



NARRATIVE GLOSSARY

Bar-ba-loots

Brown bear-like creatures that are playful and eat Truffula Fruit (Seuss 1971).

dank

“[D]amp and cold” (OED 2006: 249).

Grickle-grass

Extremely tall black grass that grows very sparsely “[a]t the far end of town.” It is the only growing thing in the melancholic part of the narrative. Deep in the Grickle-grass you can see where the Lorax once stood (Seuss 1971: 1-2). With the ‘gr’ alliteration Seuss achieves the sound of the Grickle-grass in the wind.

Humming-Fish

Brown fish that make comfortable humming sounds (Seuss 1971).

Lerkim

The Once-ler’s house. “He lurks in his Lerkim” (Seuss 1971).

Lorax

Anthropomorphic protagonist who pops out of a Truffula Tree stump. According to the Once-ler he is ‘shortish, oldish, brownish and mossy’. The Lorax ‘speaks for the trees’ and the environment. The word ‘Lorax’ can also imply ‘lower axe’ (Seuss 1971).

Once-ler

Antagonist in *The Lorax* (1971) who tells the narrative through a flashback image. As symbol of greed in the narrative, only his green hands are visible. He is the inventor, designer and builder of the Thneed, Super-Axe-Hacker and the Thneed factory.

pail

bucket (OED 2006: 729).

Snuvv

A “secret stange hole” in the Once-ler’s “gruvvulous glove where he hides payment for telling the story of the Lorax (Seuss 1971).

Street of the Lifted Lorax

A deserted street “[a]t the far end of town”, where only Grickle-grass grows, a sour wind blows and one old crow hovers in the air (Seuss 1971).

Super-Axe-Hacker

A machine designed by the Once-ler to chop off four Truffula trees at once (Seuss 1971).

Swomee-Swans

Brown and yellow birds with long tails (Seuss 1971).

Thneed

According to the Once-ler a multifunctional wardrobe item that also has other uses besides being a garment, when in fact it cannot be worn. The Once-ler knitted from the Truffula tuft of a chopped down tree (Seuss 1971).

Truffula Seed

Seed from the Truffula Tree. The last seed is thrown to ‘You’ by the Once-ler at the end of *The Lorax* (Seuss 1971).

Truffula Trees

Brightly coloured trees with pompom-like tufts that are “softer than silk” and have “the sweet smell of fresh butterfly milk” (Seuss 1971).

tuft

“[A] bunch of threads, grass, or hair, held or growing together at the base” (OED 2006: 1114).

UNLESS

The Lorax left a “small pile of rocks” with only the word “UNLESS” (Seuss 1971).

Whisper-ma-phone

The device with a long “snergelly hose” through which the Once-ler tells the secret of the Lorax (Seuss 1971).

‘You’

The narrator in *The Lorax*. Unnamed by Dr Seuss in order to achieve universality with narrative message.



5. NARRATIVE CONTEXT: TEXT BREAKDOWN

"It's a book about going easy on what we've got."

-Dr Seuss

"I went right on biggering...selling more Thneeds.
And I biggered my money, which everyone needs."

"UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It's not."

(*The Once-ler in Seuss 1971*)

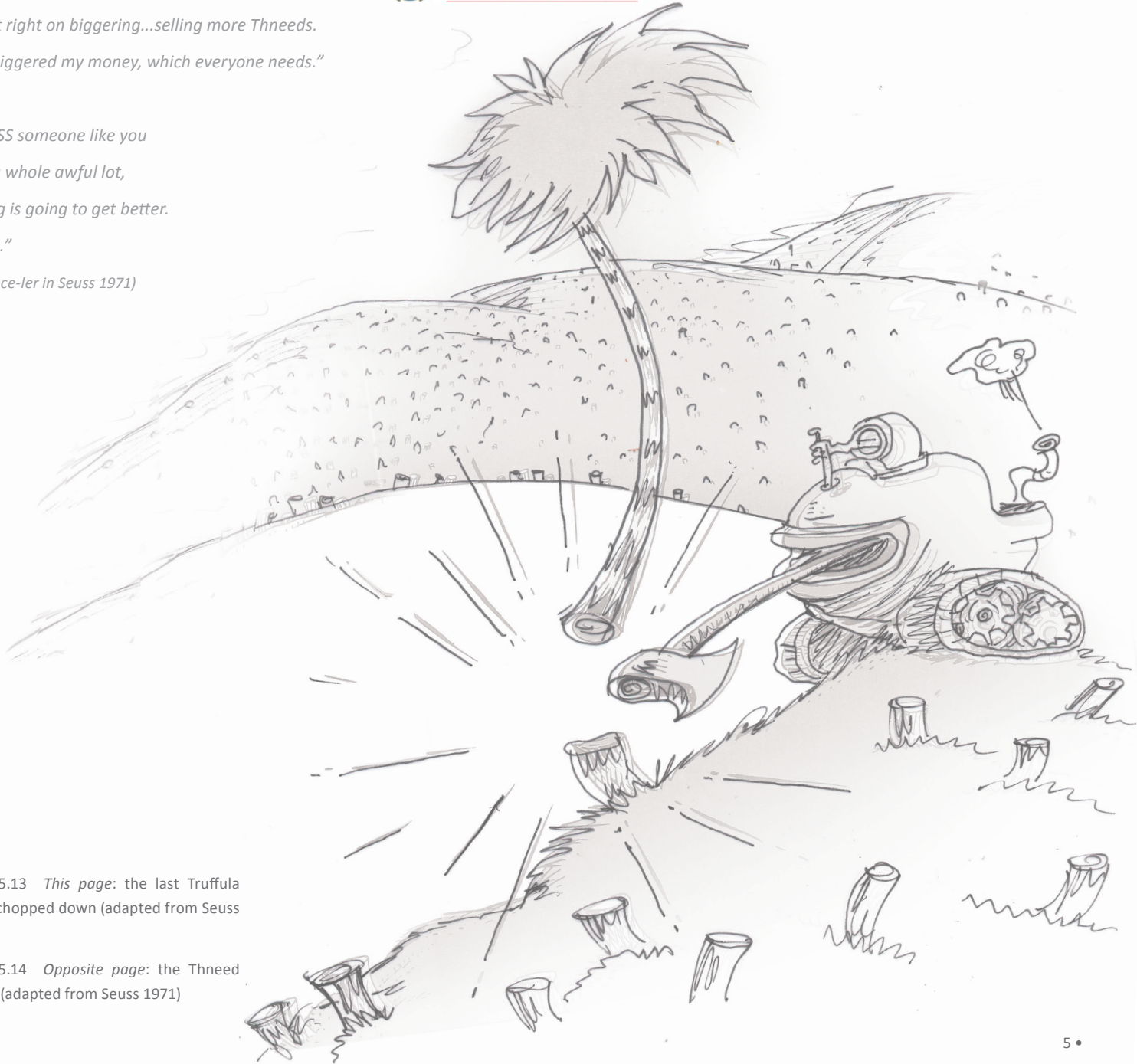
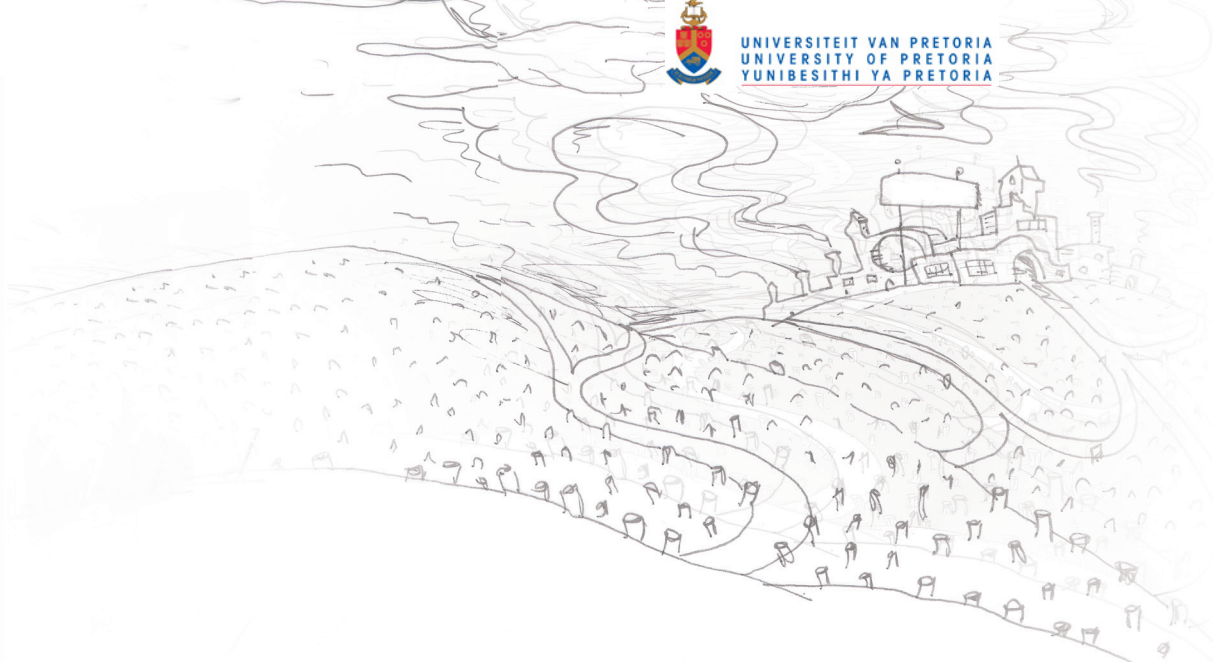


Figure 5.13 *This page*: the last Truffula Tree is chopped down (adapted from Seuss 1971)

Figure 5.14 *Opposite page*: the Thneed factory (adapted from Seuss 1971)



5.1 SYNOPSIS OF *THE LORAX* (1971)

The Lorax (1971) by Dr Seuss (Theodore Seuss Geisel), is a children's fable that warns against the dangers of avarice, consumerism and its effect on the environment.

The story is told by the narrator, a boy known only as 'You', who wants to know the secret of what 'the Lorax' was.

To hear the story, he goes to the 'Lerkim' of the 'Once-ler' (the antagonist). The Once-ler lives 'at the far end of town' deep in the 'Grickle-grass', in a melancholic and lifeless setting.

The Once-ler tells the story about how beautiful the place was when he arrived a long time ago, in a flashback of the past.

The Once-ler then destroyed the environment by chopping down all the 'Truffula Trees' - the source of life - for the trees' tuft, of which he made a useless and frivolous object called a 'Thneed'.

The Lorax, the protagonist, appeared to speak on behalf of the environment and warns the Once-ler against his deeds of avarice.

The Once-ler was blinded by his greed until the last Truffula Tree was chopped down and the environment destroyed.

The Lorax then left, only leaving a pile of rocks with the words 'UNLESS', behind.

At the end of the book the Once-ler throws the last Truffula seed to the narrator - 'You' - by which Seuss places the responsibility in the hands of the reader.



5.1 WORLD CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF THE LORAX

A year prior to the release of *The Lorax*, on 22 April 1970, the first Earth Day was celebrated (Earth Day Network 2009).

“Published in 1971, at a time when Earth Day and the ecology movement were gaining counterculture traction, ‘The Lorax’ addressed then-unconventional issues such as deforestation, pollution and greed. It was ‘An Inconvenient Truth’ for children...Although Rachel Carson is credited with launching the environmental movement with her 1962 book, ‘Silent Spring,’ Dr. Seuss made that message palatable for all ages” (Himmelsbach 2008).

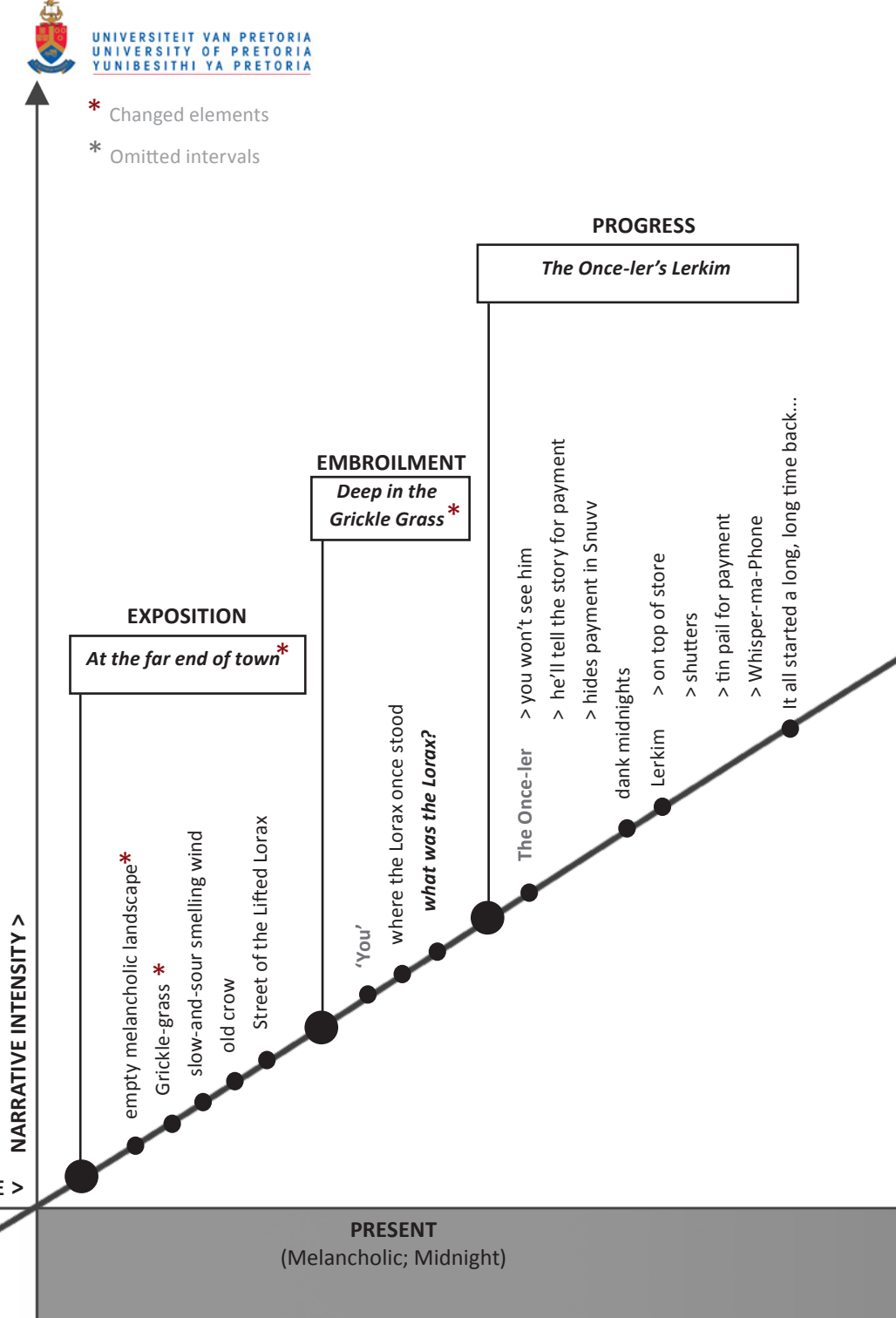
5.2 NARRATIVE SELECTION

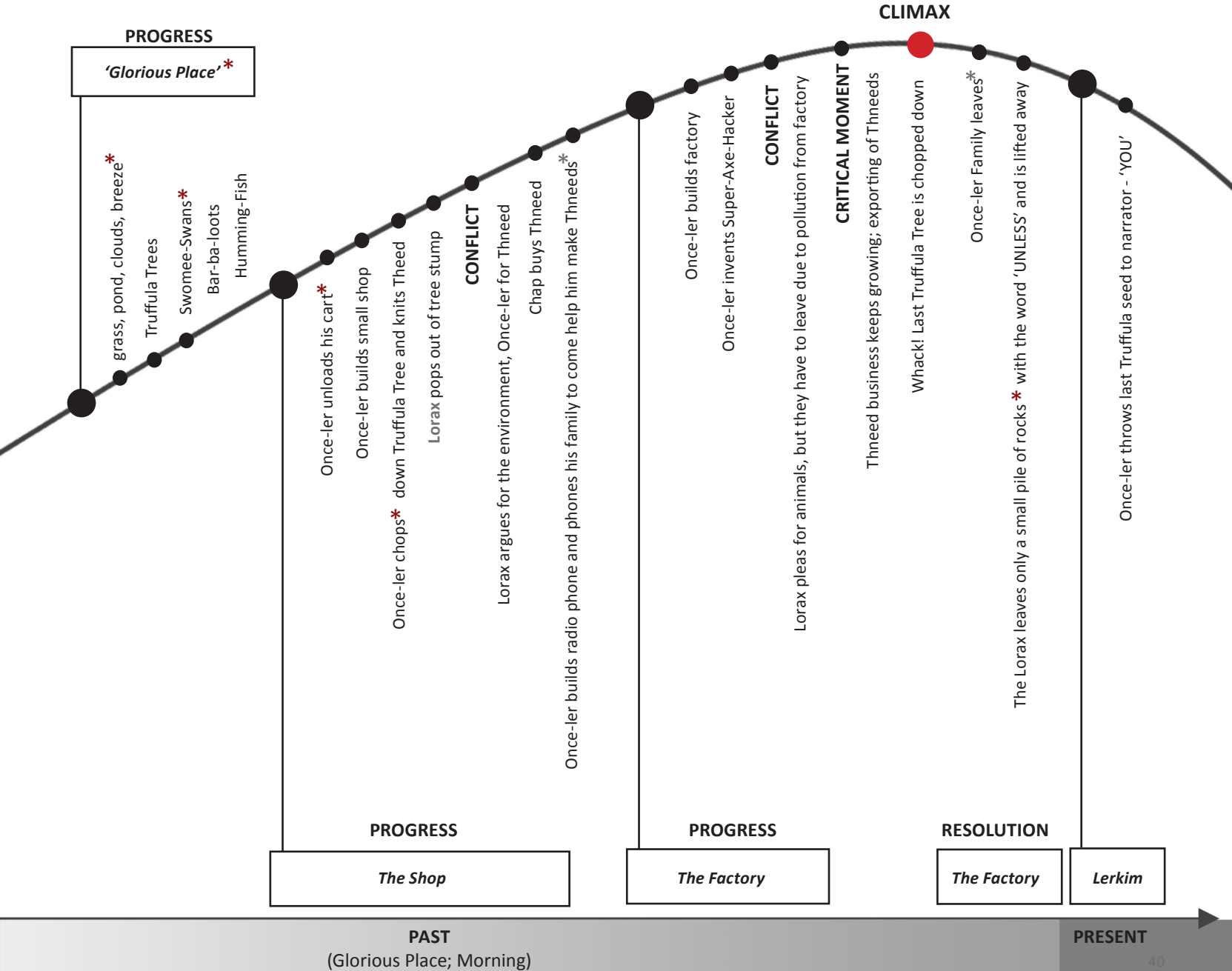
The Lorax was chosen for its relevance in the world today. *The Lorax* is about “market-driven environmental ruin...[t]he relentless pursuit of profit leads to environmental - and economic - ruin” (Adler 2005). The character of the Once-ler, being an inventive fellow, also addresses the designer’s role and responsibility.

The book is a picture book, but the aim was to mostly follow the text and not the images, in order to create a film version of *The Lorax* with zeitgeist specific to Pretoria.

5.3 NARRATIVE DESIGN

Films are usually made from scripts. A ‘break-down’ is then done by all department heads. A breakdown notes whether a scene is ‘exterior’ or ‘interior’, the time period, location etc.





(Garvy 2007: 77-87).

In the production design for *The Lorax*, the original text was treated as the script, of which the narrative design was analysed. Certain parts of the original text were left out (ellipsis) or changed, as is usually the case with the transition from the script to the shooting script. The adapted version for the production appears in Figure 9.3 The Diegetic and Production Time Line.

The original narrative is divided into two parts - that of the 'past', before environmental destruction (bright colours) and that of the 'present' melancholic landscape after environmental destruction (sombre colours).

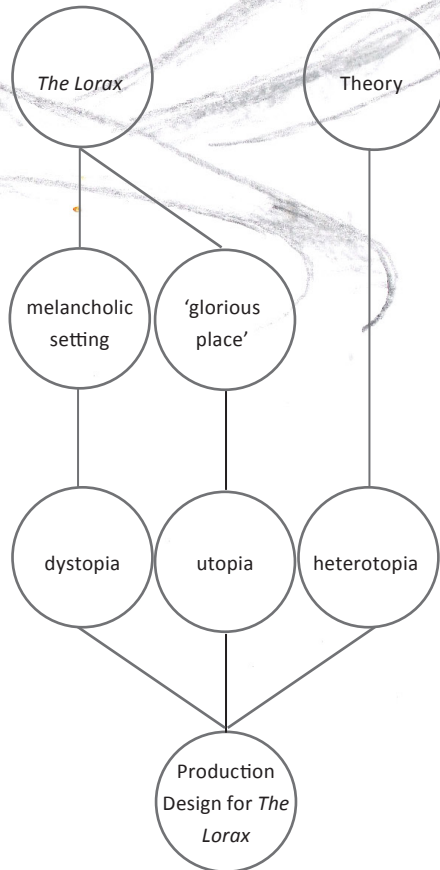
Utopia

The word 'utopia' is derived from Greek and literally means "no place". It conjures the notion of a fictional society somewhere. The word was first used by Sir Thomas Moore in his 1516 book with the same title. It was loosely based on Plato's *Republic* (Lebeko and Dreyer 2009: 6). It is significant that utopia also puns the Greek word *eutopia*, meaning 'happy' or 'fortunate' place, which possibly gave rise to its positive associations (Logan and Adams 2002: xi).

Hesiod's *Theogony* contains one of the oldest Western descriptions of human origin. "A number of human ages followed creation, the first was golden." During this age "a 'golden race' occupied the nourishing world: a time of original bliss still dreamed of long after its passing." (Coleman 2005:25) Utopian literature is saturated with nostalgia for the first, lost garden of Paradise (Baker-Smith and Barfoot 1987:3 and Eliade in Coleman 2005:26). Much the same as the original images in *The Lorax*.

The future ideals of utopias redescribe an age of gold and paradise to create an earthly version of paradise with 'instruments of the Fall' (Coleman 2005:27,28; Doxiadis 1966:24; Lebeko and Dreyer 2009:18) and "[s]ince utopias envision improved conditions intended to replace existing ones, their concern is as much with the past and present as with the future" (Coleman 2005:27; own emphasis).

The chosen site of Lilian Ngoyi Square, previously named Strijdom Square, has been described by Hook (2005) as follows; "Strijdom Square constituted an entire city block devoted to Afrikaner heritage, accomplishment, and culture. It was to many...apartheid's sa-



5.4 UTOPIA / DYSTOPIA

The narrative can be seen as divided into two parts - the melancholic world, post environmental destruction and the 'glorious place' of before. These extreme opposites are reminiscent of the concepts of utopia and dystopia.

Foucault in his *Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias* (1967) discussed in the theoretical premise, states that "first there are the utopias [which] are fundamentally unreal spaces". Therefore to supplement the heterotopic image, the concepts of utopia and dystopia will be added to the narrative analysis. The text can therefore be divided into the three time periods of dystopia, utopia and heterotopia. Heterotopia of course being the combination between the real and unreal, will be the transitional phase between utopia and dystopia (see narrative and theoretical influences on the design).

Figure 5.16 The development of the three time periods for the production design of *The Lorax*



cred precinct, a monumental public space that aimed to build and mould an Afrikaner National identity.” In a sense apartheid was also a form of avarice (ANC 1967). Apartheid has been described as “an ill conceived utopia...” (Lebeko and Dreyer 2009:19). In a sense apartheid was also a form of avarice (ANC 1967). The chosen Square can therefore be described as a ‘utopic’ square that turned in to a ‘dystopic’ square, which started approximately with the collapse of the gigantic Strijdom head statue and vault, on 31 May 2001 (see the chapter on the location context for more detail).

Dystopia

‘Dystopia’ can be defined as an imaginary difficult or evil place. It was first used in the 1868 writings of J.S. Mill (Doxiadis 1966:87). Fictional dystopias are usually portrayed as urban areas without a natural environment and often cover the topic of utopia-gone wrong (Lebeko and Dreyer 2009:9). Lewis Mumford spoke of the Necropolis or dead city (Doxiadis 1966:16). Lilian Ngoyi Square can be said to be as such, for during evenings and weekends, there is little activity. Even during the day, the Square is only used as a shortcut to walk through (see the chapter on the location context).

5.5 CIRCLES OF FEELING

Architect Christian Norberg-Schulz in his *Existence, Space and Architecture* “describes architecture and space as a series of ever-widening affective circles extending from the human subject. He proposes five basic categorical circles: graspable objects, furniture, the house, the street and landscape” (Tashiro 1998:18). For a

theory of cinema, Tashiro (1998) added two categories. Firstly that of clothing at the beginning of the scale and secondly, cosmic space, at the end of the scale. This together with the theoretical premise can be used for compiling a break down list.

Costume, Jewellery and Make-up

Film attire that differs greatly from the current clothing worn by the audience, being the first affective circle, is one of the first things noticed by the spectator. To solve this, stylized attire needs to be justified by a higher degree of verisimilitude (Tashiro 1998:18-19).

Objects (Props)

Norberg-Schulz’s first category of graspable objects – that which is closest to humans – can be compared to props (Tashiro 1998:20).

Furniture (Decor)

Furniture becomes the next category – and is not only furniture, but includes everything which the actor does not hold – i.e. decor (Tashiro 1998:26).

The Livable: The House/The Set

“With Norberg-Schulz’s next level, ‘architecture’ appears. Cinematic architecture gravitates towards two poles: the location or the soundstage set. A location exists before the film with all the inconveniences [or opportunities] of a pre-existing space...As such it exercises greater control over the film than exercised over it” (Tashiro 1998:28).

The walkable: Streets

“The urban level...” (Norberg-Schulz in Tashiro

1998: 32)

Landscapes

This level deals with man’s interaction with the environment. It can also be defined as that which cannot be captured in a single camera shot (Norberg-Schulz in Tashiro 1998: 34-35).



5.6 THE BREAKDOWN SHEET

		Circles of Feeling					
		Landscapes	The walkable: Streets	The Livable: The House/The Set	Furniture (Decor)	Objects (Props)	Costume, Jewellery and Make-up
Dystopia	Dystopia 1: At the far end of the town						
	Grickle-grass			Reflection Image			
	slow-and-sour smelling wind	Affection Image					
	crow				Reflection Image		
	Street of the Lifted Lorax		x		x		
	Dystopia 2 : Grickle-grass	Reflection Image	Reflection Image				
	deep in the Grickle-grass you can see where the Lorax once stood before it was lifted away				Reflection Image		
	What was the Lorax?						
	Dystopia 3a :						
	Once-ler Lerkim, pre flashback						
	Once-ler						
	you won't see him						
	he'll tell you how the Lorax was lifted away if you're willing to pay						
	he hides what you paid him in his Snuvv						Reflection image
	Lerkim						
	Once-ler peaks out of the shutters			x			
	on top of store			x			
	on the end of a rope he lets down a tin pail for payment					x	
Whisper-ma-Phone that has snergely hose					Reflection Image		
dank midnights	x						
secrets			Affection Image				
It all started a long, long time back...							
Utopia	Utopia (glorious place)						
	Truffula Trees with bright-coloured tufts	Reflection Image					
	clean clouds	x					
	fresh morning breeze	x					
	Swomee-Swans, Bar-ba-loots, Humming-Fish	x					
heterotopia 1 : utopia to dystopia	Once-ler unloads his cart					Action image	
	Once-ler builds small shop			Action image			
	Once-ler chops down a Truffula Tree		Action image			Action image	
	Thneed						
	Once-ler knits Thneed from tuft					Reflection Image	
	Unwearable garment						
	Multifunctional						
	Lorax						
	shortish, oldish, brownish, mossy						x



Heterotopia	popped out of stump with a ga-Zump						
	"I speak for the trees"						Reflection Image
	Chap						
	buys Thneed						
	can't see his face						
	heterotopia 2 : factory						
	business grows						
	Factory		Reflection Image				
	working full tilt, busy as bees, to the sound of the chopping of Truffula Trees.						
	Super-Axe-Hacker		Reflection Image				
	Invented by Once-ler						
	Chops down multiple trees at once						
	Once-ler biggers his waggons						
	Once-ler ships out Thneeds to the South, to the East, to the West and the North		Reflection Image				
	heterotopia 3 : heterotopia to dystopia						
Animals leave							
Last Truffula tree chopped down with a sickening whack Lorax leaves (lifted away)		Affection image					
UNLESS		Affection Image, Reflection Image					
Lorax only leaves a small pile of rocks with the word UNLESS							
Dystopia 3b :							
Once-ler Lerkim, post flashback							
The word of the Lorax now seems clear to the Once-ler UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.		Affection Image, Reflection Image					
The Once-ler throws the last Truffula Seed to 'You'		Affection Image, Reflection Image					