

Clash of cultures in the film "witness"

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



The development of characters is enhanced by Peter Weir's film techniques? Discuss this statement with reference to witness The film Witness focuses on the clash of cultures, allowing Peter Weir to comment on the injustices of modern culture and the development of characters as a result. In the film Witness the Western World influences and changes the characters through the new experiences they face and encounter.

Throughout the course of the film the Amish boy, Samuel Lapp undergoes many changes as he is influenced and corrupted by the horrors of the Western World as opposed to the Amish culture which dwells on living a pacifist lifestyle within which he lives. The murder scene in Witness is critical to revealing the change of Samuel's experiences from innocence to complete awareness of the horrors of the world. The close up of Samuel's eye through the keyhole in the bathroom door reveals that we are seeing the course of events through his point of view and perspective on the situation.

However in the bathroom scene Samuel witnesses a brutal murder which vicissitudes his character to one that has knowledge of the danger and violence in the Western World. The Western World's morals and values of what is veracious and immoral are different to that of the Amish society. The Amish and John Book have different perceptions of justice as illustrated throughout the gun scene. In this scene both John Book and Eli reprimand Samuel when he touched the gun.

The close up of Samuel handling the gun provokes contradictory responses from both John Book and Eli. John Book is concerned that the gun is loaded and hands Samuel the gun without bullets. To John Book the bullets

symbolise the power to exert justice; the gun is purely the vessel like he is, from which justice can be delivered. The close up of Samuel directs the audience's attention to the fact that it is Samuel whose mind is being influenced and challenged by his exposure to the western world.

In contrast Eli's view is that the gun symbolises the unclean nature of the Western Culture as it has the power to take away a man's life. However the gun is purely an extension of a person's values whether that is moral or unmoral values. The Amish culture dwells on the concept of peace within their community and lives a pacifist lifestyle; however when the western world collides with the Amish lifestyle many differences yet some similarities show through. This reveals Peter Weir's ultimate comment the despite our differences and similarities human nature draws individuals together. The western lifestyle is represented through the Darkmusic which conveys the cruelty and brutality of the Western World coming into and influencing and challenging characters within the Amish community. This is revealed in the final gun scene. In this scene John uses what is within the Amish community to defeat the corrupt cops that are coming against him. In the final gun scene there is a sense of community in order to protect the Amish culture whereas the murder scene there is a sense of individualism and corruption.