

# Silent light: a movie review



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Silent Light revolves around the theme of infidelity and on how a wife struggles to accept her husband's affair with another woman. Johan, one of the main characters in the story, is troubled about his feelings and is confused as to what he should do in order to relieve himself of the emotional burden that he carries with him. Esther, Johan's wife, refuses to openly show to her husband how she truly feels about his extramarital affair. The other woman in Johan's life, Marianne, seems hesitant to let go of him as well because she feels that, like Esther, she loves him.

The setting for the conflict among the characters in the story happens in a rural area where nature flourishes. Interestingly, the film opens and closes with two scenes focusing on the natural environment—the opening scene shows the rising sun from the distance casting light on the fields and trees while the closing scene shows the setting sun from afar giving way for nighttime. The movie shows a number of scenes which involve a certain focus on the natural environment where the characters are situated.

For instance, both opening and closing scenes do not only show the rising and setting of the sun, respectively. The opening and closing scenes also involve sounds that come from nature such as the sound of the crickets, the croaking of the frogs, the chirping of the birds and the faint cry of wolves in the distance. Another scene depicting the environment is the scene where Johan walks his way through the bushes and flowers, ascending to a relatively high area where Marianne was waiting for him.

The view from where they stood reveals the range of mountains from afar as well as the partly clear sky above the trees and green grasses. A scene

where Johan's family members are taking a bath in the pool surrounded by trees also features the natural environment where they lived. Moreover, a scene where Johan and Esther are working in the field of dry corn stalks together with two of their children is also one of the many scenes in the film which highlight the kind of natural environment that they have survived through the years.

In general, the movie feels a little less lively because of two primary reasons: one is the manner in which the movie is filmed and two is the relatively long scenes which usually involve less talk and movement from the characters. Most of the shots do not make use of moving cameras, so to speak, which in effect creates the impression that the characters are moving in a still environment. It also sends the idea that more focus is given to the setting or to the natural environment than the characters themselves mainly because the attention of the viewer is absorbed into the background.

A number of the scenes are also lengthy; while the characters are either not doing any movement or not talking, the film continues to roll. The fact that the opening and closing scenes involve the picturesque view of the sun rising and setting suggests that there is a considerable length of time needed just to capture those moments. In fact, these scenes take about ten minutes when combined. Another specific instance where the scene becomes longer than what most movies usually have is the scene where Johan's car runs on the dirt road from his house.

The camera continues to film until the time when the car is no longer visible from the distance. What I like about the movie is that it incorporates

numerous shots of the environment, thereby giving the setting almost equal significance with the plot and the characters in the story. From my understanding, Silent Light gives focus on the environment from one season to another in order to signify that, like the changing seasons and nature, people also change their ways and feelings.

In short, in this world, nothing remains the same as it is as one thing today may turn to be partly or entirely different tomorrow. But despite these frequent changes in both the environment and the lives of people, the story also shows how people still have the capacity to make decisions on their own in order to give them a little control of their lives, especially on how they want things to become. What I like least about Silent Light is its somehow exaggerated ending where Esther awakens from her death bed.

Despite the fact that the doctor already pronounced a massive heart attack as Esther's cause of death, she returned to life after Marianne kissed her on the lips. Apparently, the film did not show how Johan felt about Esther's resurrection. What it does is to give the reader the task of interpreting the case of Esther, especially if her case is truly what it is or that perhaps her resurrection is simply a metaphorical representation of her acceptance of her husband's affair with another woman.

It may also stand as a representation of the freedom that she gained from her death, giving her emancipation from the emotional bondage that she carried as a burden while she was alive. Only Johan thereafter is left with a heavy heart, which might have prompted Esther to say " poor Johan" towards the end of the film. In essence, Silent Light draws the attention of

the viewer not only to the characters and the story's plot. It also draws the attention of the viewer to the environment.

While the movie captures yet another story of infidelity and of emotional suffering in a rural place where residents live a simple life, it also captures a complex story involving the lives of three people who are left with no choice but to deal with the hardship they are facing. In its initial scenes, the story may be difficult to follow at first. But as the story progresses, the plot becomes clearer as it thickens, drawing relatively few surprises along the way but remaining faithful to the story's main theme nonetheless.