



Anthony Bean:

Peter Weir's *Witness* captures the very core differences between the lives of the urban and the life of the Anish. Samuel Lapp and John Book, characters within the film, determine the extreme juxtaposition of the two cultures. through the uses of in particular, the Mise en scene.

Today, I am honoured to be sitting next to the wonderful and creative filmmaker himself in order to gather a little more knowledge on the Movie, *Witness* and the use of characters such as John Book and Samuel Lapp.

Welcome Peter, glad to see you back in Australia.

Peter Weir:

Glad to be back! ~~Was~~ It has differantly been a while.

Anthony Bean:

In deed it was. Now tell me Peter, what exactly is *Witness* based on and why exactly was it significant to your career?



Peter Weir:

That's a very good question. Witness is based on a variety of Genres, it can be seen as a thriller, a clash between two cultures or it could also be seen as a love story. I wanted to create a movie that was entertaining yet worthwhile to watch, and through the use of these Genres I was able to achieve what I wanted, because I knew that I could.

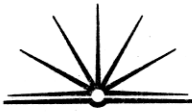
The reason this movie had a role to play in my life was because it was the very first to introduce me to the world of film making in America and it got me a long way.

Anthony Bean:

So, explain to how the use of John Book and Samuel Lapp in Witness was such a significance within the film...

Peter Weir:

Well clearly John Book is shown in Witness as a detective, who is in charge of investigating a crime that involves Samuel Lapp, because he is the only witness.



Through the crime, we are then, as the viewers, introduced to a number of different aspects and situations that begin to unravel as the story goes on, including the clash between John Book's lifestyle to that of Samuel Lapp's sheltered and isolated life and home.

The two lives are brought together in the story and tend to overlap each other often, because the differences are in fact very evident for example John Book comes from Philadelphia, a place of "brotherly love" ironical its anything but brotherly love when a murder takes place and he is introduced as being the cop. He comes from a dark town, that is constantly busy. I tried achieving this by focusing ~~of~~ on the lighting that was made dark, dull and lifeless as opposed to Samuel's life.

Samuel Lapp's home in The Amish is noticed as being warm, safe and bright. When we are introduced to the Amish people walking up the hill in the first shot we instantly feel that the environment is safe as we notice the green in the grass and



brightness of the sun, and the closeness of the community especially when Rachel and Samuel are surrounded by the Amish community in the Grist Scene.

Throughout the movie you gather bits and pieces of the dramatic juxtaposition between John Book and Samuel Lapp. Through Samuel's innocence to John's wise and violent personality, Samuel's fascination of the urban lifestyle to John's hide away from ~~Shabbat~~ through the Amish, Samuel witnessing the crime to John's witnessing of the Amish beliefs and values. The difference between the two, is what makes the two important in the film because their values, beliefs, morals, jobs, views and lifestyles constantly contradict one another making it interesting and to an extent educational.

Anthony Bean:

May I ask what techniques did you use to show the difference between the two extremely different lifestyles?



Peter Weil:

I used also of lighting techniques to show the juxtaposition, the music was soft and relaxing when the Amish appear on the screen as opposed to the eerie and electronic music that is heard when we are taken into violent stages within the film. The use of the Chorus shot and the lingering shot in the Amish scenes, whereas in the city I used a lot more of cut away, cross cutting and blocking especially noticeable when the crime occurs and at Elaine's house. Juxtaposition is shown throughout the entire film from the characters to the transport. I had used intertextuality when filming Book in the Amish community also... all these techniques make up a majority of the ways I was able to show the difference and the importance between the two cultures.

Anthony Bean:

Amazing, thank you very much for your time Peter Weil, it's been great knowing a little bit more about your techniques and witness. Thank you.