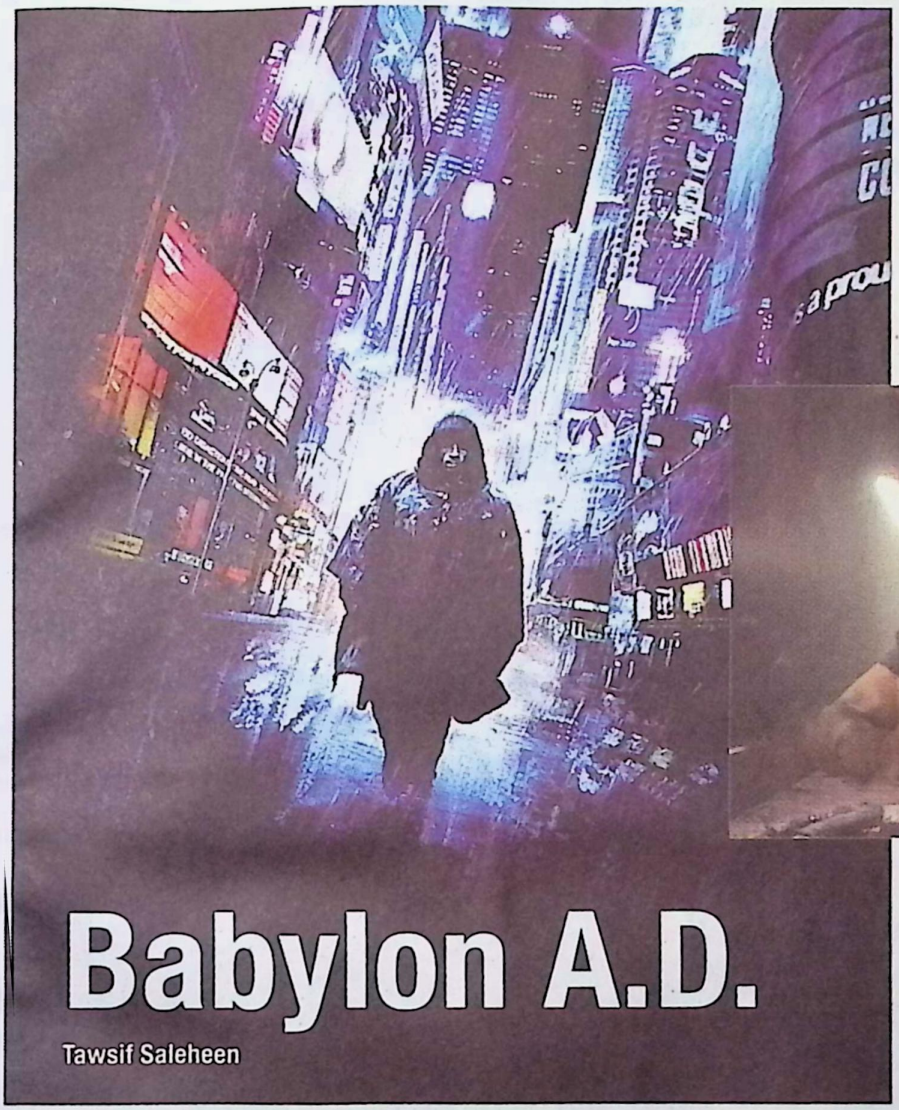
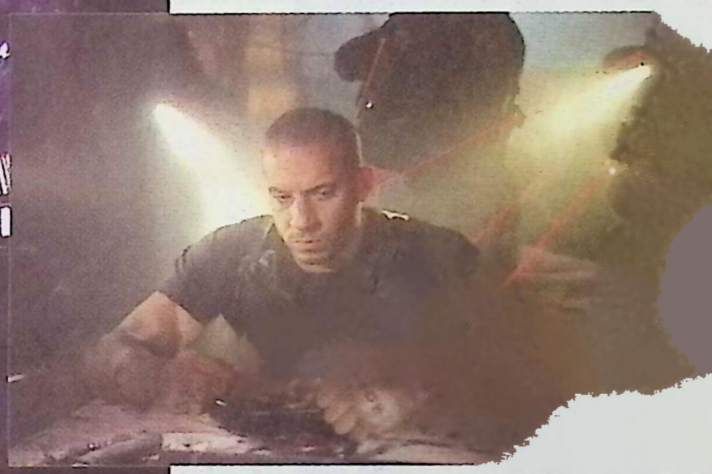




Babylon A.D.

Tawsif Saleheen

AS a fantasy thriller Babylon A.D. ranks slightly above Alif Laila. Vin Diesel stars the movie as Toorop who just so happens to be a mercenary-slash-a-smuggler-slash-a-bald-headed-hobo. He is hired to pick a girl from a monastery and deliver her to New York, a bit like a futuristic FedEx.

Although the credits of Babylon A.D. claim that the movie is based on the popular french sci-fi novel Babylon Babies, it in fact has more resemblance with Alfonso Cuarón's masterful Children of Men. Only Children of Men was a quintessential brilliance, where Babylon A.D. is down to right idiotic.

Vin Diesel takes over the Clive Owen role as a world-weary cynic who learns to care again after a prolonged exposure to a mysterious young woman. In Babylon A.D. this character's name is Toorop and he's a semi-retired human smuggler forcibly brought out of hiding by Russian mob boss Gorksy (Gérard Depardieu) for a high-paying gig. Toorop is accompanied by Michelle Yeoh, who helps him protect the psychic Aurora (Melanie Thierry) from bad people.

Directed with undue haste by Mathieu Kassovitz, the film feels disjointed and lacking true punch. Diesel looks uninterested, as do the others. The only bright spark is that Kassovitz has done a somewhat credible job in creating a futuristic society but this coupled with the obligatory car chases, shootouts and high tech explosions, certainly does not make up for its boring plot.

Babylon A.D. has the look and feel of a skeleton: an unfinished outline that whooshes by so fast that it becomes incomprehensible as its storyline and characters are lost in a flurry of fast cuts and poorly choreographed action sequences. The film is frustrating because there are instances of genuine visual flair (such as the futuristic New York) and times when one senses there might be ideas worth exploring (the roles of corporate sponsorship and religion in the new order). Alas, this is a case of a potentially epic tale being pruned and diced to the point where its underlying ideas are reduced to trite clichés. The lacklustre acting and horrendous dialogue don't help.

With its original running time of 160 minutes, Kassovitz obviously intended this to be more of an epic sci-fi adventure. Unfortunately, the final cut comes across more like a movie that has been roughly put together just to make some quick cash.

Source: Internet