

The movie "crash" essay sample

[Politics](#), [Marxism](#)



I. Introduction

Thesis statement: The movie Crash shows some racial and social differences between the characters Rick Cabot and Anthony. II. Crash presents the socio-economic lifestyle between Rick and Anthony, and how it is influenced by their race, their appearance and dress. Rick is a white man, that dress up with elegant suits and transport in a wagon Anthony is an Afro-American, he dresses with width clothes and people discriminate him because of his appearance. Ex: Rick's wife reaction. III. The social position and power that Rick and Anthony have defines their actions Rick makes people believe he is racially sensitive /political power Anthony doesn't have a stable job, steals cars in order to make living / gun IV. Conclusion

Social Classes in Crash

The American society has social classes that have issues and differences between them. American people don't like to mention or don't want to make obvious those differences, as the Director of the Joseph S. Murphy Institute Gregory Mantsios affirms in his text " Class in America: Myths and Realities". The author explains that the American society constantly omits the social classes' topic, and even in politics, education and media, social class issues are not acceptable (Gregory). Social classes in the U. S are divided in distinct categories. The first one is the " upper class", which is the highest socioeconomic class in the social pyramid and is defined by the wealth and power of its members. Then is the middle class, the one who is in between the working class and the upper class, those with a comfortable life and high salaries. Next is the working class, and it refers to people who have a low educational attainment, low status occupations and below average incomes.

Finally is the lower class for those at or near the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy, with low education, that are in a great risk of falling below the poverty line (Boundless). Since mid-20th century, television has tried to avoid TV programs and movies that show a different reality that the working and the middle class actually live (Alper, 2005). People rarely see a TV program or a movie that shows the real situation between the four classes previously mentioned, and when it happens, the viewer can understand the social, economic, political and cultural differences between them. For instance, the movie *Crash* is a film that presents the racial and social tension in Los Angeles, with different stories and characters that connect with each other and those connections bring out the bigotry, the racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudices between the four social classes (Haggis, 2004). Two of the characters are Rick Cabot, a white district attorney of the upper class and Anthony, an Afro-American of the lower class. Both are connected when Anthony assaults Rick and his wife and steals their car. The movie *Crash* shows some racial and social differences between these two characters.

Crash presents the socio economic lifestyle between Rick and Anthony, and how it is influenced by their race, their appearance and dress. Gregory Mantsios affirms that racial domination, in the American society, is a force that hold people down. Racism promotes that an Afro-American faces racial oppression, is subjected to racial slurs, and is denied opportunities because of his color. He concluded that being a non-white person increases the chance of poverty and of lower-class standing (Gregory). In addition, as the novelist and academic Alison Lurie explains in her text *Fashion and Status*,

through history, clothing has showed the social position its wearer has, also because a person would be dressed as lavishly as its incomes permitted (Lurie, 1981). For example, Anthony is not nearly as wealthy as Rick is. Anthony is an Afro- American that always is trying to fit in the stereotypes that society have of people like him.

He thinks the society is unfair with afro descendant people and because of that he says he would never hurt someone with his same race, but, when he and his partner try to assault a car of an afro American man, he says to his partner to kill him when the victim tries to defend itself. Even he discriminates against people of his same race calling them " nigger" in a derogatory tone. On the other hand, Rick is a white district attorney who lives in Brentwood, a neighborhood from Los Angeles, where the residents are considered highly educated. He drives a wagon and his wife doesn't need to work because of the salary he earns. Moreover, Rick dresses more elegant and more sophisticated than Anthony. Rick uses elegant suits that reflect his prestigious socioeconomic position. On the contrary, Anthony uses width t-shirts and jackets, with worn shoes and jeans, which is not well seen in a wealthy neighborhood.

The discriminatory situation takes place when, before the carjacking, Rick's wife reacts with fear because of the appearance and dress of Anthony and his partner (Haggis, 2004). This example represents some of the differences presented between the upper class and the lower class, and how race, the dress and the physical appearance affect the socioeconomic position in the society. The stereotypes that people have promote social discrimination and

indicate differences in the lifestyles between two people. Non-white people are rarely related to the upper or the middle class, as the film shows. The race and the appearance are related with the socioeconomic position of a person but this is not the only characteristic that differences Anthony from Rick. The social position and power that Rick and Anthony have defines their actions. Gregory in his text affirms that class affects more than life-style and material well-being. It has a significant impact on our physical and mental well-being as well.

He explains with some examples that someone of the upper class, with big educational attainments, lives better than someone of the lower class that rarely finishes the primary school, because the less you study, the less you get a stable job. The better job you have, the more incomes you get, and the more incomes you get, the more goods you get (Gregory). In addition, according to the Social Inequality book, those who own and control capital have the power in a society. It defines power as the ability to control the behavior of others and it's different from economic success (Unit 3: Social). The movie Crash, through these two main characters evidence also the different power they have in a specific situation. For instance, Anthony, who is part of the lower class, doesn't have a legal job; instead, he steals and assaults people because he thinks that those actions are what he is meant to do. He doesn't like to take the bus because people could discriminate against him more than they actually do.

He always trivialized the hardship of the modern afro American people, and uses it as an excuse of all action he commits. The lifestyle he lives, doesn't

let him advanced in his economic situation, neither permits him to earn stable incomes nor better goods. On the other hand, Rick is a district attorney, always concerned about his public image and makes people believe his is not a social discriminator to not lose political votes. After the carjacking happened, he tries to spin the situation in order to not lose vote of the Afro-American community, and he does whatever it takes, even to pin a medal on a dark skinned guy that isn't really an American (he is Iraqi) to look racially sensitive. He cares more about winning votes than a crime situation and his wife, but because of his social position as a public figure, he earns a salary that is by far bigger than the money Anthony earns with his car jacks. Furthermore, Anthony's power is based on a gun, and he can submit his victims to get what he wants, while Rick power is political and he decides cases and the future of some people (Haggis, 2004). .

The social position is a reason for the lifestyle that people have. It serves as an excuse for the actions that people commit, especially what these two characters do, in spite of the damage they probably cause to others. In conclusion, Crash is a good example to show the multiplicity of differences between classes. The upper class contrasts in distinct ways the lower class, especially with Anthony and Rick characters. Their lifestyles, what they own, dress and live every day, are influenced and mostly stereotyped by their specific race, appearance and dress. Their different social positions allow them to have different goals and incomes. Also, it excuses them to use the power they have in different ways, either in a positive way or in a negative one. The movie, through these characters, shows racial, social, cultural and economic differences between the lower and the upper class and is a good

example to understand not only the real situation of each one, but the contrast between them. In addition, it is a film that helps people to understand more about the American society and its socioeconomic hierarchy.

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