

TITLE: THE TERMINATOR

DATE 22-11-84

FILM VIDEO

DISTRIBUTOR: RANK

FIRST RESUB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: USA

CATEGORY: 15

CUTS ? NO CUTS

GENRE: THRILLER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-TITLED DUBBED

FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

APPROPRIATE CATEGORY:	Uc	U	PG	15	18	R18	CUTS	REJECT
THEME				✓	✓			
TREATMENT				✓				
<u>VISUALS:</u> NUDITY								
SEX				✓				
VIOLENCE				✓				
HORROR				✓	(✓)		?	
LANGUAGE								
DRUGS				✓				
CRIMINAL TECHNIQUES								
<u>LEGALITY:</u> OBSCENITY								
CHILDREN								
ANIMALS								
BLASPHEMY								
FILM AS A WHOLE				✓			?	

SYNOPSIS AND COMMENTS:

As in the Frankenstein story man's meddling has produced a monster in his own image that has got out of his own control. But though this is fantasy, behind the sci-fi aspects of the movie are very real and not so far distant concerns about man's increasing reliance on machinery. Just as HAL placed his own preservation and the future of his project above the lives of his human companions, so in the post-nuclear world posited here (and it is implied that the holocaust was created by a machine function or malfunction) the machine sees man as a threat to its dominance. These are clearly important issues and ones of very present concern to all, whether teenagers or older. The message of the film is undoubtedly highly relevant to the young in particular for they are both the group most easily seduced by the ever-present computer and the group with the biggest stake in the future and most concerned to affect it.

Kyle rescues her from a massive shoot-out at the disco, relentlessly pursued by Terminator, whom Kyle breathlessly explains is not a man, but a cyborg, skin and fleshly tissue on a framework of steel alloy. He, like Kyle, has descended through a time warp from the post-nuclear future. Kyle's mission to save her derives from his love and loyalty to her as yet unconceived son, John Connor, who, by teaching, urging and encouraging survival in some post-holocaust camp, has saved mankind: she is the mother of mankind's future. Now if she finds this story hard to grasp, it is as nothing to the lack of credibility with which the police treat it when they are both eventually taken in for interrogation. While the Terminator wipes the fleshly blood from his mechanical frame to repair his wounds, sceptical cops assign Kyle to a police psychiatrist and keep Sarah there for protection. Pretty inadequately too, for the Terminator bursts in, all guns blazing, and Kyle must break out of custody to rescue Sarah from a massive shoot-out. In hiding, he tells her more of the future and of her son, and she is moved by his obvious love for John, and then, in a motel room, for her. Both his loves are then understood by the audience, for their act of love is the conception of John, whom Kyle is to love as a father. Long, fast and furious is the final engagement between The Terminator and his victim, and Kyle is killed before Sarah, now grown strong with the survival instinct she will pass on to her son, escapes to Mexico, and tries to set down on tape for her child the facts of his conception.

Fairly fast and furious was the debate too, for James Cameron has made a real stunner, action-packed, yet full of humanity, science fiction that is philosophically engaging in its treatment of time, and exciting as hell. The company expected an '18', but rather ruefully requested cuts for a '15'. For me, there was no question of cutting, and we must simply justify one category or the other. If sheer excitement can grow to a level where it is unsuitable for those between '15' and '18', then '18' this must certainly be, but in the end we dismissed excitement for its own sake as a category factor. Then we considered the individual shocks and moments of horror; there are explicit moments of violence, but in the main so momentary as to be almost subliminal - as in the reel one attack by the three punks. Perhaps the most specific is the killing of Ginger in reel 2, some of which is in slow motion, but even this, though breath-taking, moves away quickly from the actual blood. There are brilliant horror shots in reel 3 in which the Terminator performs routine maintenance on himself, using a scalpel to cut through all-too-human looking flesh and eyeball (yes, 'fraid so) - but this is an intentional horror effect, skilfully effected and distressingly effective - in no way is audience reaction age-related. The language is the usual '15' ration of expletives, and the only love scene is lyrical, passionate, and waist-up. For me the film is much too good to cut, and indeed too good to deny to an audience who could derive much sheer enjoyment from it (for once, girls as well as boys) without very powerful justification. Since I could not find this justification for myself, I must therefore pass it '15' and accept that I may be called upon to justify my decision further.