the story of his sister's birth. She is blind and incapacitated by her powers.	3rd. Lindis' ordinary world and inciting incident.
2 The Visitor	A stranger comes to visit. Ateni is one of The Nine. She tells Lindis he must care for her. A call to adventure.	3rd (a call to adventure). Caring for family, set's up the 4th text theme.
3 A Song My Mother Sings	Siera is five years old, Lindis and Maria (Aeolian's sister) walk into a strange mist. There is a figure in the mist: Siera.	Maria has been cut in the revised 3rd text. It helps to focus the narrative on Lindis' and Siera's relationship.
4 Missing	The very next day, Siera is missing. So is Aeolian. They are both found on the beach.	In this revision, this has been combined with the previous chapter.
5 Foolish Games	Since the day on the beach, Siera and Aeolian are inseparable, and their powers scare other children.	Deleted in the revision, Siera's 'strangeness' or 'otherworldliness' has been accounted for in chapter 2.
6 Elsin-øre	Lindis, Siera and Aeolian journey to Elsin-Øre (the capital). There is an earthquake, Siera and Aeolian use their powers to help.	Combined with chapter 7.
7 Ennead	The land, Eorthan, recognises Siera and Aeolian as members of The Nine or Ennead. Leaders of the land.	Combined with chapter 6.
8 A Wedding Delayed	Aeolian leaves Siera at the altar and travels where no one knows where.	4th. Chapter combined with chapter 9 in the restructure.
9 The Ither in the Storm	Siera and Lindis at The Ither. Siera flies into a great storm. She finds Aeolian buried in a snowdrift.	3rd

Chapter Titles	Outline	Notes on the revision
10 The Corridor	Aeolian cannot use his powers. He scrawls gibberish on the walls about The Ither.	3rd/4th
11 The Dance	At Elsin-Øre there is a festival. Siera and Aeolian dance a special dance where they change wings and then Siera is gravely hurt.	3rd/4th. Also in 1st/reduced and combined with chapter 12.
12 & 12.5 The Elsin Spring	Aeolian takes Siera to heal in the Elsin spring. (12.5 - Siera goes back to The Farthermost)	3rd
13 Death of the Nine	Laurion kills the Nine. Siera was away from the place at the time, but her connection to Aeolian ensures her death.	3rd
14 The Breaking World	Three heinous acts rend the world asunder. Laurion forces his sister and his friend to keep the Nine stuck in a perpetual moment of last breath. These two spells, coupled with the Death of the Nine, tear the world asunder. Flinging it up into the sky - Sora. Meanwhile, Elsin sinks beneath the waves.	4th. Inciting incident of the 4th text.
15 The Space Between/In Between	Siera was unconscious when Lindis' finds her near the cliff that used to be the entrance to Elsin. He takes her home, but like when Siera was born, her eyes are clouded as if she is in a deep sleep. Five years later, Laurion's Guards capture Lindis and throw Siera over the edge of their world.	3rd/4th. Lindis' low point. 4th text relates to Emelia's story and has already been moved in significance to the second text.
16 The Beach	In another world, Siera has been running from the world for five years, running from herself and the death of the Nine. Aeolian has come back into the past to find her.	4th. This will be referred to in the second text.
17 Aftermath	Lindis, Maria and Emilia - along with others - have their wings removed by Laurion Dresdain. Siera comes to the rescue too late. Maria dies, as do the others. Only Lindis and Emilia survive.	3rd

Chapter Titles	Outline	Notes on the revision
18 Mere Memory	Because of the attack of Laurion on those with wings, Lindis asks Siera to use her powers to take the memories of everyone in Eorthan.	3rd/4th. This chapter is pivotal to both Lindis' and Siera's journey. It is Lindis' entrance to the innermost cave. And for Siera it is a kind of sacrifice. In casting this spell she loses her physical form.
19 Sign of the Nine	This tells the story of Siera finding Aya and failing to save her mother.	3rd/4th. Finding Aya helps Siera come back to herself. For Lindis this begins his journey to forgive his sister.
20 Brightest Star	This tells the story of Aya's childhood.	4th. Lindis does not 'witness' or see most of Aya's childhood. So it can be removed or referenced differently.
21 Sand and Shadows	This tells the story of Siera losing control and Aya defending herself against the spectres that Laurion sends for her.	4th
22 Old Letters and Books	To hide Aya from Laurion, Siera and Aeolian paint special symbols all over Aya. It is a very powerful spell.	4th
23 The Stranger	Siera gives Aya to Walden to hide her. Aya says that Siera can take her memories. Siera becomes a stranger to Aya.	4th
24 Pledge of the Nine	The time moves from the past to just after Morea (2) ended and the New Nine are in the burnt forest. They were under the impression that everyone in the forest had been killed, and they pledge that it will never happen again. Thus taking their place as the New Nine to be.	2nd, moved in previous restructure.
25 The Storm	Aya can now remember her past and she goes after Laurion to stop him finding the refugees from The Aral Forest.	3rd/4th. Climax of the third.
26 Gone	This chapter moves back in time just after Siera had to give Aya up. She is at The Ither. Lindis finds her there. She tells him about giving Aya up. And then she and Aeolian use their powers to finish the equation and predict the	4th

Chapter Titles	Outline	Notes on the revision
	future allowing them to find the New Nine.	
27 Silver Stream	Back in the narrative present, Aya overwhelmed by the battle with Laurion, splits herself in two. Her fiery spectral self flies to follow Laurion back to Øre City, while her body is protected by a silver stream that wells up around her and carries her off.	3rd/4th
28 The Weeping Wood (2)	Meanwhile, Siera flies over the refugees from the forest and finds that Nicolai is missing and she goes to find him. She teaches him magic and acts as a mentor.	4th. Finding Nicolai in the wood and he agrees to become one of the New Nine. Combined with the previous chapter.
29 The Wish	In Øre City, Vann witnesses Isolde making wishes, things she wishes were true. Then he sees a blazing bright light as Aya crashes into the palace. Siera comes to get Aya's soul with Nicolai.	4th. Combined with Chapter 30.
30 The Sound of Sand	Siera carries Aya's soul. Then she has to leave and gives it to Vann for safekeeping.	4th. Vann agrees to become one of the New Nine.
31 The Lake	The Silver Stream has welled into a lake. The New Nine and Vann travel out to the lake and as they fall over a waterfall and plummet down to the ocean, Vann gives Aya her soul - just in time.	4th
32 Living Statues	The New Nine meet the Old Nine who have been stuck beneath the waves for nearly 70 years. The Old Nine are released from their Ennead vow.	4th
33 At the Palace	While Siera/Aeolian deals with Laurion, Emilia talks with Isolde. Isolde tells Emilia that she is not like them, allowing Emilia to let go of the past finally.	2nd, moved in previous restructure.
34 The Sounding of the Horns	The New Nine sound the Nine Great Horns, officially taking up their place.	4th. Climax.
35 Landfall	This causes the land to fall from the sky. The New Nine used their powers to help the world.	4th. Climax part two.

Chapter Titles	Outline	Notes on the revision
36 Dawn	The Old Nine, including Siera and Aeolian die.	3rd
37 A Thousand Gifts	The funeral of The Old Nine. The people of Eorthan come with their wings and memories to say goodbye to The Old Nine.	3rd
38 The Road Home	The New Nine travel return home. The world has been made whole.	4th
Epilogue: On the Beach	Aya sits on the beach by her adoptive parents old house watching the waves. Sebastian comes to comfort her.	4th

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