

THE LAST SAMURAI MOVIE REACTION PAPER

The movie, *The Last Samurai*, was indeed a very good movie that depicts the culture of Japan very well. I think the movie is carefully dressed up in terms of its messages that it will not offend anyone. So the movie was about the Japanese leaders who thought that they would like to have a taste of modern living and western kind of life, but the samurai, the traditional warriors who are the protectors of Japan, opposed because they thought that the change is a bit too hasty at the expense of the nation's cultural identity.

The movie showed how greatly two nations can differ in their cultural aspects. The very culture of Japan is very different from those of Americans, firmly speaking; Japanese is family-oriented wherein their nation and their families are placed above their individual desires while the Americans are very individualistic.

Omura, who is an advisor of the Japanese Emperor, is the main supporter of the modernization in Japan through the help of the Americans. It was him who hired Captain Nathan Algren, the American civil war veteran, to be an adviser of the Japanese imperial army. American soldiers taught the Japanese army how to use guns and cannons, which is a new thing for them. It is to suppress the samurai whom opposes the thought of transitioning from traditional ways to modernization which is a counter culture because they reject the dominant societal values and norms that seeks alternative lifestyle. I am very aware about the samurai way on how they convey their feelings towards their nation and culture with such fact that the meaning of samurai is "to serve" and their swords or katanas are made to serve and protect their Emperor. It was very evident that samurai lives up to their cultural norms and one of those are their sanctions. One of the great example of their sanction is that when a samurai felt any shame when defeated they would ask someone to cut off their heads because it is their belief that "A samurai can't stand the shame of defeat".

Capt. Algren was then captured by the samurai. The only person that Capt. Algren can talk to is their leader, Katsumoto. Capt. Algren was very fascinated how their culture is. He was very curious as to why they can be so discipline in their way of samurai. He saw how the elders taught the kids or teenagers on how the way of samurai works which is very likely to be secondary socialization. He found himself amused of how the way of samurai works, he then tried to socialize but he can't understand a thing from the people there because of the language barrier but the very thing that struck me is how he resocialized. He unlearned his old ways and learned the new ways that he thought that it was his destiny. You can say that Capt. Algren showed multi-culturalism since he learned the culture of the samurai. The katana/swords that the samurai wields are their very own technology on how they fight or protect.

At the ending of the movie, the samurai lost in their final battle against the Japanese imperial army, Katsumoto died but even though they were enemies the Japanese soldiers still bow their heads down to Katsumoto because it is one of their folkways, respecting someone who's higher than them. The Emperor heard about his death and because of that he realized that it is not a good way to forget their traditional ways just to implement and adapt modernizations and I think the very best solution to it is to adapt and accept modernization and preserve own culture at the same time. And I quote from the Emperor "But we cannot forget who we are, or where we come from".