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It was in the year 2004 when Paul Haggis, the eminent director, made the film, *Crash*, which went on to win the Oscar. The film is fundamentally a drama about the races of humans, and the effects of racial prejudices on the people in the city of Los Angeles. The film portrays many harsh realities on the screen, and makes one introspect about the evil of racism in the society. The film goes on to spread the word in favor of racial awareness.

The film has the portraiture of characters which come from various ethnicities. There are African American people, Hispanic characters, Asians and even a Persian family in this film. The lead characters of this movie have their lives intertwined, and the audience comes to know about all of them as their stories intersect with the other.

The film has many examples of prejudice and stereotypes based on racial identity of the people. From the very inception of the film, the stereotypical perspectives against the races are shown. The film portrays the character of an affluent white man and woman, who are seen walking down the street. The lady, Jean, is seen holding onto the purse tightly and moving closer to her spouse, Rick, when she finds that two black individuals are approaching toward them. The two black men, Peter and Anthony, notice the reaction of the lady and soon hijack their car. Thus, the negative feelings which Jean has for black people get validated. On reaching home, she demands from her husband that the locks of the house be changed immediately as the keys of the house were in the purse that is stolen by those blacks. Thus, the film portrays the racial prejudice against the blacks. The stereotypical perspective of the white people is reinstated by the apprehension of the lady.

Her husband, Rick, hires a Mexican man to work on the replacement of locks. But, when Jean comes downstairs and sees this Mexican person, she becomes quite upset. Her racist remarks bear testimony to her prejudice against people of other ethnic roots. She apprehends that Daniel, the worker, would sell the new keys of the house to his "homies", and she wants to change the lock the next day again, out of her fear. Although Rick finds her wish to be irrational, she starts screaming and sticks to her stand with resolution. Daniel is surely a victim of prejudice, and his actions have nothing to do with the negative view of the whites.

The film also portrays the well-to-do black couple- Cameron and Christine. These two people are on the receiving ends of racial discrimination and prejudice. In this film, a white police officer is seen to pull them over while they are in their car. The officer makes them get out of their car. He searches both of them to find if they are carrying any ammunition. The duo stand next to one another as Ryan, the officer, continues the search. Ryan runs his hand up the lady's legs and molests her. Her husband sees the incident, but fails to protest out of fear. He is obviously afraid of the legal consequences of retorting in the face of a white police officer.

The incident portrays the racial slur that is predominant in the milieu, and also the fear in the mind of the victims of the prejudice. This fear and feeling of inferiority makes Cameron deter from protesting while the modesty of his wife is violated. Ryan has a white partner, Hansen, who finds this act on the part of Ryan to be very inappropriate, but does not stop him. Christine responds against her husband in rage when they reach home. She is the archetypal character who speaks against the prejudice, and evidently

critiques the problem of stereotyping people based on their ethnic identity. Another example of racial prejudice is expressed through what Farhad, the Middle Eastern store-owner, faces in the course of the film. He is scared about the safety of his family as everyone in the locality takes them to be terrorists after the heinous 9/11 attacks. Some unknown people break into his store and write graffiti all over the walls. This is done presumably due to the racial prejudice against him. The film portrays the character as the victim of the discrimination and prejudice, as he is not a supporter of violence or terrorism in any way.

The audience comes across the character of Graham, a black officer, who is seen dating a Hispanic lady, Rita. In one scene, it is seen that the couple is lying in bed together when the telephone rings. The man answers the call tells his mother that he cannot talk at that point of time, since he is accompanied by a white lady. Rita is disturbed by this reply of her boyfriend. She is Puerto Rican in ethnicity, and the fact is her true ethnic identity would vex Graham's mother all the more. Thus, she is also shown as a victim of racial prejudice.

Thus, it is evident that there are ample examples of stereotypes and racism in the film, *Crash*. The director never takes the subtle path, but hits the audience with the blatant expressions and scenarios which expose the discrimination based on ethnicity. The characters of Ryan, Jean and Anthony have feelings of racism against the blacks. In contrast, the characters of Peter, Rick and Hansen are not shrouded with prejudiced feelings, although they never stand up against racist behavior of the people around them. Also, Cameron and Christine are the victims of the prejudice as they do not

conform to the stereotypical view of their ethnic identity.

This film is an intrepid confrontation with the evil of racism and racial stereotypes. The film raises the question whether it is worth it to take a moral stand putting one's reputation or career at stake, which can be harmful for the ethnic community as the person has been serving as a role model. The intertwined relationship of human beings cannot be based on their racial identity. Rather, it needs to be guided by the basic tenets of humanity and virtue. The film stands out due to its portraiture of the social issue, and stirs the audience to the core with the cinematic representation.