

# The last samurai



Essay on change ??“ ??? Change does not occur without a trigger???

Introduction While change is inevitable, it cannot occur without a catalyst.

Whether the catalyst is internal or external it is initiated by the individual??

™s environment, an external force. Edward Zwick??™s ??? The Last

Samurai?? and Stephen Donaldson??™s ??? Lord Foul??™s Bane?? both

explore the concept of external forces triggering change, the effects of

triggers and the protagonists view towards the catalyst within themselves

and the environment. Zwick and Donaldson approach their protagonists in

different ways, Zwick uses a decorated and honoured American soldier,

where Donaldson portrays an Anti-Hero character in the form of leprosy

ridden Thomas Covenant. Point A Despite whether a cause for change affects

the physical or psychological development of an individual the trigger is

generated through the external environment. Director Zwick has utilised

camera angles and shots to grant significance to certain events throughout

the film. In scene 24 a samurai warrior is viewed kneeling from an above

camera angle, surrounded by soldiers.

The high camera angle degrades the status of the samurai, adding to the

shame of the removal of the tradition topknot. The circle of uniformed

soldiers surrounding the traditionally garbed samurai acts to contrast

between the western and the cultural, the individual and the crowd.

Donaldson uses imagery describe the catalyst that completely changes the

direction of the book, ??? It skidded and swerved at the speed of its turn??!

as he dropped, he had a vague sense that he was falling too soon, that he

had not been hit???

The effect of these catalysts is to signify a change in the plot of the story. In Lord Foul's Bane the catalyst causes Thomas to enter a mystical environment where he must aid the people of The Land. In the last samurai the catalyst allows Algren to acknowledge the way samurai, later enabling Algren to aid Katsumoto escape almost certain death. As Thomas' environment changes he strongly resists, naming himself the Unbeliever and constantly creating reasons as to why he is dreaming, reasons such as nerves cannot regenerate which repeated constantly throughout the novel. Algren's reaction to the change is completely different as he accepts the change willingly this is shown by the conscious decision to fight against the emperor. Further proof of his acceptance is the use of a sword to fight a group of men while on the way to Katsumoto.

Through the use of these techniques both Donaldson and Zwick have created a catalyst stemming from the external environment, this trigger created a profound change both protagonists. The most relevant aspect of catalysts is how the individual reacts to the change caused by the trigger. Symbolism is used by Zwick in The Last Samurai as the reaction to the change caused by the previously mentioned catalyst is shown by Algren wearing the traditional samurai armour in the final battle.

The effect of wearing the armour is to openly display his allegiance to the samurai, and to openly state he will fight for what he believes in. The wearing of the armour not only shows the change in Algren but also shows that the samurai have accepted him, displaying adaptation by the samurai culture as well. In this way Zwick demonstrates Algren's positive reaction to the change that has stemmed from the trigger mentioned earlier in the essay.

Where Donaldson cannot use film he employs imagery. Verbose descriptions of surroundings are used to describe the environment as Thomas views it, ??? Even its front steps were polished to guard against the stain of human need which prowled up and down them, seeking restitution???. This has the effect of showing the audience Thomas??™s perspective on the world after being diagnosed with leprosy. Thomas once a happy family man, now lonely sees the world through bitter eyes.

By allowing Thomas to describe his environment Donaldson has displayed Thomas??™s reaction to leprosy. Due to the leprosy being prior to the car crash the audience may gain insight into Thomas??™s future reaction to change. Point COnce change has been triggered it becomes difficult to stop. This concept is explored by director Zwick as the samurai attempt to slow the rate of alteration in regard to modernising Japan. The samurai symbolise a resisting force where the imperial forces and council act as driving forces.

The effect of the samurai acting as a resisting force does halt the change but provides enough opposition that compromise may be made. This is shown in today??™s society as each Australian parliamentary department has a shadow minister to oppose proposals. The resistance of the samurai provided enough disturbance that towards the end of the film the emperor of Japan dismissed the ambassador of the U. S. A as the treaty was ??? not in the best interest of my people???. The resistance of the samurai shows that once the change has been triggered it becomes increasingly difficult to haltChange within ??? Lord Foul??™s Bane??? comes in the form of a mystical world that the protagonist Thomas Covenant refuses to believe in. While Thomas

believes that he is dreaming, he is unable to wake up, suggesting this is something more than a mere dream.

He convinces himself the only avenue of escape is to complete the task given to him on entering ??? The Land???. Therefore it could be said that once the task had begun, completing it was his only optionConclusionOverall, Edward Zwick and Stephen Donaldson have provided a profound insight towards the triggers of change and the effect these triggers have on society. Through their different forms of media they have shown while change is inevitable, it cannot occur without a catalyst. Whether the catalyst is internal or external it is initiated by the individual??™s environment.