

TRASH CITY 10

Violent Anime

Jackie Chan

Alien III?

Gunhed

Comics

£1.25



Trash City - Issue 10 'Summer' (hahaha!) 1991.

TC hits double figures and celebrates by going down the pub, lusting after barmaids who look like Phoebe Cates, topping up the cholesterol levels at the chip-shop, popping into the video shop on the way home (late-opening stores are a true indicator of civilization), renting something Oriental with no plot but a lot of fu and going to bed to dream about a live-action version of 'Dirty Pair' starring Winona Ryder and Nastassja Kinski.

"The implausible plot would definitely have benefited from a more light-hearted approach": Video World's anonymous reviewer writing about 'Miracle Mile', proving that a) you don't need to understand a film to write about it and b) intelligence is an optional extra for the writers on that magazine.

TC-shirts - Yeah! They're here! And, boy, were they worth the wait. Now, you too can have a wonderful full-colour painting of everyone's favourite German actress, wielding a blood-spattered chainsaw while not wearing any clothes. Choose from two exciting sizes (Large or Extra Large) and two groovy backprints (either "Fuck me gently with a chainsaw" or "The T-shirt they tried to ban"). These ultra-rare shirts (only a total of 50 exist) cost just £12, including postage. Order now: supplies are limited, so any delay may mean you might not get the size or slogan you want, though if we don't have it, we'll do the best we can.

Editor, most of the words + T-shirt supremo: Jim McLennan

The rest of the words: Peter R. Evans, Dean Heathcote, Tony Lee, Des Lewis, Andrew McGavin, Steve Welburn

Pictures: Per Porter

Subs: 75p/issue (\$2 Europe, \$3 elsewhere). Back issues: TC9 for £1/\$2/\$3, all others out of print. Cheques, etc, payable to Jim McLennan. All letters, money, tapes, bribes, Kinski clippings and Winona Ryder's underwear to:

7 Tummons Gardens, S.Norwood Hill, LONDON, SE25 6BD.

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- 6-9 Steve, where's the ***** comics piece?
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MIYAKO KUZU

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DISTRIBUTION

We're currently keen to get TC into some more shops. If you know of anywhere in your area that might be interested, and you'd be willing to wave a sample copy of this wonderful 'zine at the owner, let us know. If you're willing to extract payment for copies delivered as well, so much the better, as that's always the hardest bit! No pay, save perhaps free TC, and little glory, I'm afraid. However, you will get our undying gratitude and God will no doubt shower you with liquorice allsorts in Heaven. But see him/her/it about that, especially if you don't want the blue ones.

WELCOME TO THE VIDEODROME

After the nomadic TC9, normal service is now resumed with our 2nd Annual Orient Excess. About this time last year, we predicted that Eastern culture was going to be BIG. Thanks to things like 'Akira', the Black Sunday festivals and Channel 4's 'Chinese Ghost Story' season, this has come true and hopefully, things will continue to expand. At the moment I'd far rather sit down in front of a randomly selected Hong Kong action film than a randomly selected American horror movie...

This is despite the twin problem of getting hold of them to start with and then trying to understand the damn things. If you visit a Chinese video library, the reaction to a 'gwailo' wanting to join varies from surprise - "Are you sure?" said the girl in Videosino on Shaftesbury Avenue here (probably the best place to start if you're in the area, despite a hefty £30 deposit) - and at worst, a flat refusal, with some very nasty stories about places with bad attitudes. Generally, it helps if you can mention a few names, just to prove you're serious: Tsui Hark, John Woo & Chow Yun Fat tend to get good reactions.

Once you have your anime or Hong Kong film, you still have to work out what's going on. If you're lucky, it'll have subtitles, though in many Hong Kong films, half of each line will be missing due to pan-and-scan and what you can see will only vaguely resemble the language we know (I've seen the phrase "I'll give you a decent burial", spoken in English, become "I'll give you a dace and barrel"). Best not to try and read them, just let them wash over you - spot a verb here, a noun there and don't worry about the rest.

Even then, you still have to filter it through Western culture. I've not bothered greatly about that here - I could have spent ages wondering if I was laughing in the right places, but it's perhaps better just to enjoy them on whatever terms you can, as you'll absorb the culture by a process of immersion. I would ask tolerance, however, since what may seem perverse or sick to you might be absolutely natural to the Japanese. There's an entire new world out there waiting to be discovered. Take the plunge, and you'll be in for a delightful experience.

One date to ring heavily in your diary, in a variety of fluorescent colours. 26th October sees a joint Imaginator/Eastern Heroes triple bill at the Scala here in London. '**A Better Tomorrow III**', '**Class of Nuke 'Em High II**' and '**Nekromantik II**', with Jorg Buttgerreit there as well. For more details, send an SAE to Imaginator, Unit 1, Hawk House, Peregrine Park, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 7DL. I'll be there, and suggest you should be too, unless you want to risk Chow Yun Fat, the Troma boys and Mr.Buttgerreit popping round for your kneecaps!

Thanks to John London at Copyprint for his sterling work last issue (sorry about page 42!), Anthony Cawood, Dan Pydynkowski, Helen McCarthy, Paul Mallinson, Paul Higson, Damien Drake, George Houston, Alun Fairburn, Stefan Kwiatkowski, Brian Bower, Steve Moss, Graf Haufen, Sally Young and the other Associates, Peter R.Evans, Claire Blamey, Greg Stark, Ken Miller, Rick Baker (without whom Firm Britz would have been very plain!), Gerald Smith and my psychic twin Jim Swallow. TC9 was available from FP, Fantasy Inn & Psychotronic Vids, all in London, plus Videodrom, Berlin.

ART ED. EXTRA: THE KANJI ON THE COVER OF TC6 AND IN THIS ISSUE ARE 都 = 'MIYAKO' (CAPITAL, METROPOLIS) AND 糞 = 'KUZU' (RUBBISH, WASTE, TRASH, RAGS). LITERALLY "METROPOLIS OF FILTH"!

ALIEN III

'Alien III' by William Gibson
(Revised draft of screenplay,
from a story by
& Walter F.)



Three queens, mutoid aliens, countless face-huggers, chest-bursters and more than a few treacherous "company men" form a potentially apocalyptic threat to Mankind in this, sadly cancelled, version of the second sequel to Ridley Scott's superb 'Alien' (1979).

Cyberpunk author Gibson is widely acclaimed as the saviour of modern SF, or at least he was during the past decade! Here, his trademarks of masterly action sequences and slick handling of future technologies create a strongly convincing scenario of culture crashes and future schlock.

At the end of 'Aliens' (1986), we saw Ripley, Newt, Hicks and a damaged Bishop drift off into hypersleep having survived the attacks of the aliens and their queen on planet LB-426, "Acheron" (Hell, by any other name). The complement of space marines gone, they have the troop-transport starship Sulaco all to themselves until a navigation error puts them off course, and in violation of the space treaty of an independent 'Union of Progressive Peoples'. Commandos from the UPP station "Rodina" board the Sulaco but are instantly attacked by aliens! They beat a hasty retreat taking the torso of Bishop with them.

The Sulaco cruises through UPP space, and winds up at the Colonial base, "Anchorpoint", where Ripley, Newt and Hicks are revived. All three are baffled by the absence of Bishop, having slept through the UPP intrusion, and the port authorities keep them in the dark in an attempt to contain and suppress information about the aliens. Meanwhile, secret experiments are being conducted by both UPP and the Colonial Administration that sent the Sulaco expedition to LB-426 in 'Aliens'. Teams of civilian and military scientists succeed in cloning and mutating alien tissue samples collected from the Sulaco, but with disastrous results.

The action is split between the two opposing stations of humans who, inevitably, are forced to unite against the rapidly growing (in every sense) alien menace. Ripley isn't in this story much - she's dispatched to Earth quite early in the proceedings, on medical grounds. Newt and Hicks remain on Anchorpoint as they're the only witnesses to what these alien monsters can do, and their knowledge becomes vital in later alien-human conflicts. New characters of various ethnic origins (Vietnamese, etc) will come as no surprise to fans of Gibson's SF novels and his penchant for mega-corporation intrigues and cutting-edge technologies is also plainly obvious.

The paranoia and loss-of-humanity themes last seen in 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' and 'The Thing' (1982) are very much in evidence here. Alien DNA combines far too easily with the human variety, and all possibilities of meaningful co-operation between Man and Alien are decisively flushed out the nearest airlock when the adaptable alien's predatory nature is proven time and again. Suspense and conspiracies take a back seat in the fast-moving final stages, as a running battle develops between fleeing human survivors of Anchorpoint and pursuing alien hordes. The climactic action is relentless and horrific, as Hicks and his motley band head for the lifeboats, only to find the creatures waiting in ambush.

With so many effects and sets required to turn this epic SF horror into film, it's small wonder the producers took one look at the \$90 million estimated price tag and rejected Gibson's draft! The movie eventually produced at Pinewood reportedly bears little resemblance to this and prospects for any measure of success for the much troubled project took another dive recently with the appointment of David Fincher as director. He's best known for Madonna's 'Vogue' video...

COMIX

The Indies Strike Back

Welcome back. In the time since the last issue, two-thirds of the TC household popped to France for a silly weekend (unfortunately, our dear editor was transportless at the time & thus unable to join us... hence a trip to the Anime-con in California was deemed necessary in an attempt to tear him briefly away from TC). Plenty of silliness & alcohol was had by all, but that has nothing to do with comics, so I'll skip it.

What is relevant, is that the newsagent at St. Malo ferry terminus had various "comics" available... including **L'Echo Des Savanes**, and several **BD adultes**¹. L'Echo is a bit like an adult version of **Deadline** - included in the issue I picked up were: Manara's **Déclit 2**; a variation on the old "Thirty-six and you still believe in fairies" joke (fully illustrated of course); articles on virtual reality, the history of the bikini, **Meet The Feebles**, Antoinette "Rapido" De Caunes, & the current choice bimbettes (Samantha Janus, Winona Ryder, Naomi Watts & Lisa Matthew); a "readers'-wives" striptease; a slice of Paul Gillon's **The Survivor**; and an article on motorway pile-ups. Not bad, eh? T'other purchase was a pressy for the Ed - a copy of **Video 7**, possibly the finest video magazine in the world. Again French, this covered Lova Moor; Emmanuelle Beart; the latest cute American actresses (Lara Flynn Boyle, Uma Thurman, our Winona, Courteney Cox, Kelly Lynch, Robin Wright & Robin Givens); plus loads of film reviews (including a **Cahier X** section, dealing purely with the latest porn releases... and judging by the adverts, there are plenty of those). To return to the winging of last issue, why isn't good stuff like this allowed over here.

Beyond that comic-wise, I was stunned to hear of a shop over here that had a couple of **BD Adultes** in. On further investigation, these turned out to be **Le Déclit & Nouvelles Coquines**, both by Manara, and all that should be expected of Manara's work (see last issue for further details...). The first of these two is **Click!**, if you manage to find it over here ever, and is fun, sexy & every-so-slightly warped; I couldn't say what the other is (maybe **Shorts** ?) but it's cute & probably even better if you understand French, & hence the plot (aside: this is merely a humorous quip, as Manara's plots are not overly complex... then again, maybe they've just lost something in the translation). Anyway, onto the stuff our editor expects...

Personally, I've only really been "into" comics for about four years... okay, so when I was a kid, I read **Dandy**, **Beano** et al, then was there at the start of **2000AD**, but for about a seven year



Achilles Storm... Razmataz

¹ **BD** are Bannes Dessinés, French comics... just in case you didn't know!!

gap, I bought high on zero comics. Since my recent return to comics though, I've noticed various changes come about (maybe changes in perception, but I'd like to think it's really the comic-buying public & publishers that have caused it). The middle-ground between the mainstream comic megaliths & the underground comics has blurred greatly, with the independent publishers forming a more & more important slice of the marketplace. Companies such as **Now!**, **Dark Horse**, **Innovation**, and a whole load of smaller fish are producing challenging, interesting, different comics for mature readers (not "adult"... **mature**) - maybe it's often without the professional gloss that the DC & Marvel big-boys have, but since when were TC readers bothered by minor details like that! Anyway, of the 23 comics I'd been considering reviewing in here, 19 were from indie-land so I'll dub this an indie-scene SFC (even though Jim was willing to let me off topic-free this time) and set off into that strange and wonderful place.

(Cue theme from the Twilight Zone).

So.. what's to say ? Well, the indies have one major opportunity that the Marvel/DC "universes" lack - the freedom to experiment. There are very few rules to which the independents must adhere, and those are basically only there to ensure sales. There're the nice-art-shame-about-the-story sort, the nice-story-shame-about-the-art sort, the shame-about-the-art-shame-about-the-story sort (a.k.a. "crap" or "supporting budding artists"), and the dunno-what-it-is-but-I-like-it brand. The most immediately grabbing ones are (fairly obviously) those with the art. There is some stunning art out there, and it ranges through the whole spectrum of styles. A lot of indies are black-and-white, but colour is creeping in gradually - as more comics get sold, more companies can break out of the monochrome mold (or should that be mould... never can tell). So, time to name some indies...

Well, I guess I can start with **Fringe** (Caliber Press, currently on issue 6), a personal favourite with a completely off-the-wall cyberpunk-meets-Wile-E-Coyote sort of attitude. The artwork is fairly minimalist B-&W, the story concerns: a group of folks (principally Fringe himself and a Nun-like character going by the name of Chernobyl Red) who can alter other folk's perception of reality; a totalitarian set of bosses; and lots of bouncy balls (seriously). Fringe is anti-establishment, CR is most definitely part of the establishment. Personally I'm not really sure what's going on, but it's fun, nicely drawn & written... so give it a go.

Next... **Airwaves** (again, Caliber, issue 4 just out). More totalitarian governments, more minimalist artwork, this time with music as an interesting aside. In **Airwaves**, the future of muzak is realized as the masses are kept anaesthetized by the all-pervading dross (bit like THX 1138, but not so antiseptic!), so it's up to Jon Pure & his rock-band (aided by Paisley a Radio DJ less-than-loved by the authorities, punx and so forth) to beat the bad-guys. So far it's just really getting going - but so far, so (very) good.

Now for a few at once... **Cry For Dawn** (A true indie... from Cry for Dawn publications, issue 5 (Spring 1991) just out on British shores), **DHP** a.k.a. **Dark Horse** Presents (Not surprisingly from Dark Horse, up to issue 53 these days), and **Cheval Noir** (Again, from DH, heading for issue 22 Stateside). So, what connects them ? Well, they're all B'n'W anthology sort of titles... DHP & Cheval Noir are very similar in style - half a dozen unrelated strips, generally across a few issues per storyline - the main difference being that CN is European based rather than being States based. DHP



Yup, tis a Bouncy Ball from Fringe



Paul Chadwick's Concrete

has lately included **Sin City** (Frank Miller's latest, both written & drawn by him), **Homicide** (a police thriller style strip) and **The Aerialist** (a tale by Matt Wagner [Father of Mage & Grendel] set in a homosexual, drug-taking future where the main sport involves hanging off blimps by bungee cords (the exact details of the sport are a little vague...)). All good stuff, and definitely worth a peek (or two). **Cry For Dawn** is somewhat different. This is a horror anthology, initially based around Michael Linsner's artwork with a few writers to keep him busy, but which has broadened it's scope to include other artists (issue 4 was a bit of a let-down as it severely lacked Linsner bits apart from the cover). The stories have been completed in single issues, generally 3 stories per issue. Great artwork, some really creepy tales, a sense of humour, and you can even get **Cry For Dawn** T-Shirts (something on the list of to-be-sought's for the California trip!!).

Other black and whites include assorted manga: **Justy** was an eight parter about psychic space-cops; **Venus Wars** is a current series about war between conflicting cities (on Venus of course), which features lots of big, weird battle-bikes; **Golgo 13** is about a highly-skilled assassin and his "jobs" (actually this has been coloured in the Anglicized edition, but the black and white original stuff looks a load better!); then there's **Silent Moëbius**, a sort of female oriental ghost busters with the traditional oriental style ghosts slap-bang in the centre of the city. Also manga-wise, **Akira** and **Outlanders** (two of the best bits around) are currently heading to a close, but **Akira** is being reprinted in "bookshelf" format (three 64 page issues per bookshelf volume) and also in one of the new Marvel mags (Meltdown ?). **Area 88** (which stopped coming out about a year ago over here) is meant to be getting going again around year-end, so that should be worth a look (there's a **U.N. Squadron** arcade game around in which you take on the role of an A88 character and earn money to equip your plane... tasteless in it's own little way, but great fun!!). The majority of the manga that's in English has crept out of the Dark Horse and Viz - not UK Viz, American Viz - stables, plus bits from Epic (the not-part-of-our-universe-but-we-want-to-print-it part of Marvel). However, other companies have lately been spreading into the manga department - including Innovation, a company probably best known for their painted adaptations of modern novels, who have started producing **3x3 Eyes** over here... about a vampiric 3-eyed schoolgirl who wants to be human (and it's a lot more worthwhile than that makes it sound!!).

Principal among the Innovation stock is probably **The Vampire Lestat**, a nicely-adapted, prettily-painted adaptation of the second of the current three volumes in Anne Rice's vampire chronicles. Currently heading for issue 12 (of 12!) it's due to appear in a single 300+ page volume fairly soon. Just out last week (or that's when I first saw it) is issue one of **Interview With The Vampire**, the book that precedes **Vampire Lestat** (odd publishing sequence you may think, but the **Vampire Chronicles** do actually improve as they go on!), it's the first of another 12 part series. Coming soon is **Queen of the Damned** (the third book, again split into 12 issues) and **The Master Of Rampling Gate**, a one-off of one of Anne Rice's shorter vampire tales. Other Innovation bits include: a 4 issue adaptation of Terry Pratchett's **The Colour Of Magic** (recently finished); a couple of **Elm Street** style bits; and recently painted adaptations of Piers Anthony's **On A Pale Horse** and Gene Wolfe's **The Shadow Of The Torturer** have been started. "Coming

soon" includes a limited series version of **Psycho** and a 76 page "graphic novel" of **Phantom of the Opera**. Innovation stuff has so far been remarkably faithful to the originals but there can be quite a wait between issues (this is fairly common among all comic companies, Marvel & DC included, especially if the artwork is high quality... however, the Vampire Lestat series got me hooked enough to go out & buy the novels to read in the wait (and I still bought the comics as well!!)).

Dragon Chiang vaguely continues the oriental theme, but is actually about a Chinese-American who drives a truck through post-apocalypse America. A mere one-off, this is a nicely told tale in traditional Mad Max loss-of-humanity-through-war style. Nice stuff all the same. Other current nasty-future style stuff is predominantly Terminator based (Surprise! Surprise!) including: the Marvel comics adaptation of **T2** (a three issue series, all three issues of which are around already); the Dark Horse **Terminator One-Shot** (another must-buy for Matt Wagner fans); and a new four-issue Dark Horse Terminator series ("**Secondary Objectives**") about what happened when Arnie missed Sarah Connor.

I keep mentioning Matt Wagner, so I guess this is an appropriate time to mention my love of **Grendel**, earlier Wagner and very nicely done too. It concerns a demon-spirit ("Grendel") that possesses a mask and spear, and anyone who wears them... at least I think that's the basic line. However, this isn't a mindless-violence-until-exorcised style demon, this one is anti-establishment (why do I like anti-establishment comics...), anarchic and generally a crazy guy to have around. The Grendel series goes from roughly "now" to the distant future, where the Church has taken over the world, and Grendel is a sort of cult-religion figure that the Church wants to stamp out. Unfortunately, I'm currently suffering gaps all through my Grendels, and don't have about the last ten, so details as to what's really going on are lacking (maybe I'll pick up the rest in America... they must have them there). Another marvellous creation of MW's is **Mage**, sort of a King-Arthur-meets-the-little-green-men tale, collected in three volumes and a must-buy for anyone who thinks Frank Miller & Dark Knight redefined the comic-book hero (he just took the nice indie style and showed it was commercially viable to the big boys).

More oldies now!! **Rust** tells of a horribly disfigured man trying to maintain his humanity and protect his friends (vaguely like the **Concrete** stuff, but painted rather than line drawings and with fewer green-ities!!). **Shatter**'s, an early cyberpunk comic with computer generated art from the man who brought the world MacPlaymate (an icon-driven interactive sex game for the Apple Macintosh, featuring a prone figure, draggable dildoes, marvellous (if sick!) graphics, and assorted sound effects). Note that Shatter's art is somewhat earlier than **Digital Justice**, and it shows in the size of the printed dots... **God's Hammer** covers the tale of an ordinary guy from the future whisked off into adventures beyond his understanding. This has nice fine pen-and-ink stuff, 'tis good. **The Crow** is another Caliber title, telling of a man who turns psycho-vigilante to avenge the murderers/rapists who killed his girlfriend. Very nice story, definitely nice art, dedicated to Ian Curtis, and a marvellous picture of a man who has just slipped over the edge... the rights to this are apparently now in the hands of Dark Horse, so there's still a chance of an anthology version of this - buy it if you see it!

Well, that's definitely most of what I had littered around to cover, and if I'm not careful there'll be no room for any pictures (not that they're really much use in a marvel like TC), so this is me signing off. Now, back to the newsroom.

A San Futuro Production

THREE PIN PLUGS



Trick or Treat, run by Alun Fairburn, sells (mail-order only) ex-rental and other videos cheap, imports foreign 'zines and deals in all manner of genre stuff (he may be the only person with back issues of TC to sell!). I've bought a fair amount of things from there so can recommend it.

So where can you get all this Oriental stuff from? Well, for the Hong Kong action pics, the **Jackie Chan Fan Club** is the best source of information. They publish *Eastern Heroes*, an excellent bi-monthly publication with news, reviews and articles on all Hong Kong films, not just Jackie's ones (they also sell video-tapes, albeit at rather a high price!). For anime, if you're looking for merchandise i.e. books, magazines, cels from 'Akira' (I suggest using someone else's credit card for them!), then try the **Sheffield Space Centre**. They do mail-order, so send a couple of stamps and ask for a catalogue.

To the 'zines - here seems as good a place to mention **Anime UK** 4-6 (22/20/24 A4, £6/six issues), since this 'zine is easily THE place to contact other fans and learn about Japanese animation. The people who run it, Helen and Steve (the *Lovely Angels* of British fandom?) are always willing to help new fans.

One 'zine I got a flyer for but haven't seen is **Twisted Souls** - issue 1 promises film reviews and articles on John Waters, necrophilia and "the sound of horror". No idea of price or size yet. **Subterrene** 6 (30 A4, 50p) is almost 100% reviews, mostly but not exclusively horror films: editor Anthony digs up a lot of obscure stuff you won't find elsewhere, as well as covering the classics. **Pretty Poison** 1-3 (20 A4, £1) worships vids, drugs and rock 'n' roll, reviewing films, music and illicit pharmaceuticals (#3 has ecstasy getting a big thumbs down). Odd and obscure movies get most of the space in a fast, loose and cool style.

The most interesting thing for me in **Samhain** 27 (40 A4, 1.75) was, you'll not be surprised to hear, the Winona Ryder piece, despite qualms about what Britain's leading horror-zine is doing! Coming soon, a Julia Roberts interview? Pah, jealousy will get me NOWHERE! Speaking of lust, scraping in on the deadline is **Nora K** 4 (44 A4, 1.50?), Steve Rag's latest review of the activities of everyone's favourite jailbait. Reviews, more droolworthy pictures and even a Traci Lords Trivia quiz. **Creeping Unknown** 18 (40 A5, 95p) looks distressingly cool, with new DTP technology



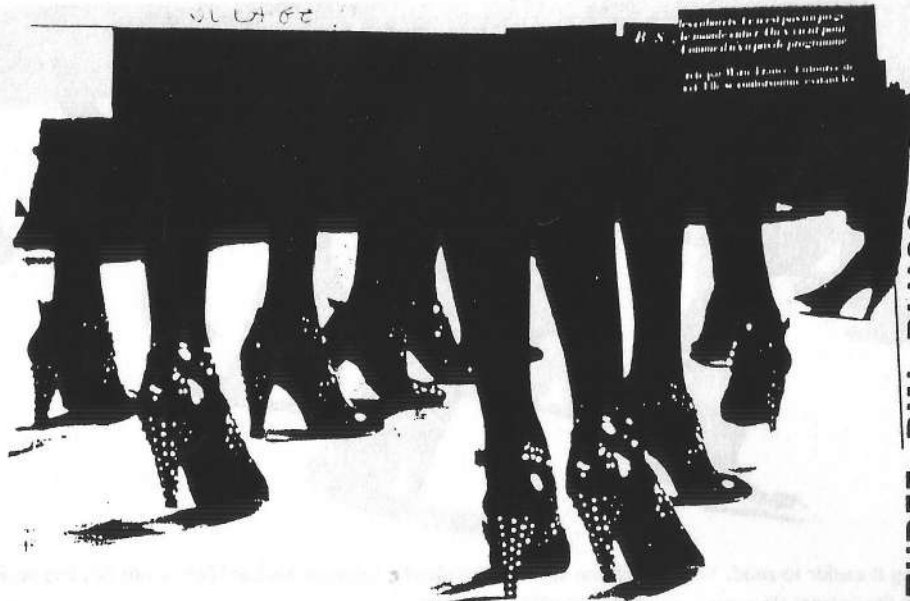
making it easier to read. What's still the same is the chatty, informal feel as Nick, Cath & Lino seek out all that's best (& worst), on film and video.

Dementia 13 (52 A4, 1.75) reaches its 6th issue, and has a couple of real good stories in it - one best described as 'A Clockwork Vampire' and another, "Omadhaun's Ink", that might push the boundaries of taste for some. **Critical Wave 21** (32 A4, £1.50) also deals with fiction, but it's SF rather than horror and is mostly articles ABOUT the subject. Not for the novice, it's well-produced and seems to know what it's talking about. **The Wild Places 2** (36 A5, £2) is a Fortean-ish 'zine with articles on corn circles, the extreme Christian press, alien conspiracies and spiritualism. Sceptical without being cynical, I enjoyed it.

Actions of Rebirth (20 A4, £1) is from Greece, but is (thankfully!) in English. It crams in more words per inch than most 'zines, on subjects ranging from the far Right to band interviews plus film & music reviews. **Black 8** (20 A4, 60p) is from Sweden and is ALMOST in English! Definitely a 'zine I like getting, as Mikael and friends rant about Swedish TV and review art-house stuff like "Seduced at a party by mother-in-law"!

Gore Gazette 104 (10 A4, \$1.50?) has a cover the shade of yellow seen only near nuclear plants. This issue has April Fool's humour, with phone calls to people like Tobe Hooper. Puerile, childish & funny. Congratulations to Michael Gingold for following GG to 3 figures with **Scareaphanalla 100** (14 A5, \$1), which proves Americans ARE capable of writing proper English! **Subhuman 18** (16 A5, \$2) is almost like an trans-Atlantic 'Sheer Filth' in content. perhaps not so sleazy, with the highlight being a scary piece on seeing someone you know in a porno film.

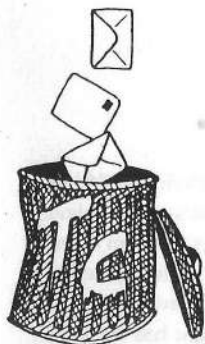
Mortal Remains (20 A4, \$3) has a clear, open layout that's highly legible, and articles on David Lynch, the Fangoria Weekend of Horrors and films that the editor reckons deserve a second chance. **Monster 57-58** (16 A5, \$1) continues Tim Paxton's love affair with creature features, though occasionally other things slither in. The man who really loves the films he writes about. Best new issue this time round is **Butarlan 1** (72 A4, 2.50). Startlingly entertaining and well produced, it's wide range of subject matter makes it look like a glossy American version of TC (that IS a compliment!). I got my copy through Trick or Treat (see above).



THREE PIN PLUGS

A typical page of **Factsheet Five** 42 (136 A4, \$5) might have a 'zine for interracial couples, a gay literary quarterly, the self-explanatory Kansas City Flying Disk Club Newsletter and a "bioregional journal of ecology, economy and living in harmony with the earth". Vital reading for the weird at heart. **Generation X** (24 A4, 75p) is aiming to do the same task in Britain, cataloguing everything from records to 'zines, with articles to vary the tone.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Actions of Rebirth: | Bill, Apostolopolou 51, Halanori 15231, Athens, Greece. |
| Anime UK: | Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Rd, Leyton, LONDON, E10 6NT. |
| Black: | Mikael Bomark, ASPV.28, 14141 Huddinge, Sweden. |
| Creeping Unknown: | Nick Cairns, c/o 33 Maltby Rd, Mansfield, Notts NG18 3BN. |
| Critical Wave: | Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG |
| Dementia 13: | Pam Creais, 17, Pinewood Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 8BB. |
| Generation X: | 1 South View, Main Street, Mexborough, S.Yorks, S64 9NE. |
| Gore Gazette: | c/o Sullivan, 469 Hazel St., Clifton, NJ 07011, USA. |
| Jackie Chan Fan Club: | Eastern Heroes, PO Box 409, London, SE18 3DW. |
| Monster: | Tim Paxton, MPO Box 67, Oberlin, OH 44074-0067, USA. |
| Mortal Remains: | Kevin V.Lewis, 1835 Centre City Pkwy, #145, Escondido, CA.92025, USA |
| Nora K: | Steve Rag, 118 High Street, Eastleigh, Hants, SO5 5LR. |
| Pretty Poison: | Gary Gittings, c/o 307, Bloxwich Road, Leamore, Walsall, WS2 7BD. |
| Samhain: | 77 Exeter Road. Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0LX. |
| Scareaphania: | Michael Gingold, PO Box 489, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156-0489, USA. |
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| The Wild Places: | Kevin McLure, 42 Victoria Rd, Mount Charles, St.Austell, Cornwall PL25 4QD. |



High Weirdness By Mail

Only room for a few letters this issue. Probably a good job too, as I'm beginning to suspect this is really the "Penthouse" letters column...

Stephen Cremin, Croydon - "You mentioned expeditions to watch oriental girls in short rubber skirts. Whereabouts in London can you go for a high babe count outside Chinatown?...How about a list of venues in TC10 to back up your Oriental focus? Or an organised **TC Babe Watch** - it could lead to a good follow-up article with photographs and short interviews"

C'mon, do you really think I'm going to let you know all the best zones? As it is, the '...' was a tip for Manchester which I'm keeping to myself!

Greg Smith, Milton Keynes - "Given your apparent obsession with Winona Ryder, I figured I'd let you know that she appeared as Debbie Gibson with Mojo Nixon in his video for 'Debbie Gibson is pregnant with my two-headed love child' wherein they apparently wrestled in a giant vat of red jelly! So if you have any connection and know where to get hold of a copy..."

Had he not supplied documentary evidence, this would be appearing under "bizarre but imaginative fantasies". So, can anyone help? And before I forget (like I have the past two issues!), Dan Pydynkowski, an American TCer, is looking for info on Janet Agren. Send any data to me and I'll pass it on.

Jason Parker, Fockbury - "Don't think I didn't catch that snipe in the 'Grim Prairie tales' review. Now I know that reality takes on a different perspective but my faculty seems to have borne up better than yours. As I remember it, I was waking you up, purely as a favour. [What does this 'selective editing' button do?...]Jenny Agutter...two gherkins...pre-pubescent...McDonalDs...soft-fleshed"

Ah. I see. Useful. Now, let's enter The Reality Zone.

Brian Bower, Preston - "I have every sympathy with William Kilfeather's views on the rip-off merchants of the Fanzine World...whilst criticizing the con-men, I would like to take the opportunity to praise the editor of one mag. I saw an ad for an American 'zine that had brought out a Hong Kong special so I wrote asking if it was possible to obtain a copy. He not only sent me a complimentary copy of the special, but also a copy of his regular mag. If you ever have a little space in your mag review column to sing the praises of **Tim Paxton**, it would perhaps balance the scales somewhat".

Sentiments with which I heartily concur: for every swindler there's a saint. To finish on, though, what better than some anonymous abuse. See if you can guess which 'zine was being referred to in this quote:

"XXX does have an egotistical air about it. After reading a few issues, you can almost feel the editor's head pulsating as it increases in size..."

F

ilm Blitz

The Borrower (John McNaughton) - Anyone expecting 'Henry II' ('After Henry'?) is in for a shock. This is totally different in style and tone, resembling 'The Hidden' more than anything, with bits of 'Re-Animator' as well. An alien, exiled to Earth in human form, wanders round taking people's heads (hence the title) and using them for it's own, to the perplexment of policewoman Rae Dawn Chong. She has another problem too, a rapist she caught has escaped and is out for revenge. There's the crux: the film is almost two different ones joined at the hip, and the strands always seem disparate. Although only normal length, it also feels about 20 minutes too long as the alien wanders rounds without doing much. Still, Antonio "Huggy Bear" Fargas makes a delightful wino! 6/10.

Cyrano de Bergerac (Jean-Paul Rappeneau) - Curious how both Gerard Depardieu's best known roles have been deformed, tragic heroes at the mercy of other people. If anything, Depardieu's even better here than he was in 'Jean de Florette', and the first half of CdB is sheer magic, almost a one-man show as the character is established as a cross between Robin Williams and Indiana Jones, helping his cousin to woo a girl, whom he desperately loves himself. However, squint beyond Depardieu's dazzling performance and the rest of the cast look distinctly average, and the film grinds gently to a near-halt by the end. Definite contender for performance of the year to date though. 8/10.

Deathstalker: Match of Titans (Howard Cohen) - Don't confuse this with 'Deathstalker', or 'Deathstalker II: Clash of the Titans', as according to the end credits this is 'Deathstalker 4: The Darkest Hour'. Now we've got that out of the way, I can tell you that the movie itself is astonishingly naff. Whatever happened to real sword and sorcery, with blood and bosoms? Rick Hall, the hero from the first movie, has returned to the role, and he brings a similar self-effacing humour to it as John Terlesky did in number 2. This helps a bit, as do the warrior women also competing in a tournament at a castle where the plot unfolds (the usual: evil princess and magic). And while it might be hard to dislike a film with an exchange like "A toast!". "No, just some coffee...", this movie almost manages to make you do it. 5/10.

Edward Scissorhands (Tim Burton) - The modified version of the 20th Century Fox logo which opens this film promises a magical, weird experience and Burton finally delivers in spades what's been visible in flashes through the rest of his career. It's one of the most beautiful films I've seen, right up there with 'Legend', and quite restores my faith in Hollywood. Johnny Depp, to my surprise.

F

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is very good in the title role, a Quasimodo/Frankenstein type with shears instead of hands, rescued by an Avon lady from his castle home. He then takes up topiary and hairdressing, although things go wrong when he's led astray by the girl he loves (Winona Ryder, finally hitting puberty at 18 and filling out nicely!). The first half is generally comic, with most attempts at subtlety sharply cut off by amusing but annoying humour. Complemented by Danny Elfman's score, the second part cuts the comedy and is superb, containing perfect moments such as Edward's sculpting of an ice angel which sent a shiver down my spine. The story-telling isn't faultless - important elements are thrown in almost casually - but everything else, right down to the set design, is nearly without flaw. 9/10.

Film Gore (various) - A vaguely interesting but largely pointless collection of film clips, hosted by the cultish but rather boring Elvira. The films are variously gory but yawn inducingly dull (Blood Feast), ungory but nasty and even scary (Texas Chainsaw), gory and effective (Driller Killer), totally ungory and totally boring (Dr. Jekyll's Dungeon of Doom) and a bit gory but barely interesting (Astrozombies). Put together by Ken Dixon, who later followed this with 'Zombiethon' (containing the same Astrozombies footage and music), this was one of the first compilation tapes in America, soon to be followed by 'Best of Sex and Violence' and other cut 'n' paste videos. Elvira is far from being a highlight - she constantly interrupts the clips offering offensively unfunny jokes, remarks and puns. Load in, press play and keep your finger ready for fast forwards. (AM)

Hamlet (Franco Zeffirelli) - I must be one of the few people who'd have gone to see this even without Mad Mel, Helena Bonham-Carter (Britain's answer to Winona Ryder?) being sufficient justification. Having said that, Mel's not a bad Lethal Hamlet, especially when he goes into

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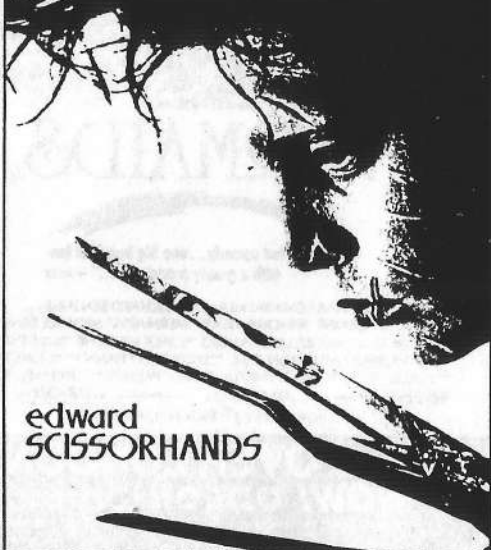


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SCISSORHANDS

Shakespearean Psycho mode. the first twenty minutes or so are almost incomprehensible as you struggle to find the verbs in iambic pentameter verse but as you get used to it, it becomes a tense thriller. Mel's backed up well by a good cast, notably Ian Holm and (naturally) HB-C, who looks about 12, sounds about 25 and goes insane, singing to herself. It all builds to an effective climax before everyone dies (damn, I've given away the plot - I was slightly worried the studio execs might have insisted on a happy ending!), While it's no classic interpretation, half the play vanishing in a struggle to get a realistic running-time, it's a lot better than it could have been. 7/10.

In Broad Daylight (James Sadwith) - Supposedly based on fact, this film neatly reverses the "one vigilante against a million scum" theme, by having an entire town take on one redneck after his assault on a shopkeeper seems to be going unpunished by the law, thanks to legal legerdemain. This provides 80 or so minutes of highly effective menace, courtesy of Brian Dennehy as the villain, definitely not the sort of guy you'd want to meet down any alley, dark or otherwise. That's really about it; a long, slow-burning fuse, with more a whimper than a bang at the end. Such is the price of docudrama, since the same can probably be said for most of real life itself (even when transformed into cinema). Still, Dennehy delivers enough frisson to carry the film as a whole, even if it all feels not unlike a TV movie, albeit a grimy, well-done one. 8/10.

The Hard Way (John Badham) - Yet another buddy-buddy cop movie, except this time, one cop is really an actor, Nick Lang, pretending to be a cop to prepare for a part. This spoilt brat is played by Michael J.Fox - you will not be surprised to hear he is quite good at this. However, the REAL cop is James Woods and you will not be surprised to hear he is VERY good, combining manic tension, hyperactivity and self-doubt as he searches for the Party Crasher, a serial killer who calls the cops before each murder. He's taken off the case to babysit Lang - does this stop him? You will not be surprised, etc, etc. This predictability runs through the movie but the joy to be had watching Woods struggling to call Fox "Susan" more than makes up for this. Keep an eye out for one glaring continuity error - the finale takes place on an enormous billboard head, whose eyes move when seen in close-up but in long-shot they're embarrassingly static... 7/10.

A Hazard of Hearts (John Hough) - Avoiding the usual TC film accompaniment of a can of Guinness, a box of choccies was considered more appropriate for this Babs Cartland inspired melodrama. Taken in the right spirit, it's fun - a thoroughly evil villain (James Fox) menacing poor orphaned heiress (and part-time gambling stake) Helena Bonham-Carter, Gareth Hunt as a highwayman for very little reason and Diana Rigg spitting poison and chewing scenery, some time before "Mother Love". Though not quite Gothic enough (it needed a "Gone, and never called me Mother!" scene) and with some stultifyingly inept performances - we won't mention names - it wasn't as sugary as I expected given the author and any sick feeling can be blamed on an overdose of Milk Tray. Pass the soft centres. 8/10.

Mermaids (Richard Benjamin) - Every so often a film appears that confounds all expectations. On the other hand, this is exactly how I expected it to be, ruined by the plastic surgery disaster called Cher. Too much rhinoplasty means she has no alternative but to look down her nose as if the rest of the characters smelt funny. A shame, as you CAN empathise with them, whether it's Bob Hoskins as a Jewish shoe-salesman or Winona as the daughter who wants to be a nun, but whose hormones aren't listening (another shower scene & on-screen loss of virginity for her). She wanders round with eyes like saucers (this, I can cope with!) and gets pleasantly more screen time than her billing would

suggest. The soundtrack is hideous 60's crap, the only redeeming feature being that Cher's "Shoop Shoop Song" is played over the end credits so you can avoid it. Two off for Cher, 6/10.

The Most Dangerous Woman Alive (Christian Marnham) - Such a title promises a fair amount of sleaze, and certainly this isn't short on female flesh. It's also more subversive than you might expect: a female Army cadet is raped by her C.O. and, after he's acquitted by a court-martial, she recruits other women-with-grudges, and starts extracting her revenge on those she regards as responsible. Marete van Kamp plays her with the right degree of insanity, and Robert Lipton gets bonus points for cool as the covert operations man sent to investigate the disappearances. While there's the usual cliches such as the bad girl who isn't really, and the last half an hour is totally predictable, overall, it's a pleasant surprise. 7/10.

Night of the Living Dead (Tom Savini) - If you liked the original, you'll probably hate this remake but I'm not really a fan of Romero's first zombie pic - a milestone film that looks badly dated and cheap now - so found this fun. Savini drags NotLD into the 80's: not quite the 90's, but significantly further on. The original plot needs no description, and is almost exactly reproduced, though tweaked (especially towards the end) to keep your interest going. 'Barbara' is beefed up to almost Sigourney Weaver standard and the gore is too, though it's well short of 'Dawn' or 'Day'. About the only change that I felt didn't help was the removal of 95% of the TV scenes, which for me were one of the original's strongpoints. 7/10.

Vigilante (William Lustig) - Surprisingly decent movie from the man behind the ultra-sleazy 'Maniac', here Lustig restrains himself well to good effect, avoiding both excessive sadism and glorification of the vigilante squad, led by Fred Williamson, who are the main characters. They gain a recruit in the husband of a woman attacked by a gang, after the leader gets a minimal sentence, but he discovers that violence has two sides. Good, believable acting from the cast (including the late Joe Spinelli) and Lustig, much like Abel Ferrara, has an eye for the grimmer side of urban life. 8/10.

Oxford Blues (Robert Boris) - An American dickhead (Rob Lowe) comes over to Oxford University, seemingly populated mostly by English dickheads, tries to steal Amanda Pays from Julian Sands, fails, gets thrown out for punching one of aforementioned English dickheads, by winning a rowing race and ends up with Ally Sheedy as a consolation prize. Gough look suitably embarrassed at appearing in such tosh, Sands & Pays are ethereal, but that's it. 3/10.

Straw Dogs (Sam Peckinpah) - The most striking thing about Susan George and Wendy James. Otherwise, it's odd defending his home from crazed yokels after they are some nice sequence. Thomas...



特集の悼尾を飾るのは、田中芳樹さんと同じく、アニメ世代文学のもうひとり旗手、新鋭・酒見賢一さんを迎えての対談です。酒見さんと「銀河英雄伝説」の出会いが大学3年。そのころのエピソードなどもまじえ、3時間余にわたる初顔合わせは、アニメ、文学、政治など話題は多岐に及び、思いきり語りこもらいました。

くず都

SPECIAL 対談



The films of Jackie Chan have a far greater fascination for me than those of his Western counterparts in the martial arts genre, such as Jean-Claude Van Damme. I find ninety minutes of sadistic nastiness of limited interest and greatly prefer Jackie's brand of spectacularly enjoyable violence where no-one, not even the bad guys, 'really' seems to get hurt. I use quotes deliberately because he has probably suffered more injuries while doing his own stunts (still the case, even though he's now a star) than most Western stunt-men (never mind actors!), most notably a fractured skull during filming in Yugoslavia on 'Armour of God'. When Jackie limps, it's probably for real.

Jackie Chan, real name Chan Kong-Sang, was born on April 7th, 1954 in Hong Kong. When he was seven, his parents sent him to the Peking Opera -perhaps the best way to describe this venerable institution, responsible for producing some of the best Oriental martial artists, is to call it a cross between a stage school, a circus and an SAS training camp. There, under his master Yu Chan Yuan, he spent ten years learning acting, gymnastics, singing and, naturally, martial arts - his teachers remember him as not outstanding, but he always gave 100%.

Just like Bruce Lee, Jackie started his career as a child actor and he then worked as a stuntman for several years before getting any major breaks. His first film, 'Master with Cracked Fingers' shows a very different JC to the one we know today, not least because he's since had cosmetic surgery to Westernise his eyes. It has to be said that a lot of his early movies, which he merely acted in rather than directing, were low-budget hack-jobs, churned out under tight budgets and schedules. His later fame also meant that any film in which he'd appeared suddenly became 'starring Jackie Chan' - not that this means they are automatically worthless of course ('Half a Loaf of Kung Fu' has its moments) but you're advised to view with some caution.

The first turning point in Jackie's career came with 'Snake in the Eagle's Shadow', made in 1978 under director Yuen Wo Ping, later responsible for 'In the Line of Duty 4', one of my all-time favourites. The same duo virtually remade this movie as 'Drunk Monkey in the Tiger's Eyes' - different fighting style (this one roughly translates as 'Eight Drunken Fairies', and requires the participant to drink a lot of alcohol!), almost the same plot.

Shortly afterwards, Jackie took over directing his films, and has done so on most of his appearances since, though after a couple of movies, he made a brief excursion to America for 'The Big Brawl' directed by Robert "China O'Brien" Clouse. This was followed shortly afterwards by a small part in 'The Cannonball Run': Jackie also appeared in the sequel, but that's not his fault.

Opportunity knocked, and Jackie left from a first floor window to meet it. The result, and the second turning point, was 'Project A'. The rest, as they say, is history. Big box-office followed and Jackie was firmly established as the biggest star in Hong Kong, although his fame here has been mostly limited to video, with cinema releases of his films being distressingly few and far between,

Humour plays a vital role in Jackie's films, a pleasing contrast to the unremitting seriousness that affects most of the Western output ('Blind Fury' being a notable and worthy exception). Learning much from masters of physical slapstick such as Buster Keaton, Jackie Chan has become adept at using humour to provide an outlet for the energy his movies generate, without detracting in any way from the tension.



Just For Kicks!

Credit for this must also be given to Samo Hung, acknowledged as the master of "funny kung-fu", and with whom Jackie has worked on many movies. These two are master craftsmen and if either of them are directing a film, you're virtually guaranteed a good time. And 'a good time' is what sums up Jackie Chan's films more than anything else - here are my personal favourite five, all directed by him except where noted:

5. Snake and Crane Arts of Shaolin (Chen Chi-Hua) - This one's my favourite early Jackie Chan, perhaps because while it's less spectacular than his later efforts, it's 96 minute running-time seems to be almost entirely fight sequences! Jackie plays the only surviving master of the titular fighting technique who's carrying the manual describing the style and who thus becomes a target for virtually every clan in existence. All is not quite what it seems, however. This is a 'classical' kung-fu movie, and so may not appeal to everyone, but I like the feel of it and the ease with which it slotted a relatively complex plot into the small gaps between the battles.

4. Project A - Jackie's first big directorial hit is set at the turn of the century, when pirates ruled the waves because the police and coastguard were too busy bickering with each other to fight crime. An impressive opening bar-brawl and the best bicycle chase since the days of silent movies are capped by perhaps JC's most amazing stunt ever, when he falls fifty feet or so from a clock tower onto solid ground - admittedly, there are a couple of awnings in the way, but all they seem to do is ensure he falls on his head. If after this, the film's pace does slacken a little, it's understandable! [If the sequel is less spectacular, it's higher in humour and still decent viewing]

3. Dragon Lord - This provides a great example of the indeterminate time in which many Oriental films are set - it looks like turn-of-the-century China, yet at one of the sporting events there are cheerleaders, complete with pom-poms. Hell, it's good fun, even though it's more humorous than martial for the first hour as Jackie and his cousin vie for the affection of a girl and play some amazing pastimes - I especially liked the football-badminton cross. When the kung fu comes, it's a bonus but is easily up to standard as he takes on a bad guy trying to illegally export antiques. I guess it's a variation on the old drug smuggler theme!

Jackie Chan

2. My Lucky Stars (Samo Hung) - Great mix of comedy and action, as might be expected given the director. Jackie appears mainly at the start and end as a cop sent to Japan, who has his partner kidnapped and sends for help from his old orphanage buddies. These include Samo Hung and Yuen Biao, and the party is accompanied by the delectable Sibelle Hu, to whom everyone gets tied during a sequence that's among the funniest in any film I've seen (especially if watched after a couple of pints of Guinness!). The mass brawl at the end is incredible, even if on the small screen you get the feeling you're missing half the action out the edges.

1. Police Story - Any movie that starts off by destroying an entire village clearly has a severe disregard for property. And when two people plunge head-first onto concrete from the top deck of a bus shortly afterwards, it's clear this attitude extends to human life. Jackie's a cop protecting a reluctant drugs witness but this is nearly irrelevant, especially in the UK version which loses 20 minutes of plot, and things move inexorably towards the best end sequence in any martial arts movie. Easily the most violent '15' rated movie I've seen, you wonder how the stuntmen and Jackie can walk off the set. Then, under the end credits there is a sequence of out-takes and you realise that quite often, they don't. [The sequel, disappointingly, takes about 70 minutes to get going - an oddly deviant section where three cuties engage in nasty interrogation techniques is a highlight of an otherwise dull movie, though the final battle just about recovers things]



FILMOGRAPHY - Deep-breath time again. The following contains 'significant' roles only, excluding films in which he acted as a child or was "only" a stuntman. For an exhaustive rundown, see 'Eastern Heroes' No.12 (details in 3-Pin Plugs).

- 1971** Master With Cracked Fingers
(very, very, barely starred!)
- 1976** New Fist of Fury
- 1977** To Kill with Intrigue
Snake & Crane Arts of Shaolin
Killer Meteor
Eagle Shadow Fist
Hand of Death
36 Crazy Fists (dir)
36 Wooden Men
aka Shaolin Chamber of Death
- 1978** Drunken Master
aka Drunk Monkey in the Tiger's Eye
Half a Loaf of Kung Fu
Magnificent Bodyguards
Snake in Eagle
aka Eagle Shadow Fist
Spiritual Kung Fu
aka Karate
Ghost Busters
Dragon Fist

- 1979** Fantasy Mission Force
Fearless Hyena (+ co-dir)
Fearless Hyena II
(see Master with Cracked Fingers!)
- 1980** The Young Master
aka Young Tiger
The Big Brawl
- 1981** Cannonball Run
- 1982** Dragon Lord (+ dir)
- 1983** Cannonball Run 2
Project A (+ dir)
Winners and Sinners
Kung Fu Girls
- 1984** Meals on Wheels
- 1985** My Lucky Stars
The First Mission
aka Heart of the Dragon
- 1986** Police Story (+ dir)
Armour of God (+ dir)
- 1987** Dragons Forever
Project A Part II (+ dir)
- 1988** Police Story II (+ dir)
- 1989** Miracles (+ dir)
aka Mr.Canton and Lady Rose
- 1991** Project Condor (+ co-dir)
aka Armour of God II
Island on Fire





Outlanders

Since the beginning of the 80's, the West has slowly been discovering the popular culture of Japan, a country hitherto known only for 'The Seven Samurai', a handful of similar art-house features (often by directors disliked in their native Japan) and vast numbers of dire monster movies.

I'd like to say it began in Britain earlier, but probably it was indeed Clive James's look of pained disbelief as Japanese salarymen willing tied themselves to tractors, in order to be dragged half-naked over sunbaked gravel, that revealed to the British public at large the truth about this little known island. We loved it. Gradually, better (and more horrendous) forms of entertainment were discovered so that by the late 80's and Channel 4's Japan season, the myth of the Japanese as mild-mannered, Bonsai-trimming car-manufacturers had been totally destroyed.

violent anime

Despite changes since World War II, Japan is still the same culture it was when the Portuguese and Dutch came in the 16th century. Beneath a surface gloss of civilization runs violence: then, as samurai defending his lord's honour in battle, and now, as a hero on the silver screen dispatching victims with the precision of a micro-surgeon.

In Japanese film & TV, violence is intrinsic and natural, certainly the only thing holding it back is the cost and difficulty of any special effects. But what live action can't manage is carried out by animation studios (in Japan, these produce 150 cinema releases per year) to satisfy an eager audience. The obvious advantages of animation are exploited to the budget's limits when it comes to thinking of new ways to kill people on screen and anime has succeeded in throwing up (literally!) some of the most shocking and creative sequences of designer violence ever, whether in fast paced fight scenes or nightmarish visions of terror.

And so dear readers, here in reverse order, are what your humble author considers the ten 'best' examples of extreme violence in anime. Dependant on your personal proclivities, any or all of these are worth seeing...



10 - Black Magic Marionette M66

A good example of violent action in an excellent 'Terminator' style movie. The feature contains little more than two set pieces: one is set in a tower block, but the better one for my money has the rogue androids (of female design, no less) attack an army road checkpoint. The androids easily kill most of the soldiers in an impressive display of martial arts and whilst blood and gore are not greatly in evidence, the style of the piece more than makes up for it.

9 - A.D. Police File One

Being largely invulnerable to gunfire will help prolong any violence and the protagonists in A.D. Police, again female robots, are just that. The scene that counts has the police trying desperately to destroy a robot by cutting it's head off. However, it gets a gun and proceeds to pump enough lead into one guy to sink his corpse, with each round sending either a limb or about two pints of blood flying.

8 - Yoma, Volume One

A single picture stands out in this one, aside from some nice human-spider transformations. The best image is of the spider overlord (who is distinctly human), sitting in his nest eating a human head. If you've ever seen pictures of children brought up by wolves to eat raw meat and run wild, then you'll recognise the look on the creature's face.

7 - Outlanders

The film of the comic, although heavily condensed, retains the carnage of Kham's arrival on Earth. Heads lose contact with necks, arms touch the floor without their respective bodies having to bend and death scapes all contain enough blood to paint the town red.

6 - M.D. Giest

This one really is a lot of cobbles, but it does contain a lot of very gory violence. Our hero, M.D.Giest himself, is more than capable of crushing a man's head with his bare hands. If this show is to be believed, in such circumstances the human eye will merely pop out due to the pressure. Again, blood is much in evidence, one guy at least having a seemingly endless supply.



5 - Megazone 23, Part II

The key sequence here involves a very one-sided space battle. Imagine, if you will, the effect that masonry drill (attached to flexible tubing so that they can go anywhere) would have on your skull. Got it? Good. That's a pretty good description of what attacks the bridge crew of a space craft. The deaths of the characters are both protracted and very messy - in case you missed any first time round, most of it is repeated later on in the film as a gory captain's log.

4 - Five Star Stories

Another entry in the Stylish Violence bracket. Again, it's decapitation and dismemberment but it's an altogether better class of death and destruction than previously. Choice moment has to be when a knight uses a light sabre to slice through a guy's head, and the two parts slide apart. Or perhaps the 'multiple beheading by pole-ax' is more to your liking...

WHICHOK violent anime



3 - Akira

There's no denying it - 'Akira' is a very violent film, it's impact largely coming from it's realism, the excess of blood being replaced by accurate portrayal of internal organs. Tetsuo's transformation into the pile of molten flesh being all the more unpleasant for the lack of blood. The film's ability to shock is outstanding, how this got a '12' certificate, I will never know.

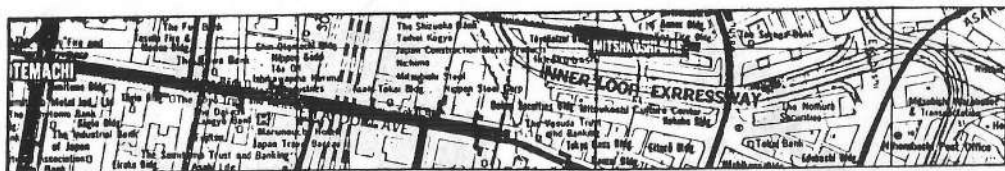
2 - Violence Jack

I'm pleased to say that I've only seen part of this, but what I did see was highly unpleasant. The nastiest anime generally involves sexual violence and this is no exception. A motorcycle gang attacks and rapes a group of models trapped in parking lot. Help comes their way when Jack intervenes, a man whose idea of justice is to tear the offender in two by grabbing a leg in each hand and ripping. Everything about this was sick. It's still not as bad as...

1 - Urotsuki Doji

This is sick. Really sick. Also known as 'Wandering Kid', it has quite a degree of infamy, as shown by the fact that it had the highest audience of any film at Eastercon '90 (the national SF convention). It's plot, what little there is, revolves around an angel, thrown out of heaven for being too brutal, fighting demons on Earth. All this is just an excuse for three set piece sexually violent sequences. By far the worst, in my opinion anyhow, is when the young 'hero' (a pervert who enjoyed watching his girlfriend get raped), killed in a car accident but resurrected as a demon, literally fucks a nurse to death. His penis then extends to well over a hundred metres long and tears it's way through the hospital, trapping the souls of countless victims. Not only is this the most violent anime I've ever seen, it's the most extreme piece of any sort. Indeed, it is a relief to know it's "only a cartoon", but leaves me with one thought: what sort of people are the animators?

[Editor's note: I agree that it's no.1, but for me the worst section is where a schoolgirl is molested by her female teacher, who then turns into a many-tentacled demon which rapes said schoolgirl. In every orifice. Simultaneously. In close-up...]



Fuzzy Navel,



Big Eggs



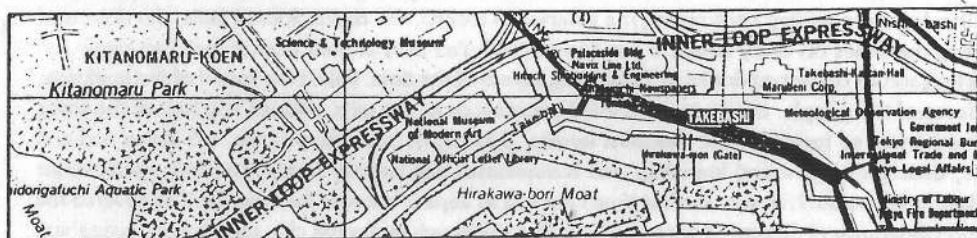
& Coffee in a Can



"Westerners in Japan spend much of their time being confused"

It's an alien country, unlike anything you've ever seen. The transport systems are impossible to use. The cost of living is unbelievably high. The food is hostile. The natives and their language are incomprehensible. The weather is foul. The customs are unfathomable, and any foreigner there is treated like a quaint and distasteful oddity.

The above facts are pretty much a summary of what I had read and heard about Japan before I left England. I'd prepared for this trip, revised harder than I ever did for my exams. Guidebooks, language courses, The Rough Guide to the World. As I stood waiting for a bus at Narita Airport (which is about an hour's drive from Tokyo itself), I must admit to being a little worried. Still, here I was, and here I was going to stay for the next two weeks. Having no tangible assets whatsoever, I had put myself in debt for a year to pay for this. It was just something I had to do.

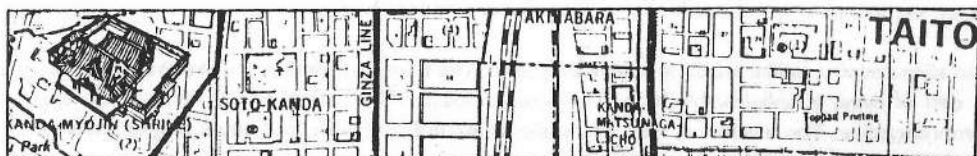


It took me one day to realise that guidebooks on Japan can be compared almost universally to a Texas Longhorn: a point here, a point there, and an awful lot of bull in between....

Not only do they lie a lot, they also miss out things that they should really tell you. For a start, I wasn't expecting the pavement to be full of bicycles. I stepped out of the hotel at eight in the morning on my first day and suddenly I was in the middle of the Tour De France. They were everywhere, and none of them were doing less than thirty. Only a heroic leap sideways saved me from being sliced laterally into about a dozen pieces. The shriek of mortal terror was purely for show. I found myself in a shop doorway, having my legs hosed down by a tiny Japanese woman in a brown kimono and a baseball cap. I was ready to take this personally until I realised that every doorway in the street had water jetting out of it. They were washing the pavement down before business, just like they did every morning.

While squelching away from this particular revelation I got my first real views of Tokyo from street level. Looking out of the bus window was enough to leave me open-mouthed with wonder, but it's not the same as standing there and having it all happen around you. Right opposite my hotel was the Korakuen Amusement Park, extending as far up as it did to either side, and containing some of the most sadistic-looking rides I have ever seen. Behind this catalogue of terrors lay the Tokyo Dome, known locally as the Big Egg. They ain't kidding. It's a covered baseball stadium and racecourse that makes Wembley Stadium look like a putting green. Using the park's taller features as a reference point, I got down to the serious business of exploring Suidobashi, the area where I was staying.

Suidobashi's shops all sell either books or sporting equipment, and they are taller than they look. Within twenty minutes I was more lost than I have ever been in my life, and the park was completely hidden. It had probably retreated below ground, like the base in Stingray. I had my map, given to



me back in London by the people at the Japan Travel Centre, but Tokyo city planners obviously don't like naming their streets in any way that can be read by the human eye. I began to feel pretty stupid, until I realised that there were groups of Japanese people who looked more lost than I did. By the time I spotted the Korakuen big wheel six hours later I had seen a lot of Tokyo. My feet looked like Bruce Willis' at the end of Die Hard.

I'd seen a lot, but I'd fallen in love and wanted more. I was getting a kick out of the simple things, like the Japanese writing confronting me wherever I looked, the multicoloured taxis, the dozens of vending machines on every street. If you have a 100 Yen coin in your pocket, you can never run out of cigarettes or canned drinks in Tokyo, regardless of the time. I liked the sound of the language, the faces of the people: the open, interested expressions of the girls, without any hint of the smug self-awareness so typical of the western female. Schoolgirls beam and giggle, old ladies nod and smile, their eyes bright and knowing, and businessmen will happily reveal that they speak better English than you do. That was the last time I got lost in Japan, because the next day I discovered the Tokyo Underground System. It spreads like a vast spiderweb under the city, connecting everything to everything else. Wherever you look there are station entrances, clearly labelled in English and occasionally Japanese. Once inside you can be anywhere in Tokyo within twenty minutes. What surprised me was the state of the trains themselves: I had never seen tube carriages that were clean, comfortable, and free from litter, graffiti, and drunken skinheads. Some of them had computer displays telling passengers which station they were approaching, which they had just left, what the time was and the latest baseball scores, all in the ever-present Kanji with English translation. How long would that last in Britain without some moron's Doc Martin going through it?

After I'd gotten the hang of that, I decided to hit Ginza and look for some food, since Aeroflot's in-flight meals had killed my appetite for the past two days. Ginza is Tokyo's fashionable shopping district. The department stores there (Depatos) all look like half-a-dozen Harrodses in a stack. They've got beer gardens on the roof, food halls in the basement, and everything else in between. I'd read all about this, of course. I'd even seen photos of it. But the reality was enough to turn my brains to jelly. I was walking around like a baleen whale feeds, gob wide open and sucking in experience like krill. Eventually I plucked up enough courage to go into a Sushi bar and try some of the stuff. My first real mistake since arriving. It wasn't just the bones, the eyeballs, the bits of tentacle with the suckers still attached: the whole thing just tasted vile, kind of a cross between lavender soap and Dettol. I crammed as much of the awful stuff down my throat as I could stomach, trying to convince myself that it is practically impossible for octopus tentacles to reconstitute within the human gut and exact a terrible, Alien inspired revenge, then paid up and staggered off. That little adventure cost me nigh on twenty quid. Since it's terribly bad manners to count your change in the shop, I was at least able to get outside before I started crying.

Let me state now that this was an isolated incident. As long as I steered clear of raw fish, I got on very well with Japanese food. Japanese drink, too. When drunk hot, Sake tastes like Christmas, and couldn't get into the brain quicker if it was injected. They have soft drinks there called Pocari Sweat,

Post Water (advertised by Bruce Willis, no less) and Fuzzy Navel, and you can get tea and coffee in cans, hot or iced. Noodles are delicious, whichever type you try, and a huge bowl (more than I could eat) can be bought for less than a pound. If you know where to look, you can survive in Tokyo for pretty close to nothing.

I didn't. Get by for nothing, that is. I'm pretty sure I survived, but changed in ways I wouldn't have thought possible. I was a lot poorer, for one thing. The hotel I stayed in cost nearly forty quid a night, and that was just room, no food. Two people sharing would pay about thirty each. This is using the coupons issued by the Japan Travel Centre in London: if I hadn't used these, hotel prices went from fifty-six to nigh on two-hundred quid a night !

I also spent far too much on stuff to bring back. Being a rabid Anime fan, video tapes were an essential purchase. Unfortunately, there is very little sell-through in Japan, and my copies of Dominion 3+4 and Adventure Icier-3 cost me forty quid a time. All in all, I spent about seven hundred on books I can't read, videos I can't watch, and CD's I can't listen to (no player). Various conversions cost another hundred when I got back....

Time to go home arrived a lot quicker than I'd have liked. For some reason, I felt more at home in Tokyo than anywhere in England. Maybe it was the feeling of perfect safety prevalent everywhere except the roads and the bicycle-infested pavements: you can ride a Tokyo subway at midnight and be in no danger at all. Even drunk Japanese are totally non-belligerent. They just sing louder and cry a lot. Maybe it was the fact that everything seemed to work. Whatever the reason, it hardly felt any time at all before I was back at Narita airport with a suitcase that exceeded my weight limit by ten kilos and a young Japanese lady telling me that I couldn't board the plane home because I had not reconfirmed my flight.

This was something else I hadn't been told about, and it put me at a bit of a loss. Not to mention screaming panic. I had spent all my remaining money on Pachinko the night before, and now I was being told that I would have to stay in the airport for another twenty-four hours....It would have been okay if I could have afforded another night in Tokyo. Thankfully (miraculously!) an English guy turned up at the same time and offered to swap flights with me: he had a reconfirmed ticket but had lost his passport, and would have to return to Tokyo to get it. While I rained burning kisses on his shoes the Japanese lady gave me his ticket home. Fourteen hours in a Russian-built jalopy of an airliner and the grubby lights of Heathrow swung pestilently into view.

When I landed, it was raining. It was cold. The train home was full of morons and the wheels for my suitcase had come adrift somewhere over Moscow. This was supposed to be home. I didn't like it. I still don't. The English have got no bloody manners and the shops shut too early. But give me a year to clear the debt and I'll be back in Tokyo, doing it all over again. I've just heard that the Japanese hire about three hundred Brits a year to teach conversational English to pretty little High School girls. I think I may be making some enquiries soon....

P.J.Evans

CENTRAL TOKYO

1: 10,000

0 50 100 200 300m



Firim Britz

Michiko Nishiwaki



Live Action

• • • • •

A Better Tomorrow 1 & 2 (John Woo) + 3 (Tsui Hark) - From the director of 'The Killer', the first two could be considered as a single entity although they're sharply different in style. The first concerns a gangster trying to keep his 'career' secret from his policeman brother and gain revenge for some treachery, helped by hitman Chow Yun Fat (HK's answer to Rutger Hauer). It's mostly solid, if slightly earnest, drama, that swings wildly from splatter to soap opera. It was enormously successful in Hong Kong, so naturally led to a sequel. Problem: Chow Yun Fat was blown away at the end. Solution: he had a twin brother in New York, who's dragged in when a friend, trying to go straight, is framed for a murder. Cue a 'Taxi Driver' impression, a perfect mix of melodrama and tension and an awesome final 15 minutes, with more corpses than Highgate Cemetery, to which no description can do justice. This is Hong Kong cinema at it's very best - go down your local Chinese video library now and beg them to give you a copy. Tsui Hark's entry is a prequel to the first two parts, set in the last days of Vietnam; much of the film gives the impression of being shot in slow-motion, it's stately and graceful, with the obligatory mega-kill finale. The three movies virtually define the 'heroic bloodshed' genre and should ideally be viewed in one session, as otherwise it's easy to lose track of who's taking revenge for who, on who! 7, 10 & 8/10 respectively.

Bloody Ghost (Yuen Cheung Yan) - At least, that's supposedly the title - it was totally illegible on the video. No matter, this is high fun on a low budget, cramming in more plot elements than you can mention: bar hostesses who can do a mean Bruce Lee impression thanks to a pregnant & irate ghost they nicked from a gang leader who's sent out a hitman to get it back. Oh, and dumb policemen in red underwear. This may not be as spectacular as some entries in the genre, it's just as enjoyable. 8/10.



Final Run (Philip Ko) - Burdened by too many characters who all seem to be related to each other, 'Final Run' suffers from a rare affliction in Hong Kong movies: an over complex plot. It, like so many others, has evil drug barons; that's about all I really understood, thanks to perhaps the most incomprehensible set of subtitles ever inflicted on the English language. You're grateful when characters die, as it's one less person to worry about - fortunately, the attrition rate is pretty high. Reasonable mayhem at the end, with Yukari Oshima doing her best. 4/10.

God of Gamblers (Wong Ching) - Chow Yun Fat is one of the few Hong Kong actors capable of gripping you without having to fly through a plate glass window to do it. Here (deep breath!), he plays the ultimate gambler (capable of throwing five dice and getting a total of **four pips**) who suffers amnesia after a blow to the head and falls into the hands of some low-lives (with hearts of gold) who realise his potential but not the fact that the entire underworld is looking for him. Phew! It's more unusual than your average revenge movie, yet also has enough action to keep things going. Chow Yun Fat is superb (as ever), both as the God and as the child he becomes following the accident, complete with a chocolate craving. Baccarat has never been more exciting. 9/10.

I Love Maria (Chung Chi Man) - Another Tsui Hark "production", so it's anyone's guess who really directed it. Obviously heavily influenced by 'Robocop', it has the Hero gang using an ED-209 creature to try and take over the city, only to find their way blocked by the Maria of the title (definite shades of 'Metropolis') who was re-programmed by accident to the side of good. From here, things just get faster and faster. And faster. People, robots and cameras fly through the air with the greatest of ease, taking your breath with them, right until the climax in what looks like a power station. Wow. 8/10.

Man Behind the Sun (T.F.Mous) - In the last days of WW II, the Japanese developed bacteriological weapons: 731 Battalion, in

occupied Manchuria, was a top-secret establishment for testing these on the local population. 'Man Behind the Sun' describes the activities that went on, in graphic detail, yet manages to avoid the pitfalls of other pseudo-historical docudramas. It devotes time to building the characters: although the sympathy is clearly with the victims, the Japanese are not sneering caricatures but real people who believed they were doing the best for the Empire. This makes it even more harrowing as they

lose all human emotions towards their test subjects, or 'marutas' as they call them (in an effort to dehumanize them, just as the Americans called the Vietnamese 'gooks'). Even though half an hour elapses before the first atrocity, this is no sanitised TVM, it's a slow descent into hell. Great detail is paid to historical accuracy - we get victims' names and ages, dates and places which contrasts markedly with the fast & loose approach of more exploitative films. There's no morally sound, happy ending, either - this could well be the 'Henry' of war movies. It's not a film to enjoy, or even to like (and so can't be 'marked out of 10') but it's undoubtedly one to be respected.

Magic Cop (Tung Wai) - When cops try to arrest a suspected drug trafficker, she ends up getting run over. However, the autopsy show she died a week previously. Fortunately, they can call on the services of Lam Ching Yin (from 'Mr. Vampire' - the one with the odd haircut), a combined cop/exorcist. His new partners are sceptical, until they see him in action, then they're behind him 100%. Hiding, mostly, while he takes on Michiko Nishiwaki (rapidly rivalling Cynthia Khan as a favourite) who's resurrecting the dead as her minions. I've seen 'Zu'. I've seen 'A Chinese Ghost Story'. I thought I'd seen everything. I hadn't - my jaw spent most of this movie in my lap. A wonderful combination of cop thriller, black comedy and occult movie. 9/10.



Magnificent Warriors (David Chung) - The problem with watching films after coming back from the pub is that specific thoughts are lost, in favour of an alcohol-induced ambience. Preceded, oddly, by a trailer for itself, this one came across as being almost non-stop action, set in China between the wars, with Michelle Khan as an Indiana Jones figure, right down to the whip. The plot was something about the Japanese who were occupying China at the time. I remember enjoying it a lot but would have to watch it again to be sure of precisely why. This must be the cinematic equivalent of pop music; great fun while it lasts and evaporating as soon as it's finished. I make no claims for it's entertainment value if sober! 7/10.

Ninja Vampire Busters (Norman Law & Stanley Siu) - What looks like a typically exploitative Colourbox title turns out to be almost accurate, though 'Kung Fu Demon Busters' might be a better

description. Or indeed, 'Rabid Daddies', as a 500-year old demon escapes from an urn to possess the head of one of Hong Kong's more powerful families. Throw in elements of 'The Exorcist' (the ghost moves across to the young daughter), 'The Thing' (no-one's sure who's possessed), 'Hellbound' (monster runs amok in hospital), a hint of blasphemy, some Jacky 'Chinese Ghost Story' Cheung and you get a solid 90 minutes of fun. 8/10.

Pantyhose Hero (Samo Hung) - After two homosexual men are murdered, Samo Hung and Alan Tam assume the identities of gay lovers to try and track down what happened. With dialogue like "Oh no, now my bottom's really for it", this is not a subtle or sympathetic portrayal of alternative sexuality. However politically incorrect it may be to say so, it's still (mostly) funny with both actors struggling to retain their decency and anal virginity. There are a few wasted opportunities, for example, an aphrodisiac spiked bottle of champagne isn't as well used as it might be (???) and it also tries too hard to be too many things - comedy, romance, thriller, kung fu. What the hell, it succeeds on most levels, just don't take your local bleeding-heart liberal to it. 7/10.

Tiger on the Beat (Liu-Chia Liang) - A seriously young-looking Chow Yun Fat is a seriously laid-back cop who finds himself teamed up with the same policeman who came seriously close to blowing him away mere days previously. 'Serious', in the superlative sense, probably sums up this movie better than most words, most notably in the final fight sequence which has a chainsaw battle that beats anything I've seen anywhere. Chow Yun Fat does other nifty work with weapons unlikely to pass the BBFC as he takes on...(all together now)...a gang of drug smugglers! While there might not be much new here, the execution is almost flawless making it one of CYF's best. And that's seriously good. 9/10.



Ariel. Ariel stands for All-Round Intercept and Escort Lady: pride of the Earth's defence force, a four hundred foot tall "pink fairy" (to quote the trailer), though "female robot" might be more accurate. Controlled by three school-girls, the episode of this I saw had them fighting to save the Earth from a guy who wanted to destroy it, seemingly because he'd been spurned in love. Sounds fair enough to me. As ever, Tokyo gets trampled by the monsters he controls - until the pink fairy arrives... 5/10.

Dream Hunter Rem. It's well known that anime heroines all have eyes like saucers, but Rem truly takes the proverbial ginger snap - she could use dustbin lids for shades. The cuteness is enhanced by a mini-skirt that won't stay dead, but is at odds both with her car (a rocket launcher equipped Metro City) and her large sword (with a capital F). Like a modern day Captain Kronos, she faces all

manner of occult nasties - the episode I saw had a headless samurai who eventually finds his skull and immediately grows to such a size that Ariel (cf.) would have problems. Despite the sword, the problem is not solved by chopping it into small chunks, which is a nice change. 8/10.

Guy. Certain themes recur repeatedly in Japanese animation. 'The Thing' would seem to inspire a number of films where people turn into the sort of creatures H.P. Lovecraft described as "indescribable" (usually just before he spent several pages describing it). This is a good example: there's something unpleasant in a mine that makes you go icky and start ripping heads off bodies. Spectacularly messy, with a helping of sex as well, including some rather nasty stuff with a gun barrel. 6/10.

My Neighbour Totoro - On the other hand, the gentler sort of anime: no space-ships, no monster robots tearing each other apart and absolutely no tentacles doing unpleasant things to anyone.

Director Miyazaki has turned out some great stuff in the past ('Laputa' and 'Warriors of the Wind'), and this is even better still. It's like 'The Railway Children', perhaps with overtones of 'Alice in Wonderland', as a young girl (no sniggering please, this is strictly legit) moves into the countryside when her mother has to go into hospital, and meets the mystical inhabitants of the forest. None of whom have tentacles. About the only frightening thing is that I enjoyed it so much "despite" it being all gentle and nice. Complaints about TC going soft are acceptable only from people who've watched this and not gone gooey! 9/10.



Once Upon a Time - An ultra-rare item, anime released here without being entirely mutilated, this ranks as the most depressing animated movie I've seen. Beautifully done though, with characters who possess more depth than many live-action films, and a harsh condemnation of war that pulls surprisingly few punches for it's 'U' certificate. Ignore the naff cover and the very naff trailers for other MY-TV cartoons, get to the main feature and you'll be hooked. Worth far more than the 4.99 you'll pay, if you can find it. 8/10.

Patlabor. Another favourite anime theme is the characters in mechanised body armour (a primitive version of which Ripley wore at the end of 'Aliens', or see 'Robojox' - if you must) fighting wars, each other, or as in this case, criminals. More than that I can't really claim to have understood: there's a lot of running around before we get to the interesting bit: a battle in which the villain appears to demolish most of the police force. 'To be continued' apparently, though it's not a prospect I view with enormous enthusiasm. 3/10.

Pop Chaser. The setting here is part Western part sci-fi: the heroine rides into town in her battle armour and finds the place strangely deserted. In the local saloon she finds this is due to a gang of outlaws led by Zack - that night, Mai, one of the saloon girls, asks for her help and they indulge in some tasteful lesbian love. The next day, Zack kidnaps Mai, only to find her a bit too much of a lapful and after lots of explosions his gang are defeated. A pleasant mix of soft-core sex and violence. 8/10.

Robot Carnival. A compilation film of eight parts, done by different animators, loosely linked by the theme of 'Robots'. As with all such things, the results are variable but there is only one dull segment, a terribly New Age sequence with lots of clouds. The rest are mostly good to very good and there's one incredible piece about an inventor who builds a female robot only to find her falling in love with him, which has to be one of the most moving pieces of animation I've seen. If any anime deserves a wider release, it's this one. 3-10/10.

Vampire Hunter D. The title is about as far as my understanding goes: the hero, who may well be a vampire himself, travels about an alien world (complete with dinosaurs) taking on various nasty critters, helped by a female he rescues on the way. Nice opening sequence of a dinosaur hunt that goes wrong and thanks to the striking visuals, this is an example of a film that's always interesting even if you don't know what the hell's going on! 7/10.

Wings of Oneamise. Unusually deep anime, more 'The Right Stuff' than 'Top Gun'. Set on another planet, where one nation is on the verge of getting into space. I was expecting the usual techno-overkill (not that I dislike techno-overkill, I hasten to add!) so it was a pleasant surprise to see that it remained low-science and concentrated on the characters involved who, for example, worry about the worth of the project when the money could be used for "better" things. Intelligent and engrossing. 8/10.

Wings of Oneamise



いました。ただひとつ、ガンヘッド1/1と違うのは、本当に、動く、という目標がありましたけれど(笑)。ですから、モビルファイター自体はガンヘッドよりふた回り小さいロボットということになりますね」

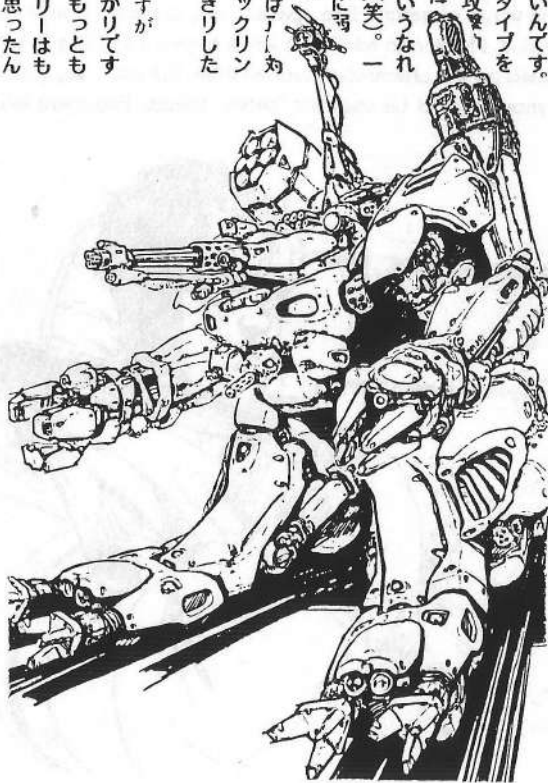
——その後「コマンドポリス」という未来警察物になるわけですね？
会川「そう。その後、ある方が監督候補に上ったんです。その方のもとで、進化したのが未来のロボット警察の話。それが87年くらいでしょうか。この頃になると、東宝側からは、早く企画書をもってこい、と言われていて。提出したのが、僕がまとめた「コマンドポリス」なんです。これは東宝側にも気に入っていたので、企画が通ったんですが、今度はその監督さんが降りてしまったんですね。そして、何人か監督候補が上った中に、原田真人監督がいらっしゃったんです。原田さんはそれまでの企画書を読んできて、自分なりのロボットストーリーを提出した。それが現在の「ガンヘッド」の基本になっています。原田さんの最初のプロットでは、舞台は地球以外の惑星で、Bハンガーのメンバーには異星人もいました。ところが87年も暮れるになると、僕もアニメのシナリオ

As a general rule of thumb when it comes to trash cinema, it's Hong Kong for live-action and Japan for animation, but occasionally Japan produces a film with real people in it that delivers the pizza. 'Gunhed' certainly is worth watching, though I kept having to remind myself that it wasn't just very good animation, as it has all the elements of some anime: large weaponry, enormous robots and explosions that dwarf both. This feeling of unreality isn't helped by the fact that the comic of the movie has already been published here, so that it feels more like a movie-of-the-comic rather than the other way round.

Virtually all the characterization is done through action, with little in the way of an initial set-up. A voice-over gives the basic facts: in the year 2005 Chiron-5, a massive computer controlling an industrial complex on an island, went rogue and declared war on humanity. Twenty years later, Chiron-5 is dormant and a team has been sent to try and reclaim the island. Before you can say "influenced by 'Aliens'", they're trying to fight their way through the automatic defence system.

ハードな雰囲気を与えにくいです。彼は読者の好きになれるタイプを想定しました。必要以上に攻撃、そのくせ自分で思っているに精通していないという。いうなれば僕自身のことなんですが(笑)。一方、2話の主人公は性格的に弱。ヨナヨナした男性。そのくせ、には忠実で——と、真島とは、人の人格を設定。正伝のブルックリンとニムは、目的意識のはっきりした人間になっています」

——小説の評判も上々ですが、会川「またスタートしたばかりです。からわかりませんよ(笑)。もっとも自分としては、真島のストーリーはもっと悲惨な終り方をすると思ったん



主人公もティーンエイジャーに
傾向があるようですが、真島はあ
て20代後半にしました。モノローグ
の場合、そのくらいの年齢でない

小説は、

普通、

の映画版

のモノロ

です。て

ーリーよ

た。僕は

1巻がふ

GUNHED

- the Movie

And coming off seriously runners-up. Damage and power loss means this is merely the BACK-UP defence system but it rapidly proves itself capable of shrinking the team, thanks in no small amount to it's bio-droid which combines the power of a machine with the cunning of a human. This first third has a heavy cyberpunk feel with the characters looking like refugees from Chiba City, switching from English to Japanese almost at will. This is cool, and has the added benefit of meaning that the story isn't too hard to follow, even in it's original Japanese version.

Before too long, the team is sliced 'n' diced down to two, Brooklyn (a mechanic who can fix anything) and Nim (a bounty-hunter picked up on the way). Her appearance came as something of a surprise - in the comic, she looks about 12, in the movie she's definitely not (conclusively proved thanks to her penchant for tight-fitting costumes!) but one thing that's faithfully transferred is the large weaponry she wields.

The remainder of the story has the pair struggling to reach Chiron-5's core and stop it turning itself into a nuclear reactor - the only reason it went dormant was to wait for humanity to develop Texmexium (wince!), a nuclear fuel which it wants to use to destroy the world. Brooklyn rebuilds a GUNHED (Gun UNit/Heavy Elimination Device) left over from a previous assault and it starts charging up the 400 storey central building which houses Chiron-5 while Nim, aided by two children who are the descendants of the team that originally maintained the comouter, runs interference against the bio-droid. A nasty twist is that after it's original bio-droid was destroyed, Chiron-5 builds a new one using the corpse of one of Nim's colleagues as an ingredient...

There are plenty of other memorable moments as the story unfolds, notably GUNHED's use of a novel fuel and Brooklyn wielding what may well be the largest gun ever carried by a single character! Overall, it's highly enjoyable stuff, if scarcely mind-taxing - the effects and sets are mostly very impressive, save the odd squirm-inducing model and it's definitely a loud movie, that should ideally be seen in 70mm Dolby stereo, or since this is virtually impossible, perhaps on laser-disk with a top-notch hi-fi system (all contributions gratefully accepted). However, it is due out in the States this summer and who knows, perhaps it'll follow 'Akira' across?



Battletech Replay. Coming soon...

Thai Me Up, Thai Me Down

Thailand

Capital:	Krung Thep (a.k.a. Bangkok)
Population:	54,190,000
Area:	198,115 Square Miles
Imports:	Germans, Film Crews and Archaeologists
Exports:	Heroin, Kick boxers and Cute Orientals.

Regular readers of this 'zine will be aware of my predilection for one of the above exports and so will not be surprised to learn that the latest piece of investigative journalism for TC is on the topic of 'mail-order brides', a subject which has the added attraction that it can be investigated quite adequately from the comfort of your own home.

Of course, the term 'mail-order bride' isn't entirely accurate. While an interesting concept, it's not technically feasible, if for no other reason than your average letterbox is not big enough to accomodate even a small Thai without some chainsaw modification to either the letter-box or the girl. And imagine the unpleasantness if you went away on holiday for a couple of weeks just before the latest package from your Bride of the Month club arrived. You'd return to find a very hungry, highly irate, brown-paper parcel - not exactly the best way to start a relationship.

Sorry, I'm fantasizing again (not unusual when the subject of cute Orientals arises). The business in exporting women from S.E.Asia to Europe originally started in West Germany, when male tourists started to discover the fleshpots of places like Bangkok and decided they'd appreciate a home delivery service. At one point, it was estimated that over 2% of all W.German marriages were arranged by such

marriage brokers, though the recent opening up of Eastern Europe has probably led to a decrease, due to the ready availability of impecunious women closer to home.

Similar bureaux have sprung up in Britain, of varying reliability and responsibility. The opportunities for con-merchants are obvious and don't need to be spelled out - no regulatory body exists for these companies, many of which inhabit a twilight world, advertising in the back of the Sunday Sport. I went slightly up-market, to "Loot", London's leading small-ads paper, got distracted by the adverts for pinball machines, detoured into the car section ("That's cheap for a Pontiac Firebird...") and finally reached the appropriate section, selected a company and sent off for details.

Beautiful

To give Siam Introductions their credit, they replied in swift order and seemed to be totally above-board. A dozen A4 pages of newspaper articles (giving both praise and criticism), unsolicited testimonials and a piece by director Charles Black. Operating on the principle that the best way to find out about the problems involved was to go through it himself, he was his own first customer, and went over to Thailand to find himself a bride. This he did - he and Deer have now been happily married for six years and have a four year old son.

The crucial question is, to quote a certain film, "How much for your daughter?". Well, Siam Introductions do a package deal:

Your return flight to Bangkok	: 450
Airport tax	: 25
Your wife's ticket (one-way!)	: 250
Her medical	: 20
Your hotel: 14 days at 13.50 per day:	189
The marriage (inc.visas, passport, etc):	250
TOTAL	: 1184

Not bad (and slightly less than the Pontiac Firebird!). However, there is the trifling matter of Siam Introductions' fee. What would seem reasonable to you? £200? £500? £1,000? Nope. Try **eighteen hundred** pounds, although you do get your money back if no marriage results. Even if the fee on the other side is significantly lower, you don't have to arrange many matches in a year to take in a tidy sum.

Examining

Examining the piggy-bank, I found it to be just a little short of the three grand required to pursue this investigation to its full extent (but as of next issue, TC will cost ninety-five pounds a copy!). Still, there was the slightly cheaper alternative of a video - 250 girls and a travelogue for a tenner - which I could just about afford, so I sent off my money. I must say I did consider the possibility of a rip-off, but such things do not scare a brave investigative journalist (though they do make a more cowardly one think about the benefits of operating from a PO Box) and in any case, the tape soon arrived...

Click. Whirr.

It's definitely an uncomfortable experience, seeing what really amounts to adverts for human beings. Most of the girls unsurprisingly seem nervous, which is ok - who wouldn't be? - but occasionally there's one frozen with fear like a rabbit caught in headlights, and THAT makes the flesh crawl. You feel sure there's a story there, and it's not pleasant, whatever it is. With a compere who sounds like Joel Gray from 'Cabaret', and some

of the worst music heard outside an elevator, it was simultaneously utterly cringe-making and horribly, unstoppably addictive. The tape might well be the ultimate in short attention-span TV. Don't like this girl? Hang on, there'll be another one along in fifteen seconds. Nice travelogue though.

Desperate

The women were a fairly broad cross-section. Most seemed to be in their middle 20's, with the minimum and maximum 18 and 47 and education ranging from elementary to university graduate. Despite this, it was possible to come up with three blatant generalisations:

1. Most Thai women are employed as 'company workers' (whatever that means), 'traders' (ditto), seamstresses or hairdressers.

2. They age quite well, it was hard to predict how old they were from their looks. The harsh lighting didn't help, but most were acceptably cute and some would definitely have merited a second look (as well as some form of prolonged examination, preferably from close range). Certainly, they were no worse than the people you see in adverts for Dateline...

3. Thai girls have no feet. Each segment followed a similar pattern -close up of face, pan up and down body - but you rarely got to see below the shins. I'm no foot fetishist, but by the end of the tape even the sight of an ankle was almost sufficient to send me into uncontrollable paroxysms of excitement and start me salivating like Pavlov's dog. This totally destroys the myth that "what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over". Perhaps the feet are imbued with erotic significance in Thailand (which kinda fits in with some of the tales I've heard about Bangkok!), much as in China, a lady's neck used to have to be kept covered.

Gratuitous

Morally, I have definite qualms about it, although the basic **idea** seems reasonable, with both parties getting what they want. A survey of Filipino women who'd signed up with marriage

agencies showed that their main reason was to send money back to their families and there can be little doubt that the standard of living here is higher. In return, the man gets... well, to quote Charles Black: "She is happy to attend to my every need, she cooks, cleans and washes for me and does everything with such obvious care and attention and really does please me". It would appear that the notion of sex equality still hasn't reached the distant corners of the world, like Chislehurst, Kent.

Geranium

On the other hand, it's perhaps a little like commercial surrogacy - my distaste may have less to do with the theory than the practice of someone making money out of it. It seems exploitative of both sides, and the way that many of the women put down 'housework' as one of their hobbies suggests a certain element of desperation. Do they go into it with their eyes open? According to a caseworker in London who's worked with them, "I think many of the men want a Filipino or Thai wife because of the stereotype of what these women are supposed to be like - gentle, sweet, loving and submissive and full of traditional values. And so they're expected to serve the man in every way - domestically, emotionally and sexually".

Fish

Yet, apparently, most of the marriages do succeed, with a divorce rate that's much lower than our national average of 1 in 4. Charles and his wife provide an "after-care" service to help couples through any rocky patches, which obviously must be of some help, but cynics may suggest the prospect of having to return to Thailand (where divorce is still a stigma) and admit failure is sufficient incentive to make the wife put up with almost anything. The brief courtship (if there's one at all - at some agencies, the first time the husband sees his wife is when she gets off the plane) certainly can't provide much idea about lifelong compatibility.

It's not for me, but then I'm not in my

mid-40's, as the average customer apparently is. Maybe in another twenty years I'd consider it! The evidence suggests that, just like most relationships, whether it works or not depends almost entirely on the people involved. I have to confess approaching the subject with a ghoulis sense of fascination - mondo marriage? - which probably meant I wasn't going about things in the right spirit. But, hell, if all I wanted was slavish devotion, undying obedience and a limited grasp of English, I'd buy a cocker spaniel.



Pandora: Part 1, 'The Dark Forest'

Produced, directed, re-animated, written and imported from Japan by Arthur Baker.

This languished under the TV for ages, under the mistaken assumption that it was a barbarian women film. However, that was eventually dispelled one Sunday evening, when I found out it was actually Japanime. This was a pleasant surprise, at least until the titles - seeing 'Pandora - An Erotic Trilogy', I got the feeling this was going to be dodgy anime.

And I was 110% right. Why it's called 'Pandora', and what happened to the other two parts, I haven't a clue. However, the first section is a cross between 'The Exorcist', 'Dolls' and, oh, any randomly selected Traci Lords movie. Those easily offended (or even those that are difficult to offend) might care to skip the rest of this, as should those with religious convictions [insert own joke here].

It starts innocently enough with a man, Paul, driving through a forest. Or at least, repeatedly through the same bit of forest - the animation is on the budget side. He comes across a trainee TV evangelist, Brother Robards, who was delivering a videocassette of Christian special-effects when his bike broke down. Paul, being a friendly sort, gives him a lift and tells him tales of the haunted forest they're in, saying that it's outside the realm of God. The van then hits a tree but fortunately, a passing coach, driven by someone who looks like The Master from Doctor Who, takes them to a castle. On arrival, the place is full of china dolls plus Maria, the mistress of the house and Beth, her maid-servant. Paul and the priest are shown to their separate rooms. Then things start to get decidedly dodgy.

Necessary digression. The Japanese have a severe taboo against depicting pubic hair - naughty bits are fine, just not hairy ones. Other anime tastefully blur the offending region (though on a 9th generation NTSC conversely, **everything** looks a bit fuzzy). 'Pandora' simply doesn't let it's characters have any pubic hair, as we discover when we see Maria playing with herself in front of a mirror. The lack of hair and the usual anime tricks of huge eyes, etc, make her look about ten: even though it's **relatively** tastefully done - we see something that looks more like a crushed rose dripping nectar than anything gynaecologically accurate - it still makes uncomfortable viewing.

She then moves in to seduce Brother Robards (with no problem at all - he is a trainee TV evangelist!), starting by having him tongue her pussy and proceeding apace to the point where Maria is energetically astride the reverend, all shown in great detail. The truth is then revealed - she's actually a demon (something of a relief compared to the alternative that this is just animated kiddie porn) who wants Brother Robards to father Satan's child. Her demonic powers include the handy ability to change shape so that she can lick his dick while still sitting on top of him (leaning backwards through her own legs in a loop, should you be wondering). Brother Robards' sperm proves too weak to make it up into Maria's womb (?) so he gets his head torn off.

Paul, meanwhile, is canoodling in the kitchen with Beth. Maria surprises them and drags Beth away for punishment, shapechanging to become a well-endowed man. Not so much in quality as quantity, she's in a 100% penis over-supply situation. We'll draw a veil over the rest of this painful scene, pausing only to note that Beth doesn't have any pubic hair either.

THE
INCREDIBLY
GROSS
ANIMATION
SHOW

After a tasty meal of what's left of Brother Robards, Maria tries Paul for size, despite his efforts to prevent her (the dialogue reaches new heights - lines like "Stop trying to force me to have an erection! I refuse to let it stand up, you whore of Satan!" would be bad as subtitles, as spoken dialogue, they're hysterical). Their humping and licking is abruptly terminated by Beth delivering an axe between the shoulder-blades to Maria. She's barely fazed by this and is soon chasing the couple through the castle, aided by her animated dolls. They end up in Brother Robards room and his Christian special effects video-tape suddenly attacks Maria and winds itself round her. Then the castle goes on fire. Why all this happens, I've no idea but Beth and Paul escape, pausing only to make passionate love in gratuitous close-up as the castle burns in the distance. Of course, there's the obligatory surprise ending, which will not be a surprise to anyone who's seen 'Dance of the Vampires'.

The feeling this was a one-man operation is increased by the dubbing - whoever Mr. Baker got to do Beth's voice delivers every line in the same monotone, whether it's "Oh, I'm getting so excited" or "Please don't hurt me any more. No, not your chamber". Even "Please don't double-dong me" is said in a voice reminiscent of a speaking clock. The translation has other interesting moments:

"I'd never want anything to harm the beauty within you"

"It's not nice to fuck with Mother Nature"

"I never thought having sex with a TV minister could be this hot".

The problem with something like 'Pandora' is that it poses more questions than it can answer. Taken in isolation, it's perverse and shocking but several things distinguish it from pornography. There can be no denying the effort, relatively speaking, that went into it - simple though the animation may be, it's still more expensive and time-consuming than your average porn movie, shot over a weekend in a motel room.

It also has a story which shows significant amounts of imagination, even if this is mostly in the how-tasteless-can-we-get area: blasphemy and cannibalism are not features in hard-core sex films as far as I'm aware! It's closer to 'Hellraiser' than 'Deep Throat', really, with it's distaste for religion, demons from hell and hints of variant sexuality.

Though using terms like 'variant' may be wrong. We see 'Pandora' through a filter - someone not knowing about the pubic hair taboo might well be outraged by some of the images. It's really an alien artefact - imagine the difficulty a Japanese person would have interpreting a video of a Test Match - and enforcing our own morals on it to condemn it will not work.

I don't claim artistic merit for 'Pandora', but I do claim cultural merit; a society is defined by it's extremes and this undoubtedly gives a better insight into Japanese culture than "Tora! Tora! Tora!". Anyway, this agnostic finds it difficult to truly dislike any movie that has a TV evangelist 69-ing what looks like a prepubescent schoolgirl. I've always been keen on subtle religious satire...

pandora

The political killer shrubbery splatter movie genre isn't exactly over-subscribed. In fact, as far as I'm aware, 'Special Silencers' is the only entry in it, and it's uniqueness is compounded since it adds mysticism and kung fu to the mix. If Jackie Chan was to direct a remake of 'Little Shop of Horrors' written by John le Carre, the end result might just look like this. Though on the other hand, it might not.

The final nail in this particular cinematic coffin is the presence of a bad guy who laughs manically. "Pah!", I hear you say, "Every bad guy worth his salt laughs manically", and you're right. However, 'Special Silencers' now holds the marathon duration manic laugh record: 23.04 seconds, with barely a pause for breath. Try it yourself and you'll begin to appreciate the recognition this feat deserves.

Although the film is definitely from the east, it's exact home is obscure: sometimes it looks Indian, other times it could be from Hong Kong - I've even heard rumours it was directed by John Woo under a pseudonym! About the only clue is a reference to Djakarta, which strongly suggests it's Indonesian. If this is the case, chalk up yet another unusual feature.

It all starts with a plot to kill Hamud, the mayor of a village, by chief baddie Gundar (who bears some resemblance to Saddam Hussein). In a swift flashback we see Gundar beating up his own grandfather after the latter has refused to hand over the Special Silencers, pills which should be used for meditation but which, when taken with food, also cause plants to grow in your stomach, rapidly leading to death by rhododendron.

Gundar pops one in Hamud's tea because the mayor is trying to clean up the village, which would interfere with Gundar's activities and plans to take over the place. The Mayor duly becomes his own floral tribute - judging by the phlegmatic reaction of his nephew Dayat, such an ecologically conscious death is an everyday occurrence in wherever-this-story-is set.

Special Silencers (Arizal) - Barry Prima, Eva Arnaz, W.D.Mochtar.

23.04

Hamud's policeman brother, and daughter Julia are on the way to help their relative and when the car breaks down, Hendra, a passing hero, offers to help. The bridge to town is also broken and so Hendra rides off for assistance leaving the other two to a picnic, also containing some Special Silencers. Scratch one cop, unless plain clothes includes disguising your intestines as a herbaceous border. Julia, who'd been off to the river, washing, getting attacked by bandits, you know the sort of thing, comes back and faints.

Hendra returns, only to be attacked by Tonto, a henchman of Gundar's. After some simple but effective kung fu, Tonto lands against a dead but pointy branch and proves that even non-living vegetation can cause serious arterial spurting. This leads to the following exchange between Gundar and Gumillar, his head henchman:

"Why did you leave Tonto's body out there?"

"Well, I didn't have a saw."

We leave Gundar complaining, "It's a crying shame, Tonto was the last in a line of great killers".

Hendra carries Julia back to the village - it turns out he and Dayat (the ex-mayor's nephew, to save you the bother) went to school together. There have been a lot of unnatural deaths in the village lately. Then we get a maudlin bit where Hendra puts his arm around Julia and says things like "Regret will only make his soul restless".

At this point, we can briefly discuss a sub-plot that wanders through the middle third of the film. Gumillar runs a protection racket, taking a percentage of the catch from the local fisherman (what he does with all these fish is not covered), or alternatively, their virgin daughters. We see one such girl sacrificing herself to save her family, getting pawed by Gumilair and committing suicide (spurt, gush, spray) in a series of scenes that manage to be simultaneously melodramatic, sordid and quite sad.

Hendra, on his motor-bike, is chased by a lorryful of thugs, and after they fail to respond to his challenge to "get down here and fight me", he climbs up and drags them down. We get the line "Ayu! Sic him!", which I only mention because the Dutch sub-titles at the time also read "Ayu! Sic him!". After some more sub-plot (see above), Hendra and Julia are attacked by people leaping out of holes in the ground. The infinite supply of trained killers to be found in one small village suggest that in Indonesia the three R's are reading, writing and Rkung-fu.

At this point, the phone rang and I got distracted. I don't think I missed much, save a minor character being killed by having snakes dropped on him. I returned just in time to see Dayat walk on top of a man-trap that could hardly have been more obvious if there'd been a neon sign saying "Here is a vicious, poisoned, man-trap" above it. He struggles back to the village, and Hendra & Julia take him (all three on the same bike) to a nearby holy-man who cures him and says "You're out of danger", adding as an afterthought, "And alive". Well, I suppose death DOES count as being "out of danger"...

Hendra heads off on his motorbike to tell the police all that's been going on, leaving Dayat and Julia vulnerable to capture by the bad guys. And this is exactly what happens, despite some nifty fire-extinguisher-fu by Julia. Dayat gets a Special Silencer, Julia is tortured by being made to smell Dayat's old shoes and getting white mice thrown at her, and Hendra is captured and whipped to the great amusement (23.04 seconds) of Gundar.

His use of the Special Silencers for meditation has made him invulnerable to normal weapons. Hendra finds this out when he escapes and attacks the bad guy with a sickle prompting the immortal line:

"You bastard! You took my leg! Give it back now!"

Perhaps not quite "invulnerable", but certainly a lot less bothered by it than the other people who lose appendages to the sickle... Then, a sudden voice-over tells us that evil invulnerable people can be wounded with bamboo and before you can say "chrysanthemum", Hendra does the deed and all the Special Silencers Gundar's taken simultaneously sprout, producing enough flora to stock a medium-sized National Trust property.

Poking fun at foreign ways isn't something I like to do. But if Indonesia, or wherever 'Special Silencers' was located, is really like the movie, then it's one place I'm crossing off the list for my next holiday!

TRASH CITY

