

FRICTIONS IN THE CITY: SPIKE LEE'S *DO THE RIGHT THING* VS. PAUL HAGGIS'S *CRASH*

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ABSTRACT

The essay offers a comparative look at two cinematic responses to the question of multicultural coexistence in the American urban context, Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and Paul Haggis's *Crash* (2004). Both films received a variety of prizes and represented what were, in their day, ambitious efforts to address racial problems in the USA. The purpose of this comparative analysis is to consider to what extent the films succeeded in describing the phenomenon of US race relations in their multifaceted complexity.

KEYWORDS

American cinema; race relations; American urban cinema; African Americans in film; Spike Lee; Paul Haggis

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years separate the production time of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) from Paul Haggis's Oscar-winning feature *Crash* (2004). Several momentous historical events happened during this time span. Prior to the traumatic events of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Americans experienced the outbreak of violence in Los Angeles' Watts district after the verdict of the Rodney King trial (1992) and they followed with horrified fascination the day-to-day happenings of the O. J. Simpson trial (1995). These events reminded them forcefully that regardless of the progress made during the civil rights era, the troubles of racism were far from settled; on the contrary, these events signaled that W. E. B. Du Bois's problem of the color line was about to make as much difference in the coming century as had been the case in the century that was about to pass.

In many respects both *Crash* and *Do the Right Thing* (henceforth *DTRT*) fall within the same film category: both are ensemble pieces crowned with a variety of prizes, including Academy Awards and nominations for these, and both represent serious and ambitious efforts to tackle racial problems in the USA. The films draw attention to the multitude of tensions and frictions brought about by the coexistence of people of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the American urban context and both highlight the role prejudicial stereotypes play in interpreting the actions of others.

Significantly, both end with a meaningless violent death of a basically innocent African American male.

Since *DTRT* represents, in my opinion, a major achievement in the rendering of the life conditions of the black American urban population for its generation (as well as being an early pinnacle of Spike Lee's career), it will be used as a point of reference against which its more recent counterpart will be measured. In doing so, several questions will be asked or touched upon. Do the films succeed equally in describing the phenomenon of US racism? Do the films help viewers understand the multilayered workings of various important aspects of the social positioning of raced individuals such as education, the economy, history, politics, and representation in the mass media? Are both plots characterized by a comparable amount of verisimilitude? Do they offer a range of believable, lifelike characters? Do the filmmakers connect their fictitious film narratives with real-life historical events and, if so, to what purpose? As judged by their films, what are the filmmakers' respective assessments of the nature of American cultural plurality and democracy? Do the films merely depict the situation or can they be read as suggesting a possible solution to the United States' multiple race problems?

DO THE RIGHT THING

Set in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, the world of Spike Lee's *DTRT* is circumscribed by merely one block. Here a virtual microcosm of urban African American life is presented. We meet representatives of all generations: the ageing, whose life experience is formed by the memory of the African American rural experience and the severe economic hardship of the Great Depression; the middle-aged, who, sitting on the sidewalk, appear to have given up on life's various pursuits, and the young, whose life prospects are certainly not brighter as a consequence of their second-rate education and the relocation of traditional factory jobs abroad. Yet, unlike the middle-aged, they are nevertheless full of energy and enjoy life. It is particularly each other's company and African American music that they seem to be savoring to the full.

At the center of the narrative—and the life of the block—we find Sal's Famous Pizzeria. The Italian American Sal enters the world of Bed-Stuy from the outside every day. He is a kind colonizer, someone who believes in the beneficial mission of his enterprise (feeding the locals with his pizza), while at the same time drawing ample profit from his joint. Customers are always welcome as long as they respect his rules. During an especially hot summer day Sal's seeming benevolence gets tested by the complaint of the local agitator in matters of blackness, Buggin' Out, that his wall of fame features only Italian Americans (while all his customers are African Americans). Matters get even worse in the evening when Radio Raheem, a giant threatening-looking black youth, enters his place, his powerful boom-box blasting Public Enemy's rap chant *Fight the Power*. Whereas in the first

instance Sal manages to contain his temper and solve the dispute peacefully, in the later incident he destroys Radio Raheem's radio with a baseball bat. In the ensuing fight policemen strangle the youth. A riot breaks out and Sal's pizzeria is burnt down.

The pizza delivery boy Mookie—played by Spike Lee—functions as a connecting link between the whites and their surroundings. Despite acting as a mediator¹ between the two worlds, at the moment when Radio Raheem is killed, he is the one who starts the riot. It seems that Raheem's death reminded Mookie of his proper place in this racially divided context, that in a world of extreme injustice and meaningless brutality it is pointless to attempt any kind of mediation with the objective of reaching a reasonable compromise.

Although during the final climactic riot we witness a bipolar confrontation with an angry multiracial, multiethnic crowd facing Sal and his sons, the film also captures a whole range of different forms of stereotyping and prejudice among a variety of groups. There are multiple fissures that run through the Bed-Stuy community: in this contested space African American music competes with salsa played by groups of Latinos, a white gentrifier owns a house in a street that is meant to be inhabited solely by “brothers and sisters,” and the various African American generations provoke each other. The successfully operating Korean corner shop represents yet another affront to the economic deprivation experienced by most local inhabitants.

Crime enters the world of *DTRT* as though by accident when an angry spark ignites the fateful fight, which ends in a meaningless conflagration. Except for this forceful eruption, however, Spike Lee paints a picture of the inner city as a relatively safe place where the various conflicts and contestations remain solely verbal (at least until Sal reaches for his baseball bat). The notable omission of the drug trade and gang violence may be understood as a very welcome correction of a widely accepted stereotype associating an inner city address solely with excesses of drug abuse, homicide and gang violence, when indeed many honest people may spend their entire lives there without being shot dead or even harassed by doped crack addicts. Nevertheless, the fact that a Nation of Islam unit had to be hired to keep the drug trade off the block while *DTRT* was being shot is an ironic reminder that regardless of such ruthless stereotyping the problems of drug consumption and trafficking and the related crime do represent an important aspect of American inner-city existence.²

CRASH

The ubiquitous nature of racism also forms the core of *Crash*, which has been hailed as “the most authentic, lived-in depiction of today's multicultural

1. See Ed Guerrero, *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 148.

2. See Tomáš Pospíšil, *Sambo tu již nebydlí? Obraz Afroameričanů v americkém filmu 20. století* (Brno: Nadace Universitas Masarykiana, nakladatelství Cerm a Nauma, 2003), 110.

America to be released in some time.”³ Paul Haggis’s film confronts the issue of racism head on: in this cinematic world there are none of the benevolent façades of tolerance, patronizing assistance, or polite neglect most people usually project onto their racial others. The viewers are immediately led behind this public screen and confronted with mutual suspicion, mistrust, harassment and violence.

If the world of *DTRT* is enclosed within the confines of one Brooklyn block, the world of *Crash* is significantly more spatially extended, like the city where it is set, Greater Los Angeles. The social scope is also larger, containing a whole range of ethnic and racial groups: the families of a white district attorney, a Latino locksmith, and Iranian store owners; a Chinese couple where the husband turns out to be a people smuggler; a white racist policeman and his sick father. Similarly, *Crash* offers a depiction of a much wider range of the African American experience, not just the inner-city population. Here, practically all African American social classes are represented: two street criminals, a police commander, a police investigator, and a TV director and his wife.

The filmmakers’ attempt to furnish a possibly all-encompassing cross-section of American urban society is apparent in another telling difference. Unlike in *DTRT*, where everything happens in and around Sal’s Famous Pizzeria and the only household the viewers are shown is the cramped and cheaply equipped apartment of Mookie’s partner Tina, in *Crash* we enter the homes of most of the participating characters. While not significantly contributing to our understanding of the characters’ actions and their motivations, this strategy adds a dimension to the film and invites reflection on questions of racial, class, cultural and economic difference, privilege, and dominance in society.

Crash cannot be charged with the omission of crime. In its universe physical violence is as omnipresent as verbal slurs. It does not happen at exceptional moments under exceptional circumstances, it happens all the time. One of the film’s multiple plots deals with a homicide investigation; we see an attempt by the frustrated Iranian store-owner to murder the Latino locksmith because his shop was broken into and totally destroyed, for which he blames the innocent craftsman, and finally we witness the killing of a black hitch-hiker at the hands of a nerve-wracked white policeman off duty. Perhaps the most disturbing of all the acts of violence is the harassment of the black director’s wife by a white racist LAPD officer, while her husband is standing by, unable to help. Two young African American males, one of whom voices the frequent black grievance of being not properly treated in a diner because of their skin color, take out their guns and attack the District Attorney and his wife and carjack their luxurious SUV. It is an interesting twist that a character who complains of being a victim of racial discrimination based on

3. Josh Larsen, “Messy, Honest Reality on Race,” *American Enterprise* 16, no. 4 (June 2005): 51.

prejudice in one moment acts in a manner that confirms the prejudice a few seconds later.

Paul Haggis stresses the prevalence of race as the ultimate criterion in distinguishing among people and their access to power in today's United States. In the conflict-ridden world of the American city it is the whites who have the final say in most arguments. Representatives of the African American bourgeoisie—here represented by the figure of the well-to-do black TV director—may have benefited from the political developments of the second half of the 20th century and may have achieved an enormous rise in prosperity and class standing. However, this melts down to nothing in the first quarrel with a white racist police officer. Similarly, in the world of the media we see the white producer indicating to the black director that a black lead does not sound “black enough” any more and that the scene should be redone. Although the director sees no reason for the change, he complies with the producer's subtle pressure and thus assists in the perpetuation of an artificially stressed stereotype. It is no wonder that having gone through excruciating helplessness and humiliation at the moment of his wife's harassment and having been ordered to redo the scene he starts acting emotionally and violently, nearly getting himself killed by the police.

In another unsettling scene a black police investigator accepts the offer by a district attorney's white aide to be promoted and have the criminal record of his younger brother erased in exchange for presenting an untrue version of a murder he investigates. The DA hopes that framing an innocent white detective, who happens to have a racist record, would boost his appeal to the black electorate in the upcoming election, for he will be able to present himself as tough on crime, regardless of the race of the perpetrator.

In this corrupt world there are hardly any unblemished heroes: the white establishment runs society (the police department, the office of the District Attorney, the media) and members of the black middle class are forced to accommodate to the situation in order to survive: the competent African American aide of the district attorney cannot be unaware of the sinister nature of the deals being made, but she refrains from commenting or interfering, and only casts a knowing look; other blacks simply accept whatever dubious parts of the bargain they are offered. At a lower level, however, we see African Americans as having achieved some inroads into the local establishment and wielding some power. Yet are they using it to further interracial solidarity and equality? Are they working toward more justice? No: they seek revenge. At least this is the impression one gets from the character of the clerk at the hospital who refuses to admit the father of the racist police officer despite the old man's enormous suffering. Only the dangerous-looking tattooed Latino locksmith is exempt from the overall hatred, resentment and corruption. He is a role-model family man and an honest and competent craftsman. His character is meant to suggest that appearances may be misleading and first impressions can at times be wrong.

It is precisely the perpetual motion of prejudice and harassment that sends the various characters of *Crash* on their dangerous and deadly trajectories. The racist police officer cannot achieve the admission of his hurting father to the hospital, so he goes and harasses the black couple. The Iranian store owner has his store broken into and thus he attempts to shoot the locksmith, for he blames him for the burglary. And so it goes. And yet, not all hope is lost. In the second half of the feature we see an extraordinary reversal in most characters: those who were introduced as bigots wind up, all of a sudden, on the positive side. Those who appeared tolerant, moderate and well-meaning turn into suspicious bigots. The black youth guilty of armed robbery refuses to sell the vanful of Chinese immigrants into sweatshop slavery and sets them free in the downtown area, passing up the handsome profit of \$500 per head. The prejudiced white wife of the DA sprains her ankle and seeks consolation in the arms of her Latina housekeeper. The bad cop risks his own life to save the woman he had abused the night before, while his more sensitive colleague shoots the young black hitch-hiker. The tragedy was caused by him misreading the hitch-hiker's movement of reaching into his pocket, and yet it was not a gun the black youth was trying to pull out. . . .

The seriousness with which the authors decided to approach the issue of intolerance and prejudice led to a significant—and telling—omission: there is not a single scene in the whole feature with characters relaxing or simply having fun. In the rare moments when they appear to enjoy themselves—such as when the black police investigator is making love to his Latina partner—the issue of racism creeps back within seconds. In this particular instance the intercourse is interrupted by a phone call from his mother. Irritated by the interruption and thus trying to annoy his mum in return, the police investigator claims he is making love to a white woman. . . . Unlike in *DTRT*, where we frequently encounter characters just chatting, biding their time, or simply having fun, happily oblivious of the whole race issue, the creators of *Crash* do not allow their viewers a single moment of rest: watching the film is “hard work” from beginning to end.

THE QUESTION OF CHARACTERS

The world of *Crash* may be so spatially extended as to encompass the whole of Los Angeles, but in terms of its cast and their frequent encounters, it is surprisingly small. The representation of their dramatic conflicts certainly provides the narrative with suspense, emotional intensity and a strong moral appeal. Nonetheless, if the viewer abandons the immediate perspective of a particular thrilling moment and assesses the overall structure of the multi-plot narrative and the tight interconnectedness of its individual strains, he or she can't help seeing a certain predictable pattern in the narrative's frequent coincidences and character reversals, as though a certain degree of verisimilitude had been sacrificed at the expense of driving home the film's skeptical anti-racist message. To suggest that no person can be entirely free from prejudice and that race is a major determinant of the ways Americans

make sense of the world and deal with one another, Paul Haggis has gone to extremes. The basic points that are made are that: 1) any person is but a rather fluid set of attitudes arising from the given context one finds oneself in; 2) no one is ever entirely free from racial prejudice and stereotyping; 3) unfriendly and violent actions provoke even more unfriendly and violent reactions; and 4) the qualities of affirmation, altruism and sacrifice, as well as negation, hatred and spite, are variously mixed within each individual. Yet in order to capture the complexity and inner contradictions within a human being, Paul Haggis makes some of his characters rotten first, only to make them exemplary moments later, and vice versa.

Compare this to the way Spike Lee constructs his characters in *DTRT*. At the center of the narrative we find two people: Sal, the white pizzeria owner, and Mookie, his black delivery boy. As far as race and prejudice are concerned, neither is presented in extreme terms; together they maintain a mutually advantageous economic partnership and they are capable of reciprocal respect. Yet at the end of the film, under the spell of circumstances, these basically tolerant figures become destructive: Sal by smashing Radio Raheem's boom-box to pieces, Mookie by starting the looting of the pizzeria. Like Haggis, Lee shows that generally well-meaning people can act violently given the right (or rather wrong!) set of circumstances. Unlike Haggis, however, he does not construct his characters as moving between extreme positions; these conflicting positions are already present, intertwined with their affirmative and benevolent attitudes. In the context of the racially divided society, we are told, prejudice and a danger of erupting violence are buried within each person, even those who under normal circumstances are well-meaning and kind. This is, however, not to say that these characters are hypocrites: Lee presents them as basically unaware of their own destructive potential, which gets unleashed only in a moment of crisis.

Sal, for instance, is contrasted to the overtly racist member of the family, his son Pino. Unlike Pino, Sal appears to like his customers. He is proud they have grown on his pizza. He is amorously attracted to Mookie's sister Jade. Yet he explodes when his domination of his territory is contested during the day, first by Buggin' Out's complaint about the pictures of Italian Americans on his Wall of Fame (here, Sal's burst of anger could still be contained) and by Radio Raheem's aural aggression by means of a militant rap song. His benevolent attitude is predicated on the condition that whatever happens in the pizzeria happens on his terms only. Lee's ingenious construction of Sal's character critiques the hidden racism many even well-meaning white Americans display toward members of the black minority. His syrupy expression of pride ("I like these people here; I've seen them grow up on my pizza") or sentimental, fatherly promise to Mookie ("Mookie, there will always be a place for you here. . . .") can certainly be interpreted as such, while not being so obvious to many mainstream (i.e., white) viewers. Moreover, Sal's benevolence is immediately forgotten when his space is violated by an uncomfortable aspect of the culture he pretends to tolerate or even like: Radio Raheem's rap music.

Throughout the film *Mookie* operates as a middleman between the races and cultures on the block, negotiating the rising tensions, crossing the boundaries between variously demarcated spaces. When confronted with extremists on both sides—such as Pino or *Buggin' Out*—he stands for toleration. His motivation may not be entirely altruistic. In the post-industrial economy there are hardly any traditional manufacturing jobs available for people with his educational background. Thus his own economic well-being depends on his working for Sal. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that in the racially divided society he stands for acceptance, cooperation and reason.⁴ Even his decision to throw the trashcan through the pizzeria's window and thus start the looting appears to have been made with a clear mind. At the moment when Radio Raheem was killed by the police patrol and when an angry crowd full of people of color calls for revenge, occupying the position of the middleman is no longer a tenable option: Mookie has to choose sides and he does. One way of reading his action is this: he dissociates himself from the white establishment that indirectly caused Radio Raheem's murder and at the same time hits Sal where it hurts: his property. Another way—not mutually exclusive—is that by channeling the anger of the crowd toward the joint he in fact saves Sal and his sons from being lynched by the fierce crowd. In any case we see a very consistent character, one that does not move between extreme positions of harassment vs. self-sacrifice, tolerance vs. bigotry, and greedy recklessness vs. selfless altruism.

Mookie's consistency as a character can be well illustrated by the following telling detail: his attitude toward money. Throughout the film we see his enormous pride at having a job, getting paid and being dressed properly. Indeed, as Paula J. Massood claims, “[i]n a hyper-materialist consumer culture in which income and clothing define individuals, Mookie derives much of his self-esteem from the money in his pocket and the clothes on his back.”⁵ And the morning after the riot he goes to the incinerated place and approaches Sal, who is mourning the loss of his property, and requests whatever the Italian American owes him. This claim might appear rather insensitive to viewers, who are likely to empathize with the character who has just seen his life's work going up in smoke; doubly so when it is made by the character who started the destruction. But Mookie knows and stresses that Sal's joint was insured so that eventually he will receive his compensation and flatly demands his weekly wages. Sal's material loss can be easily compensated, unlike the loss of Radio Raheem's life. In Mookie's attitude and argumentation one can certainly recognize the same kind of person. The character's actions have an inner logic that one cannot fail to notice.

4. See Pospíšil, *Sambo tu již nebydlí*, 107.

5. Paula J. Massood, *Black City Cinema: African American Urban Experiences in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 137.

THE USE OF HISTORY

At the moment of the confrontation with the police immediately after the killing of Radio Raheem, Spike Lee uses a panning shot across the various people outside of the pizzeria. The camera moves across the faces of Latinos and blacks, men and women, the old and the young. Then the people start shouting the names of black victims of white violence, such as Eleanor Bumpers or Michael Stewart.⁶ In this manner the author connects this fictitious event with its real-life counterparts, thus highlighting the fictional event's veracity: these things unfortunately happen in society at large and young African Americans keep dying at the hands of the police.

The way Lee cinematically handles the ensuing riot—where the firemen fight both the flames and the fierce crowds at the same time—is likewise informed by recent history.⁷ The firemen's hoses aimed at desperate and angry people are a reminder of the way protesters, demonstrators and rioters were handled during the years of the Civil Rights Movement in places such as Birmingham, Alabama, Selma, Alabama, or Watts, Los Angeles. For a person with at least a minimum awareness of American history it is impossible to see this particular scene without realizing Spike Lee's message: what we are looking at is just a film but the events it depicts are frighteningly real.

Likewise Haggis relies on the audience's awareness of the history of American race relations. In one of the most intense and disturbing moments of the film the white LAPD officer harasses the black director's wife. Under the pretext of searching for weapons he touches her intimate parts, while her husband is unable to intervene. On the contrary, he is forced to apologize. This double humiliation—of both the wife and her helpless husband—clearly evokes the history of the sexual abuse of black women by white men, the symbolic emasculation of black men, who were not in a position to protect their wives and female relatives, and the absolute power white males wielded during the times of slavery and the Jim Crow South.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Various characters in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* answer the question of what is to be done. Depending on their generation and experience, there is a whole range of readymade responses to choose from. Mookie's centrality in the narrative has been mentioned. Thus it is probably his point of view that matters most (especially when he is played by Spike Lee himself). Throughout the whole film Mookie is stressing the fact that he is working and that he is getting paid. The fact that he has a job—albeit a low-paying, service one—is a source of pride for him and an important part of his identity.

6. See Spike Lee with Lisa Jones, *Do the Right Thing: A Spike Lee Joint* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 59. Eleanor Bumpers was an elderly woman fatally shot-gunned by police in the Bronx in 1984. Michael Stewart was a young graffiti artist killed while in police custody in Brooklyn in 1983.

7. See Lee with Jones, *Do the Right Thing*, 65.

Another important suggestion is presented by the deejay of the local radio station, DJ Love Daddy, who functions as an omniscient witness to the events. The whole narrative is framed by his voiceover, which also suggests authority. From his commentary one piece of advice stands out: register and vote! What is understood, of course, is to register as a Democrat and vote against the then mayor Ed Koch.⁸ The situation might be bleak and change for the better seemingly unavailable, and yet despite these enormous odds Spike Lee suggests it has to be attempted, by the means of economic empowerment and participation in the democratic process.

Paul Haggis appears to be less certain about what to suggest as a meaningful course of action. In *Crash* he presents a picture of a society at odds with itself, fragmented, irritable, and constantly threatening to explode. One of its most characteristic features is segregation. Here people of various cultural backgrounds live apart from each other and a car crash represents a rare opportunity to meet someone from a different racial or social group. The film can also be read as a serious indictment of the American political system, marred by background wheeling and dealing, corruption, and cynical manipulation of the race issue. Democracy is not working; plurality of cultures is a frustrating nuisance; racial tolerance seems unavailable, and there is no way out of this predicament. *Crash* could be read as a diagnosis, as a powerful reminder of a burning problem that may not always be apparent to people who commute from a mainstream job to a mainstream suburb every day. Yet the film represents less a blueprint for action than an invitation to reflection: about the ubiquity of racial divisions within us and within our societies, and about our nature which—despite its benevolent façade—is never entirely pleasant. The decision as to what concrete steps one should take to get Americans out of this unhappy situation is left to the viewers.

CONCLUSION

Both Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* and Paul Haggis's *Crash* present American cultural plurality as problematic and highlight the multiple fissures running across the various sections of society. Both show how negative stereotypes of the other complicate the daily interaction of the representatives of the various groups. The films also make use of recent, as well as more distant, history to connect the diegetic and extradiegetic spaces and to put more stress on the current relevance of the issue. Beneath the multifaceted world of racial, ethnic and cultural plurality the films present one fundamental opposition: that of the mainstream white population, which wields most power, versus the other racial and ethnic groups. Thus in the small world of Spike Lee's film we see the white character of Sal as effectively running the territory of his pizzeria, and even though he temporarily loses control over his property during the climactic moments of the riot, it can

8. See Houston A. Baker, Jr., "Spike Lee and the Commerce of Culture," in *Black American Cinema*, ed. Manthia Diawara (New York: Routledge, 1993), 174.

easily be reestablished in the future. In the broader social canvas of *Crash* a similar picture can be seen: here the worlds of politics and the media are run by white authority figures, who manage to maintain their influence by skillful manipulations of the race sentiments of the electorate and race stereotyping of minorities in the media. Both films present the police force as prejudiced and racist, effectively subjugating and—sometimes even killing—innocent members of the African American population.

Both films can be read as voicing an important social message of warning about the impasse any society can reach if it ignores the divisions caused by racial thinking and if it allows its democratic process to be dominated by skillful manipulators and their unscrupulous aides. In addition to these timely and universal points, unlike *Crash*, Spike Lee's film offers yet another set of vital cinematic assets: characters with inner logic, consistency and a significantly higher level of verisimilitude. One can certainly also appreciate Lee's portrayal of the various subtle forms of racism. This dimension is basically missing from the world of *Crash*, where extreme manifestations of racial prejudice and violence predominate.

While several characters in *DTRT* suggest possible avenues of action for African Americans toward attaining a less disadvantaged social position—such as the suggestion to find a job and participate in the political process—the characters in *Crash* offer us no such vision. This gloomy narrative can only be used as an example of a road not to be taken: its broad cast of prejudiced and frustrated characters can only advocate the necessity of adopting a contrary position: one of ease, tolerance and respect for the other.

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