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An Analysis of Selected Linguistic Strategies Used to Evoke
Moral Judgments, Emotions and Attitudes
with the Audience of *300*.

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Abstract: Literature has the power to influence its audience to establish different attitudes towards its characters and elements. This study examines the linguistic strategies that are employed in doing so. A case study, in the form of a close reading of the graphic novel *300* was performed, taking note of the five most frequent rhetorical devices and analyzing these with Sanford & Emmott's (2012) model of Rhetorical Framework Processing. These rhetorical strategies are also compared with the film adaptation of the graphic novel to see whether or not the strategy is retained, and how it differs from the graphic novel.

The five rhetorical devices qualifying for analysis (bold text formatting, text box layout, repetition, anaphora and metaphor) showed the importance of foregrounding narrative elements to lead the audience into selected emotional attitudes beneficial to the telling of the story. The importance of different modalities of literature is problematized, and it is discussed as to whether a higher number of modalities can provide for a richer story. Furthermore, some sociolinguistic theory is relevant as playing an important part in the experiencing of literature, with focus in this study given to the audience's implementation of stereotypes in listening to a voice.

Keywords: *300*, graphic novel, film adaptation, rhetoric, Matched Guise Test, sociolinguistics, Rhetorical Framework Processing, foregrounding

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1 Introduction

Literature is a powerful tool for communication. Not only can it convey facts and events, but emotions as well. Felicitous events lift our spirits, while tragic ones fill them with despair. Heroes receive our admiration, while villains gain our contempt. But why? What is it that evokes these feelings? How do writers use language to trigger these kinds of responses? Such questions have been studied and considered for thousands of years, most famously by Aristotle, who wrote a book on the subject called *Rhetoric*, much of which is still relevant to this day. Today, not only texts, but films too, are subject to rhetorical analyses. However, few studies exist on rhetoric on the format in the transitional space between the two: the graphic novel. This medium, often overshadowed by formats generally considered more “mature”, provides an interesting symbiosis of text and images not found in any other medium, and does, in spite of the general notion, also feature more mature content. In this paper, a study of the rhetorical devices, or strategies for persuasion, is carried out on the narrative voice in one such graphic novel: *300*. Having been adapted to the screen, the potentially transferred rhetorical properties of the narrative voice in the film are also examined and compared with the graphic novel.

Studying the graphic novel from a rhetorical perspective may help to create a better understanding on how multimodal literature affects its readers, which in turn may further facilitate the use of such media in pedagogical areas. How rhetorical elements are transferred from one multimodal medium to another may prove helpful in determining the importance of different modalities of narrative, not only for pedagogues for the reasons mentioned above, but for producers of entertainment and researchers of such. Not only are studies of graphic novels scarce, linguistic research on graphic novels compared to their film adaptations is even more so, further justifying the particular approach of this paper.

2 Aim

The aim of this essay is to examine how rhetorical devices can be used with the reader of the graphic novel *300* to evoke emotional states, moral judgments and attitudes, and how this transfers to and possibly differs from the film *300*.

3 Materials and Methods

A linguistic analysis, in the form of close reading, was conducted on the graphic novel *300*, by Frank Miller, with focus on the narrative voice, which is represented by square text boxes. This examination was carried out by studying the narrative voice, taking note of rhetorical devices used

with regards to the narrative voice, including positioning of the text boxes themselves, as well as what they contain. An extensive list of the most common rhetorical devices was used as a reference when reading the graphic novel (*Glossary of Rhetorical Terms* [online]). The five most frequently used devices were analyzed primarily with the help of Sanford and Emmott's model of Rhetorical Framework Processing (see section 4, Theory). Subsequently, whether or not the rhetorical devices were transferred onto the film adaptation by the same name was investigated, and how they potentially differ from the graphic novel. One prominent difference with the film compared to the graphic novel is the inclusion of sound in the former format.

It is worth noting here that apart from *300*, there are other examples of graphic novels turned into films, such as *Sin City* and *Watchmen*, and although both of these feature narrative voices, neither of them offers as strong or consistent a narrative voice as *300*, in which the narrator accompanies the reader continuously in the retrospective telling of the story. The “weaker” and more “inconsistent” narrative voice in the other works may be due to the choice of the producers, having chosen to focus more on dialogue or otherwise digressing from the original narrative style.

The relatively narrow time frame of this essay also played a part in the choice of material being examined, as I am already very familiar with *300*, analysis of the data was facilitated, granting me more time for discussion with each element investigated, turning this paper into a case study of *300*.

3.1 The Original Comic Books

300 (1999) is originally a collection of comic books, more recently compiled in the form of a graphic novel, written and illustrated by Frank Miller, inspired by the battle of Thermopylae in which King Leonidas of Sparta and three hundred of his soldiers supposedly stood their ground against King Xerxes and his vast Persian army. The graphic novel consists of five chapters, each chapter representing an issue of the original comic book series released by Dark Horse Comics. The narrative voice, being the retrospective depiction of the battle from the perspective of Dilios, one of the surviving soldiers, is present throughout the story.

3.2 The Film Adaptation

The film *300* (Nunnari, Canton, Goldmann, Silver 2006) is an adaptation of the graphic novel produced by Zack Snyder, who wanted to make the movie true to Miller's visual and linguistic style, consequently featuring a voice-over by Dilios, in this adaptation performed by Australian actor David Wenham. Compared to the graphic novel, the film as a medium offers moving images and the addition of sound, the latter being of particular interest with regards to the film, adding depth to the

speech of Dilios and turning Wenham's voice itself into a rhetorical device.

4 Theory

The main analytical tool of this essay is Sanford & Emmott's model of *Rhetorical Framework Processing*. This model incorporates a wide array of theories on disciplines across the scope of linguistics and psychology, consisting of the three following main strands.

1. *Fundamental Scenario-mapping Theory* attempts to explain the way we understand language. Sanford & Emmott claim that much is comprehended by utilizing background knowledge of situation-specific information, stored as scenarios in the mind. When encountered with a situation, the mind searches past experiences for a fitting scenario to map onto that situation. If a suitable scenario is found, *primary processing* occurs and basic understanding is achieved. However, if no scenario is found, a search for less fitting scenarios is engaged in order to understand, called *secondary processing*. This engages higher inferential activity and forces the reader to “think” about what he/she is reading. Secondary processing, in some cases, may lead to *defamiliarization*, a process in which even the most mundane phenomenon can be perceived as something richer than usual, by presenting it in an unusual fashion, such as the use of rhetorical devices.

2. *The Rhetorical Focusing Principle* deals with how writers can control the attention of the reader by rhetorical means. We all make inferences when we come across a specific element in a text, some of which may be in conflict with what the writer wants us to think about. This can be manipulated by forefronting unusual stylistic devices, a notion called foregrounding. For example, by typing a word in italics I make sure the reader pays particular attention to that word, effectively controlling the attention of the reader.

3. *Experientiality* treats the phenomenon of narrative embodiment, the notion of vividly experiencing a narrative. Sanford & Emmott (2012) claim that perceiving or imagining an action activates the same areas in the brain as if the action was actually performed, a neuroscientific phenomenon attributed to mirror neurons, which effectively creates a simulation in the brain of what is being observed (Sanford & Emmott 2012:133). The extent of these simulations, with regards to attitudes towards characters, depend on the emotional proximity to the person observed, as well as how well the observer agrees with the character's actions and moral choices.

5 Previous Research

No studies have been done on the linguistic features of *300*. Neither the graphic novel nor the film have received any academic attention on the language used, not to mention the lack of studies on linguistic comparisons between graphic novels and their film adaptations. Seeing as the film was a box office success, having grossed more than \$70 million on the opening weekend (IMDB [online]), this lack of interest may be seen as odd. However, a high gross income is perhaps not per se an accurate indication of scholarly attention, but it does indicate a high general interest.

Adapting comic books to film has been, and still is, a popular trend, and comparisons of the media do exist. Gordon et al (2007) debate the value of adapting comic books to film, and the problems that arise in doing so, due to the discrepancies in modalities. Furthermore, there are articles that focus on film adaptations of specific comic book titles, in which comparisons are made, such as Reynolds (2009) and Burke (2012). Unfortunately, most studies available primarily deal with comparisons of content and style of the two formats, leaving the subject of language barely mentioned, if at all.

5.1 Rhetoric

Rhetoric is sometimes, by people in general, falsely categorized as an exclusively linguistic science, but actually covers a range of different disciplines. The art of persuasion implies a psychological process, as changes of attitude and emotions take place in the brain, but language is the means by which these processes are triggered with the recipient. Works on classical rhetoric, which mainly focus on the linguistic development and conveying of texts and speeches, such as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, are available in Crowley & Hawhee (2009) among others.

The humanities have progressively become more and more aware of the underlying biological processes relating to their disciplines, but although psychological studies of linguistics and rhetoric exist, it was not until recently linguistics started to receive attention from a neuroscientific point of view. Neuroscience is an interdisciplinary science collaborating with a wide range of different areas, linguistics and psychology arguably being the two most relevant for rhetoric. Sanford & Emmott (2012) and Ingram (2013) all deal with rhetoric with regards to neuroscience, and how the brain works when inputting information. Ingram writes about the potentially physiological addictiveness of emotional, political speech, and the separation of the brain and the body, each able “make decisions independently of the will of the thinking subject” (2013: vi).

Sanford & Emmott (2012) introduce a model called Rhetorical Framework Processing. This model incorporates a wide array of theories on disciplines across the scope of neuroscience, the

most important of which are covered in more detail in section 4 (Theory). Due to it being one of the few extensive, well-documented neuroscientific approaches to rhetoric available, it is the main source that informs the analysis of this study.

The concept of narrative immersion, which is explained in section 4 (Theory), is further discussed by Green, Brock & Kaufman (2004:311-327). With the use of *transportation theory* they describe narrative immersion as a journey away from everyday existence into another reality, as being transported. This transportation experience is “assumed to take place regardless of modality of communication” (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004:312), rendering the theory applicable to both media covered in the scope of this essay. Green, Brock and Kaufman claim that this “journey” consequently leads to identification, and the adoption of characters' emotions, goals and behaviors. Furthermore, the authors claim that reader's evaluation of characters in fiction tend to be based on criteria typically applied to people met in the real world, such as looks, similarity, and potential establishment of friendships.

5.2 The Graphic Novel

The graphic novel is a medium that in essence is the same thing as a comic book, defined by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as “a fictional story that is presented in comic-strip format and published as a book” (Graphic novel 2013, Merriam-Webster [online]). For the purposes of this essay, the terms graphic novel and comic book will be used interchangeably.

Research on the linguistic features of the comic book as a medium is voluminous. Reading graphic novels has relatively recently started to be accepted as a serious literary format for all ages, and Schwartz & Rubinstein-Ávila (2006) and Hammond (2009) are just a few of all those who want comic books to be considered seriously and added to the curriculum in schools, pointing towards the benefits of multimodal literacy. One of the most revered authors on the comic book, as a format of literature, is Eisner, who claims “that the special nature of Sequential Art is deserving of serious consideration by both critic and practitioner” (1985:5), but also acknowledges that more worthy subject content and thoughtful pedagogical concern are factors that need to be addressed, because how else “can they hope for serious intellectual review?” (1985:5). McCloud, who recognizes Eisner as one of his big inspirations, further examines the many elements of comics, starting with the history of the medium itself, and ending with the introduction of a model for creating art. He emphasizes the importance of the emptiness in between panels in comics, as well as the manner in which the reader complements all given information and fills in the gaps. Furthermore, McCloud speaks of emotions, and not only how these can be conveyed through shapes and styles, but more importantly how they can be evoked in the reader (1993:121).

5.3 The Film

One of the most popular media today is that of film, and quite a few films are adaptations from books or comic books. The latter has been very successful with Marvel and DC Comics having adapted and released their comic books, such as Batman and Superman, on the screen. Lefèvre (2007) discusses the problems connected to adapting a graphic novel to film, acknowledging the different perspectives. He mentions that some analysts recognize the creative aspects of some adaptations, while others claim adaptations only belong to mediocre talents, and given the discrepancies of modalities of the comic book and the film, “perhaps the central question about filmic adaptation of comics is not, 'how faithful/respectful to the comic the film will be,' but rather, 'how least dissimilar to the comic can the film be?'" (2007:4).

Plantinga (2010) addresses the topic of moral judgment and attitudes with fictional characters, in films specifically. He exemplifies the results of his study on contemporary, generally well-known films, such as *Spider Man* and *Legends of the Fall*. One of his key terms on the topic is *character engagement*, describing the audience's relationship with characters in the narrative. He breaks this phenomenon down into eight smaller components for more precise representations. These range from the strongest “con” to the strongest “pro”. “Opposition” is on the bottom end of that scale, being an attitude “Often taken toward antagonists and villains who directly threaten the protagonist, and whose actions are judged to be morally evil” (2010:43), whereas the other end of the scale features “Projection” which refers to the “desire to emulate a character, typically incorporating both strong sympathy and allegiance, but extending to cognitive and affective activities and responses beyond the viewing experience” (2010:43). See Appendix A for the complete table.

5.4 Sociolinguistics

The descriptive study of the relationship between language and society, or more specifically the effect society has on language, is referred to as sociolinguistics, in which social factors, such as age, gender and religion, are claimed to have an effect on the language used (Wardhaugh 2009). People belonging to the same social group, or people aspiring to become part of a certain group, tend to use similar language. Trudgill defines this as “a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers’ social background rather than geographical background” (2003:122). People sharing a similar language can often wrongfully be thought of sharing other traits as well, leading to stereotyping; “to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same” (Stereotype 2013, Merriam-Webster [online]).

This manner of categorizing people has proved to play an important role in what is referred to as Matched Guise Tests. This is a method which involves candidates listening to apparently different speakers speaking in two or more different varieties of language, after which the candidates are subsequently asked to evaluate those speakers for impressions, personality characteristics and other traits (Lambert et al 1960). A study by Allport & Cantrill (1934), using a method similar to this, many years before the Matched Guise Test was officially established as a method, was performed on 600 students at Harvard University. By listening to 18 different male voices through speakers the subjects were asked to assess “outer” as well as “inner” features of the character, from age and height, to political references and moral values. When physical traits were matched with a voice, the majority was often successful, but it was also found that, drawn from the exaggerated results of inner traits from the speakers, stereotypes play a major role in the assessment of character personality. These findings have continually been reconfirmed, and refined, in studies such as by Giles (1970), showing different levels of prestige are given to varying regional accents of English, and by Limerick (2010), in which African Americans and Caucasians were shown to discriminate Latin Americans based on their language. Listening to a voice causes inferences to be made for that particular manner of pronunciation. These inferences present the mind with information of with which to build a stereotypical image of the speaker (2006), very much in the same way as Sanford & Emmott (2012) explain the mapping of information onto narratives with their theory of Fundamental Scenario-mapping (see section 4, Theory, for a more detailed explanation).

6 Results and Discussion

The close reading of the graphic novel resulted in the data presented in the table below, with the most frequent rhetorical devices being shown at the top.

The text boxes of the narrative voice in the graphic novel distinctly stand out, primarily because of its fragmented layout. Due to text box layout being complicated to count without some kind of elaborate scheme, it is not included in the table below. However, since it is a highly prevalent feature of the entire graphic novel, it is discussed alongside the other rhetorical devices.

Instead of having the entire part of a narrative voice for each panel in the same text box, the text is frequently divided into several smaller text boxes in sequence, potentially granting the reading of the graphic novel another semiotic level. Whether or not the rhetorical effects of this device are transferred to the film, and in what way, are highly interesting, and is investigated in this section.

Apart from text box layout, the top four rhetorical devices (as seen in Table 1) are subject to analysis in this section.

Table 1: Occurrence of rhetorical devices in the graphic novel of *300*.

<i>Rhetorical device</i>	<i>Number of instances</i>
Bold formatting	603 (2131)*
Repetition	36
Anaphora	26
Metaphor	23
(Personification)	10
(Alliteration)	9
(Hyperbole)	8
(Simile)	7

***The number of words in bold face out of the total number of words in the narrative voice in the graphic novel, in brackets.**

Bold formatting, repetition, anaphora and metaphor occur most often in the graphic novel, qualifying them for analysis. The four least frequent rhetorical devices can be seen at the end of the table, enclosed in brackets, and are included for reference only, and will, despite potentially being relevant to the study, not be covered in this paper due to lack of frequency compared to the other devices and the limited scope of this essay.

The rest of this section is divided into seven subsections, the first five representing the five most prominent rhetorical devices found in the graphic novel, followed by a subsection on Wenham's voice as a rhetorical device, the entire section ending with a subsection of some concluding remarks. Each of the first five subsections introduces the data of the study of the graphic novel, the corresponding data in the film, and an analysis of the device, facilitated primarily by The Rhetorical Framework Processing model, with regards to how it might elicit emotions and attitudes with the audience. It should be noted that examples of the rhetorical phenomena presented in the following subsections are not to be read as offering full coverage of each respective rhetorical device. All findings are discussed throughout the section.

6.1 Text box layout

Text boxes, in which almost all text in the graphic novel is shown, have a square shape to indicate the narrative voice. What is interesting about the text boxes of the narrative voice is that these have a scattered, fragmented layout. Sentences are often cut off in one box and continued in the next, containing few words conveying the mere essential pieces of information to complement the

imagery. The positioning of the text boxes in *300* are, with a couple of exceptions, subject to the norm in comic book making, arranging panels and elements so that they “are read left-to-right first, then up-to-down” (McCloud 2006:32, see Figure 1).

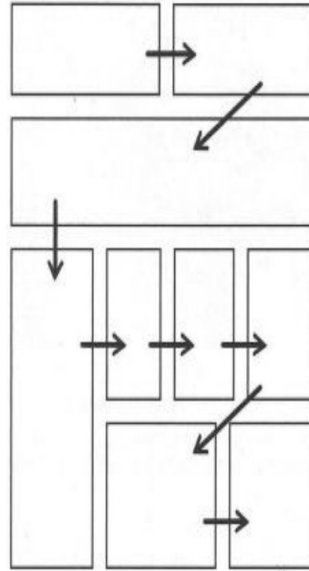


Figure 1 – McCloud's representation of narrative flow in comic books. Source: McCloud 2006:32.

However, this pattern is on occasion interrupted, especially on wide images, and the order of the text boxes is reset, restarting at the top of the staircase manner of layout again. This can be seen in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 - Example of reset of text box order in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:24.

Commonly, the order of text boxes in graphic novels and comics is only reset in new panels, which could have been applied in this case by simply adding vertical frames between each set of reset text boxes. However, by extending the same panel across the page, a sensation of greater temporal length is achieved (McCloud 1993:101). The reason for resetting the order of these text boxes is most likely for practical rather than rhetorical reasons.

The arrangement of the narrative voice text boxes in the staircase manner (as seen in Figure 3) leads the reader along the page, in the same way all elements are arranged in the graphic novel, and the fragmentation of what could have been just one, big text box, creates natural pauses. Being given a pause the reader might take a moment between boxes to have another look at the image, intertwining the verbal telling of the story with the complementing, visual art in the background.



Figure 3 - Example of the arrangement of narrative text boxes in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:53.

In the film, this text box fragmentation is sometimes translated into short pauses in the speech of the voice-over, but not consistently enough to draw conclusions on its usage. The voice-over of the film sometimes has pauses in sentences contained in a single text box in the graphic novel. This inconsistency could imply many things. Snyder might have taken some artistic liberties when adapting it to film, adding and erasing pauses as he saw fit, or he may have failed to grasp Miller's idea with the pauses altogether. On the other hand, maybe Miller did not intend on the fragmentation to be perceived as the only indication of a pause. There can only be speculation on Miller's true intent, but seeing as the film strays from the text box fragmentation as the only major indicator of pause, it is probably safe to assume that the function of the layout of the text boxes in the graphic novel has more to do with leading the reader along, rather than prompting pauses, even

if, in the graphic novel, it has that additional effect as well. The pauses in the film come across as natural, but at the same time cleverly planned. Moments of silence are utilized as frames for all kinds of speech in the film, enhancing their rhetorical effect. Along this line of reasoning, silence could be said to be the norm, and all speech deviations, consequently making all speech foregrounded. However, this might be taking the notion of foregrounding as a direct result of deviations from a norm a bit too far.

6.2 Bold formatting

The bold formatting of words is a very common typographical foregrounding device in the narrative voice throughout the graphic novel. Out of 2131, the total number of words used in the narrative voice, 603 are in bold face (see Table 1). On occasions where the narrative voice of the graphic novel and the voice-over of the film are identical, bold text is verbally emphasized by Wenham by a raise in pitch or amplitude. This retention of emphasis across media may not only be an attempt to keep Miller's original style of narrative in the film, but actually implementing what has proven to be a successful rhetorical device. It not only enables for a convincing style of written speech, it also renders a text dynamic and realistic, as people seldom speak monotonously in real life. However, the bold formatting of words is a rather rudimentary manner of adding depth to a text compared to the vast potential of the voice. The audio voice is astoundingly more complex than the written word, able to vary infinitely in ways of pitch, amplitude and stress, which speculatively introduces a small, yet potentially crucial, difference in the experience of literature and film. This difference, between the written narrative and the spoken narrative, which involves the prompting of scenarios according to Sanford & Emmott (2012), will be further explained and expanded upon in section 6.6 (Wenham's Voice).

McCloud speaks of how words “allow us to describe all five senses [...] and give readers a rare chance to listen with their eyes” (2006:146). The bold formatting of words in the graphic novel represents verbal emphasis, meant to cause the readers to imagine them pronounced with higher pitch or higher intensity. This is accomplished in the film by simply including Wenham's voice, ridding the audience of the need to imagine the sound of the narrative voice.

In the graphic novel, non-bold text is the norm, and bold words are deviations. The same goes with the film. Verbally emphasized words are deviations, as such subject to foregrounding, potentially prompting defamiliarization upon hearing them. Speech in real life is dynamic, with some words being stressed, and with a varying level of pitch and amplitude, all of which can function as deviations depending on their contexts. It should be noted though, that the categorization of a narrative element as a deviation and foregrounded unit, if not sufficiently

distinguished from the norm of the literature in question, may lead to inaccurate conclusions as to the level of effect achieved. Even though all deviations may be seen as contributing to the overall effect, every single element may not be significant enough by itself to prompt defamiliarization.

In Figure 4, words have been formatted in bold, making them foregrounded. These words are emphasized in the film as well, and convey a sensation of great size: *force*, *massive*, *army* and *vast*, but also has the potential to put the audience in a state of mind of being small, maybe even implying fear.

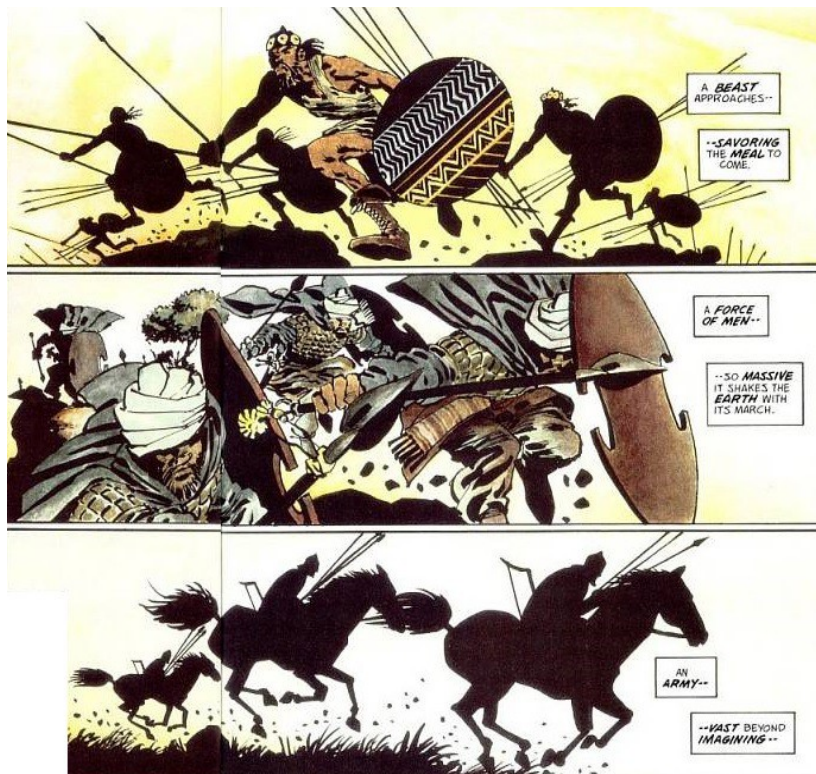


Figure 4 - Example of words with bold formatting in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:47.¹

Had Miller, hypothetically, chosen to emphasize *approaches*, *to come*, and *march* the audience might have experienced a stronger sensation of movement towards itself instead, also invoking fear, but with less focus on the size of the threat. The notion of experientiality may come into play here. As mentioned in section 4 Theory, mirror neurons enable the simulation of observed actions in the brain, creating the sensation of actually experiencing what is being read or witnessed. As in Figure 1, with *force*, *massive*, *army* and *vast* emphasized, the reader is transported into the alternate, fictional reality of *300* (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004:311-327), oftentimes referred to as narrative immersion, with the induced sensation of witnessing something of great size moving.

¹ As the original graphic novel has no page numbers, a chronological system was created for numbering the pages in which the front cover of the graphic novel represents the first page.

6.3 Repetition

In this essay, repetition as a rhetorical device refers to the reoccurrence of a word or other linguistic element within the same semantic field, lexically related in meaning referring to the same subject, in a literary work. Repetition occurs 36 times in the graphic novel (see Table 1), of which the most commonly repeated element throughout the story, within the same semantic field, is *we march*. Counting all the different variations on the phrase, such as *we charge*, *we strike*, *they march*, they amount to 11 instances total. These specific repetitions, consisting of *we*, or the one variation with *they*, followed by a verb of action and momentum, are always enclosed in their own text boxes, making them stand out. The film features these repetitions as well, but to a lesser extent, although always verbally emphasized. This is similar to how the words are emphasized by granting them their own text box in the graphic novel.

Sanford & Emmott “view repetition as a form of deviation, since repetition can provide an unusual degree of regularity” (2012:75), by definition categorizing it as a type of foregrounding. As such, it is likely that the author wants that particular element in the minds of his audience, and stored as a scenario for later prompting of primary processing.

Arguably, the most important case of repetition in the graphic novel, from a narrative point of view, is that of the beast. Early on, the reader learns of King Leonidas' time in the wild as a boy, and his encounter with the wolf (see Figure 5). Leonidas is at a disadvantage, armed only with a wooden spear. Nonetheless, against the odds, he manages to defeat the wolf.



Figure 5 – King Leonidas' encounter with the wolf in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:16.

This scenario, with all its inherent emotions, is saved in the reader, and is referred to several times throughout the story, effectively turning the wolf, or the beast, into a metaphor with the beast embodying King Xerxes and his Persian army. Chandler speaks of the notion of *transference*, in which qualities of one image can be transferred to another (2002:128), such as the qualities of the wolf, of being powerful and threatening, are transferred onto Xerxes, while the qualities of young Leonidas, of being small, weak and defenseless, are transferred onto the 300 Spartans. In the same way as the reader is turned against the wolf, so is the reader turned against Xerxes. It is possible to draw upon Plantinga's (2010) work on character engagement here, applying potential reader attitude towards Xerxes and Leonidas. Plantinga (2010) claims that the more time characters spend in the foreground of a narrative, the more the reader's stance towards those characters is strengthened (see complete list of stances in Appendix A). Furthermore, Plantinga's notion of character engagement can be coupled with Sanford and Emmott's idea of autobiographical alignment, which dictates that the ability to empathize, or identify, with a character largely depends on the reader sharing the same characteristics as the character, and approving moral judgments made by same (Sanford & Emmott 2012:211). These ideas both fall under the category of experientiality (Sanford & Emmott 2012, and mentioned in section 4, Theory), involving a sensation of being a part of the narrative, feeling for the characters. According to autobiographical alignment it is unlikely any reader would empathize with Xerxes, due to him repeatedly being depicted as a beast looking to extinguish all that is good and pure. As mentioned, this is most likely no coincidence, as it benefits the story to have a distinct antagonist. However, this does not mean the reader is devoid of feelings towards Xerxes, on the contrary, the repeated mentioning of him, and reiterated use of the beast metaphor, depicting a direct threat to the protagonist, forms a strong, emotional stance of opposition (Plantinga 2010) towards him. Leonidas, on the other hand, appears to be consciously portrayed so as to prompt allegiance (Plantinga 2010); a character with whom the reader identifies with, engaged in a morally justified quest. He is an element of focus throughout the story, in both the graphic novel and the film, facilitating the autobiographical alignment with his character.

6.4 Anaphora

Anaphora can be defined in a grammatical manner and rhetorical manner. Grammatically, it is “the use of a word which refers to, or is a substitute for, a preceding word or group of words” (Anaphora 2013, Merriam-Webster [online]), exemplified by the use of *it* and *do* in the sentence “I know it and they do, too”. Rhetorically, it is “the repetition of the same word or phrase in several successive clauses” (Anaphora 2013, Merriam-Webster [online]), as said by Churchill “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we

shall fight in the hills”, in which *we shall fight* is repeated in successive clauses.

This paper uses the rhetorical definition of the word, with an interesting exception in one of the examples, out of the 26 instances of anaphora found during the close reading (see Table 1). In that example, *only* appears in three consecutive sentences.



Figure 6 – Example of anaphora in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:36.

This is yet another example of foregrounding at work, as it not only is a deviation in the narrative, but also a case of consequent repetition of an element. The repetition of *only* reinforces the thought of there being absolutely no other than Leonidas keeping his reserve, whereas the repeated synonyms of Leonidas as the second component in the sentences may work differently. Being referred to as *one among us* puts Leonidas on the same level as all the other Spartans, and the reader, enhancing character alignment due to ease of identification, as discussed in the previous section, as well as boosting the feeling of sympathy and allegiance (Plantinga 2010, see Appendix A) for him. *Only the King* raises him above the others, glorifying him, as well as stating that he, in spite of the presence of his companions, stands alone.

6.5 Metaphor

Metaphor is a kind of figurative language in which a component is to be understood in terms of another component. An example of this is the phrase “My job is a prison”, in which *my job* (component one) is supposed to be understood in terms of *a prison* (component two), perhaps isolated, claustrophobic, and with a lack of freedom. Similes are a kind of metaphor, different in that the comparison is implemented by including *like* or *as*, as in “My job is like a prison”. During the close reading of the graphic novel, similes were counted as metaphors.

“A beast approaches” (Miller 1999:47), one of the 23 instances of metaphor (see Table 1) in the graphic novel, is said about Xerxes (the first component), who is to be understood in terms of

the beast (the second component). The context of a beast, and all connotations and inferences that go with that situation, or scenario, using terms of Fundamental Scenario-mapping, are applied to Xerxes. Consequently, he gets all the qualities of a beast transferred upon him. Sanford & Emmott (2012) apply their theory of scenario-mapping to this concept and theorize that metaphors can work in the writer's favor by drastically limiting one's understanding of a component. The graphic novel speaks of Xerxes' army in terms of a beast who is “savoring the meal to come”, and who wants to “snuff out the world's one hope for reason and justice”. References of the beast are prevalent in both the graphic novel and the film, excluding all hope for peace treaties and negotiations, because a beast cannot be reasoned with, and the only solution is its death. Limiting the reader's perception of the army to a mindless beast helps confirm Xerxes as the enemy, consolidating the reader's opposition towards him, and fortifying the reader's allegiance with Leonidas. This kind of dehumanization of Xerxes and his Persian army is important as not to allow for the reader to identify, and potentially sympathize, with the antagonists. Identification with the antagonist may, in some narratives, provide an interesting rhetorical feature in that the fictional world, and its inhabitants, becomes less black & white, and more gray. Nevertheless, in a story where a distinct difference of the protagonist and the antagonist is pursued, identification should in most cases be reserved to the former.

However, the metaphor of the beast does not end with the beast. The foe of the wolf is Leonidas as a young boy, caught in the same situation as the older King. He, a small boy at a disadvantage, faces a big, vicious creature. Victory is achieved by trapping the beast in “a narrow wound in the rock” (see Figure 7). The entire incident is a metaphor for the battle at Thermopylae.



Figure 7 – The metaphor of the beast in the graphic novel *300*. Source: Miller 1999:17.

6.6 Wenham's voice

The narrative voice in the graphic novel receives another dimension in the film adaptation in the form of the voice of David Wenham, who plays the part of Dilios, a member of Leonidas' army (see Figure 8). His voice introduces features of verbal emphasis and intensity to the voice-over, elements which can only be implied and imagined in the graphic novel.



Figure 8 – David Wenham as Dilios in the film 300. Source: Nunnari et al 2006.

Sanford & Emmott's (2012) idea of foregrounding, although in their work mainly applied to text, should provide insight in this area as well, as the written word can be considered as, and generally is, a representation of the spoken language. Foregrounding has been defined earlier in this essay (see section 4) as a deviation in the narrative, which, observed from a purely verbal perspective, should make all instances of emphasis and changes of intensity elements of foregrounding.

A study by Allport & Cantril (1934) suggests that physical looks and personal traits can, although not consistently, be judged solely by listening to a person's voice. Their theory is that this is done by the employment of stereotypes; listening to a voice, a person with a similar voice, known to the listener, is matched with it, and traits from that person are utilized in the reproduction of the character talking. This is closely related to Fundamental Scenario-mapping (Sanford & Emmott 2012), as the process is similarly depicted for the mapping of scenarios onto narrative.

Wenham's voice in the voice-over is mostly deep and dark, and possesses the quality of a classic rhetorician's voice. He speaks calmly and clearly, and takes pauses for rhetorical effect, all of which are characteristics of a skilled public speaker, almost implying that Dilios is reading from a prepared script. A vast number of inferences can be made from this. The speculative hypothesis is that most people couple his rhetorical skills with intelligence and reason, making him appear trustworthy and credible, which in turn might infer a character of high moral standards. These

hypothetical conclusions render Dilios a fitting candidate for autobiographical alignment (Sanford & Emmott 2012) in that he shows traits that are easily empathized with, as well as prompting strong allegiance (Plantinga 2010).

In subsection 6.2 (Bold formatting), the difference between the written narrative and the spoken narrative was touched upon, with the promise of expansion in this present subsection. This idea requires some introductory arguments, after which the connection to Wenham's voice will become clearer. The written narrative, which in its purest form can be found in literature, exclusively featuring text, relies on the imagination of the reader in giving voice to the narrative and the characters. However, in order for the reader to be able to imagine a voice, some bit of information of the character in question is required. For example, learning that a character, living in New York, is a Swedish native may facilitate an imagined voice of American English with a Swedish accent. The process at work in this example, as claimed by Sanford & Emmott (2012), is scenario-mapping. In receiving the information about the character, the mind of the reader searches for scenarios of the manner in which people from New York speak, as well as how Swedish natives, speaking English, speak. Additionally, a scenario about a New Yorker probably includes more than a manner of speech, such as habits, likes and dislikes, political preferences, etc. These all give life to the fiction and further establish and reinforce characteristics of the character, such as the voice.

The same thing speculatively happens with the graphic novel, only it features different modalities of narrative, namely the visual art and the text. The reader not only needs to find scenarios that match the given text, but the visual images as well. Hypothetically, this raises the bar of what scenarios are acceptable for mapping onto the narrative. The scenario needs to more accurately resemble the given situation in the graphic novel, and avoid contradicting any of the text or images. These high standards of what scenarios are acceptable for the mind to map onto the situation might render primary processing inadequate for complete comprehension of the situation. When primary processing has led to text having been mapped onto scenarios, “those aspects of the text that are unmapped set off secondary processing” (Sanford & Emmott 2012:21) recruiting “more complex inferential activity, and a search for alternative scenarios” (Sanford & Emmott 2012:21). Each modality renders the narrative more detailed and complex, limiting the choice of scenarios that can be mapped onto the story. This opens up for secondary processing, the mind looking deeper for available scenarios, and may even prompt defamiliarization. Based on this logic, every modality that is added to a narrative hypothetically raises the probability of prompting defamiliarization with the reader.

However, the opposite can also be claimed. If one modality of a narrative fails in mapping all aspects of the situation onto a scenario, another modality may pick up “those aspects of the text

that are unmapped” (Sanford & Emmott 2012:21) and successfully convey them as “ordinary” to the reader, making it unnecessary to prompt secondary processing. This perspective makes works of a single modality more prone to prompting defamiliarization, as there are no additional modalities to complement one another.

The properties of Wenham's voice are not particularly provocative, and stay within the expectations of the audience. Wenham does not stray from his acquired role of rhetorician and public speaker, at least not with how he uses his voice. The added modality of sound does however provide Snyder with a sort of control over the mind of the audience, as he effectively limits available scenarios and inferences that potentially can be drawn when not having knowledge of what Wenham's voice sounds like. Therefore, granting Dilios, Wenham's character, his specific voice makes sure the audience does not map another voice, which may have interfered with the narrative, onto his character.

6.7 Concluding remarks

In section 3 (Materials and Methods) a hypothetical difficulty was mentioned regarding the limited scope of this paper. The disregard of certain narrative elements, such as the visual art in the graphic novel or the soundtrack in the film, was necessary to be able to perform this study. The analysis here should be read with this in mind. That being said, a great deal of conclusions can be made based on the individual elements of *300* by themselves, which in turn can help facilitate a better understanding of the elicitation of emotions and attitudes with both the graphic novel and the film as wholes.

The theory of Rhetorical Framework Processing, by Sanford & Emmott (2012), proved very useful throughout this study, and provided insight on the processes of the mind during reading and experiencing the graphic novel and the film *300*. Results indicate that foregrounding plays a major role in *300*. Words and elements the writer wants the reader drawing inferences from are made to stand out and attract the eye, but although analyzing these instances of deviations often leads to interesting results, conclusions on the importance of each individual occurrence of foregrounding should be drawn with care. Foregrounded elements convey effect, but every small instance may not be significant enough by itself, but requires consideration of the context, and might sometimes only work properly in conjunction with other foregrounded elements.

The bold formatting of certain words in the narrative voice, in conjunction with its fragmented, yet logical, layout, rendered the narrative voice lifelike and realistic, with natural pauses implied by the units of text boxes. Words in bold were shown to retain a similar rhetorical effect in the film, often having been interpreted as verbal emphasis, making it foregrounded to the

reader.

Repetition, anaphora and metaphor can be seen as ways to reinforce particular attitudes or emotions with the reader, foregrounding selected elements, paving the way for experiential sensations of character sympathy, as dictated, apart from Sanford & Emmott's idea of experientiality, by the theories of autobiographical alignment, character engagement and transportation. Elements, such as the beast (see section 6.5), can be impregnated with emotional inferences for the audience to draw upon, and in turn be used in conjunction with other elements in order to imply emotional transference, such as the beast and Xerxes or the lion and Leonidas.

There may be some pedagogical value in pursuing defamiliarization with all audiences of narratives, using multiple modalities hypothetically being one possible way of doing so, but as discussed in section 6.6 it is still very unclear whether multimodal works actually facilitate or counteract the prompting of deeper, cognitive processing. The results of this study do not provide enough support for claiming either idea. Thus, further research on the subject is needed in order to attain insight on the matter. As a suggestion, further studies could include a quantitative investigation on the comprehension of works of varying numbers of modalities.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Stances toward Fictional Characters. Source: Plantinga 2010:43.

Opposition	Strong “con” stance extended through large portions of the narrative. Often taken toward antagonists and villains who directly threaten the protagonist, and whose actions are judged to be morally evil.
Antipathy	“Con” stance that may be weaker in strength and shorter in duration than opposition. Often rooted in moral factors such as cruelty toward or unfair treatment of other people or animals. Often taken toward minor characters as well as central villains or antagonists.
Dislike	Negative affect directed toward any character for the character’s nonmoral characteristics, such as style, quirks of behavior, appearance, dissimilarity to the spectator, etc.
Neutral Interest	Interest in, but lack of concern for, ironic amusement at, or mere cool fascination with, a character.
Liking	Positive affect directed at a character for any number of reasons, from similarity to appearance.
Sympathy	Concern for a character rooted in the perception that the character is suffering or has been treated unfairly. Usually accompanied by congruent emotions. May be weaker and shorter in duration than allegiance.
Allegiance	Strong “pro” stance extended through large portions of a narrative. Often taken toward the protagonist and usually involving sympathies. Tends to be governed by moral judgment and/or the promise of moral improvement.
Projection	The desire to emulate a character, typically incorporating both strong sympathy and allegiance, but extending to cognitive and affective activities and responses beyond the viewing experience.
