

Celluloid Penance (2006)

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Beginning

I am going to discuss a range of films to understand contemporary cinema and the maintenance of whiteness. I have deliberately chosen mainstream film, which are those seen as part of the cultural mainstream, even if they started life as a small scale enterprise. *Romper Stomper* (1992), the story of Dando, an Australian Neo-Nazi's fall from prominence and eventual death, started life in the independent British film circuit, then made its way into mainstream British Cinema.

A genre of film, which for simplicity will be called 'Supremacy Film', will form the basis of this paper. Calling them 'Race Films' would impinge on a use of language I do not wish to undermine. 'Supremacy Film' is marked by its deliberate and murderously violent engagement with confrontations of race, racism, and racial politics. While most of the exemplary films (see list) have been made in the United States, they appropriately reflect racial politics within the United Kingdom. And as European diasporic cultures share meta-discourses on race, most viewers within the United Kingdom find it easy to identify with Hollywood cinema filmic 'main characters'.

Whether Supremacy Film is racist is a question raised in considering this range of films. One can see racism in all cinema, there is the humorous moment in *Boomerang* when Snooker is analysed along racist lines, that the white ball knocks all the coloured balls into pockets and winning the game depends on pocketing the black ball, leaving the white ball alone on a sea of green. It is arguable that films which take race as their primary focus are racist as a matter of course. The same way a film that takes war as its subject is a war film. I am not arguing that films addressing race are therefore unacceptable, just that with the introduction of violence they tend to reproduce extant power structures. Most of the films to be discussed have been written and directed by white filmmakers, who see it as a