

**Inglourious Basterds**  
(Quentin Tarantino, 2009)



One of the worst films I've seen in ages. Not since *Love, Actually* has a film annoyed me so much by its non-stop miscalculations and clashings of tone.

You can't mix serious WWII stuff with cartoon or spaghetti-western comic book material. *Der Untergang* does not blend with *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, nor *Secret Army* with *Allo Allo*. I know postmodernism values hybridity, but this is ridiculous. Some sequences – especially the first one in the farmhouse – are dead serious and extremely tense. Others – particularly the climax, with Hitler, “Göring”, Borman and Goebbels (plus, presumably, “the greatest actor in the world”, Emil Jannings), all being shot and incinerated in a Paris cinema, are inane fantasy. The actor who plays the German whose brains are clubbed out is deadly serious, but Brad Pitt and the Basterds cavort around him like Flanagan and Allen gone kosher. Tarantino's messy style just makes you cross, so that you begin to see the Nazis' viewpoint, which can't be right, even in 2010. The two most sadistic details – probing the injured leg, and making with the Bowie knife on the kraut's forehead – go to Pitt, not to one of the Nazis.

Jews behaving like Nazis – *is* Tarantino making a point? Is he that aware of what he's doing?

The casting of Rod (*The Birds*) Taylor as Churchill is symptomatic of Tarantino's unfocussed self-indulgence: you don't realise it's him. So is Mike Myers' anachronistic hairstyle in the same scene – where's the joke?

Christoph Waltz's linguistic versatility, to say nothing of his brilliant acting, deserves a better vehicle than this.