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Weaving a Universal Narrative:
A Comparative Screenplay Analysis of Parasite and Blue Velvet

by

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Abstract

Based on a comparative analysis between *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite*, (Joon-Ho, 2019), the purpose of this dissertation is to facilitate the: definitions, possibilities for further research, and a skillset upon which audiences and vocational practitioners might interpret cinematic storytelling, thus allowing scholars, critics, and audiences develop statements on the film's central theme.

The approach of this thesis is to appreciate, acknowledge, elaborate upon, and challenge the filmmakers' artistic statements while contributing to the methodologies by which viewers might further appreciate the universality of the cinematic language (*Lingua Cinéma*). My methodology for this thesis will be to identify and offer a comparative analysis of narrative, visual, and sound elements based on interpretive and evaluative claims to determine and establish a universal film narrative. *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019), despite their cultural and temporal dissimilarities, are both films that are deeply invested in mood, tonality, and symbolism, and deal with post-modern themes such as late-state capitalism by conflating the iconography of the ideal national standard and juxtaposing it with inequity and moral decay. The diversity and similarity of this selection of films, therefore, has served to demonstrate the correlation between cinema and culture, thereby inferring the universality of images, textual analysis, and *Lingua Cinéma*. Based on the framework consisting of plot and character development; similarities in tone, length, and genre; and the incidence of beat placement, contemporary and subsequent research into the comparative analysis of these two films indicates a correlation between audience and scholarly response and the application of a universal narrative.

Interpreting the framework of the cinematic storytelling methodology offers and facilitates formal organization; expectations; aspects of character, story, and structure; interpretation of motifs and parallels; and references to history, tradition, culture, and themes. Offering a universal framework bestows scholars the means by which to develop interpretative and evaluative claims based on organization and a keen insight.

Table of Contents:

Cover Page/Declaration	i.
Title Page	ii.
Acknowledgements	iii.
Abstract	iv.
Table of Contents	v.–viii.
List of Tables	ix.
Terminology	x.–xi.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study	2
1.2.1 Problem Statement	2
1.2.2 Aim of the Study	3
1.3 Research Methodology	3
1.3.1 Introduction	3
1.3.2 Limitations of the Investigation	4
1.4 Structure of the Research Report	4
1.5 Conclusion	5

Chapter Two: Concepts, Theories and the State of Literature on Comparative Screenplay Analysis

2.1 Literature Review	6
2.2 Current Literature	8
2.2.1 Introduction	8
2.2.2 Hegemony of the Industrial Model	9
2.2.3 Historical Continuity	10
2.2.4 Investigations, Methodologies and Conclusions	11
2.3 Screenwriting Structure	11
2.3.1 Introduction	11

2.3.2	Modern Storytelling	13
2.3.3	Decentralizing Analysis	14
2.4	Screenwriting Gurus and Beat Sheets: The State of Literary Screenplay	
	Analysis	15
2.4.1	Introduction	15
2.4.2	Standard Form	16
2.4.3	Acts and Sequences	16
2.4.4	Beat Sheets	17
2.5	Research Application	18
2.5.1	Introduction	18
2.5.2	Textual and Thematic Analysis	19
2.5.3	Comparative Analysis	19
2.6	Research Analysis	20
2.6.1	Introduction	20
2.6.2	System Unification	20
2.6.3	Dramatic Engine	20
2.6.4	Recognizing Artistic Choices	21
2.7	Conclusion.....	21

Chapter Three: Comparative Screenplay Analysis and Research Methodology

3.1	Methodology	23
3.2	Methodology for Comparative Screenplay Analysis	23
3.3	Research Approach	24
3.3.1	Introduction	24
3.3.2	Form and Development Strategies	25
3.4	Area of Study	26
3.4.1	Introduction	26
3.4.2	Method of Data Collection	26
3.4.3	Sample Techniques; Standard Form Structure and Templates	27
3.5	Methodologies; Screenplay Analysis	28
3.5.1	Introduction	28

3.5.2 The Screen Narrative Model	28
3.5.3 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation	31
3.6 Conclusion	35

Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion; Results

4.1 Data Presentation	36
4.2 Comparative Screenplay Analysis	37
4.2.1 Introduction	37
4.2.2 Structure	37
4.2.3 The Central Thematic Element; Motifs	38
4.2.4 Characters	40
4.3 The Screen Narrative Model; Blue Velvet	41
4.3.1 Stylistic and Narrative Profile; Blue Velvet	41
4.3.2 Blue Velvet; Prologue	42
4.3.3 Blue Velvet; Act I	43
4.3.4 Blue Velvet; Act II (a)	44
4.3.5 Blue Velvet; Act II (b)	45
4.3.6 Blue Velvet; Act III	46
4.3.7 Blue Velvet; Epilogue	47
4.4 The Screen Narrative Model; Parasite	47
4.4.1 Stylistic and Narrative Profile; Parasite	47
4.4.2 Parasite; Prologue	48
4.4.3 Parasite; Act I	48
4.4.4 Parasite; Act II (a)	49
4.4.5 Parasite; Act II (b)	51
4.4.6 Parasite; Act III	52
4.4.7 Parasite; Epilogue	52
4.5 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Application	53
4.5.1 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Blue Velvet	53
4.5.2 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Parasite	57
4.6 Discussion and Overview of the Research Objective	60

4.6.1 Introduction	60
4.6.2 Research Objective	60
4.7 Conclusion	61
 Chapter Five: Summary of Findings; Discussion	
5.1 Discussion	63
5.2 Interpretation	63
5.3 Analysis	64
5.4 Findings	65
5.5 Key Themes and Meanings	66
5.6 Conclusion	66
 Chapter Six: Conclusion	
6.1 Thesis Overview	68
6.2 Aim of the Study	69
6.3 Literature Overview	69
6.4 Methodology Overview	70
6.5 Results Overview	71
6.6 Conclusion	72
 References	 74

Tables and Figures:

Figure 1. Three- and Four-Act Structure.....	12
Figure 2. Blake Snyder’s “Beat Sheet”	18
Figure 3. The Screen Narrative Model	30
Figure 4. The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation Chart	34
Figure 5. The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Blue Velvet	55
Figure 6. The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Parasite	58

Terminology:

<i>A-story:</i>	The primary storyline in a feature-length film.
<i>Antagonist force:</i>	The externalization of the protagonist's internal or external conflict.
<i>Beat:</i>	A story element that serves to move the plot forward.
<i>B-story:</i>	The secondary storyline in a feature-length film.
<i>Central Thematic Element:</i>	The primary motif in a film that drives its theme.
<i>Climax:</i>	A narrative beat that culminates with a conclusion.
<i>Conclusion:</i>	The end of a film.
<i>Darkest moment:</i>	The protagonist's lowest point in the narrative.
<i>Debate:</i>	A sequence in the film that precedes the end of the first act.
<i>Denouement:</i>	The final part of a film.
<i>Deus ex machina:</i>	A plot device that resolves the protagonist's darkest moment.
<i>Discourse:</i>	A set of pre-determined practices. In this thesis, I use the term to refer to the screenwriting method.
<i>Doxa:</i>	An existing framework in a theory.
<i>Final endeavour:</i>	The moment a protagonist attempts their final attempt at overcoming the antagonist.
<i>First sequence close:</i>	The approximately ten-minute mark in a feature-length film narrative.
<i>Feature-length film:</i>	A film of over ninety minutes.
<i>First act climax:</i>	The first major turning point in a film.
<i>Inciting incident:</i>	The point in a film where the protagonist is forced to respond to an element that draws them towards the narrative.

<i>Lingua Cinéma:</i>	The language of cinema.
<i>Midpoint:</i>	The halfway point of a feature-length film.
<i>New situation:</i>	The sequence following the midpoint where the protagonist is forced to adapt to new circumstances.
<i>Paradigm:</i>	A conceptual scheme that sets rules within a concept.
<i>Precession:</i>	A sequence in a screenplay that introduces an element that is central to the film's theme.
<i>Prologue:</i>	The opening moments of a film.
<i>Promise of the premise:</i>	The third-way mark of a screenplay; dividing the second act into two parts.
<i>Resolution:</i>	The sequence where the main event problem has been solved.
<i>Screen Narrative Model:</i>	A model that highlights the ubiquity of screenplay structure. The model is a new approach that I have developed for the purpose of this thesis.
<i>Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation:</i>	An equation that serves to identify the placement of beats in the Screen Narrative Model. This equation that I have developed can be used to identify the placement of various beats within a film's runtime.
<i>Set-up:</i>	The first sequence of a feature-length film.
<i>System of dispersion:</i>	The regulations that conform to the expectations of a discourse. I use this term in the screenplay to highlight how screenwriters adhere to the practices of the medium.
<i>Ternary:</i>	The sequences in a film that divide it into thirds. I developed this term as a way to identify act breaks that come at the 33% and 66% mark of the runtime.
<i>Theme:</i>	The central elements of a film from which it derives its meaning(s).

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis will be to extrapolate a broad body of knowledge to infer a comparative screenplay analysis of the films: *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019). This thesis examines texts, articles, blogs, studies, research and broader works by myriad researchers, scholars of texts, authors, screenwriters and a broader range of writers. Work in the field of screenplay analysis has served to formulate the basis of the theories upon which I will explicate a narratological analysis between these two screenplays and identify the significance of the elements and principles of narrative structure. I believe that the medium of screenwriting adheres to a form that conforms to the universality of structure. This structure can be used as a measurement by which the framework of a screenplay may be evaluated by various forms of analyses.

My research examines the current state of literature in screenplay analysis and its predilection that feature-length films follow a strict structural and prototypical formula. The true universality of screenplay analysis, its application to modern cinema, and the interpretation of the text's translation to the visual medium needs further investigation. In this dissertation, I will serve to clarify the ubiquity of narrative structure in films and highlight what makes the formulaic approach appealing to so wide an audience for over such a long period of time. In this thesis I have demonstrated the correlation between the placement of story elements, how they serve the film's theme, and the universality of the images that create meaning for the audience. In this thesis, I will also examine how narrative serves the function of developing characters and exploring the film's thematic questions. The two films were chosen for their similarities in themes, tone, length, and genre, while being different enough to adequately allow me to explore films from different periods and cultures. Despite choosing these two films, this thesis attempts to develop a cohesive and applicable approach to deconstructing narrative structure for any film within mainstream cinema. I note that filmmakers choose not to conform to common narrative structures, and that there is no one-size-fits-all breakdown of film structure. However, the purpose of this thesis is to expand on the work of others and create a system for evaluating the placement of certain elements within a film's narrative.

I acknowledge that the chosen films are considered arthouse films by auteur filmmakers and that the application of the model is not universal to all films within their respective

filmographies. This dissertation will use the terminology and analysis of some of the world's greatest screenwriting gurus, as well as from theoretical research, to further explore the methods by which an analyst may interpret, define, or apply the theories that link story structure within world cinema. This research facilitates a more precise understanding of narrative structure, thus contributing to the body of knowledge surrounding screenplay theory and analysis.

For this thesis, I have developed two primary modes of analysing screenplays. These are the Screen Narrative Model and the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation. The Screen Narrative Model is an expansion of narrative structure that incorporates more elements and principles than those that have been developed before. The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation is an equation that I developed for interested parties to determine the exact placement of various sections within a screenplay. In my research I have found that this equation may be applied to almost every mainstream film and by using it, I feel that it can assist a) aspiring writers to better formulate structure and b) analysts to better determine the conscious decision by a screenwriter to place moments at certain points within a screenplay.

1.2 Background to the Study

1.2.1 Problem Statement

In this thesis, I have extrapolated the methodology by which screenwriters conform to the Screen Narrative Model (Field, 2005; McKee, 1997; Snyder, 2005; Thompson, 1999; Truby, 2008; Vogler, 2007). This is a model that I have developed as a ubiquitous tool through which screenwriters, analysts, scholars and critics might extrapolate meaning and convention. Contemporary and historical screenplay analysis and the ubiquity of its model has been examined by academics and scholars (Bordwell, 2006; Dent, 2021:47-60; Hambly, 2021:69-84; Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130-144; Macdonald, 2021:9-29; Price, 2017:319-333) and authors, or screenwriting gurus (Field, 2005; McKee, 1997; Snyder, 2005; Thompson, 1999; Truby, 2008; Vogler, 2007) and has been well-documented. In this thesis, I have sought to identify a new interpretation of their writings and develop my own analysis of screenwriting structure. As such, in seeking to answer, to what degree do the similarities in the screenplay structure of the films, *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), characterize a universal model for feature-length narrative structure, the research into the collective screenplay theory and an elaboration of the Screen Narrative Model serves as the background to this study. This research

will assist the methodology that I will attempt to use to infer meaning based on the principles, elements and forms of the screenwriting medium.

1.2.2 Aim of the Study

In undertaking research into various studies made with regards to screenwriting theory, I postulate that films follow a strict narrative structure. Within the Screen Narrative Model, I ask the following questions: How does a scene progress the narrative and contribute to the film's theme? How do characters develop while attempting to attain their goal? How does the character's journey define the narrative conflict? How do filmmakers employ storytelling devices to develop a story and its themes? (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:40). Schock (1995), underscores mainstream cinema's infatuation with the discovery of a formula through which to replicate the success of previous projects, whether to draw the same returns at the box office or at an awards ceremony. I hypothesize that the universality of the Screen Narrative Model is adhered to by auteur and professional filmmakers to serve the conformity of traditional structure while adhering to the approaches adopted by modern audiences to engage most closely to the narrative. As such, this study compares the works of various scholars in the department of narratology by examining the the analysis of screenplays and through the development of a custom model.

1.3 Research Methodology

1.3.1 Introduction

As a medium with its own underlying knowledge base (Dent, 2021:47-48), this thesis will be based on a comparative examination of myriad feature length films, with *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) serving as the primary films upon which I shall draw my conclusions and explore the hypothesis of a universal film structure. However, I would like to note that I have applied this structure to other films and have found that nearly every western films conforms to this model. In this thesis, I attempt to provide an overview of the model by comparing the time codes in which various elements appear within the screenplay of the chosen films. These elements include an array of rudiments used by screenwriters to conform to the hegemony of the model (Hambly, 2021:69-84). Based on the placement of these elements, I have designed and developed a measure by which to examine their placement. This is the Screen

Narrative Model Comparison Equation, which uses the timecodes correlating to the placement of these elements within a screenplay to determine their meaning and highlight the universality of their placement within specific moments of the film.

1.3.2 Limitations of the Investigation

The limitations of this investigation will involve the subjective nature of its examination. The cultural and linguistic biases may confine and restrict the analytical approach of two vastly different works (Hambly, 2021:135-150). As a result of the methodology of reviewing previous literature and applying the works of a wide range of authors and scholars, I have attempted to make use of novel templates and schemes upon which to base the analysis. I will therefore serve to delimit the application of previous works while attempting to contribute to existing bodies of knowledge. By undertaking a comparative approach, this thesis explores the universal application of the screenwriting model while attempting to respond to the notion that argues that story structure is common across its form.

1.4 Structure of the Research Report

By exploring the works of various scholars and academics, I have identified a template upon which creative participation in screenwriting can serve as a navigational tool for writers. I have correlated my findings with a formulative interpretation of narratological structure. I argue that the principles and elements of the medium have been reiterated in academic, theoretical and analytical literature since the early days of the scholarly field. The model upon which I have based the structure of this research report will derive from the fundamentals of narratology (Dent, 2021:47-48) within screenwriting. This thesis begins by offering a literature review into the subject matter and drawing conclusions from an array of previous studies. This is followed by an explication of methodology and a presentation of the inferred data in relation to its findings, whereafter I have discussed and extrapolated meaning from the conclusions of the study. I attempted to substantiate the hypothesis of this thesis to elucidate upon the model and gauge an interpretation of its structure while maintaining consistency within the canon of the field of research. The final section of this thesis offers a subjective and intersubjective interpretation of the systems of the craft and to what degree this may be applied practically to offer a better understanding of cinema and its study.

1.5 Conclusion

This thesis develops a formula through which a vocational practitioner – a scholar, an academic, a critic, an analyst or a writer – may infer a comparative analysis between two or more screenplays. The model upon which this comparative analysis may be extrapolated is developed in accordance with the structural basis for feature length films, which I have developed for the purpose of this study and coined the term: the Screen Narrative Model. In undertaking a review of the current state of literature in the field of structure, formula and various other methods within the field of cinema narratology, I examined to what degree the screenplays of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) conform to the hegemony of the model and to what degree this model might find meaning in theme, character development, tone, genre and structure in accordance with the placement of story beats and conformity to a universal narrative. The methodology that this thesis undertakes makes discourse of the Screen Narrative Model and Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation to extrapolate a textual, analytical and comparative analysis of the case study films. The purpose of this study is to present a new structure by which to analyse screenplay structure and assist the process of screenwriting by offering an in-depth breakdown of the medium's formula and structure. Limitations of the study pertain to the subjective nature of its examination, whereby the cultural and linguistic biases of modal literacy are poised to limit its application. However, it is my hope that the strategy for formulating a comparative screenplay analysis for any two films, serves to contribute towards the relevant fields of study.

Chapter Two: Concepts, Theories and the State of Literature on Comparative Screenplay Analysis

2.1 Literature Review

Screenwriting is a craft that features an inexorable number of texts “used to teach the requisite skills to those who wish to write for the screen” (Dent, 2021:48), all of which agree upon at least some form of structural integrity that is mandatory for any successful screenplay. Foucault (1972:37) calls these discourses a system of dispersion, a body of knowledge upon which a medium is delimited by a set of rules that is prescribed by its practitioner. For, “if an individual is to be accepted as part of the discourse, then they need to be trained in and exhibit the proper practices” (Dent, 2021:48).

Ideas for the screen are an imaginary concept that are expressed through established practices, standardized concepts and homogenous terminology (Macdonald, 2021:11). As such, screenplay development can be seen as less an individual contribution and more as a collective process (Batty et al., 2017:227). The uninformed principles that dictate the fundamental structure of a screenplay have resulted in the practices becoming inherently collaborative, even when presented as an original concept, idea or manuscript, due to predictability, functionality and formula serving as a requisite for such a commercial artform (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:132). Screenwriting is a common craft and an individual’s shared way of working within the confines of a collective formula is confined by a form of inter-subjectivity (Macdonald, 2021:18). Arguments pertain to challenging the conventional approach of screenwriting, challenging writers to take creative risks in their application of structure, however, deviating too strongly from the Screen Narrative Model is poised to result in alienation of the audience and challenge their notion of the tried-and-tested, traditional formula (Dancyger, Keyt & Rush, 2023; Straub, 2022)

Therefore, when participating within the confines of a practice, members from within the same field may admire or admonish the product of the medium by a prescribed set of standards (Dent, 2021:48). According to Dent (2021:47-60), there are three differentiated forms of practice: normative, habitual and spontaneous; the methods by which a peer or critic might evaluate the standards of screenwriting acknowledges the work’s adherence to the normative practices of screenwriting, i.e., pacing, structure, the integrity of beat placement, etc. However, it is through the other two practices by which individual screenwriters might ascribe their own

techniques. Price (2017:324), suggests that screenwriting and screenplay research suffer the impiety of falling into a distinction between film studies and literary criticism due to its being unconventional in its methodology. The practice of writing for the film industry takes intrinsic authority away from the author with their methodologies operating under a fairly strict form of confidentiality due to outsider interference through re-writes, screenplay sanitization and third-party involvement (Price, 2017:325), which gives rise to the question as to:

- A) How much of the original screenplay retains its novelty/originality? and
- B) To what degree does outsider influence inform the structure of a screenplay before, during and after the film's production?

In his research, Macdonald (2021:9-26) argues that an individual's ability to contribute to a collective within the same medium lies within their ability to draw from an existing framework, the prerequisite structure, or formula, or *doxa* in screenwriting theory, through which they may receive feedback from knowledgeable others, such as scholars, contemporary contributors and critics. Sawyer (2010:365) argues that this practice has resulted in what he calls collaborative emergence, which arises from a writer and the influences that the collective collaborators have constructed. (Macdonald, 2021:17). Sawyer (2000:182) states, "the study of collaborative emergence requires simultaneous analysis at multiple levels – group interaction, textual, and historical development."

Screenwriting conforms to the exact, as opposed to the approximations found in other textual-based artforms ("*Writing a Screenplay ...*", 2021). The fragmentation of the collective work has led scholars to identify unifying characteristics within a singular text. Screenwriting gurus (Field, 2005; McKee, 1997; Snyder, 2005; Truby, 2008; Vogler, 2007) attempt to offer a structure for would-be writers to adhere to, one that is meant to conform to this collective screenwriting system. With regards to the term's anthropological origin, Bourdieu (1972:159-170) refers to the notion of adhering to a collective formula as the *doxa*, a term that refers to the body of beliefs within a specific culture, and which is considered the correct manner by which to approach a task. A survey conducted by Macdonald (2021:9-29) in 2015-2016, found that between 85% and 95% of advisory texts, such as manuals and blogs, are in accord with an identifiable framework used for screenwriting. This "clearly indicates a high degree of coherence

in the forms of principles that can be applied with some confidence by the originator of the new idea” (Macdonald, 2021:20). The model, which is based by Macdonald (2021:21-22) on 103 texts and/or fragments, feature 28 distinct components in what he has dubbed The Classical Hollywood Narrative Paradigm. As such, the *doxa* in screenwriting theory exists prior to a screenwriter’s original work and serves the writer by assisting them in crafting an idea that seems novel while being based on a traditional system (Macdonald, 2021:22). Screenwriting gurus simply suggest a principal framework for creatives to adhere to, from whence it is their responsibility to develop the absent content. In this sense, a screenplay “will feel fresh, novel and original while at the same time *right*” (Macdonald, 2021:22).

2.2 Current Literature

2.2.1 Introduction

In this section, I have explored the workings of various scholars and academics to explicate the methodologies for comparative screenwriting analysis. I have attempted to identify a blueprint for creative participation in the industry that serves as a navigational tool that conceptualizes the meaning, theme and purpose of a screenplay. Kerrigan and Batty (2016:130-144) argue that both the practice and theory of screenwriting are undergoing a reestablishment of values and ideas, whereby innovative research is being done to recognize the creative agency of screenwriters and how their autonomy has been historically overshadowed by the production process. As such, I have corroborated the workings of various scholars, academics, theorists, screenwriting gurus and filmmakers to infer the hegemony of what I have drawn out as the Screen Narrative Model.

The current state of literature with regards to screenwriting analysis and formulative structure seems to argue that collaboration is one of screenplay development’s defining characteristics. Batty and Taylor (2021:271-289) explore in their research, the inner workings and power dynamics involved in story development, while Douglas (2005:228; Batty et al., 2017:227), concurs that the process of script development refers to the creative and industrial collective process that takes a screenplay from story idea to production. Meanwhile, Bloore (2012:9), calls screenwriting the “creative and industrial collaborative process in which a story idea [...] is turned into a script; and is then repeatedly rewritten to reach a state when it is attractive to a suitable director, actors and relevant film production funders.”

In his seminal work, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*, McKee (1997:181) ascribes five seminal design elements to a common screenplay whose functions are imperative towards the development of a contemporary, three-act screenplay that conforms to The Classical Hollywood Narrative Paradigm. These include the inciting incident, progressive complications, crisis, climax and resolution (McKee, 1997:181). Additionally, Field (2005:21), in his book, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, describes a paradigm of dramatic structure, a conceptual scheme, the rules of which are universal to all Western screenplays. Meanwhile, Snyder (2005:68), argues that structure is the single most important element in writing and selling a screenplay, having subsequently developed a 15-part beat sheet that he describes as imperative for any screenwriter to apply to their work in order to develop a successful film within cinema's Western canon.

2.2.2 Hegemony of the Industrial Model

Within the model of narrative structure – which could be defined as “the narration [...] of an event or series of events [...] organized in function of the spatial-temporal context, but also following cause and effect logic” (*Development of Narrative ...*, 2018) – a writer will be judged on the standards of the practice. The effectiveness of screenplay structure application to the works that follow characterize the functionalism of this broader body of knowledge. This thesis argues that operating within the confines of a distinct creative process serves to drive an original story that fulfils the economic requisite of the industry as well as the creative demands of the author. Having transmuted toward a near ideological fascination for modern storytellers, the writings of Campbell (2008) on the foundation of mythic structure have become engrained within modern narrative schematics, particularly those found in the cinematic medium. Through this, Vogler (2007) ascribes the rigid rules and the modern screenwriter's reliance on act structure, page counts, character arcs and the mythic structure, as an imperative innovation adopted by the dominant Hollywood method of storytelling in his book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*.

The literature surrounding screenplay analysis, however, is not without its detractors. Screenwriters are intrinsically constrained by the modern discourse of the craft, conforming to the expectations not only of those who commission the work, but by those who consume it as well, that, in a study to determine the effectiveness the Classical Hollywood Narrative, a survey

was developed to assess the culture of script development in Australia. The research sought to determine to what degree screenwriting is a universal practice (Hambly, 2021:69-84). Hambly (2021:135-150) argues that the universality of Campbell's quest myth has been widely misinterpreted with regards to Indigenous societies, applying a default narrative from an Anglo-Western perspective towards story structures and narratives from around the globe. As such, I opine that the literature surrounding comparative screenplay analysis is well-established, however, the practicalities of globalism and cultural perspective offer a conflicting notion towards its universal application.

2.2.3 Historical Continuity

Bordwell (2006:7) argues that modern and post-modern cinema features a tendency to frequently allude to other films, with Carroll (1996:283-306) ascribing this tendency to Hollywood's new generation of filmmakers (1967 – 2003). Price (2017:327) argues that a writer that is "exclusively interested in the here and now may be assisted by the production guidelines, but without knowledge of prior examples and some concept of continuity within the profession, he or she would be unable to create scripts at all." This speaks to historical continuity of the screenwriting medium, the building blocks that have been developed over generations of tried-and-tested methods upon which future writers develop their own unique works.

In the grand scheme of comparative screenplay analysis, the practice of theoretical research into story structure derives from screenwriting manuals such as *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Vogler, 2007) and *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (Field, 2005). Meanwhile, books such as *Writing the Character-centred Screenplay*, by Horton (1999) focuses on the development of story characters, while McKee's (1997) *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting*, offers an analysis of visual storytelling and narrative properties (Kerrigan, & Batty, 2016:139). McKee provides a system unification and foundational groundwork for how the systems and principles of narrative structure govern modern commercial feature-length films (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:139). As such, this thesis offers an explication into how comparative screenplay analysis might measure the individual components of story and be applied to offer clarity, unity and closure within the dramatic engine of a screenplay. This is poised to allow the audience, scholars and critics recognize the artistic

choices employed by a filmmaker and interpret how these expectations have emerged throughout the history of cinema.

2.2.4 Investigation, Methodologies and Conclusions

After investigating the current state of knowledge throughout my research and becoming familiar with existing theories, models and frameworks for screenwriting, I attempted to define and elaborate upon the convergences between screenwriting techniques more accurately. Understanding the medium requires an internalization of the rules that dictate the practice in order to navigate the inner organization and stringency of their mechanism (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:140; Csikszentmihalyi, 1998:331). Therefore, with its academic study exhibiting a wide array of disciplines, compounded by a multitude of professional and cultural practices that demand myriad classifications, definitions and possibilities for further research (Price, 2017:319-320) I have correlated my findings to the methodologies of previous studies to help me develop my own conclusions.

2.3 Screenwriting Structure

2.3.1 Introduction

Screenplays must be dictated by a sense of cause-and-effect, with tension rising throughout the narrative until climactic events resolve the plot. Such principles have been reiterated in screenplay writing manuals since the early years of cinema. Extrapolating Aristotle's (2020) dictation that stories must be divided into a beginning, a middle, and an end, most screenwriting gurus agree that films must be divided into a three-act structure (Field, 2005; McKee, 1997; Snyder, 2005; Truby, 2008; Vogler, 2007). The screenwriting rule-of-thumb dictates that one minute of screentime equates to approximately one page in a script, thus galvanizing the notion that a 120-page script be segmented to a ratio of 1:2:1, with the first act running thirty pages, the second act running sixty pages, and the third act running the final thirty. Thompson (1999) argues that films conforming to the Classical Hollywood Narrative ascribes to a four-part structure (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:71), through which screenwriters streamline the conception of a three-act structure, commonly used in modern narrative fiction, and demarcate each part, which is roughly equal in length, with turning points linked to a playbook

of narrative devices, i.e., character goals, complications and resolutions. According to this model, a film may be broken down as follows:

Three-Act Structure	Four-Part Structure
Act One: <i>Opening Statement, Theme, Inciting Incident, Consideration, Climax and Turning Point</i>	Part One: <i>Opening Statement, Theme, Inciting Incident, Consideration, Climax and Turning Point</i>
Act Two: <i>B-Story, Conflict, Trials and Tribulations, Climax</i>	Part Two: <i>B-Story, Conflict, Trials and Tribulations and Midpoint Climax</i>
Act Three: <i>Resolution and Closing Statement</i>	Part Three: <i>[Change of Narrative Tone, New Goals, New Obstacles, Villains Encroach, Darkest Hour and New Direction]</i>
	Part Four: <i>Resolution, Climax, Denouement and Closing Statement</i>

Figure 1. The common Three-Act Structure found within The Classical Hollywood Narrative compared with Thompson's conception of a Four-Part Structure found within The Classical Hollywood Narrative (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:71).

In Thompson's book, *Storytelling in New Hollywood* (1999), she argues that the formula and structure that was previously determined by screenwriting manuals as a three-act structure tend to omit myriad elements that have proven requisite in the scope of narratology. Thompson (1999) calls these parts, which are divided by major turning points, the setup, the complication action, the development and the climax. The purpose of dividing a film as such has proven to explicate character development, theme and narrative progression. "[T]he setup establishes the initial situation, and the complication action takes the action in a new direction, either by having the protagonist follow a goal established in the setup, or "Building a whole new situation" [...]" (Thompson, 1999:28). By the time of the complicating action, the goals, complications and obstacles of the story have been firmly established, and the protagonist here struggles to attain her or his goals. "When all goals and lines of action have been introduced, the climax typically begins, taking us toward final resolution" (Platinga, 2000:61).

McKee (1997:181) divides a screen narrative into five distinct parts: “The *Inciting Incident*, the first major event of the telling, is the primary cause for all that follows, putting into motion the other four elements – *Progressive Complications*, *Crisis*, *Resolution*.” Meanwhile, Field (2005:21) outlines the narrative structure of film as a paradigm, within which he describes the setup, confrontation and resolution as being the fundamental, distinct divisions within a screenplay’s structure. Most films, particularly American feature-length films, are approximately one-hundred-and-twenty minutes long and most screenplays tend to be roughly one-hundred-and-twenty pages in length (Field, 2005:22). A plot point, according to Field (2005:26), may be defined as, “any incident, episode, or event that hooks into the action and spins around in another direction”, with the first plot point propelling the action from the first act into the second, with the second towards the midpoint and with the third act into the fourth (Thompson, 1999). “Plot Point I occurs at the end of Act I, anywhere from pages 20 to 25 or 30” (Field, 2005:26). Alternatively, Field (2005:27) defines the purpose of a plot points as, “major story progression and keep the story in line anchored in place.” As such, this thesis examines various structures through which I have used to formulate a unique structure upon which one may base their analysis and/or narrative.

2.3.2 Modern Storytelling

Regardless of which method a screenwriter chooses to conform to, the Western canon and contemporary screenplays take the form of a three-act structure, a beginning, middle and end, the setup, confrontation, and resolution (Field, 2005:21-27). The first act of a film is a series of sequences that serve to introduce characters, goals, and conflicts, culminating in a turning point that sees the main character in the story commit themselves to the driving plot, thus signifying a shift towards act two, wherein the protagonist is faced with a series of challenges, which tend to arise from the trials and tribulations associated with defeating an external or internal force, commonly personified in the form of an antagonist (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:70-71). These conflicts conflate, causing the character(s) to grow and adapt, eventually culminating in a turning point that leads to the third act, which serves to resolve the main conflict within the narrative, concluding the plot and returning the protagonist(s) to a cathartic end (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:70-71). These acts tend to be segmented by important turning points in the plot, which are often “signalled through dialogue, setting, or other visual or sound

techniques” (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:71). The Western canon has developed a cohesive and universal film narrative that is familiar to the audience and requires screenwriters to make frequent allusions to well-recognized genres, premises, character motivations and structure (Batty et al., 2017:233).

According to Todorov (1971:39), stories must feature five requisite elements, which include a situation of equilibrium, the disruption of this equilibrium, recognition of the breakdown, repair of the breakdown and reestablishment of the equilibrium, to which Pramaggiore and Wallis (2011:67), argue that restoration is what drives the plot in modern cinema. Meanwhile, Egri (2019; Bordwell, 2006:32), argues that character growth is a staple of modern storytelling, and that modulated character growth offers a thematic exploration of the inner workings of one’s psyche. This notion emphasizes the need for a narrative to challenge the character and allow them to develop externally and internally (Egri, 2019; Bordwell, 2006:32). This adheres to Hollywood’s requisite for goal-driven stories and offers the truest form of narrative structure.

2.3.3 Decentralizing Analysis

Post-classical/New Hollywood, a term used to describe the narrative conventions of American cinema between approximately 1967 to 2003, saw an influx of amateur and aspiring writers who approached a decentralized field with little in the way of experience or official training (Cook, 1998:1-4). As such, producers to whom these writers approached needed a concise and equitable measure by which to appraise and judge the influx of spec scripts arriving on their desks (Miyamoto, 2021). Therefore, a new field of analysis was borne of a necessity to quantify the value of a screenplay, one that would codify the skillset while formulating templates and galvanizing the field of cinematic analysis (Varotsis, 2015). As Snyder (2005:22) puts it, to avoid a cliché, an understanding of the traditions that make a cliché in the first place must be fully understood by an aspiring creative. Throughout my investigation into how screenplay structure serves to encourage interpretations by scholars, casual viewers, analysts and critics, those who seek to derive a sense of textual interpretation from a film are required to take advantage of one’s prior knowledge within the heuristics of visual storytelling. As a result, a requisite for interpretation is comparative in essence. This seems to have the detracting quality of

leading potential analysts to antedate their interpretation in screenplay analysis (Bordwell, 2006:9).

2.4 Screenwriting Gurus and Beat Sheets: The State of Literary Screenplay Analysis

2.4.1 Introduction

I have discovered that a relatively modern innovation in comparative screenplay analysis came in the form of Campbell's (2008) monomythic sensibilities. Thus, "the new screenplay manuals' reliance on act structure, page counts, character arcs and the mythic journey [...] became an academic enterprise [...] characterized by rigid rules and a widely accepted canon" (Bordwell, 2006:34). In the book, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, edited by Bordwell and Carroll (1996), it is hypothesized that film scholarship that came in the wake of New Hollywood Cinema (1967-2003). Scholars, academics and theorists sought a universal theory to employ for film analysis and question the essential principles and elements of cinema (Bordwell & Carroll, 1996).

This thesis postulates that the universal theory of filmmaking can be found within the text upon which they are based. Understanding the screenplay is fundamental to understanding how to dissect and interpret a film. Schilf (2017) states that, in general, a film will feature three primary acts and eight sequences, with two – or three – sequences within the first act, four sequences in the second, and two final sequences that make up act three. According to this model, the second act, which is broken into four sequences, may be divided into two, with a major turning point occurring at the midpoint of the film and thus translating to two acts, which falls in accordance with the Screen Narrative Model. Meanwhile, the sequences of a film may be identified and segmented by beats, the "important moments in [...] feature films" that "lay out what needs to happen in each act of the story" ("*Three-Act Structure ...*", 2021). Beats tend to fall into one of four categories: events, realizations, resolutions and interactions, with films tending to feature at least 12 beats within their screenplays ("*Learn About Beats ...*", 2021). As such, this section explores the elements and principles that contribute towards the implementation of the Screen Narrative Model.

2.4.2 Standard Form

“Give me the same thing ... only different!” exclaims Snyder (2005:21), implying that the development of a screenplay adheres to a process whereby an individual writer conforms and pays attention to manuals that obey the industrial process (Price, 2017:330). As such, this promotes the autonomous hegemony of the Classical Hollywood Narrative (Price, 2017:330). This idea derives from a body of knowledge upon which a medium is delimited by a set of rules that is prescribed by its practitioners (Foucault, 1972:37). For, “if an individual is to be accepted as part of the discourse, then they need to be trained in and exhibit the proper process” (Dent, 2021:48). The scriptwriting medium positions the writer within the confines of templates that have been reinforced and propagated by screenwriting manuals written by gurus who themselves are exclusively interested in industry guidelines, yet, without prior knowledge to the concept and continuity of films that precede one’s work (Price, 2017:327).

2.4.3 Acts and Sequences

Sequences, which are made up of scenes, and which in turn make up acts, are generally comprised of between two and five scenes, varying in number depending on the sequence’s placement in the narrative. Cutting, Brunick and DeLong (2011:1-16) argue that the analysis of cinema involves the dissection of the various structural elements of its narrative into units of measurement that can be used to highlight “acts, sequences, shots and frames”. Messaris (2009), has demarcated the identification of a scene as being defined by temporal and spatial boundaries, with non-sequential transitions from one temporal or spatial period or locale to another, serving to explicate theme through juxtaposition. Meanwhile, sequences are composed of scenes that serve as the metric for defining screenwriting structure (Cutting, Brunick & DeLong, 2011:2). Each act has a beginning, whereby the plot point of the previous act has been resolved, and a new one is introduced (Wilson, 2021). The purpose of the interspersed sequences is to drive the plot from one point to the other, destination points, as one may view them (“*How to Master ...*”, 2022). The contemporary screenplay, as described by Field (2005:195), can be described as a series of interconnected sequences that tie a story together through one dramatic premise. According to Field (2005:194), a sequence is, “a series of scenes tied together, connected by one single idea.” Meanwhile, Gulino (2004:13-14) argues that sequences “offer an opportunity to

give the audience a glimpse of a great many possible outcomes to the picture before the actual resolution,” serving as an ideal layout and effective starting point for screenwriters.

2.4.4 Beat Sheets

Beats are defined as “story points and serve as a treatment and outline to the overarching narrative” (Douglas, 2011:163; Kilka, 2021:206). They are also defined as “an interchange of action and reaction or emotional variations” (Kallas, 2010:147) within a story to help and define and rationalize character action and motivation and move the plot forward in a concise and digestible manner (Snyder, 2005). Sorkin (“*Learn About Beats ...*”, 2021), indicates that feature length screenplays tend to have approximately twelve and fifteen story beats. The development of a beat sheet needs to incorporate considerations of reactions to actions made by characters that reflect or contradict their views in the world (Kilka, 2021:209). This tends to facilitate drama through cognitive dissonance (Krueger, 2015) and the use of unifying themes to motivate character and drive plot progression (Marks, 2007). By using this method, characters naturally develop. According to Smith (1999:91), threatening the loss of a character’s goal is what facilitates tension and externalization of the character’s growth, which is fragmented by these well-placed and deliberate beats.

Snyder (2005:70) developed his own “beat sheet” that laid out 15 beats that he found to be imperative for any screenwriter to apply to their own work to develop a successful film within cinema’s Western canon:

Act	Beat	Page-code	
Act One	1.	<i>Opening Image</i>	(1)
	2.	<i>Theme Stated</i>	(5)
	3.	<i>Ste-up</i>	(1-10)
	4.	<i>Catalyst</i>	(12)
	5.	<i>Debate</i>	(12-25)
	6.	<i>Break into Two</i>	(25)
Act Two	7.	<i>B-Story</i>	(30)
	8.	<i>Fun and Games</i>	(30-55)
	9.	<i>Midpoint</i>	(55)
	10.	<i>Bad Guys Close In</i>	(55-75)
	11.	<i>All is Lost</i>	(75)
	12.	<i>Dark Night of the Soul</i>	(75-85)
	13.	<i>Break into Three</i>	(85)
Act Three	14.	<i>Finale</i>	(85-110)
	15.	<i>Final Image</i>	(110)

Figure 2. Blake Snyder's "Beat Sheet". (2005:70) The numbers within the parentheses are indicative of where the beat takes place in the film, read in minutes.

Meanwhile, McKee (1997:37-38) describes a beat as "an exchange of behaviour in action/reaction. Beat by beat these changing behaviours shape the turning of a scene." Scenes are comprised of multiple beats that serve to redefine various elements within the narrative, such as character dynamic, prop introductions and theme development, amongst more (McKee, 1997:38).

2.5 Research Application

2.5.1 Introduction

Batty et al. (2017:225-247) postulate, to what extent is there a common interpretation of screenwriting and/or screenplay analysis, stating that "Script development is complex, contested and contingent upon context" (Batty et al. 2017:226). According to Cattryse (2017:645), a transnational lens through which one may analyse film within the contemporary landscape of

globalism offers a wide range of flexibility when considering which model to apply to a universal narrative. For this essay, I use a multi-discipline approach, examining a textual, thematic, analytical and structural comparative screenplay analysis in order to explicate my hypothesis.

2.5.2 Textual and Thematic Analysis

The textual analysis of a film involves an understanding and appreciation of myriad disciplines within the filmmaking process, such as genre; cultural, temporal and geographic context; narrative structure, themes and conflict; and motif theory, among others (“*Textual Analysis, Structure ...*”, 2021). This also requires examination that identifies, analyses and reports on thematic patterns within the film or screenplay (Harrison, 2021). The methodology behind analysing a screenplay involves literary comprehension of the text as well as a comparative analysis of the product upon which it lends its basis (Miles, 2017). This thesis extrapolates meaning from the correlation between the placement of beats, the arrangement of sequences, the occurrences of acts, as well as the motifs, themes and character dynamics that serve to formulate the basis for meaning within the film.

2.5.3 Comparative Analysis

By distinguishing the similarities and differences between the placement of various elements and principles found within the Screen Narrative Model, I have discerned the strategic and universal commonalities by comparing two distinct screenplays. The purpose of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the development of screenplays and thus provide context for analysis. In order to successfully analyse a script, the key elements upon which to base one’s methodology include an analysis of progression, structure and internal and external action (O’Thomas, 2011). The literature examined for this thesis has indicated that the key principles and elements of design within a screenplay may be compared with workings of the same medium to infer a sense of universality.

2.6 Research Analysis

2.6.1 Introduction

Within the field of script development, the base knowledge upon which most aspiring writers formulate their work may be correlated to the description and breakdown of models explored within the texts of well-known manuals and treatises (Kerrigan, & Batty, 2016:139). The organizing principles that stipulate the placement of plot points, turning points, act breaks, etc. simultaneously serve to structure a framework that prioritizes exposition, theme, subtext, character development and a wide array of principles and elements that define the field of cinema narratology (Cowgill, n.d.).

2.6.2 System Unification

Batty et al. (2017:225) sought to define the film industry's methodologies of development, which is used by screenwriters to actively participate in the process (Batty et al., 2017:239-240). "A screenplay is like a system," states Field (2005:193) adding, "it is comprised of specific parts related and unified by action, character and dramatic premise. We measure it, or evaluate it, in terms of how well it "works" or "doesn't work."” Field (2005:193) goes on to discuss how, when analysing the various aspects of a film, one examines them based on the methodologies of system unification. He argues that a film is measured as a whole as opposed to based on its individual mechanisms, thus placing structure at the forefront of comparative screenplay analysis. It has been noted that the primary principles of the Screen Narrative Model derive from the principles developed by the forerunners of the techniques that were developed in Hollywood in the early years of the Twentieth Century (1902 – 1967), whereby filmmakers refined a set of requisite rubrics through which to develop a film (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:77-78). According to Pramaggiore and Wallis (2011:77-78), these requisites are determined by "clarity, unity, characters, closure, and unobtrusive craftsmanship", which, when combined, come together to ensure that the audience can make sense of the film in question. This is poised to guarantee that the audience is not taken out of the narrative space, or diagesis.

2.6.3 Dramatic Engine

According to Field (2005:247), the paradigm used to embellish the four parts within a screenplay is segmented by various units. This allows the dramatic engine of the narrative to be

motivated through action, character decisions, obstacles and conflict, among other embellishments. Meanwhile, as Csikszentmihalyi (1999:332) states, a writer is required to adopt and co-opt the principles of the form in a way that adheres to the expectations of contemporary practitioners of the form (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:140). As McKee (1997:33) states, “an event is caused by or affects people, thus delineating characters [...] Event “means *change*”.”

2.6.4 Recognizing Artistic Choices

The screenwriter’s main prerogative is to endow upon a viewer, a temporary skillset upon which they may acquire meaning – cause-and-effect – from within visual storytelling based on expectations derived from previous works (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:10). Within the confines of these artistic choices, a writer depends on a practiced spectator through which to convey a film’s themes based on its narrative (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:10). Therefore, when considering structure, a writer must conform to the obligations of ubiquity. For example, this will involve placing expository character detail at the beginning of the film, whereby the audience might infer how these characters undergo certain changes as the narrative progresses. It is important for screenwriters to understand how these changes might correspond to various segments within the film, how character development serves the narrative and how and where these placements are required to occur during and between act breaks (Pramaggiore, & Wallis, 2011:72).

2.7 Conclusion

Screenwriters are so intrinsically constrained by the regulations of their craft – adhering to specific structures – that they are required to conform to the expectations of the audience as well as to the commissioners of the film. The technique of positioning particular elements within a film at particular moments during its runtime is indicative of the cadence, tone, tactile stimuli, and the morphemes and phonemes of the art of visual storytelling. Therefore, the script development process is entirely dissimilar to the analysis of the final product with the refining period in a writer’s method allowing the author to segment their work in conjunction with industry rules. As such, it is through collaboration and conformity that screenwriters are able to bring certain aspects of the film’s analysis to its appropriate placement, regardless of the story idea.

Field (2005:193-194) identifies screenwriting as a conglomeration of various dramatic portions that are synchronously comprised of “endings, beginnings, plot points, shots and effects, scenes and sequences”. When combined and arranged in a particular way, these elements comprise the methodologies upon which a writer can unify and weave a cohesive narrative. This section has sought to identify a methodology of interpreting various key elements within a screenplay to extrapolate meaning. A wide array of disciplines is required to develop an approach towards analysing the workings of a similar medium, demanding myriad classifications, definitions and possibilities for further research (Price, 2017).

Dent (2021) follows the Foucaultian approach of a system of dispersion upon which to base one’s analysis, with Bordwell (2006) noting that the approach of writing for cinema is impossible without alluding to previous works. As such, I have extrapolated the methodologies of several fields of screenplay analysis to infer a comparative analysis of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2017). Screenwriting systems implore the writer to offer an account of events that transgress along a linear spectrum, an “ordered series of events connected by the logic of cause and effect” (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:66-67). As such, a devotion to applying narrative techniques to their films has proliferated an iconographic code (Carroll, 1996:283-306) through which screenwriters have developed traditional patterns of narrative structure and sequence, in what Carroll (1996:283-306) describes as an imperative function/feature employed by new generations of filmmakers (Bordwell, 2006:7). Therefore, the purpose of a universal film narrative is to familiarize audiences with the requisite tools needed to build an interpretation of the film’s themes. Archival research and comparative analysis of films and their screenplays retain indisputable value, (Price, 2017:322), in large part due to its endowment upon the viewer, film literacy; the technique of positioning particular elements within a film at moments throughout the runtime is indicative of the cadences of what I call *Lingua Cinéma* – a term I have coined for this dissertation to describe the narratological and textual language of cinematic storytelling.

Chapter Three: Comparative Screenplay Analysis and Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology

The Screen Narrative Model is a formula based on feature-length films – a film of over the length of ninety minutes (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023) – as explored by screenwriting gurus such as: Field (2005), McKee (1997), Snyder (2005), Truby (2008) and Vogler (2007), whose notions on narratology are applied to how screenplays should be structured. Contemporarily, script development is a social, cultural and creative process (Batty & Taylor, 2021:273), in which the individualization of writers in conjunction with external influences, such as industry policies and movements or developments, helps to refine the process of collaborative script development (Batty et al., 2017:240). In this thesis, I have provided an explication for the Screen Narrative Model by determining the time codes in which certain elements, such as beats, appear, after which I correlate the codes with numerical values with which to place into an equation that will correspond to common moments within a select number of films.

It is common for a script writer to utilize a beat sheet to identify story points and serve as a treatment and outline to the overarching narrative (Douglas, 2011:163, Kilka, 2021:206). The commonalities within these beat sheets share many similarities that adhere to the Screen Narrative Model (Snyder, 2005:67-96; McKee 1997:37-38). Feature film screenwriting requires a precise model upon which to base one's work; it is imperative to hit beats and place certain elements at exact moments to amplify their significance and meet established pacing modes (Snyder, 2005:68). As such, a beat, in the context of this thesis, serves as a unit of measurement with regards to the placement of various narratological elements, i.e., character, prop and/or motif placement; inciting incidents; exposition; moments of conflict; plot points; and moments of character development, through which I correlate a comparison.

3.2 Methodology for Comparative Screenplay Analysis

The purpose of this essay is not to regurgitate the repeated techniques offered within screenwriting manuals, but rather to define and elaborate upon the convergences between screenwriting techniques more accurately. As such, my methodology for this thesis is to offer a comparative analysis of narrative, visual and sound elements to determine and establish a universal film narrative structure by looking at the synergy – “the study of systems; the behaviour of systems as a whole, independent of their working parts [...] the relationship

between the whole and its parts” (Field, 2005:193) – of the films, *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986). By using a textual, analytical and structural basis for the comparative analysis of these two films, I have determined to what degree screenwriters make recourse to the works of previous screenwriters, analysts, critics and screenwriting gurus to adhere to the core concept’s uniformity (Dent, 2021:47). As Macdonald (2004:286) postulates, the “screen idea is created not by an individual working to some sort of universal principles, but by a set of assumptions working through a field, which is both created and changed by the agents who work in that field.”

There are various elements and principles within the medium of screenwriting upon which one may base their textual and comparative analysis, such as formula and modelling as a form of inter-subjectivity (Macdonald, 2021:18); seminal design elements (Field, 1997; 2005); visual storytelling and narrative properties (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:139); universality (Bordwell & Carroll, 1996); traditional and unconventional systems (Macdonald, 2021:22); and cultural systems (Hambly, 2021:69-84). Therefore, in an attempt to extrapolate the hegemony of the modes and systems of screenwriting, this thesis identifies a narrative structure in relation to the standards and principles found within the ubiquity of the system (O’Thomas, 2011) and the functionalities and methods that form the foundation of the medium. Throughout the films selected as the case studies for this examination, this thesis infers certain units which I use to offer a comparison of the two films.

3.3 Research Approach

3.3.1 Introduction

The textual interpretation and comparative analysis of a screenplay offers a conceptualization of the methodologies exploited by professional screenwriters and contextualizes the practices and may be applied to a larger body of knowledge (Price, 2017:319-320). Understanding the medium of screenwriting requires an internalization of the rules that dictate the practice in order to navigate the inner organization and stringency of their mechanism (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:140; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988:331). As such, Kerrigan and Batty (2016:132) state that the development of a screenplay might be described as a process by which creativity and practicality intersect, having been refined in accordance with the collaborative nature of screenplay structure. Screenwriting has transmuted, since its inception, into a

collaborative practice (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130) that can be understood and based upon by analysing the traditions, discourses and economic factors that drive the creation to its end.

3.3.2 Form and Development Strategies

A comparative screenplay analysis will undergo the process of comparing two written works to one another and attempting to find correlations amidst their similarities and differences (“*What Is Comparative ...*”, 2021) and thus allow adequate research to better understand the issue of both form and development strategies. Various benefits to this approach include the strategies of the standards of cinema, how trends affect the medium and how and when to apply emerging techniques and theories with regards to the ubiquity of screenplay development. This allows analysts, scholars and critics a better understanding of a problem and how to apply certain relevant questions through a comparison of data, methodology and processes (O’Thomas, 2010). An in-depth comparative analysis may be used to provide a frame of reference for data upon which others may attempt to infer meaning (Walk, 1998). In this thesis, I identify the ubiquity of the Screen Narrative Model and extrapolate its meaning by using the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation.

The lens of comparison upon which this thesis bases its central argument considers texts that came before the subjects of examination (Page, 1992). It also considers events that have served to mould the methodologies of the central area of study and theory of practice (Laurie, 2013) and the stability of the ubiquity of narratological comparisons – the monomythic theory (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007). “The grounds for comparison anticipates the comparative nature of your thesis” (Walk, 1998), with the methodologies by which this thesis infers a conclusion, relates to corroboration, contradiction and direct contrast, highlighting the similarities and dissimilarities that formulate the ubiquitous relationship between various case studies within the compare-and-contrast nature of a comparative screenplay analysis. The results and discussion of this thesis serve as a frame of reference, grounds for comparison and organization of structure schematics that infers meaning for scholars, academics, critics, creatives and audience-members.

3.4 Area of Study

3.4.1 Introduction

Awash with a wide array of disciplines and compounded by a multitude of professional and cultural practices, (Price, 2017:319-320) standardized story templates often evade the elaborate intellectual skillset that is employed by an author. Screenwriting practice studies is a field that calls upon a wide range of subtly different relationships between the tripartite distinction of the academic, the practitioner and the consumer (Price, 2017:323). Batty and Kerrigan (2016:139) argue that understanding the elements that compose a screenplay is imperative for screenwriters to develop a marketable, digestible and accessible piece of work, which should help audiences define narratological elements, such as theme and character development.

The elements that serve to compose a screenplay within the Screen Narrative Model are imperative towards the development of a product that may relate to consumers. Campbell's (2008) influential study into the monomythic structure and subsequent findings that the so-called, hero's journey, permeates across a wide variety of human cultures across time and space, has lent itself to the ubiquity and universality of what McKee calls 'classical design' (1997:44-45), with Campbell's (2008) research in the mid-20th Century having become a seminal pillar in the development of modern, Western screenwriting. Despite its flaws and restrictive lens, however, it is clear that this structural design has become a useful tool to filmmakers that were receptive to the idea of a universal resonance within plotlines in order to develop a criterion upon which to base future screenplays (Hambly, 2021:147).

3.4.2 Method of Data Collection

In this essay, I have discovered that screenplay writing is less about the development of a literary work of art and serves more as a template for a medium separate to writing (Kerrigan & Barry, 2016:130). Script development, as Price (2017:330) postulates, and its form, oblige a literary analysis based within a comprehensive milieu of work. As such, I have extrapolated my data from an in-depth textual analysis of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019).

David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) noirish, atmospheric and nightmarish, post-modern exploration of the psychosexual condition, explores themes of depravity, violence and the abject

distortion of suburban Americana (Chay, 2021:93). The film is a masterclass in the application of the principles and elements of *Lingua Cinéma*. It employs motifs such as a severed human ear – serving as a portal into the subconscious and primordial sexual desires of humanity – and adheres to the Screen Narrative Model through the placement of its beats, turning points, act breaks and structure. These elements serve to enrich the theory of comparative analysis, through which one may infer and extrapolate the tools necessary for qualitative data collection. Meanwhile, *Parasite*'s (Joon-ho, 2019) thought-provoking thriller/tragedy is an examination into the class struggles of South Korea and uses its themes, thematic elements and motifs, such as the *suseok*, or scholar's stone (Kench, 2020), to extrapolate meanings of capitalism, colonialism, parasitism, violence, hope and deception ("Parasite Themes", n.d.).

As touched upon in section 3.2.3, the qualitative unit of measurement, a beat, is used to compare the screenplays that I will relate to one another. Having read the screenplays for, watched the films *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and read extensively about the theories and criticisms of the films, I will mark the time codes of the films in question, use these numbers to apply to the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation and infer a quantitative manner through which to extrapolate conclusive evidence that subscribes to the Screen Narrative Model theory.

3.4.3 Sample Techniques; Standard Form Structure and Templates

The standard form of a screenplay can be used for the approach of comparative analysis by examining and contrasting the characterizations of the medium (Figuerido, 2015:4358-4361). As such, the data presentation section of this thesis makes use of self-identified templates that I have developed. I offer a presentation of data, an analysis of said data and a discussion related to my findings. The template that this thesis has attempted to examine will be based on the stylistic and narrative profiles of each film, their structure application and the universal narrative, compounded with the various principles and elements that contribute to meaning through various aspects, such as theme.

3.5 Methodologies; Screenplay Analysis

3.5.1 Introduction

This thesis argues that the script development process is entirely dissimilar to the analysis of its final product. The refining period within a writer's method allows the author to segment their work in conjunction with industry rules. However, it is through the collaborative efforts of various filmmakers that bring certain aspects of the film's analysis to its appropriate placement, regardless of the story idea (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130). The various elements within a screenplay's structure may be directed by the themes through which the writer(s) choose(s) to include in their narrative. As such, the choice of subject matter intrinsically alters what may or may not appear at certain moments within a screenplay's structure. The method of screenwriting stipulates the best way through which writers may express themes, whether through character action, dialogue, conflicts, resolutions, etc. (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:140; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988:331). For example, the introduction of a motif within a film and the choice by which where to place its introduction, is a choice that is made by the writer which inscribes upon that element, a sense of meaning.

3.5.2 The Screen Narrative Model

According to Campbell (2008), narrative form is globally ubiquitous, universal and constant. This is what McKee (1997:44-45) calls classical design, a cause-and-effect method that serves to structuralize the character's journey, a model that has become deeply entrenched into the modern narrative zeitgeist, borne from centuries of storytelling, from Aristotle (2020) to Campbell (2008; Hambly, 2021:136). Following the explosive popularity of the 1977 blockbuster, *Star Wars* (Lucas), Campbell's monomyth became the pillar for the principles and elements of screenwriting practices (Hambly, 2021:147). Thus, filmmakers became aware of the benefits of incorporating a quest myth with cross-cultural reach into modern blockbuster films, offering a monomythic structure to incorporate a universal resonance into common plotlines (Bordwell, 2006). Vogler (2007) and McKee (1997) incorporated the theory of the monomyth into Field's (1997; 2005) three-act screenplay story structure (Hambly, 2021:147). The model upon which I have based the analysis of this thesis makes recourse of the works of Campbell's (2008) *Hero with a Thousand Faces*' hero's journey; Snyder's (2005:70) beat sheet; Macdonald's

(2021:21-22) Classical Hollywood Narrative Paradigm; McKee's (1997:81) paradigm; Field's (2005) three-act structure; and Thompson's (1999:29) four-part structure.

The Screen Narrative Model features twenty-eight beats. Each may be allotted within a specific timecode and/or page count on the screen and on the page, respectively. These twenty-eight beats may be further divided into four acts, which comprise four sections within a narrative, roughly equal in length. Furthermore, these acts may be divided into three parts, which serve to segment the narrative in accordance with what some might correlate to the three-act structure (Aristotle, 2020; Field, 1997, 2005) and which are divided by major turning points in the film. I have coined the terms: ternary parts one and two for these distinct points in a screenplay, which divide it into three parts. These moments occur at approximately 33% and 66% of the film's runtime, respectively. As such, the purpose of this structure is to adhere to a formula upon which screenwriters may explore the themes of their works. It may also demonstrate internal and external character development while emphasizing the major turning points and setbacks of their journeys. The model also identifies recurring motifs that serve to progress the narrative and highlight theme and navigate the plot.

Three-part structure	Act (four-part structure)	Beat	Page-code
Part one	Act one	1. <i>Prologue</i>	(1-*)
		2. <i>Set-up part one</i>	(1-7)
		3. <i>Theme</i>	(5)
		4. <i>Precession</i>	(7)
		5. <i>Set-up part two</i>	(7-10)
		6. <i>First sequence close</i>	(10)
		7. <i>Inciting incident</i>	(10-12)
		8. <i>Debate part one</i>	(12-17)
		9. <i>Debate part two</i>	(17-22)
		10. <i>First act climax</i>	(22-25)
Part two	Act two	11. <i>Act two open</i>	(25)
		12. <i>B-story part one</i>	(25-30)
		13. <i>A-story</i>	(30-35)
		14. <i>Promise of the premise</i>	(35-40)
		15. <i>Ternary break one</i>	(40)
		16. <i>Antagonist force part one</i>	(40-45)
		17. <i>B-story part two</i>	(45-60)
		18. <i>Midpoint</i>	(60)
		19. <i>New situation</i>	(60-70)
		20. <i>Antagonist force part two</i>	(70-85)
Part three	Act three	21. <i>Ternary break two</i>	(80)
		22. <i>Darkest moment</i>	(85-90)
		23. <i>Act three close</i>	(90)
		24. <i>Deus Ex Machina</i>	(90-95)
		25. <i>Final endeavour</i>	(95-100)
		26. <i>Climax</i>	(100-110)
		27. <i>Conclusion</i>	(110-115)
		28. <i>Denouement</i>	(115-120)

Figure 3. The Screen Narrative Model (table).

The Screen Narrative Model's twenty-eight beats are divided based on the elements and principles that serve to segment the various sections of a film (Snyder, 2005:67-96). Each beat serves the purpose of explicating the theme (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:40) while driving the narrative (Snyder, 2005:71-72), highlighting character change (O'Meara, 2015:190) and structuring ideal pacing and editing prompts (Cutting, Brunick & DeLong, 2011:2).

3.5.3 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation

The beats found within the Screen Narrative Model serve as a unit of measurement by which a) a writer may plot the narrative ("*Learn About Beats ...*", 2021); and b) an analyst might be able to infer meaning from the film (Green, 2020). The structure of these beats is what composes a narrative (Snyder, 2005:70) and allows for the writer to succeed in adhering to the principles and elements of narratological screenwriting (Myers, 2012). Therefore, twenty-eight essential beats necessary to shape a screenplay have been identified to provide a model upon which to base an equation that may be used to conceptualize the framework of this structure. The application of this model and its equation will be used to explicate an interpretation of the films in question, serve as a method by which a scholar may infer analysis and highlight the punctuality of the elements and principles in filmmaking that expound the work's themes and meanings. In this section, I use the first half/sequence of act one to elucidate the equation, before offering an in-depth analysis of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) in accordance with the model and equation in Chapter Four.

The first sequence of a narrative is meant to accomplish several key goals: introduce the world and characters, their status quo and establish the tone and theme of the film (Snyder, 2005:75-76). This sequence may be broken down into several beats that most screenplays employ, the prologue; set-up part one; theme; precession; set-up part two; and first sequence close, which takes place within approximately the first 8.3% of the film (with the following beat, the inciting incident, taking place at the film's 10%-mark). The first beat is the prologue, a short vignette that establishes the film (primarily its tone) (Snyder, 2005:70), lasting for roughly two minutes of screentime. In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the prologue opens with roses framed against a blue sky, crosscutting amongst various shots to show us a montage of the pleasantness of the film's setting, Lumberton, in a sequence that lasts for two minutes, or approximately 1.6% of the film's runtime. The harmony of the sequence is abruptly juxtaposed with violence

whereby Tom Beaumont (Jack Harvey), suffers medical condition, forcing him to collapse on his lawn, after which we as the audience are shown the underbelly of the forestry of grass and dirt, a hive of insects that serves to explicate the film's theme of dualism within the human condition (Van Sijll, 2005:236). In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the prologue lasts precisely four minutes, or 3.3% of the film's runtime, visually expositing the theme and introducing the audience to the world of the story. Following this beat, we transition into the first part of the film's set-up, wherein we are typically introduced to the protagonist. This beat takes place within the first seven minutes of the film (determined by the length of the prologue), and during which exposition is often provided to the protagonist by another character that correlates to the film's theme (Snyder, 2005:73), which occurs at precisely 3.5% of the film's runtime. The first sequence is segmented by what I call the precession, which takes place at approximately the seven-minute mark, or 5.8% of a one-hundred-and-twenty-minute film. This section introduces an element, which I call the Central Thematic Element, into the narrative that threatens change, with a notable example being the severed ear in *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) (Page, 2022) and the suseok in *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) (Brzeski, 2020), which occur at minutes 00:06:20 and 00:07:31, respectively. This differs from the catalyst (Snyder, 2005: 76), the call to adventure (Vogler, 2007:99) and the inciting incident (McKee, 1997:181), in that the Central Thematic Element is a motif, a symbol that the screenwriter refers to in order to compare and contrast the theme of the story throughout the timeline of the narrative. With the introduction of the Central Thematic Element, the second part of the set-up begins, which serves the purpose of giving the audience a sense of the initial internalization and externalization of a character in order for the audience to infer meaning based on how they develop throughout the narrative. The closing of this scene ends the first sequence of the film at approximately the ten-minute mark in a one-hundred-and-twenty-minute film, at approximately 8.3% of the runtime.

Therefore, the equations for determining the placement of these beats within the Screen Narrative Model may be represented with the following symbols and numerical values, which, in the theory of this thesis, should extrapolate the ubiquity of the model.

P (*prologue*) (1.6%)

T (*theme*) (3.3%)

S₁ (*set-up part one*) (5.8%)

Pr (*precession*) (5.8%)

S₂ (*set-up part two*) (8.3%)

Rt (total runtime)

Therefore, to determine the theme's placement in *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), one may apply this equation, with the respective symbol representing the beat, Rt representing the film's runtime and TC representing the placement of the beat within the film's runtime (it's timecode):

$$\frac{T (3.3) \times Rt (02:00:33/120)}{100} = TC (3.9) (00:03:55)$$

Thereby inferring that the film's theme will be expositied at the 00:04:45-minute mark, which is precisely when the camera fades into the seedy undergrowth of the lawn, into a hive of insects, which is symbolic of the film's themes of the duality of the subconscious and the underbelly that lurks beneath one's mind (Van Sijll, 2005:236).

Beat		Symbol	Placement (%)
1.	<i>Prologue</i>	P	1.6
2.	<i>Set-up part one</i>	Su ₁	0 – 5.8
3.	<i>Theme</i>	T	3.3
4.	<i>Precession</i>	Pr	5.8
5.	<i>Set-up part two</i>	Su ₂	5.8 – 8.3
6.	<i>First sequence close</i>	Fs	8.3
7.	<i>Inciting incident</i>	I	10
8.	<i>Debate part one</i>	D ₁	10 – 14.5
9.	<i>Debate part two</i>	D ₂	14.5 – 18.3
10.	<i>First act climax</i>	Fa	18.3 – 20.8
11.	<i>Act two open</i>	Ao	20.8
12.	<i>B-story part one</i>	Bs ₁	20.8 - 25
13.	<i>A-story</i>	As	25 – 29
14.	<i>Promise of the premise</i>	Pp	29 – 33.3
15.	<i>Ternary break one</i>	Tb ₁	33.3
16.	<i>Antagonist force part one</i>	Af ₁	33.3 – 37.5
17.	<i>B-story part two</i>	Bs ₂	37.5 – 50
18.	<i>Midpoint</i>	M	50
19.	<i>New situation</i>	Ns	50 – 58.3
20.	<i>Antagonist force part two</i>	Af ₂	58.3 – 70
21.	<i>Ternary break two</i>	Tb ₂	66.6
22.	<i>Darkest moment</i>	Dm	70 – 75
23.	<i>Act three close</i>	Ac	75
24.	<i>Deus Ex Machina</i>	De	75 – 79.2
25.	<i>Final endeavour</i>	Fe	79.2 – 83.3
26.	<i>Climax</i>	C	83.3 – 91.6
27.	<i>Conclusion</i>	Co	91.6 – 95.8
28.	<i>Denouement</i>	D	95.8 - 100

Figure 4. The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation Chart.

3.6 Conclusion

As most writers working in the industry today use some form of structural worksheet to write films (Heckmann, 2023; Tharpe & Eisinger, 2013), such as Field's (1997; 2005) paradigm or Snyder's (2005) beat sheet, this comparative analysis explores, in detail and with a metric, how to identify, analyse and conceptualize a screenplay based on the Screen Narrative Model. This thesis elaborates upon the structure employed by screenwriters and, through a comparative analysis, determines a universal method upon which one may apply to any screenplay and identify a synergy amidst the principles and elements of screenplay development. As such, by explicating the rules adopted by writers of cinema, I have navigated the systemic organization of the medium's mechanism. The methodological approach of this study takes into account the multidisciplinary characteristics of the medium, examining the elaborate, myriad classification, definitions and systems of film theory, such as: auteur theory, genre studies, psychoanalytic film theory, Schreiber theory – the approach of film criticism in which the writer of the film holds principal authority over the final product (Kipen, 2006) –, and structural film theory. In undertaking a comparative screenplay analysis between *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019), this thesis will avoid the fragmentation of research associated with film analysis, such as the ubiquity of other methodologies. This is done by determining a new formula upon which one may base their analysis. Adhering to the model, an inherent skillset is endowed upon the practiced viewer of cinema that allows them to interpret the principles and elements of filmmaking, and thus offering a tool upon which one may interpret the communication of theme, character development, narrative, etc. through a screenplay (Lapsley & Westlake, 2006:129). As such, by undertaking a screenplay analysis, the methodology section of this thesis features an equation – the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation – that can be used to determine comparative units of measurement within a script.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion; Results

4.1 Data Presentation

This paper will utilize the Screen Narrative Model and the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation, to explicate the formula of a screenplay's narrative, which will be used to determine a unit of measurement by which to gauge a structural interpretation of its structure. This thesis makes recourse of the works of scholars and academics, Batty et al. (2017:225-247), Bordwell (2006), Dent (2021:47-60), Hambly (2021:135-150), Kerrigan and Batty (2016:130-144) and Price (319-333) as well as authors, Field (2005), Foucault (1972), McKee (1997), Pramaggiore and Wallis (2011), Snyder (2005), Thompson (1999), Van Sijll (2005), and Vogler (2007) in order to maintain consistency with research having been done in the field. This array of research also serves to offer a basis by which this thesis might contribute to existing work.

The purpose of this essay is to determine a better understanding of the function of narratological practices and to contribute to the methodologies by which viewers might further appreciate the universality of screenwriting. The framework of the Screen Narrative Model, its formal organization, expectations, creative choices, interpretation of motifs and parallels and references to classic cinema offers a framework upon which analysts might develop interpretative and evaluative claims based on the correlation between various screenplays. Snyder (2005:22), argues that the development of a story requires a strong comprehension of the modes, the clichés and traditions of screenwriting that came before an original idea, thus stressing the requisite of understanding what the tradition itself is. He argues that a “full-fledged knowledge of hundreds of movies, [...], is required” to maintain observance and adherence of a screenwriting model (Snyder, 2005:22).

In this section, I have examined the narratological structures *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and compared them with formulas that have been postulated by researchers such as Dent (2021:47-60), Price (2017:319-333) and Macdonald (2021:9-29). This thesis will make recourse of the existing framework and identify unifying characteristics within each of the films that I have selected as my case study, which I will then explicate and offer discussion.

4.2 Comparative Screenplay Analysis

4.2.1 Introduction

In this section, I examine how the principles and elements of a screenplay progress the narrative and contribute to the film's central theme and how character(s) develop(s) while attempting to attain her or his goal(s). The model that I have developed also identifies how the characters' journeys define the narrative conflict and how filmmakers employ storytelling devices to develop the narrative and explicate its themes (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:40). I have outlined the narrative structure of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and offered a stylistic and narrative profile for each film, breaking down the various beats, scenes and sequences that comprise each act. By making recourse of the works of screenwriting gurus such as Field (2005), McKee (1997), Snyder (2005) and Vogler (2007) I have outlined the narrative profile of the films in accordance to the Screen Narrative Model, offering a comparison of the model to each film and thereby explicating an analysis based on the correlation of beat placement, turning points, character, theme, motifs and the development of the central dramatic question. This thesis draws from the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation, through which I will attempt to authenticate the postulation directly and quantifiably. I have sought to determine to what degree the similarities in screenplay structure characterize a common model for feature-length narrative films.

4.2.2 Structure

Films must follow a strict structural model based on the habits and preferences of writers, audiences, as well as the industry (Snyder, 2005:67-96). Extrapolating Aristotle's (2020) dictation that stories must be divided between a beginning, a middle and an end, most screenwriting gurus agree that films must be divided into a three-act structure (McKee, 1997). The *doxa* for each of these films contribute towards the collective within the medium (Macdonald, 2021:9), and thus conform to the collective emergence (Sawyer, 2010:365) of the ubiquity of comparative screenplay analysis. Feature film screenwriting requires a precise model upon which to base one's work, with conformity to the standardized practice of the medium adhering to the exact, as opposed to the approximate ("*Writing a Screenplay ...*", 2021). It is imperative to hit beats at exact moments to amplify the significance of the event and meet established pacing modes (Snyder, 2005). "The Foucaultian heterotopia of deviation is one in

which “individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (Filimon, 2014:2). To explicate a comparative screenplay analysis, the films’ structures have been examined based on the principles of filmmaking by utilizing the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation to discern the percentage of the runtime in which various elements occur, thereby inferring an analysis based on the structure of the film in question.

4.2.3 The Central Thematic Element; Motifs

The various elements within a screenplay’s structure may be directed by the themes which the writer(s) choose to explore. The choice of subject matter intrinsically alters what may or may not appear at certain moments within a screenplay’s structure. The discourse of screenwriting stipulates the best way through which writers may express these themes, whether through character action, dialogue, conflicts, resolutions etc. is through visual elements (Green, 2020). According to Bordwell (2006:44):

Today’s screenwriting manuals sometimes acknowledge the importance of the motif. It has been called an “echo” (aiming to illustrate character change or the film’s basic theme), or more ambitiously an “image system” operating through “subliminal communication”. One manual distinguishes between *touchstones* (recurring objects that remind us of the story world before it was plunged into disorder) and *twitches* (objects that symbolize the characters’ internal conflict).

Motifs are woven into the thread of the plotline (Bordwell, 2006:44), serving the narrative by establishing and reiterating the relation of the Central Thematic Element to itself at different points within the film. The introduction of the Central Thematic Element within a film, and the choice by which where to place its introduction, is a choice made by the writer which inscribes upon that element, a sense of meaning, one that is meant to recur throughout the film, albeit with differing meaning each time. As such, a primary impetus of the Central Thematic Element is to offer the audience a device through which to connect intellectually (Martell, 2018). A feature-length film will use a central theme to connect characters, lesser plots and motifs to resolve its central dramatic question (Van Sijll, 2005:214).

The Central Thematic Element in *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) is the severed ear, which serves as an externalization of the film's central dramatic question. The film's central dramatic question postulates to whom it belongs, thus driving the mystery of the film's narrative (Ebert, 1986), as well as an internalization of the film's theme, which relates to the psychosexual tendencies of the human subconscious (Chay, 2021:92). The severed ear – and the ear motif in general – does this by offering an opening to the world of the conscious and the subconscious. I believe that Lynch chose the symbol of an ear in order to symbolize an opening into the mind. As an orifice leading to the brain, the motif has direct psychosexual connotations, which lies at the heart of *Blue Velvet*'s (Lynch, 1986) themes of something darker lying beneath the surface of a world that otherwise appears wholesome and comely. Jeffrey's desires, which are extrapolated through the narrative, become unravelled following his discovery of the ear, an orifice in the body that leads to the brain, suggesting a penetrative id-responsive symbolism ("*Unmasking the Psychosexual...*", 2018).

At the end of *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the camera tracks out of an ear, thus implicating the return home and the character's return to normalcy, whereby the character has completed the narrative having changed. The ear serves as a representation of the protagonist's departure from the terror of the subconscious (Chay, 2021:92). This is in line with Pramaggiore and Wallis' (2011:15) stipulation that motifs are tools employed by writers that take on the function of offering information about the character or theme to the audience, encouraging the viewers to associate various elements amongst one another and insinuating an elucidation of the film's ultimate and central theme.

The ear in *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), which is found crawling with ants and thus tying into the theme of parasitism and bottom-feeding within the dregs of society (Van Sijll, 2005:236-237), serves to orchestrate and pivot the surreal dreamscape of the film, leading the audience into Jeffrey's subconscious at the beginning of the film and taking us out of it at the end of the film. This allows the audience to draw parallels and juxtapose the character's inner workings from the introduction of the Central Thematic Element to the denouement (Bradley, 2011).

The Central Thematic Element in *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) is characterized by the scholar's stone, or suseok, which is embedded with the meaning and symbolism of unearned charm and misguided fortune (Chernick, 2020). The suseok recurs at moments in the films when the characters undergo significant change in circumstance. First, they are gifted the stone during

a moment when they are about to leave their ordinary world and commit to a new strategy to change their circumstances. The stone then appears again as a symbol that showcases the characters' desperation, changing its meaning from symbolizing fortune to symbolizing violence.

In the closing shot of *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019), the suseok is placed back into a stream, symbolizing the film's theme of misplaced reliance on fortune to attain the characters' wants and needs (Chernick, 2020; Kench, 2020). This device serves to juxtapose the Central Thematic Element's meaning at the beginning and end of the film.

As such, the suseok in *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) is introduced to the characters as an element poised to bring good fortune, yet when the characters are in their darkest moment, experiencing a flood in their apartment, the rock floats to the surface of the sewage and water, demonstrating that it is indeed hollow, similar to their misfortune (Fogarty, 2020). The symbol simultaneously serves as an externalization of the characters' desire, greed, parasitism, thus anchoring the film's theme of violence ("Parasite Themes", n.d.).

4.2.4 Characters

Various elements and principles within the narratological devices of screenwriting, such as character development, have become such an integral part of the viewer's experience that its absence in a screenplay warrants common criticisms amongst, not just critics, but audience responses as well (O'Meara, 2015:190). So engrained within the zeitgeist is this narrative technique that audiences of cinema expect characters – at the very least, the protagonist – to undergo some form of change throughout the story (O'Meara, 2015:190), whether internal or external. Dyer (1998) notes character development as a crucial dynamic for the conception of a strong protagonist within a story and lists several elements that serve to externalize character development as: "name, appearance, objective, correlations, speech of character, speech of others, gestures, action, plot structure and mise-en-scène" (O'Meara, 2015:190).

According to Russo (2017:12), character alignment – how a character guides the audience through the narrative and facilitates a point of view for the events shown onscreen – is a crucial element for writers to consider during the development of a narrative. This practice allows audiences to connect with through the provision of a vicarious conduit through which one may experience plot, character and narrative (Mittell, 2015:219). In most cases, the audience will align themselves with at least one character (Russo, 2017:17), whose navigation of the narrative

is what motivates audiences to engage with the plot. Side characters, introduced at certain moments within the film's narrative, serve as measuring tools for the protagonist's arc, a web-diagram of thematic archetypes that compel the viewer to participate in evaluating the theme. Thematic inconsistencies exemplify how multiple characters convey the same theme, yet from a different perspective. "This heterotopia of deviation is inhabited by characters who are incompatible and yet jumbled together in the cinematic space" (Filimon, 2014:4).

"The notion of transformation is closely linked to our understanding of character in story" (O'Meara, 2015:189). While filmmakers may employ all, several, or only one of these elements, character action, i.e., their decisions and responses to threats/events, and story structure serve as the most common element for screenwriters to incorporate due to their confines to the written word (Price, 2011:203-204). Plot formulation and character action are so interwoven that the development of plot itself serves as a vehicle for the character to develop through changes in motivation, choices, responses to obstacles or environment. When drawn together, the implication and interpretation prompt audiences to recognize character change. The more drastic these elements, the more difficult the hero's journey seems to be. Due to the process of character development being so largely an internal process, and in order not to figuratively drown the audience in exposition, it is necessary for this change to be inferred more clearly through externalized action (Abbott, 2002:133). According to O'Meara (2015:192), character change is most often seen as juxtaposing behaviours by the character, between the first and final acts, that are brought on by events in the story, i.e., conflicts, challenges, attrition, etc.

4.3 The Screen Narrative Model; Blue Velvet

4.3.1 Stylistic and Narrative Profile; Blue Velvet

Beneath the nightmarish veneer of Lynch's prototypical surreal- and impressionistic deconstruction of suburban Americana, *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) is a postmodern examination into the primitive, repressed depravity of the human condition, with the director's cinematic capabilities serving to "enrich the cinematic space" (Filimon, 2014:6) as well as every concept in film theory.

"[T]he presentation of depravity, violence and the psychosexual serve to interrogate the politics of sexuality and desire, as well as the broader Lacanian concerns regarding the construction of the self vis-à-vis the symbolic order and the Real," states Chay (2021:93),

adding, “Through images of the abject and through a series of distortions and ruptures in the veneer of small-town, Stepford perfection, Lynch engenders a cultural artifact that exposes the darkness underneath society and the individual’s incongruous and primordial erotic desires.”

4.3.2 Blue Velvet; Prologue

Foucault describes certain cultural, institutional and discursive spaces that are somehow ‘other’: disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory or transforming as heterotopias, worlds within worlds, mirroring and yet upsetting what is outside (Filimon, 2014:2). Having been bestowed meaning by taking place during the opening moments of a film, the prologue is critical towards the audience’s understanding of character, theme, time and location (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:66).

According to Van Sijll (2005:236), “a well-crafted film uses everything to contribute to the story”. As such, *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), uses the film’s setting as an externalizing device that prompts recognition to the audience of its main thematic engine (Van Sijll, 2005:236). *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) opens on the pleasant vista of a blue sky, panning down to a white picket fence that frames a bunch of long-stemmed red roses to the 1963 tune, *Blue Velvet*, by Bobby Vinton, thus defining the setting of a suburb in sublime America and contributing towards the film’s timeless setting and juxtaposing its neo-noir sensibilities (“*Blue Velvet*”, 2015). The ideal imagery and scenery of suburbia Americana shifts as the camera tracks down, descending into a forestry of grass and the dirt beneath our feet, which is inhabited by a mass of insects in the dark, “crawling and scratching”, thus sabotaging the audience’s expectations and tying into the central theme of contrast within the “suburban icon of wellness” (Van Sijll, 2005:237). Insects are a primary motif in the film, symbolizing evil. Their appearance throughout the film at certain moments exemplify the well-crafted nature of the Screen Narrative Model, in which this scene is emblematic of the prologue.

As David Lynch says about his film, “*Blue Velvet* is a drop beneath the surface of a small American town, but it’s also a probe into the subconscious or a place where you don’t normally face” (Chute, 1986:32). Meanwhile, as Filimon (2014:4) points out, “In Foucault’s sense of the world, the first thirty seconds of *Blue Velvet* create a Utopian space on the screen, only to be immediately acted upon and mingled with an other world.” Joseph (2017:258), postulates that the iconography of what Chay (2021:87) describes as “Stepford America”, which is often

idealized to the point of mockery, cannot be recognized without the “rampant corruption and moral decay” that lurks beneath its founding (Chay, 2021:87-88).

4.3.3 Blue Velvet; Act I

The first act of a film can be segmented into two primary sequences, which in turn feature a) four scenes within the first sequence, and b) three scenes within the second sequence (Thompson, 1999:28). Scenes, and their respective general placements (in percentage), within the first sequence – the set-up part one – include the prologue (1.6%), theme (3.3%), the precession (5.8%), and the first sequence close (8.3%). Scenes and their respective approximate placements in the second sequence – the set-up part two – can be demarcated as 10% for the inciting incident, 10% to 14.5% for the debate part one and 14.5% to 18.3% for the debate part two. The first act climax occurs roughly between the 18.3% and 20.8% mark, thus closing the first act.

Set in an idealised version of suburban Americana, in the small and wholesome town of Lumberton, we are introduced to the film’s protagonist, Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan), as he walks through a field to visit his father in the hospital. Having introduced the film’s theme, underlying deviance (Van Sijll, 2005:236), the protagonist is endowed with the Central Thematic Element, the severed ear he finds in the field, which is meant to represent the abjection of the subconscious, exploring the psychosexual heterotopia of the human mind (Chay, 2021:92).

Similar Central Thematic Elements that can be found in other films include the word, “rosebud”, in *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941) (“*Seven things you ...*”, 2021), the black monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968) (Chiasson, 2018) and the use of orange in *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972) (Marovich, 2018). Elements that, when contrasted with how they appear at the beginning of the film versus how they appear at the end, offer the audience an opportunity to compare and contrast the thematic motion within a film, allowing the viewer a point of reference through which they may infer and interpret progress (Heckmann, 2023). This Central Thematic Element in a film serves a very important purpose in explicating the work’s meaning, and, as the research of this thesis has served to prove, must be introduced at a specific point in the film – the precession. This beat is generally introduced at the midpoint of the first sequence, between the end of the prologue and the end of the inciting incident beat placements.

Whether threatened from an outside force, conflicted by an internal problem, or disrupted by a change in circumstances (Douglas, 2011:163; Kilka, 2021:206), a character is forced by a narrative catalyst to leave their initial environment and undertake a journey that facilitates change before the character solves their problem and returns to the ordinary world having changed (Kilka, 2021:213). The character's initial undertaking of the journey takes place during the second sequence of the act. This sequence lasts for roughly ten minutes until the film undergoes its first major plot point, the first act climax. In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), this is when Jeffrey first investigates Dorothy Vallens' (Isabella Rossellini) apartment and is introduced to the proposed dramatic conflict that he will undergo should he choose to undertake a commitment of the narrative. The first act climax in a film is preceded by the characters' deliberation upon the catalyst, whereby they question the aspects of the call to adventure and offer exposition as to the strategies they will employ while attempting to overcome the narrative's primary obstacle. During this segment, the writer offers an externalization into the inner workings of the character in the debate part one and debate part two sections. This debate sequence concludes with a moment wherein the characters commit themselves to the plot (Snyder, 2005:78-79), closing off the first act and leading into the second.

4.3.4 Blue Velvet; Act II (a)

The first part of *Blue Velvet*'s (Lynch, 1986) second act pulls the characters violently into the dredges of the psychosexual subconscious (Page, 2022). This act is generally broken down into five scenes, which serve to a) reinforce the central dramatic question, b) introduce the subplot, c) complicate the action, d) offer the promise of the premise (Snyder, 2005:190) and e) break the film into two in leading up to the midpoint. The purpose of the second act of a screenplay is to plot a string of complications, crises, obstacles and villainous encroachments that challenge the protagonist. These challenges iterate the themes based on action, choices and consequences, all firmly pivoting around the midpoint of the screenplay (Snyder, 2005:78-79). The midpoint is a pivotal moment in the story that marks the moment the protagonist is either at their highest or lowest point, following which the protagonist faces more challenges until arriving at their darkest hour.

In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the second act opens with Jeffrey and Sandy Williams (Laura Dern) at a cabaret, watching Dorothy perform the song, *Blue Velvet*, on stage, thus tying

into the central dramatic question of the film, highlighting that she will be the focus of the plot and its relation to theme. The second sequence of the second act introduces the audience to the B-plot (B-story part one), which in this film is the love relationship between Jeffrey and Sandy. Following the B-plot introduction, the film presents a sequence that serves to complicate the action (Snyder, 2005:80-82) and offer the promise of the premise (Snyder, 2005:190), which in *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), is when we see Jeffrey infiltrate Dorothy's apartment and subsequently get introduced to Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper), the antagonist. Films that adhere to the Screen Narrative Model, typically boast their most iconic characteristics in this scene, with the notable example from *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) being the low angle shot of Dorothy character in the arms of Jeffrey.

The ternary break one occurs during the midpoint of this act, which arrives during the scene wherein Frank arrives to Dorothy's apartment and takes Jeffrey on a joy ride, thus leading to the antagonist force part one beat, taking place at precisely 33.3% of the film's runtime and thereby dividing the film perfectly into thirds. The closing of the second act (Act II (a)) – in accordance with the Screen Narrative Model, culminates with a major turning point – which tends to unite the A- and B-stories in a film – and serves one of the most important in screenwriting, the midpoint, whereby characters are introduced with a wholly new situation that deviates their journey and introduces them to a new set of challenges to overcome, offering character development. This section often features a change in setting and a change in tone (Snyder, 2005:82-84; Page, 2022), while also generally convening the central and secondary plots while driving the film's narrative towards its conclusions and resolution.

4.3.5 Blue Velvet; Act II (b)

The midpoint of a film must serve to move the protagonist either closer to or farther away from their goal (Write, n.d.), while uniting the two major plots within a film, it's A- and B-plots (Nelson, 2021) and driving the narrative towards its climax (Snyder, 2005:82-84). This sequence of a film drives its narrative into the second half of act two in accordance with Thompson's (1999:28) iteration of a four-act plot structure, which may be divided into four sequences, the new situation, the antagonist force part two, the ternary break two, and the darkest moment. The first sequence tends to show the main characters deliberating on a new point of entry with regards to how they aim to achieve their goals (Miyamoto, 2022).

In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) this is where we see Jeffrey explicating to Sandy, how he plans to use his rapport with Dorothy to assist her in finding her son (Jon Jon Snipes) and ultimately defeat the villain, Frank. The antagonist force part two arises when the protagonist is forced to engage with external or internal challenges, further driving dramatic tension and raising the stakes (Cowgill, n.d.). Following a divide into three with the ternary part two, the darkest moment, which “yields to enlightenment as the hero prepares to attain the external goal” (Bordwell, 2006:30) and thus closes the act.

4.3.6 Blue Velvet; Act III

Thompson (1999) puts forward the notion that screenplay structure consists of four parts, through which the audience is exposed the narrative through a protagonist(s) that seeks to resolve a conflict. The character must undergo change during this section, with the main goal of the screenwriter to define the conflict and compel the main character to achieve their goal (Bordwell, 2006:7). This final act, which according to Field (2005:12-30) is what constitutes the closing sequences of a film, those which McKee (1997:181) would characterize as the fifth and final stage of his paradigm. This is the film’s resolution. Having been terrorized by Frank and admitting his unwillingness to persevere through the narrative, which is overturned by what Snyder (2005:89) has poignantly noted as a plot point whose function serves to recommit the protagonist to their goals, the *Deus ex machina*. The sequences found within the final act of a film serve to juxtapose these character’s starting positions with their positions after having resolved conflict and thus achieved change. The *Deus ex machina* drives character development through various challenges and obstacles that internalize and externalize their motivations, needs, goals and characterization (Bordwell, 2006:30).

In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), Jeffrey reinvigorates his commitment to the plot when he discovers that the partner of Detective John Williams (George Dickerson) turns out to be one of Frank’s henchmen, The Yellow Man/Detective Tom Gordon (Fred Pickler). From there, mirroring the first section of the debate sequence in the film, Jeffrey returns to Sandy’s home and informs her father of his discovery, which results in the final endeavour (Snyder, 2005:67-96). This leads to the complicating action (“*Learn About Beats ...*”, 2021) that finally achieves resolution with the climax of the film.

The fourth and final act of a film in accordance with the Screen Narrative Model features three primary sequences followed by a brief epilogue. The first sequence in *Blue Velvet*'s (Lynch, 1986) final act shows Jeffrey undertake a new strategy to confront the film's antagonists (Bordwell, 2006:41-42). This centres on the dramatic question of whether the hero will achieve her or his goals. The following sequence serves to complicate the action further, with Jeffrey making the discovery that his love interest's father, Detective Williams, is in fact working with an imposter who turns out to be an antagonist, while the sequence that follows develops the situation and culminates in the film's climax (Bordwell, 2006:42). The final sequence in this act, precedes the epilogue and denouement and tends to show the protagonist overcoming the threat of the antagonist, frequently resulting in the death or demobilization of the villain, which thus results in catharsis and resolution (Schilf, 2017).

4.3.7 Blue Velvet; Epilogue

At the end of the film, the camera tracks out of Jeffrey's ear, the Central Thematic Element, mirroring the opening sequence where he finds the rotting ear in the grassy field. Tracking out of the ear symbolizes the return home and the venture back to normalcy where the character has completed their cycle having changed. In Jeffrey's case, this is his departure from the terror of the subconscious (Chay, 2021:92). This leads the audience towards the resolution, or denouement, which may be defined as: "the falling or unravelling action after the climax of a narrative that leads to resolution" (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:452). In *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the denouement, which typically occurs over one scene, begins precisely when we pan out of Jeffrey's ear, resulting in a scene that mirrors the first scene of the film, albeit with the world, internal characterizations of the characters and conflict having been resolved.

4.4 The Screen Narrative Model; Parasite

4.4.1 Stylistic Narrative Profile; Parasite

Parasite (Joon-ho, 2019) is a two-hour and twelve-minute feature-length film that follows a poor South Korean family that lives in a half-basement apartment in the working-class district of Seoul ("*Parasite*", n.d.). The film involves their plot to become employees of a wealthy family, infiltrate their home and form an unnerving, symbiotic relationship with them ("*Parasite*", n.d.). *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) explores the socioeconomic inequity between class in

South Korea (Lau, 2021) and “how the working class are forced into conflict against one another” (Di Placido, 2021).

4.4.2 Parasite; Prologue

The set-up of a film serves to establish the characters, inner workings of the world, potential complications, the catalyst and the protagonist’s goals and opportunity for development (Cutting, Brunick & DeLong, 2011:3). The prologue in *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) introduces us to the Kim family (Song Kang-ho; Choi Woo-shik; Park So-dam; Jang Hye-jin), who live in a semi-basement, taking odd jobs as a source of income while commenting on the state of social class in South Korea (Kench, 2020), thus setting up the theme of the film, which is in itself the commentary of social class in the East Asian country, highlighting the discrepancy between the upper-class Parks and the lower-class Kims. The theme in the film is presented to the audience visually, through the gassing of the Kims’ sub-apartment, which ironically externalizes their characterization as undesirable vermin, or parasites (Jenkins, 2020).

4.4.3 Parasite; Act I

Like *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), the first act of *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) may be broken down into two primary segments, with the first segment featuring four scenes and the second segment featuring three. Following the prologue, during the film’s set-up part one scene, we see the Kim Family sitting at dinner, noticing through their street-level window, the approach of Kim Ki-woo’s (Choi Woo-shik) friend, Min-hyuk (Park Seo-joon), who has come to gift the family with a scholar’s stone, otherwise known in Korean culture as a suseok (Kench, 2020). Suseoks are emblematic of good fortune in Korean culture and may be interpreted as an externalization of the Kims’ quest to jump to higher socioeconomic standing (Brzeski, 2020). This device serves as the film’s Central Thematic Element. This scene precedes the inciting incident, whereby Min-hyuk suggests Kim-woo impersonate a university student to take over his position as an English tutor for the daughter of the wealthy Park family (Lee Sun-kyun; Cho Yeo-jeong; Jung Hyeon-jun; Jung Ji-so). This action leads to the film’s inciting incident, wherein Kim-woo forges his credentials and enquires about the position with the Parks (Kench, 2020).

The first part of the debate sequence begins with Kim-woo’s interview with the Park family mother, Choi Yeon-gyo (Cho Yeo-jeong), and is then followed by the son’s infiltration

into the inner workings of the Park household, devising a strategy by which he may find employment for his entire family (Chernick, 2020). This introduces the audience to their motivation (Chernick, 2020).

The closing of the first act comes with the first act climax, where we see the Kims infiltrating the Parks' household, one-by-one devising plans to moonlight as various workers in their household. By circumnavigating the theme of the film, which involves class division in South Korea, this sequence serves to apply subtle foreshadowing that may be juxtaposed through the film's beginning and its end (Kench, 2020). An example of how the film uses the elements and principles of filmmaking to extrapolate meaning from its *mise-en-scène* is the use of architecture, which serves to externalize Kims' social standing and compare it to the Parks' (Kench, 2020). Meanwhile, notions of secrecy, violence and classism are extrapolated based on narratological elements such as dialogue, character action and character motivation and commentary ("Parasite Themes", n.d.). The first act of *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) serves to offer exposition, establish the story's world, introduce the audience to the film's main characters and feature the precession, the Central Thematic Element and the inciting incident. The first act also presents the debate and concludes with a major turning point ("*Three-Act Structure ...*", 2021), the first act climax.

4.4.4 Parasite; Act II (a)

The first part of the second act of a screenplay serves to complicate the action of the A-story plot and the B-story, challenging the characters to overcome a new set of obstacles and antagonistic forces (Scambler, 2022). This act serves various purposes, including introducing the plot that is meant to be resolved by the film's third act, development of the characters, the creation of obstacles and presentation of choices for the characters, the promise of the premise (Snyder, 2005:190), and the change in tactics as defined by the major plot point at the midpoint of the film (Scambler, 2022).

In *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019), we see the Kim family embark on their infiltration of the Parks' household, committing to the plans that were devised in the first act of the film and undertaking an escalation of the film's central conflict (Kench, 2020). We see the Park's deliberating on whether to hire each individual member of the Kim family, what consequences

these choices will have on the narrative and how it ties into the theme of navigating the socioeconomic landscape of South Korea (Chernick, 2020).

The B-story part one portion of the film sees Ki-woo begin to get close to Da-hye (Jung Ji-so), serving as the romantic subplot of the film. Meanwhile, the promise of the premise comes in the form of a montage that shows the various strategies employed by the Kims in accordance with their undertaking of, and adherence to, the central objective of the story. Throughout this sequence, we are introduced to the Kims' parasitic, cunning and manipulative nature of revelling in the luxuries of the household, infiltrating the class discrepancies and solidifying their ruse. The promise of the premise in *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) begins at the 00:37:15-minute mark, lasting for approximately seven minutes, until the 00:44:25-minute mark. This is significant because forty-four minutes of the film's runtime of one-hundred-and-thirty-two minutes is exactly 33.3%. As such, this sequence serves not only to segment the second act into two parts, but segments the entire film into a third, with a major turning point occurring at precisely 33% of its runtime.

Dealing with themes such as parasitism, class, deception and consumerism versus traditionalism – as demonstrated through the luxury of the Park's living circumstances juxtaposed with the inequality of the capitalist system (Kench, 2020) – the film's ternary break one comes precisely as Yeon-gyo faints, which solidifies the Kims' infiltration of the household. Following this montage, we are presented with the antagonist force part one, during which the characters in the film have wholly committed to the narrative and are now reaping the benefits of their action, which will soon be unravelled by the complications of circumstance and plot. This beat occurs as the Kim patriarch, Ki-taek (Song Kang-ho), ensures the employment of his wife, Chung-sook (Jang Hye-jin), driving the characters into their parasitic tendencies ("Parasite Themes", n.d.), which will result in the tragic consequences at the end of the film.

Meanwhile, leading up to the midpoint of the film, we see the Kims enjoying the luxuries of the Parks' household, tying into the themes of parasitism ("Parasite Themes", n.d.) and serving as the second part of *the B-story*, which culminates with Ki-woo's secret relationship with Da-hye.

4.4.5 Parasite; Act II (b)

The midpoint of *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) features a jarring shift in tone (Kench, 2020), which occurs at the 01:06:00-minute mark, wherein the Kim family are made aware of a secret basement in the house. They discover that they are not the sole parasitic entity (“Parasite Themes”, n.d.) living in the Parks’ home, thus resulting in a new situation for the characters. This culmination reveals new information to the characters and, similar to *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), forces them to undertake a new strategy to achieve their goals, with Moon-gwang (Lee Jung-eun), the Parks’ long-time housekeeper, revealing that her husband, Oh Guen-sae (Park Myung-hoon), has been living beneath the Parks’ house for four years (Miyamoto, 2020). This leads into what I have defined as the antagonist force part two beat, forcing the characters to undertake a new set of obstacles and challenges (Snyder, 2005:85-86) that present themselves throughout the act.

The first sequence of this act shows us the Parks’ housekeeper, Moon-gwang returning suddenly after having been fired by Yeon-gyo, who was led by the Kims to believe that she had tuberculosis. Having discovered her secret, the Kims are extorted into keeping the secret lest Moon-gwang expose their ruse, thus driving a new event situation which will be undertaken by the narrative for the rest of the film. The second sequence of the act shows Moon-gwang and her husband forcing the Kim family to watch as they enjoy the luxuries of the household themselves. The scene features a shift in tonal power dynamics once the Kim family try to subdue Moon-gwang. Segmenting the first sequence of the third act, this plot point, the ternary break two, forces the characters to readapt to their situation, shown in the film by their attempt to return the situation to a sense of normalcy.

The Kims manage to leave the house, which is mundanely inhabited by the Parks. This point serves as a tonal and narratological shift, whereby the characters’ situation is externalized by the ravaging tempest that floods their basement apartment, and thus ending the first half of the second act. This scene serves as a central moment of crisis for the Kim family (Brzeski, 2020), wherein the Central Thematic Element returns to extrapolate the theme of perseverance through vulnerability (“Parasite Themes”, n.d.). The end of this scene takes place at precisely 75% of the way through the film’s runtime – the character’s darkest moment –, occurring at the 01:41:30-minute mark. This mark features a shot of the suseok and closes the second act.

4.4.6 Parasite; Act III

Act III of a film forces the characters to act against the antagonizing force. This act has the protagonist proceed to resolve the complications within the plot and bring balance back to the world introduced in the set-up, thereby undergoing a sense of change and development (Schiff, 2010). The primary setting for act three – or the fourth act according to the Screen Narrative Model – takes place primarily during a house party for Park Da-song (Jung Hyeon-jun). The Deus ex machina comes in the form of a phone call when the Parks call on the Kims for assistance for a party they are throwing for Da-song, thus giving the characters a new opportunity to achieve their goal(s). Juxtaposing the brightness and jovial nature of the party, the sequence is cross-cut with Ki-woo entering the bunker with the suseok, only to find that Moon-gwang has died as a result of the actions of the Kim family. In the bunker, Ki-woo is attacked by Guen-sae, who bludgeons the boy with the suseok, thus extrapolating themes of violence (“Parasite Themes”, n.d.) and serving as the film’s final endeavour, which leads into its climax at the end of the fourth act.

The sequence marks a tonal shift when Guen-sae escapes from the bunker and enters the party brandishing a cooking knife, which he uses to attack Ki-jung and, upon seeing Mr. Park’s reaction to Guen-sae and his disgust at what the film symbolically demonstrates as lower socioeconomic standing (Kench, 2020; Miyamoto, 2021), Ki-taek brutally stabs and kills Park Dong-ik (Lee Sun-kyun), bringing the sequence to a close.

The conclusion begins by explicating the consequences of the choices and actions in the film’s narrative as undertaken by the Kim family. Ki-woo recovers from brain surgery as a result of being hit with the suseok while he, along with his mother, is convicted of fraud, meanwhile Ki-taek is on the lamb and wanted by authorities. We see Ki-woo, who is now out on bail, spying on the Park family home revealing to the audience that Ki-taek escaped into the Park family bunker, and has now embedded himself into the house like a parasite, bringing the narrative and its themes full circle and offering closure for the audience (Miyamoto, 2020).

4.4.7 Parasite; Epilogue

The denouement of the film comes as we are presented with – what could be interpreted as a dream sequence – a scene that opens with a shot of the suseok being placed into a stream,

after which we see Ki-woo having earned enough money to buy the Park family house himself in order to reunite with, and free, his father.

The closing image of the Central Thematic Element here, occurs at precisely the 02:04:45-minute mark, which is approximately 94% of the film's runtime, appearing at near the same approximate percentage as the Central Thematic Element – the ear – within Blue Velvet's (Lynch, 1986) paradigm.

4.5 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Application

4.5.1 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Blue Velvet

In this section, I used a sequence from Blue Velvet (Lynch, 1986) as an example of the elements and principles of the theory upon which I have based my methodology. The section that I will be examining occurs at the 35:00-minute mark, wherein Jeffrey hides in the closet of Dorothy and voyeuristically spies on her. This point of a film, at the precise midpoint of act two, segments the act and serves to pivot the narrative towards the promise of its premise (Snyder, 2005:190). The moment Jeffrey enters the closet explores one of the film's themes: the deviance of the psychosexual subconscious (Chay, 2021:93). The second scene of the sequence, taking place during the 00:42:25-minute mark, sees Frank enter the scene, representing another theme of the film, the vile underbelly (subconscious) that lurks beneath suburban American (conscious) (Van Sijll, 2005:236-237), followed by his assault on Dorothy, Jeffrey's consoling of Dorothy and his subsequent exit from her apartment.

This scene features multiple beats including character introduction, exposition, moments of conflict, motifs and moments of character development. Frank's introduction to the film here conforms to the prototypical introduction of a villain to a film (character introduction). His abusive treatment of Dorothy serves to exposit his relationship to the characters and plot (exposition, character development). Frank's mistreatment of Dorothy compels Jeffrey to make a choice (conflict; internal) and his abusive conduct yields conflict (external). The grotesque and bug-like mask Frank wears while assaulting Dorothy, externalizes the insect symbolism pervasive throughout the film. These seminal principles and elements occur during this seven- to fifteen-minute scene in a number of films. In Blue Velvet (Lynch, 1986), a drastic change in tone – the arrival of Frank to Dorothy's apartment – serves as a major turning point in the film's narrative, driving the character to make new choices and offering him a manner through which

he may undergo change. This sequence and its midpoint serve not only to segment the second act of the film, but serves to segment the entire film into thirds, with 33% of the film's runtime occurring at the 00:40:00-minute mark.

Blue Velvet; Screen Narrative Comparison Equation

Three-part	Act	Beat	Symbol	Placement (%)	Equation	TC		
Part one	Act one	1.	<i>Prologue</i>	P	1.6	$\frac{1.6 \times 120.5}{100}$	1.9	00:01:55
		2.	<i>Set-up part one</i>	Su ₁	0 – 5.8	$\frac{5.8 \times 120.5}{100}$	6.9	00:06:55
		3.	<i>Theme</i>	T	3.3	$\frac{3.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	3.9	00:03:55
		4.	<i>Precession</i>	Pr	5.8	$\frac{5.8 \times 120.5}{100}$	6.9	00:06:55
		5.	<i>Set-up part two</i>	Su ₂	5.8 – 8.3	$\frac{8.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	10	00:10:00
		6.	<i>First sequence close</i>	Fs	8.3	$\frac{8.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	10	00:10:00
		7.	<i>Inciting incident</i>	I	10	$\frac{10 \times 120.5}{100}$	12	00:12:00
		8.	<i>Debate part one</i>	D ₁	10 – 14.5	$\frac{14.5 \times 120.5}{100}$	17.5	00:17:30
		9.	<i>Debate part two</i>	D ₂	14.5 – 18.3	$\frac{18.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	22	00:22:00
		10.	<i>First act climax</i>	Fa	18.3 – 20.8	$\frac{20.8 \times 120.5}{100}$	25	00:25:00
	Act two	11.	<i>Act two open</i>	Ao	20.8	$\frac{20.8 \times 120.5}{100}$	25	00:25:00
		12.	<i>B-story part one</i>	Bs ₁	20.8 - 25	$\frac{25 \times 120.5}{100}$	30	00:30:00
		13.	<i>A-story</i>	As	25 – 29	$\frac{29 \times 120.5}{100}$	35	00:35:00
		14.	<i>Promise of the premise</i>	Pp	29 – 33.3	$\frac{33.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	40.1	00:40:05
		15.	<i>Ternary break one</i>	Tb ₁	33.3	$\frac{33.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	40.1	00:40:05

Part two		16.	<i>Antagonist force part one</i>	Af ₁	33.3 – 37.5	$\frac{37.5 \times 120.5}{100}$	45.2	00:45:10	
		17.	<i>B-story part two</i>	Bs ₂	37.5 – 50	$\frac{50 \times 120.5}{100}$	60.3	01:00:20	
		18.	<i>Midpoint</i>	M	50	$\frac{50 \times 120.5}{100}$	60.3	01:00:20	
	Act three	19.	<i>New situation</i>	Ns	50 – 58.3	$\frac{58.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	70.2	01:10:10	
		20.	<i>Antagonist force part two</i>	Af ₂	58.3 – 70	$\frac{70 \times 120.5}{100}$	84.4	01:24:25	
		21.	<i>Ternary break two</i>	Tb ₂	66.6	$\frac{66.6 \times 120.5}{100}$	80.3	01:20:20	
Part three		22.	<i>Darkest moment</i>	Dm	70 – 75	$\frac{75 \times 120.5}{100}$	90.4	01:30:25	
		23.	<i>Act three close</i>	Ac	75	$\frac{75 \times 120.5}{100}$	90.4	01:30:25	
		24.	<i>Deus Ex Machina</i>	De	75 – 79.2	$\frac{79.2 \times 120.5}{100}$	95.5	01:35:30	
	Act four	25.	<i>Final endeavour</i>	Fe	79.2 – 83.3	$\frac{83.3 \times 120.5}{100}$	100.4	01:40:25	
26.		<i>Climax</i>	C	83.3 – 91.6	$\frac{91.6 \times 120.5}{100}$	110.4	01:50:25		
27.		<i>Conclusion</i>	Co	91.6 – 95.8	$\frac{95.8 \times 120.5}{100}$	115.5	01:55:30		
28.		<i>Denouement</i>	D	95.8 - 100	$\frac{100 \times 120.5}{100}$	120.5	02:00:30		
Total Runtime									02:00:33

Figure 5. *Blue Velvet*; The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation

4.5.2 The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation; Parasite

For Parasite (Joon-ho, 2019) I will use its opening sequence as an example of the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation's application. The opening shot to Parasite (Joon-ho, 2019) depicts the window through which The Kims observe their world from a half-basement apartment, continuing into the prologue sequence wherein we see the face of each main character/member of the family. The last face we see is the father, Ki-taek at 00:02:18 ($P = (1.6 \times 132)/100$). The theme of the film, the allegory of parasitism, is demonstrated at the 00:04:00-minute mark ($T = (3.3 \times 132)/100$), wherein we see the Kims' basement apartment get sprayed with gas to exterminate the literal parasites living inside ("Parasite Themes", n.d.). Meanwhile, the conflict between the working class (Di Placido, 2021), is iterated through a confrontation between Chung-sook and a pizza restaurant owner (Jung Yi-seo) within the demarcated time. The Central Thematic Element in Parasite (Joon-ho, 2019) is a suseok, or scholar's rock, a collectible ornament found in Korean households (Chernick, 2020), which is gifted to The Kims by a friend of Ki-woo's at 07:33 ($Pr = (5.8 \times 132)/100$). Finally, the inciting incident, is when Ki-woo receives the opportunity to work for the wealthy Park Family, finally entering the house they will go on to infiltrate in a scene beginning at 13:10 ($I = (10 \times 132)/100$).

Parasite; Screen Narrative Comparison Equation

Three-part	Act	Beat	Symbol	Placement (%)	Equation	Minutes	TC	
Part one	Act one	1.	<i>Prologue</i>	P	1.6	$\frac{1.6 \times 132}{100}$	2.1	00:02:10
		2.	<i>Set-up part one</i>	Su ₁	0 – 5.8	$\frac{5.8 \times 132}{100}$	7.6	00:07:35
		3.	<i>Theme</i>	T	3.3	$\frac{3.3 \times 132}{100}$	4.4	00:04:25
		4.	<i>Precession</i>	Pr	5.8	$\frac{5.8 \times 132}{100}$	7.7	00:07:35
		5.	<i>Set-up part two</i>	Su ₂	5.8 – 8.3	$\frac{8.3 \times 132}{100}$	11	00:11:00
		6.	<i>First sequence close</i>	Fs	8.3	$\frac{8.3 \times 132}{100}$	11	00:11:00
		7.	<i>Inciting incident</i>	I	10	$\frac{10 \times 132}{100}$	13.2	00:13:10
		8.	<i>Debate part one</i>	D ₁	10 – 14.5	$\frac{14.5 \times 132}{100}$	19.1	00:19:05
		9.	<i>Debate part two</i>	D ₂	14.5 – 18.3	$\frac{18.3 \times 132}{100}$	24	00:24:00
		10.	<i>First act climax</i>	Fa	18.3 – 20.8	$\frac{20.8 \times 132}{100}$	27.5	00:27:30
	Act two	11.	<i>Act two open</i>	Ao	20.8	$\frac{20.8 \times 132}{100}$	27.5	00:27:30
		12.	<i>B-story part one</i>	Bs ₁	20.8 - 25	$\frac{25 \times 132}{100}$	33	00:33:00
		13.	<i>A-story</i>	As	25 – 29	$\frac{29 \times 132}{100}$	38	00:38:00
		14.	<i>Promise of the premise</i>	Pp	29 – 33.3	$\frac{33.3 \times 132}{100}$	44	00:44:00
		15.	<i>Ternary break one</i>	Tb ₁	33.3	$\frac{33.3 \times 132}{100}$	44	00:44:00

Part two		16.	<i>Antagonist force part one</i>	Af ₁	33.3 – 37.5	$\frac{37.5 \times 132}{100}$	49.5	00:49:30
		17.	<i>B-story part two</i>	Bs ₂	37.5 – 50	$\frac{50 \times 132}{100}$	66	01:06:00
		18.	<i>Midpoint</i>	M	50	$\frac{50 \times 132}{100}$	66	01:06:00
	Act three	19.	<i>New situation</i>	Ns	50 – 58.3	$\frac{58.3 \times 132}{100}$	77	01:17:00
		20.	<i>Antagonist force part two</i>	Af ₂	58.3 – 70	$\frac{70 \times 132}{100}$	92.5	01:32:30
		21.	<i>Ternary break two</i>	Tb ₂	66.6	$\frac{66.6 \times 132}{100}$	88	01:28:00
Part three		22.	<i>Darkest moment</i>	Dm	70 – 75	$\frac{75 \times 132}{100}$	99	01:39:00
		23.	<i>Act three close</i>	Ac	75	$\frac{75 \times 132}{100}$	99	01:39:00
		24.	<i>Deus Ex Machina</i>	De	75 – 79.2	$\frac{79.2 \times 132}{100}$	104.5	01:44:30
	Act four	25.	<i>Final endeavour</i>	Fe	79.2 – 83.3	$\frac{83.3 \times 132}{100}$	110	01:50:00
		26.	<i>Climax</i>	C	83.3 – 91.6	$\frac{91.6 \times 132}{100}$	121	02:01:00
		27.	<i>Conclusion</i>	Co	91.6 – 95.8	$\frac{95.8 \times 132}{100}$	126.5	02:06:30
		28.	<i>Denouement</i>	D	95.8 - 100	$\frac{100 \times 132}{100}$	132	02:12:00
	Total Runtime							

Figure 6. *Parasite*; The Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation

4.6 Discussion and Overview of the Research Objective

4.6.1 Introduction

Schock (1995) underscores mainstream cinema's infatuation with the discovery of a formula through which to replicate the success of previous projects, whether to draw the same returns at the box office or at an awards ceremony. Screenwriters may be defined as a "conditioned agent" (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:131), whereby the application of their practice is inherently collaborative, with Csikszentmihalyi (1999:332) stating, "one must internalize the rules of the domain and the opinions of the field, so that one can choose the most promising ideas to work on, and do so in a way that will be acceptable to one's peers."

The base of knowledge upon which institutions are dedicated to its study (Dent, 2021:47-48) has formulated a notion in the practice of screenwriting that constrains and exhibits a set of pre-determined practices (Foucault, 1972:37-38). The Screen Narrative Model is based on feature-length films as explored by screenwriting gurus such as Snyder (2005), Field (2005), McKee (1997), Truby (2008), and Vogler (2007), whose insights into narratology are applied to how screenplays should be structured. One of the main purposes of the Central Thematic Element is to encourage the audience to connect emotionally with the protagonist(s) and assist them in interpreting the theme. Contemporarily, script development is a social, cultural, and creative process (Batty & Taylor, 2021:273), in which the individualization of writers in conjunction with external influences, such as industry policies and movements or developments, held to refine the process of script development. Staiger (2012:72) argues that "Studying the context of the creation of a screenplay is crucial in locating what pertains to the system and what relates to the individual" (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:136), going on to state that script development is reliant on its application of industry-standard form and style. He states that, "understanding the complex creative process of film-making" is imperative towards the development of a screenplay that meets the principles and elements requisite to producing a film (Staiger, 2012:72).

4.6.2 Research Objective

This thesis has set out to prove that screenwriters are constrained by the rules and regulations as well as the elements and principles of their discourse, adhering to a set of techniques, methodologies and applications by which they attain relevance to vocational practitioners who seek to interpret and divulge meaning from their works for the purpose of

academic study, interpretation and analysis. Most people with insider knowledge within the film industry itself would argue that the practice of screenwriting is a collaborative effort generated from an industrial network of influence as opposed to an individual one (Batty et al., 2017:240). Macdonald (2021:9-29), argues that the collective addition of thoughts and ideas to a work or group of work diminishes the concept of authorship, suggesting that authorship is a group activity, postulating, “We need to rebalance our view of screen idea development so that we recognize originality as the product of multiple factors rather than emanating from one individual blessed by divine insight and sublime skill” (2021:10).

4.7 Conclusion

Screenwriting practice studies is a field that calls upon a wide range of subtly different relationships between the tripartite distinction between the academic, the practitioner and the consumer (Price, 2017:323). The nascence of in-depth screenplay analysis may be intrinsically characterized by the commonalities present within the definitions, theories and elementary doctrine of screenplay structure. As such, I have sought to inform a practice of improvement in identifying undefined narrative likeness, thereby facilitating improvement within the field. As such, the observation of a collective screenplay theory can only be explored through the examination of multiple contributors to the collective. The various elements within a screenplay’s structure may be directed by the themes through which the writer(s) choose to include within their narrative. As such, the choice of the subject matter intrinsically alters what may or may not appear at certain moments within a screenplay’s structure, however, the theories of screenwriting stipulate the best way through which writers may express these themes. This may be done through character action, dialogue, conflicts, resolutions, etc. The introduction of a particular motif within a film and the choice that screenwriters make regarding its introduction, is a choice made by the writer which inscribes upon that item, a sense of meaning for the audience and/or analyst. The fundamental notion of textual analysis, therefore, suggests that there is an ideal upon which a comparison may be articulated, with identifying tools that set the benchmark for an ideal screenplay structure.

This chapter explicates and lays out the template for the theoretical Screen Narrative Model. By offering a textual, thematic and comparative analysis of the synopses of these two films, I have determined to what degree the ubiquity of screenwriting narratology may be applied

to these two films. And it is my hope that the model may be applied to other films to verify its accuracy. Meanwhile, I have also offered an equation that can be used to quantifiable confer the model. The purpose of this thesis is to offer a reliable and quantifiable measure by which to analyse screenplays, their structure, as well as the textual analysis of their subject.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings; Discussion

5.1 Discussion

Screenwriting is a form of creative writing that relies on a template, or apparatus, that embodies rules that perpetuate the ubiquity of film theory. Its standards provide writers the opportunity to improve and adapt various models (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:134). The medium has moved from the subjective to the intersubjective collective interpretation whereby the systems of the craft – the economically viable craft – become a commodity to the industry itself. The development of screenplay structure, as prescribed by the innumerable screenplays that have been written throughout the medium’s history, as well as the workings of script gurus, analysts, scholars, audiences, bloggers and vloggers, is intrinsically reliant on the plot and story structure. (Vogler, 1999; Field, 2005; McKee, 1997; Snyder, 2005). This is done through the understanding of character development, genre and visual storytelling, as well as a strong comprehension of how to apply and iterate themes. According to Thompson (1999:9), the “ideal American film still centres around a well-structured, carefully motivated series of events that the spectator can comprehend relatively easily,” arguing that the norms of classical narratology from the early- to middle-years of cinema (1917-1967) adapted to an ever-solidifying set of conventions that were tempered by audience and studio expectations (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson, 1985; Platinga, 2000:61). As cinema transitions to and adapts modern sensibilities, financiers, studios and executives have begun to – and will continue to – acclimate themselves to new periods of filmmaking. This is poised to impact and alter the methodologies of storytelling significantly (Platinga, 2000:61). Therefore, “there is little doubt that screenwriting has developed into a coherent and transmittable body of knowledge” (Dent, 2021:47).

5.2 Interpretation

Research for this thesis suggests that the broader body of knowledge with regards to the distinct creative process and foundation of the ubiquitous structure serves as the modern schematic for the cinematic medium. The Screen Narrative Model falls well within the rigid rules of the widely accepted canon for the standard of writing for the screen. The purpose of this ubiquity is to offer clarity, unity and closure within the dramatic engine of a screenplay, thus allowing its vocational practitioner the opportunity to recognize the filmmaker, or writer’s, artistic and narratological choices (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:139).

The Screen Narrative Model is there to structure the protagonist's journey (Vogler, 2007), through which the major sections of the film are segmented by turning points that serve to resolve subplots and advance new circumstances and these turning points are determined by a deliberate and well-defined configuration that has been developed since the earliest films were made (McKee, 1997:35-37). Film structure derives its meaning and value from the way it reunites sequences, from beginning to end, and creates a narrative arc, dramatic changes and by using turning points to divide the story and alternate between the complexities of narrative storytelling. By framing a scene, sequence or act in a certain way, filmmakers will call attention to moments that progress the narrative. McKee (1997:64) proclaims that, "great storytellers have always known that, regardless of background or education, everyone, consciously or instinctively, enters the story ritual with Classical anticipation."

5.3 Analysis

Both *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) deal with post-modern themes such as late-stage capitalism (Chay, 2021:87). Pramaggiore and Wallis (2011:78) describe various conventional and unconventional variations within story structure of screenplays, with both *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) exhibiting similar narrative conventions that draw on an element of immense character subjectivity. The films also feature multiple and diverse characters, which Pramaggiore and Wallis (2011:78) call, "Lack of Clarity", a screenwriting technique that is embodied by a thematic web drawn between varying perspectives of thematic personifications. Most writers working in the industry follow at least a variation of various interpretations of screenplay structure (Moreno, 2013), which can be used to disseminate meaning. This technique can be used to extrapolate analysis and theories.

The setup of a film serves the purpose of providing exposition to the audience in order for the narrative to offer a sense of tonal and thematic legibility for the audience, with the sequences and acts that follow piquing emotional and cognitive responses based on the choices made by the characters and their subsequent consequences (Bordwell, 2006:29-30) The narrative develops as the main- and sub-plots progress through a temporal apparatus, based on theme, that leads to the resolution. This offers the audience a "plot structure [that] engages the spectator in a carefully articulated mental and emotional experience" (Bordwell, 2006:42). The creative aspects of writing for the screen derive from the purpose of innovation in terms of finding more effective

ways to tell stories and finding new techniques by which they may be presented through the medium of cinema.

The aspect of industrialization may be undermined by the writer, whose ideas and creative processes may trump the standards of formula and convention (Staiger, 2012:85; Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:136). Screenwriting manuals (Field, 2005; Snyder, 2005; McKee, 1997; Truby, 2008; Vogler, 2007) have presented formulas that writers are obliged to conform to. This denies individual creativity in the process of developing structure yet relies on authorship to present novel and creative ideas that formulate the narrative. Screenplays generally abide to page-per-minute unit of measurement and correlation (Hellerman, 2020), therefore offering an equitable gauge by which to structure, and therefore analyse, screenplays from a comparative point-of-view. Segmenting the major plot points within a film's structure by dividing the narrative into sequences and bookending these sequences with turning points endows the screenplay's theme, tone, character development, conflicts and resolutions and the narratological elements and principles with meaning.

Recognizing and translating the narrative anatomy of a film “has implications for the shape of the viewer's experience” (Bordwell, 2006:41). Therefore, screenwriting might be observed and understood as both a collaborative and systemic process of development, iterative and recursive of the processes that have been developed by a combination of audience expectations and production stipulations. “There is something the academy can and should bring to the table in order that future generations of screenwriters are made aware of practical – and *useful* – approaches for writing for the screen” (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:14).

5.4 Findings

Screenplay writing is less about the development of a literary work of art, and serves more as a blueprint, or template, for a medium separate to writing (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130). Screenwriting is inexorably linked to the financial concerns of an industry that relies on its practitioners to contextualize and adhere to the rules of the theories proposed by earlier scholars and screenwriters by which their work observes the expectations of contemporary critics, theorists and peers. This prompts the analysis of the intricacies of the newfound *Lingua Cinéma* and urges screenwriters to incorporate essential elements that galvanize the narrative, iterate the theme and develop the character, stipulating specific features such as visual motifs, character

flaws, plot details and other, subtler, devices that are revealed through textual analysis, subtextual analysis, literacy and underlying narrative (Bordwell, 2006:33-42). As such, the writer for the screen is embedded into and confined within the systems of production and development for the purpose of marketability, by which film might be described as a creative product (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:134).

5.5 Key Themes and Meanings

The restraint within the bounds of an established screenplay structure confines the writer to a narrative blueprint, whereby technical processes form the systems of knowledge commonly shared amongst the collective (Dent, 2021:48). Within the methods of narrative structure, a writer will be judged on the standards of the practice and the effectiveness of this application to the works that follow, characterizing the functionality of this broader body of knowledge. As stipulated by Kerrigan and Batty (2016:134), “Acknowledging the creative process [...] allows us to theoretically examine the processes of screenwriting.” As such, operating within the confines of a distinct creative process serves to drive a mediative original and artistic narrative that fulfils the economic requisite of the industry as well as the creative demands of the writer. In today’s modern landscape of binge-watching and mass consumption of media, it is fair to assume that once an audience-member sits down to watch a film, they have undergone thousands and thousands of hours of visual storytelling (Crosett, 2020), compelling a network of associations that serve to saturate and cement their narrative expectations in cinema.

5.6 Conclusion

Screenwriting has emerged throughout the past century – give a couple of decades – into a body of knowledge that is taught by innumerable schools, academies, workshops, etc., with countless bodies of text dedicated to their analysis, understanding and scholarship, and emboldened by high-profile awards for art and academia (Dent, 2021:48). As such, I believe that screenwriting belongs to an ideology in the sense that, through the process of its development, screenwriting is limited by a well-established framework. Despite the notion that screen storytelling is a creative art, the capitalistic nature of the medium, its originality, novelty and creativity, are excluded from the collective agenda of the collaborative art of filmmaking, particularly through the commissioning of new works, due to the risk of poor investment in

scripts that cannot be predicted and/or planned well in advance and in coordination with a number of collaborators (Batty et al., 2017:227). In other words, when so much is at stake, and in order for filmmakers to guarantee a return on their investment, tried-and-true methodologies must be adhered to in order to lower the risk for profit, primarily at a conceptual phase in a product's development.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Thesis Overview

In conclusion, film scholars generally agree that screenplays follow strict structural guidelines, which involve placing elements of a story into a certain order to better create an emotional response from the audience, and which is universal in its application to modern cinema. However, the true universality of screenplay analysis, its application to modern cinema, and the interpretation of the text's translation to the visual medium needs further investigation and will serve to clarify the writer's strengths and what makes the narrative structure appealing to so wide an audience over such a long period of time. By examining the films, *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), my aim with this thesis has been to provide a comparative analysis of the two screenplays. I have demonstrated the correlation between the placement of various narratological elements and how they serve the film's theme and central narrative principles. The universality of images and motifs in a film creates meaning for the audience while fulfilling the function of progressing the plot, developing the characters, and exploring the text's thematic questions. The practice and theory of screenwriting is determined by a set of values and ideas whereby innovative research is being done to recognize the creative agency of screenwriters and the application of ubiquity to the medium. This practice has been postulated, explored and proven by the particularities of an "amorphous unconnected creative collective" (Kohn, 1999:443) that conforms to the monomythic (Campbell, 2008) nature of storytelling. As such, comparative screenplay analysis compounds the similarities and dissimilarities of the post-modern artform. This thesis has defined the methods by which one may develop a coherent and transmittable body of knowledge that serves to stipulate the requisite tools and benchmark identifiers regarding the ideal screenplay structure. Through a textual, analytical and structural basis for examining the theory posited by this thesis, its research objective has been to highlight the narratological method that echoes the literature drawn upon by practitioners and pioneers within the field of film studies. I have also identified how these methods may be applied to a screenplay and to what degree research into this theory might contribute to existing knowledge.

6.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study has been to determine and extrapolate to what degree do the similarities in the screenplay structure of the films, *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986), characterize a comparative model for feature-length narrative structure. As such, I have discovered that the placement of various principles and elements within a screenplay's narratological structure serves to infer meaning. Storytelling tools such as character development, plot progression, thematic inquiry and meaning, among others, serves as a structural basis by which one may examine films based on comparative screenplay analyses. By using the Screen Narrative Model and its Comparison Equation, I have proven that the placement of beats within a screenplay's structure correlates directly with the ubiquity of a universal structure. "For better understanding of the function of these practices, there needs to be a broader consideration of bodies of knowledge and discourses" (Dent, 2021:47). This thesis has sought to outline the regulations, elements, principles, techniques, methodologies and applications that conform to the expectations of the audience and of the industry (Price, 2017:322). Conforming to the Screen Narrative Model allows filmmakers to communicate more clearly, aspects of the film which audiences have become accustomed to, and which are widely regarded as the requisite for cinema (Dent, 2021:48), endowing upon the viewer, the critic, the analyst, the scholar or the laymen, the skillset by which they may interpret narratological meaning within cinema.

6.3 Literature Overview

In-depth screenplay analysis, whether textual, analytical or structural, is characterized by the foundation of screenplay structure as explored and stipulated by Batty et al. (2017:225-247), Bordwell (2006), Dent (2021:47-60), Field (2005), Hambly (2021:69-84; 2021:135-150), Kerrigan and Batty (2016:130-144), Macdonald (2021:9-29), McKee (1997), Price (2017:319-333), Snyder (2005), Thompson (1999), Truby (2008) and Vogler (2007) through myriad definitions, theories and the doctrine of screenplay development. This thesis has sought to examine and elaborate upon the narrative likeness of classic and modern screenplays and thereby facilitate a new understanding of the theories present within the field. As such, the research into collective screenplay theory and an elaboration of the Screen Narrative Model will assist the methodology of extrapolating meaning from the principles and elements of screenwriting to stipulate the most effective way by which screenwriters might express the structural integrity of a

feature-length film. This analysis suggests an ideal upon which a comparison may be identified, with the principles and elements serving as the requisite tools and benchmark identifiers regarding the ideal screenplay structure. In conclusion, the literature review section of this thesis has served to provide an overview of the research extrapolated within the abstract, identifying the purpose of this thesis and highlighting its contribution to the field of study. By undergoing a wide range of research, I hope that the research question and fundamental purpose of this paper is sufficiently original and that the scope of its study is appropriate to the approach and methodologies of its research.

6.4 Methodology Overview

No different to the rules governing the Petrarchan sonnet and the contrapuntal form found within the European classical tradition in Western pedagogy, writing for cinema tends to conform to the rules governing the “firm standards of plot construction and characterization” (Bordwell, 2006:28), regardless of variation in genre conventions. Hambly (2021:69-84) examines how the development of screenplays may be applied as a universal practice through the consensus of a classical method to which writers adhere. Following the replacement of the Australian Film Commission by Screen Australia in 2008, after years of having approached screenwriting from local traditions, global audience appeal gave rise to a structure that adopted commercial rationale to screenwriting formulas with transnational ideologies subsuming intrinsically national ones (Hambly, 2021:70-71). This led to a desire for local screenplays to adopt a model that had a larger audience appeal. This was similarly seen following the emergence of new policies implemented by the Irish Film Board (Hambly, 2021:72-73). Screenwriters in Australia seeking funding from Screen Australia are required to submit a detailed document that includes the story’s primary event, the protagonist’s goal, their obstacles, major turning points and conflict, among other structural requisites, for which financiers, may use as “something that studio executives, [...] producers, financiers, and a whole lot of people can refer to comfortably and say that this is where it needs to sit” (Hambly, 2021:73). In a study to determine the effectiveness of what Hambly (2021:69-84) refers to as the Classical Hollywood Narrative, she developed a survey to assess the culture of script development in Australia, interviewing agencies as well as 22 Australian screenwriters, determining their success based on box office earnings between 1994 and 2013. By examining the writers’ creative process, Hambly

(2021:69-84) sought to determine to what degree screenwriting is a universal practice, taking into consideration the writer's local, cultural and linguistic heritage; social influences; as well as the adoption of the global industrial model for screenwriting. The findings of the study seemed to suggest that a minority of writers conformed to the hegemony of the industrial model (Hambly, 2021:69-84).

And thus, I believe that the standard form may result in the delight of certain writers, or the dismay of others, who have acclimated themselves to modifying and redefining the traditions of modern cinema in the development of unconventional form, challenging the conventions that have come before them and exhibiting these new features in subtle or dramatic ways. Despite this desire to redefine the template, however, I suspect and argue that conformity to the Screen Narrative Model is intrinsic to cinema, and despite the felicities of avoiding cliché by aspiring virtuosos, my research suggests that development as opposed to composition results in subscription to the classic model. The technique of positioning particular elements – such as, the Central Thematic Element – within a film at specific moments, and the art of visual communication is interpreted by the audience either consciously or subconsciously (Figuerido, 2015:4359). This form of visual communication serves to adhere to and explicate the precepts of space, environment, emotion, thoughts and expectations of standard form structure. By using the films *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) as a case study upon which to extrapolate meaning from the methodologies employed, I have sought to deduce that the model is applicable to any two films for the purpose of analyses.

6.5 Results Overview

Screenwriting relies on a blueprint determined by the echoes of practitioners and pioneers from the history of cinema (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130). As Harper (2015:111) states, “Screenplay writing is about writing a template for another art form.” The concept of ubiquitous narratology perpetuates the theory of creative agency while proving the restrictions of the attitudes of the industrial standard. The systems of the medium may employ the use of elements and principles such as motifs, which are a tool employed by filmmakers to offer information to the audience about a character or theme, encouraging the audience to correlate the associated relationship between various elements to one another. These techniques insinuate character or

plot development (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2011:15) and circumnavigate the central dramatic question.

The purpose of these elements is to “illustrate character change or the film’s basic theme” (Bordwell, 2006:44). Therefore, by examining and analysing the placement of the narratological principles and elements of filmmaking, I have sought to prove that the ubiquity of narrative structure in cinema is widespread. In this thesis, I have developed the Screen Narrative Model to contribute towards the current state of literature with regards to screenwriting analysis.

6.6 Conclusion

In this essay, I offer a comparative screenplay analysis for the films, *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) in order to explicate their use of the Screen Narrative Model. I have sought to prove that these practices have been influenced by decades of development and storytelling and identify how character-alignment and story elements correlate to those found within their narrative structures. A comparative screenplay analysis of these two narratives has served – based on the equation which I call the Screen Narrative Model Equation – to identify the temporal placement of beats within each film and I have inferred that films found within the same, or similar, canon adhere to the Screen Narrative Model. Contemporary and subsequent research into the textual and comparative analysis of screenplay structure and its universality has been limited in its approach to identifying the incidence of beat placement and how they are allocated effectively.

With regards to the origin of the Screen Narrative Model, much like the innovation of cinematic storytelling techniques, from the montage theory of the Soviet-Era filmmakers, to the psychoanalysis, gender studies, literary theory and semiotics of New Hollywood, the optimal design for screenplay structure derived from years’ worth of innovations that were developed and then built upon (Heckmann, 2020; Mambrol, 2017; Muller, 2006; Sellier, 2005; Tomaselli, 1981). Dissection of hundreds, if not thousands, of films lend to the analysis of consistency, with propagated analysis further seeking and accounting for well-placed turning points, poignant beat placements, serving as yardsticks upon which scholars (Hirst, 2021), writers and filmmakers may consistently conform to the intricacies story structure. Writers incorporate essential elements that galvanize the plot, iterate the theme and develop the character. These features are revealed through subtext within an underlying narrative (Bordwell, 2006:29-30). The concept of

screenplay authorship perpetuates the traditional view of auteur theory and the authors of screenplays find agency, creativity and voice through the restrictions of screenplay structure and design. Screenwriting is primarily a creative exercise, yet one that subscribes to the attitudes of industry standards, thus relying on the principles and elements ascribed by writers that have come before (Kerrigan & Batty, 2016:130).

In conclusion, through an examination into the state of current literature, through the development of a methodology by which to extrapolate meaning from the underlying theory of this text, through a discussion of the results discovered throughout its research and an extrapolation of its meanings and findings, this thesis proposes the theory that screenplay conform to the hegemony of a ubiquitous and universal model. This universal model is meant to punctuate a formula, or model, for feature-length narrative structure. Therefore, by examining the films *Blue Velvet* (Lynch, 1986) and *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019), I have explicated a novel theory – the Screen Narrative Model – and formula – the Screen Narrative Model Comparison Equation – to serve as the basis for comparative screenplay analysis.

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