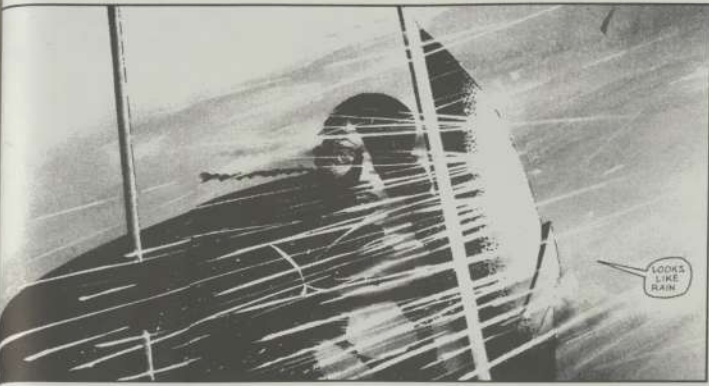


'300' paves way for next-gen film



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Left: A panel from Frank Miller's graphic novel, *300*, in which King Leonidas watches a Persian fleet get destroyed, that was perfectly recreated in the film adaptation. Right: King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) stands in front of his battle-worn army in a torrential downpour, watching the Persian fleet face Poseidon's wrath in the film version of *300*.

David Stark

The Clackamas Print

Three hundred Spartans died for honor, glory and an amazingly epic movie. With the threat of the advanced Persian Empire, King Leonidas (Gerard Butler, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Beowulf and Grendel*) goes to the oracle in order to gain permission to fight them. When refused, he breaks the law and takes 300 of his men to stand against the million soldiers of King Xerxes in the famous Battle of Thermopylae. The movie is excellently narrated by Dilios (David Wenham,

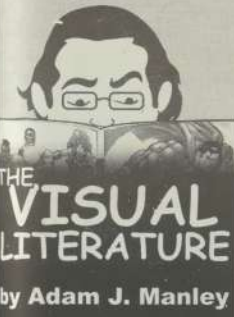
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, *Van Helsing*) and features a subplot new to the film about Queen Gorgo (Lena Headey, *The Brothers Grimm*) trying to convince the Spartan leadership, and councilor Theron (Dominic West, *Mona Lisa Smile*, *28 Days*) in particular, to send reinforcements to her husband. *300* is based off of the graphic novel of the same name written and illustrated by legendary comic book author Frank Miller. And as adaptations go, it is the best out there. Butler's performance as King Leonidas is perhaps the greatest of his career. When he bellowed the orders to the Spartan army, there

was a palpable feeling of command in his voice. As should be expected in any movie about a great battle, there was a great deal of time concentrated on the fighting, and it was spectacular. One scene particularly deserving of merit is when King Leonidas first enters the fray, and the audience is treated to one of the most amazing linear fight scenes, where the king

dispatches one enemy after another before taking a step and defeating his next foe. The visuals were truly magnificent, from the sky throughout the film to the charging rhinoceros that was felled by a Spartan spear. It needs to be kept in mind that the film was shot almost entirely on blue screen and that virtually all of the landscape is digital.

When compared to other "historical epics" that have come out in recent years, *300* soundly bests them all. With talented acting and dialogue straight out of Frank Miller's work, *300* dominates *Troy*, *Alexander* and even *King Arthur*. If you like great movies and don't mind some stylized bloodshed, then *300* is the movie for you.

Go go Gonzo comics!



He's sexier than Buddha and harder than Jesus... at least that's how he describes himself. His name is Spider Jerusalem, and he hates it here. Star of the comic series *Transmetropolitan*, Jerusalem is a renegade journalist living in a distant future filled with designer DNA and drug-addicted household appliances. After a blissful five-year retirement in the mountains, a regretted two-book contract forces him to return to a place known only as The City. Jerusalem immediately sets out to yank the carpet from under The City's comfortable consumerist culture, armed only with a chip on his shoulder and an illegal, diarrhea-inducing gun. When writer Warren Ellis began the series in 1997, it was the black sheep of the monthly comic world. With not a single hand-drawn shrine to an impossible physique, *Transmetropolitan* delved into our world's absurdities deeper and more blatantly than any ongoing comic of the time dared to. Dubbed a "fuckhead" by strippers and filthy assistants alike, the character of Spider Jerusalem is portrayed as a master of gonzo journalism - a gritty style of journalism, popularized by Hunter S.

Thompson, which plays off the notion that the truth needn't be objective. In the comic, Jerusalem writes a popular column entitled *I Hate It Here*, named for the fact that he was forced to return to The City after five beautiful years in the mountains. He uses the column to point a finger at the ignorance of his adoring masses - the middle one. "Spider Jerusalem needs to be in The City to write," his editor remarks in one issue, "but he also needs to be hated." It's a frame of mind the world doesn't see enough of today: the person so intent on telling the truth that they get gratification, possibly even of a sexual nature, from pissing people off. After all, strange as it may seem, the truth always pisses people off. That's why Ellis created the drug-addled son of a bitch to star in this comic: to point out everything in our "buy-now" culture and politics that makes him sick. I find it inspiring. As a journalist, as a filmmaker, and especially as a person, I find myself wanting to be more like "the fuckhead." Through Jerusalem, Ellis has achieved the very thing his character did. He has pointed out our ignorance, our hypocrisy and our sheep-like habits - and we love him for it. We love his series. We love his crude, insulting, degenerate character. We love the character because, in spite of his bracing personality, he stands for the truth, no matter the cost. He may hate The City, but he'll be damned before he'll let anybody screw with it. *Transmetropolitan*, sadly, reached its conclusion in 2002 - but not before leaving a very important message: Trust the fuckhead.



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Oracle of the Ephors (Kelly Craig) takes in some hallucinogenic mist in order to prophesize the results of King Leonidas' marching against the million soldiers of the Persian army.

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