

# Witness film essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The film Witness, Directed by Peter Weir was famous in 1984. This film is about two cultures clashing with each other the Amish and The Western Society and a story line of a murder crime. “ A big city cop who knows too much... His only evidence: A small boy who’s seen too much”. The main character of this film is Harrison Ford as John Book. Today I will be talking about two of the themes Peter Weir uses in the film ‘ Witness’. They are the clash of two worlds and power. The first theme that I would like to speak about is the clash of two worlds ‘ The Amish’ and ‘ The Western Society’.

This theme, Weir has made a clear comparison between the two worlds. They could not work together in harmony because of the differences in beliefs, culture and lifestyle patterns. Because of this the relationship between Rachel and Book could not work out, their cultures and beliefs are too diverse from one another, and she could not go with him to the city life and Book could not stay with her in the Amish world. Towards the end when the two worlds collided with each other it did not do any good for the Amish but bring violence and danger towards their community.

The opening scene music was slow pace equal and harmony with this type of music Weir has demonstrated the Harmony and the slow pace of the Amish people. The Amish does not fight against each other and strive for the top, like the city life people and does not want to be better the another person. Weir has use the techniques of long angle shot at the opening scene where the Amish people walking together to attend Rachel husband funeral, then comes the close-up shot of showing clearly of the Amish people, with this

angel shot Weir wanted to demonstrate the unity of the Amish community people working together as one.

The colour of the green meadow with the pre-modern housing surrounding the landscapes, the bright blue sky in the horizons and the wind gently making green waves in the meadow and the addition of calm soothing music in the background, this is demonstrated through the harmony and the peace of the Amish land and how simple they live their lives. While the City life is crowded with transport, people, tall, tightly spaced buildings and the pollution the urban community live in. The city lives are dealt with violence, greed and criticism of the people.

The dull colour of scene where people are rushing to reach their destination and the heavy and quick pace of the music has change dramatically from the opening scene as the changes is when Rachel and Samuel got on the train to go and visit her sister in the city. As the train starts to travel you could hear a great change of music from calm and soothing music to a rush and mysterious sound of the music with this it tries to tell us that Rachel and Samuel are travelling for the first time out of their comfort zone of their home into a world that is strange and unknown to them.

As an audience we could see how Weir has portrayed negative thoughts of the city life while the Amish country life is a positive. Because of this issue the clash of two cultures is demonstrated through the relationship between Rachel and Book. A relationship that started at the first sight but ended as the end drew near, because of the huge gap of their cultures, faith and understanding. Rachel was a stranger to the big city life and could never

understand it, and Book could never understand the culture and the life of the Amish people.

An example to this is when John, Rachel, Eli and Samuel were having breakfast and John made a joke which no one understood. We could tell from this that they are different for each other and could not really communicate understandingly with one another other. While watching the film us viewer could clearly see how Rachel is having problem with the way Book dealt with violence. She does not like it because of her belief and the way she grew up in her culture where violence are forbid.

The evidence that clearly show how she felt about violence is ‘ I just don’t like my son spending time with a man who carries a gun and goes around whacking people. ’ With this problem the character of Rachel was then to face the problem between the feeling she has for Book and her culture and family. She tries ways to make Book understand her culture and for him to become an Amish man, but for Book he was born and raised up in a world fill with violence that he could not understand and adapted to the lifestyle Rachel is living in.

For Rachel she could not leave the world she is living in and go with Book because she will then have to face the outside world that is a complete stranger to her and leave behind her son. From this we could see the huge difference between the two worlds for individuality and the connection of love they had, and because of the clash of two worlds and the difference of their culture Rachel and Book are in forced to be apart from each other at

the end because both are not willing to leave behind their culture and their belief.