

Movie crash

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The film that had an impact on me was the movie Crash. This Oscar-winning movie written and directed by Paul Haggis showed so many lessons about life that are important. The movie demonstrated the need for empathy in this world. No matter what color or sex or size, people need to show more empathy to one another.

But this movie is also about the anger and frustration that we carry around with us everyday as well. Living in the modern day world is tough, but we need to find better ways to relate to each other. As Robert Jensen says, “ We all carry around racial/ethnic baggage that’s packed with unfair stereotypes, long-stewing grievances, raw anger and crazy fears. Even when we think we have made progress, we find ourselves caught in frustratingly complex racial webs from which we can’t seem to get untangled” (Jensen).

No matter where we are from around the world, the point remains that we need to find better ways to get along. Not just with those from other places and backgrounds but with those next to us who deserve better. This idea of “ It’s the sense of touch. In any real city, you walk, you know? You brush past people, people bump into you. In L. A., nobody touches you. We’re always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much, that we crash into each other, just so we can feel something.” means that we need more relating and touch and understanding from the people around us. This idea of being able to relate to each other and get along is shown over and over again in this movie

One example of the theme of getting along are the characters of Rick and Jean (Brendan Fraser and Sandra Bullock), a rich white couple. Rick is a DA

who tries to remain unprejudiced, but the viewer feels like he is all about image so he can be re-elected. Nothing “ real” seems to come from him, and the viewer suspects that he is having an affair with his white co-worker. Jean, on the other hand, is all real. She is incredibly prejudiced against the Hipic locksmith who comes to the house. She very clearly tells her husband exactly what she thinks.

“ I would like the locks changed again in the morning. And you know what, you might mention that next time we'd appreciate it if they didn't send a gang member...”

She is a mean person, and she has this one memorable quote. She is talking with a so-called friend on the phone and she begins to explain the way she feels, “ I am angry all the time... and I don't know why” (Crash). The viewer wonders how many others feel this way. Jean has supposedly everyone that anyone would want. She has lots of money and a rich and important husband. She can do anything she wants, but she has nobody in her life. If a woman like this is angry all the time, what can that say for the rest of us?

She berates and chastises everyone due to her own unhappiness, and I believe that may just be the general state of the world. And at one point, she tells her maid that she is indeed her best friend. This is the maid who has taken her to the hospital after she has fallen down the stairs; her friends were too busy. We need to find ways to connect with each other and make our lives more fulfilling, so that we can have relationships with other people. That is the lesson that Jean teaches in the film. the old adage that

money cannot buy happiness is shown again. Meaningful people in our lives bring happiness.

Another character who displayed the importance of relationships, and was the opposite of Jean's character was the Latino locksmith Daniel (Michael Pena). By first glance this man did not have half of what Jean's character did. He was just a working-class guy trying to make a living. However, when we catch a glimpse of him at home with his family, our take is altogether different. The viewer sees him under the covers with his daughter telling her a story about the invisible cloak and being a dad and a family man. His story is playful and fun, not just matter of fact.

" She had these little stubby wings, like she could've glued them on, you know, like I'm gonna believe she's a fairy. So she said, " I'll prove it." So she reaches into her backpack and pulls out this invisible cloak and she ties it around my neck. And she tells me that it's impenetrable. You know what impenetrable means? It means nothing can go through it. No bullets, nothing. She told me that if I wore it, nothing would hurt me. And I did. And my whole life, I never got shot, stabbed, nothing. I mean, how weird is that?" (Crash).

He enjoys his time with his daughter, like tucking her in at night. It seems that he is good at his job, but he works to live rather than lives to work. He loves his wife and his daughter, and the viewer cringes at the idea of something horrible happening in this family. The scene where Daniel's daughter almost gets shot is one of the most tense of the film. This man, while he does not have money or status, shows the viewer what life is all

about. he forms meaningful connections in life, and these are what sustain him.

And there is another character who seems to be in the middle, between Jean and Daniel in his ability or lack of ability to form relationships. This is officer Ryan. While he is a racist cop and does some terrible things in this movie, he is also a human being as evidenced by the scenes with his father. Because of his powerlessness at home, he is able to commit horrible atrocities at work and yet, turn around and do something entirely redeeming. His sense of powerlessness is because his father may have cancer, but their HMO prevents them from using a different doctor.

His father is having prostate trouble, and the viewer sees the two of them together at night in the bathroom. The humiliation in these scenes is overwhelming, and the love between father and son is clearly shown. But Officer Ryan takes all that out on those around him. He tries to appeal to the caseworker Shaniqua, but he still insults her by lashing out about affirmative action. In the end, she cannot form a connection with him, and she honestly answers his pleas with,

" Your father sounds like a good man. And if he'd come in here today I probably would have approved his request. But he didn't come in, you did. And for his sake, that's a real shame."

We can't really blame Shaniqua for not wanting to help him, but the viewer wishes that she would. Again and again we are shown what happens when we lack compassion and empathy for others and do not form relationships.

The title itself and the opening quote implies that we are too busy with our own lives to get to know others, but that many of our preconceived notions or prejudices would be gone if only we would take the time. This applies for people from all walks of life. If rich people never do things where they come into contact with different types of people, the preconceived notions will continue to exist. The other lesson here is that everyone has a story and a reason for acting the way they do. If human beings could just take the time to learn about others, we could at least begin to understand why they act the way they do. Crash does a phenomenal job of showing us these things without preaching.

Works Cited

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