

Crash. A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor
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Crash thoroughly deserved to win Best Picture at the 2006 Academy Awards. The movie follows the unexpected collisions of unexpected characters and films their finding of unexpected redemption in unexpected places.

For two days in urban Los Angeles, the lives of a variety of diverse narratives are interwoven: a black police detective and his conflicted family relationships, two car thieves talking sociology of race, a white district attorney and his paranoid wife, a veteran cop and younger partner, a black Hollywood director and his wife, a Hispanic locksmith and his young daughter, scared sleepless at the thought of random violence.

Crash is a masterful movie. The cinematography is similar to *Collateral*; Los Angeles is filmed with a tenderness that exposes urban beauty among human decay. The dialogue is entertainingly sharp. As the characters challenge our stereotypes, they win our trust. As we identify with the characters, and begin to fear the outcome of their unexpected collisions, the tension of the movie is slowly ratcheted tighter.

Film editor, Hughes Winborne, gained a deserved Academy Award for his editing. His rapid movement between scenes increases the pace, and raises the tension, of the movie. I like movies that play with linear time and demand audience concentration. But such movies, when mixed with diverse characters and diverse plots, have to work harder to provide a satisfying ending. *Crash* lands well.

Viewers are not only treated to a superb movie that pleases both the art critic and the fan of big screen spectacles. *Crash* is also a film that challenges our ability to judge a book by its cover. Thus it engages the arm chair philosopher. *Crash* forces us to finger the complexities of racial fragmentation. From the film's opening lines;

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.

And so we face the reality of urban life. Such is the power of so much contemporary film, to narrate the contemporary search to be human. As *Crash* films fragments of redemption in the unexpected clash of people's lives, it suggests an answer to the besetting human condition that is racism, both institutional and personal. We admit we are flawed characters. We accept unexpected grace.

Crash could almost be the gospel.

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