

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents findings of the research and their discussion.

4.1 Findings

This section is focused on the findings to answer the research question how the main characters exercise power as evidenced in the text and what types of power exercised by the main characters in the film *The Last Samurai*. Based on the data analysis, the research found that the main characters exercised their power through having higher position, giving threat, giving reward and using their skills.

The research also found that the types of power exercised as evidenced in the movie script were four types from the five types of internal power proposed by French and Raven (1959). They were legitimate power, coercive power, reward power and expert power.

4.1.1 Power Exercised through Absolute Power or Position (*Legitimate Power*)

Legitimate power is used by people at higher levels over the people below. Legitimate as in *The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (1989) is defined as “confirming to recognized principles or accepted rules or standards.” It is the ability to influence or instruct other people because of absolute power or position.

As evidenced in *The Last Samurai*, Japanese army and all citizens complied with the decisions of the Emperor as a person at the highest level in Japan. Therefore, everyone who lived in the country was lawfully controlled by the Emperor to follow his instructions. This is illustrated in the following textual evidence:

(The Emperor looks up at the gathered dignitaries)

EMPEROR

Ambassador Swanbeck, I have concluded that your treaty is not in the best interests of my people.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Sir, if I may --

EMPEROR

So sorry, but you may not. From this moment on, economic investment from every nation will be considered equally.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

This is an outrage -- !

(The Emperor watches as Ambassador Swanbeck and his Aide exit)

(Omura steps closer to the Emperor)

(p.125)

The textual evidence shows that the Emperor of Japan rejected a treaty that was offered by Ambassador Swanbeck because the treaty was not the best deal for his people. It indicates that the Emperor had the ability to control other people without any resistance from them. The Emperor had an absolute power. That the Emperor possessed absolute power is supported in the following textual evidence:

OMURA (subtitles)

Enlightened One, we should discuss this --

EMPEROR (subtitles)

Omura, you have done quite enough.

OMURA (subtitles)

everything I have done, I have done for my country.

EMPEROR (subtitles)

Then you will not mind when I seize your family's assets and present them as my gift to the people.

OMURA (subtitles)

Enlightened One, you disgrace me.
(The Emperor finally looks up from the sword)
EMPEROR (subtitles)
If your shame is too unbearable... I offer you this sword.
(Omura bows and steps back, relegated to a place among the lesser advisors. The Emperor looks at Algren, still kneeling before him)
(p.125)

The textual evidence shows that the Emperor still held his decision even though Omura tried to convince him. This condition illustrated how Ambassador Swanbeck and Omura had to follow the Emperor's decision despite their disagreement. The absolute power of the Emperor cannot be fought by anyone.

The Emperor was not the only one who had absolute power. Omura Zaibatsu, one of the main characters also had this power. He had absolute power because he was the important person after the Emperor. This position made him able to control the people around him. This is illustrated in the following textual evidence:

KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
It is my honor to rejoin this Council.
OMURA (subtitles)
You are perhaps unaware of our edict regarding the wearing of swords?
KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
I read every edict with singular attention.
OMURA (subtitles)
Yet you bring weapons into this chamber?
KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
This chamber was protected by my sword when --
OMURA (interrupting; subtitles)
We need no protection. We are a nation of laws now.
KATSUMOTO (calm; subtitles)
We are a nation of whores. Selling ourselves to our Western "allies."
OMURA (subtitles)
If we are whores, it is the Samurai who have made us this way, living off the backs of our people.

(Katsumoto looks to the Council, but his words are addressed to the Emperor)
KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
I have not seen the Omura Zaibatsu distributing gold to the masses...
It remains safely in your pockets.
(They stare at one another)
(p. 92)

OMURA (subtitles)
Minister Katsumoto, it is with great regret that I must ask you to remove your sword, as this body has declared in its edict.
(Katsumoto's hand closes on his sword hilt)
KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
With all due respect, this sword serves the Emperor, and only he can command me to remove it.
(Katsumoto looks to the Emperor, as murmurs fill the room)
OMURA (subtitles)
But the Emperor's voice is too pure to be heard in the Council of State.
(One last time, Katsumoto meets the Emperor's eye. But the Emperor looks away, thus sealing Katsumoto's fate)
KATSUMOTO (subtitles)
Then, I must refuse to give up my sword.
(Omura looks to his associates. A silent decision is made. A group of Guards march in)
OMURA (subtitles)
Then, regretfully, Minister Katsumoto, my guards will accompany you to your home in Tokyo. There you will await our summons.
(The Guards await. Katsumoto looks to the other Council Members. Katsumoto bows to the Emperor. The Guards lead Katsumoto out)
(p. 92)

The textual evidence indicates that the absolute power was created by the indirect agreement of the Emperor on his actions. The Emperor did not say anything when Omura forbade Katsumoto to bring his samurai to the council. The Emperor allowed Omura to control this situation with his rules.

4.1.2 Power Exercised through Compulsion and Threat (*Coercive Power*)

In fulfilling their purposes, people who hold power maintain their dignity in two ways; through legal way or legitimate and illegal way or coercion. Illegal way or coercion can be the right decision to control a situation or people in certain circumstances. For example as evidenced in the text, Omura coerced his army to fire the Samurai in the battlefield.

People at higher level usually give the people below them threats to make them do what they want which are often against their will. This is elucidated in the following textual evidence:

(Algren looks at him and refuses to answer. Ujio -- the grim samurai who cut off the man's head in the street -- races forward and SCREAMS at Algren in Japanese)

UJIO (subtitles)

You insolent swine! Answer! You, speak!

(Algren doesn't move. Ujio paces back and forth like a caged panther spitting invective at Algren. Algren doesn't move. He watches Ujio evenly. This takes incredible will. SUDDENLY -- Ujio draws his long sword -- it slashes through the air -- the blade singing -- and stops an inch away from Algren's face!)

(p.53)

The textual evidence shows that Katsumoto as a leader asked Algren his name but Algren refused to answer. In order to make Algren answered the question, the threat was given by Katsumoto indirectly through Ujio the grim Samurai. The threat was effective because the simple way was not working as it was expected.

Coercive power could take the form of a threatening strike action like what Ujio did. People who are threatened will do everything instructed by the people

who make the threat because they cannot fight. Ujio expected Algren to answer the question after he threatened him.

Coercive power was also applied by the main character, Nathan Algren when he gave an order to his soldier in order to show Omura that they were not ready enough to have a battle with The Samurai. Algren was able to use a compulsion because he was a trainer who wanted the best decision for his trainees. Algren exercised coercion against his soldier as evidenced in the following textual evidence:

(Algren looks off for a moment, then heads back to the firing range. Omura and Bagley watch as Algren approaches a young soldier)

ALGREN

Fire at the target.

(The boy takes careful aim, and misses the target a hundred feet away. Algren shakes his head and starts to walk toward the targets -- into the field of fire. There is instant commotion as men STOP FIRING and point at Algren)

GANT

Captain?

Omura and Bagley look at each other. Algren continues walking -- calls out over his shoulder.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham, tell this man to fire at me.

GRAHAM

Excuse me -- ?

(Algren unholsters his Colt as he walks)

ALGREN

Tell him, if he does not shoot me, I am going to kill him with my third round.

GANT

Captain, if we might have a word...

(Algren stops, turns, raises his REVOLVER and FIRES. It WHISTLES past the young recruit's ear. Everyone freezes)

ALGREN

Tell him.

(Graham hurriedly translates. The young recruit's eyes widen in disbelief. The other recruits hastily back away. Algren now leans casually against the target)

ALGREN

Fire, damn it.

(He aims his REVOLVER and FIRES again. This time it knocks the conical hat off the poor recruit's head. In fear for his life, the boy drops his ramrod, shoulders his weapon. Still he cannot bring himself to fire. Algren cocks his weapon once more and aims at the boy. Finally, in abject terror, the recruit squeezes the trigger. A bright orange flash and a cloud of blackpowder smoke.

Algren is untouched)

(Just as casually, he heads back toward Bagley and Omura, touching the boy's shoulder as he passes)

ALGREN

They're not ready.

(p.45)

The textual evidence indicates that Algren resorted to coercion when his command was not obeyed by his soldiers. As a leader, Algren had the right to decide what was good or bad for his soldiers.

Coercive power results from the expectation of a negative reward. It works best if used when the other methods fail and sometimes come with a threat.

4.1.3 Power Exercised through a Recompense for Worthy Acts (*Reward Power*)

In reaching their target, people also use reward power. Asserted by Mortensen (2010), “reward power is the fastest way to persuade because it refers to the ability to deliver rewards or benefits to influence others”. A reward is also a tool to change people’s belief, mind and opinion. A reward can be given by company to a person who is capable of becoming an ambassador of their product so the company is represented by his/her personalization. As evidenced in the movie script, Winchester Company exercised reward power to other people

including Nathan Algren, the main character. This is supported in the following textual evidence:

WINCHESTER REP

This Company has an image to uphold, you know.

ALGREN

I'm upholding. I'm upholding.

WINCHESTER REP

Sure you are. Here's your ten dollars. Do the speech and don't bother coming back tomorrow.

(The rep walks away. Algren takes a last furtive swig from a flask, steels himself, then climbs onstage, stumbling on the steps)

ALGREN

My thanks, Mr. McCabe... You're too kind.

(p.3)

The textual evidence shows that Algren's battle experiences had made the Winchester Company which produced guns for the public to offer Algren the position of an ambassador. The Winchester gave him a big amount of money to make a speech in front of the citizens and to demonstrate '73 lever-action "Trapper" as the product of the company.

Beside the Winchester Company, Omura Zaibatsu as the representative of Japan also wanted Algren to work for him. Omura tried to get closer to Algren through Colonel Bagley. He could spend a lot of money to hire Nathan Algren for training Japanese army. To some people including Nathan Algren, money is the reward.

According to Mortensen (2010), Reward power is extremely effective in changing human behavior and in increasing the ability to persuade. As depicted in the movie script, Omura Zaibatsu got what he wanted with minimal efforts.

4.1.4 Power exercised through Skill or being Skillful (*Expert power*)

Expert power is possessed by a person who may have expert knowledge about administrative, technical or other expertise. Japan Emperor wished to change his Samurai into Modern Army. To make his wish come true, the Emperor through his advisor Omura required Algren to command the army. Aware that his skill was required by the Emperor, Algren offered requirements to become the trainer of his army.

The following textual evidence illustrates the power exercised by the main character, Nathan Algren through *expert power*:

BAGLEY

Nathan, been a while. Good to see you.
(Bagley extends his hand. Algren doesn't take it.
Instead he gives Gant a murderous look.)

GANT (sotto voce)

Just hear what the man has to say...

ALGREN (flat)

Colonel Bagley, what a surprise.

BAGLEY

Nathan, I'd like you to meet Mr. Omura, from Japan, and his associates, whose names I've given up trying to pronounce...

Sit down. Sit down...

(OMURA 40, is a handsome and intelligent man. Algren sits down reluctantly. A WAITER hovers)

ALGREN

Whiskey.

BAGLEY

Japan's got it in mind to become a civilized country and Omura here is willing to spend what it takes to hire white experts to train their army.

(Algren's cold stare is unnerving to Bagley. Omura watches them carefully)

BAGLEY

Washington insists we only serve as advisors, not combatants -- help them with training, tactics, and the like.
(raises his glass)

And if we play our cards right, the Emperor gives the U.S. exclusive rights to import arms.

(Algren's drink arrives. He downs it and trains his eye on Omura)
(p,11)

ALGREN

I have an agreement with the Winchester Company -- I'm sure these people have some concept of what an agreement is.

Omura suddenly speaks. His English is flawless

OMURA

Your "performances" for the Winchester Company bring you twenty-five dollars a week. We will pay you 400 dollars a month.

(In 1876, this is an enormous sum. Gant almost spits out his drink)

ALGREN

Five.

(Omura looks at Bagley. He was not prepared to negotiate)

ALGREN

And another five hundred as a bonus when the job is done.

(pleasantly)

How many other genuine heroes you got lined up?

(looks around)

What does a man have to do to get a drink around here?

(He laughs heartily. A waiter hurries to fill his glass.

Omura and his associates confer in Japanese)

OMURA'S ASSISTANT (subtitles)

He's rude.

OMURA (subtitles)

That's how it is here. A land of cheap traders.

(p.11)

As evidenced in the text, it was found that Algren had knowledge and skill which were required by Japan. As Japan would pay more, Algren had to train and gave soldiers strategies in a battle.

Generally, individuals are positive about being led, or at least influenced, by those whom they regard as 'an expert'. Nathan Algren had the power because he had knowledge, skills and competence based on his experiences. It is found in the text that he was an expert as combatant of battlefield.

4.2 Discussion

The data analyzed are aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the main characters exercise their power to other characters as evidenced in the text?
2. What types of power are exercised by the main characters as evidenced in the text?

The previous sections show that power according to French and Raven (1959; 150-167) is classified into five different types of internal power forms. They are legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, referent power and expert power. In the context of the research, there are only four types of internal power that are found in the text.

As illustrated in the findings of this research, the main characters exercised their power to other characters in different ways. Their power in society can be seen in every conflict that is evidenced in the text. It is not difficult for people who hold power to control or to instruct other people in their own ways in the society. In the text, this is evident in how Nathan Algren and Omura as the main characters in *The Last Samurai* movie exercised their power for their different purposes.

Nathan who was a veteran captain working for Winchester company, exercised his power by offering his skill or ability to train the Japanese army. Since he had the expertise, he knew how to use his expertise to earn money for a living. French and Raven asserted that expert power is gained by someone

because he/she had some special knowledge or expertness. As the issue found in this research, Algren possessed expert power because of his battle experiences.

On the other hand, Omura who was the prime minister and representative of Japan for other countries exercised his power by ordering people around him to fulfill what he expected. He had the power to decide whether something was good or bad for the Japanese. Even though he did not have absolute power like the Emperor of Japan had, he still owned legitimate power because of his position in his country. According to French and Raven, legitimate power is possessed by someone who has legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him. As found in text of the research, Omura exercised power in the form of interpersonal power which was derived from the Emperor of Japan. Certainly this exercising of power made Omura able to control people around him to follow his order or instruction.

The exercise of power can result in conflicts among the characters in the text. In one side, conflicts occur if both characters had the power to exercise even though their power is different from each other. On the other side, conflicts would not appear if one of the characters who are involved in an argument does not have the power. As result, he/she would obey commands or instructions without resistance. In the text, Nathan Algren who had expert power and Omura Zaibatsu who had legitimate power often argued in order to get what they wanted. People who had legitimate power such Omura often tend to get what they want because legitimate power is derived from absolute power which cannot be fought or resisted by anyone.

The conflict between Nathan Algren and Omura Zaibatsu happened because both have power. Kline (2010) asserted that conflict between people usually arises from power struggle. Nathan Algren in this case had expert power that derived from his battle experiences. Expert power is considered as the most effective power for a leader such as Algren. As evidenced in the text, when Algren demonstrated expertise, Japanese armies tend to trust and respect what he said. Whereas Omura Zaibatsu had the power derived from the absolute power of the Emperor. This type of power can be unpredictable and unstable because if Omura loses the position in the kingdom, legitimate power can instantly disappear. Since they had expert and legitimate power, they are considered as powerful people. The conflict between powerful people usually results in violent action.

As the textual evidence shows, four ways of power exercised were used by the main characters. They are legitimate power, coercive power, reward power and expert power.

Legitimate power as evidenced in the text was exercised especially by the higher authority, the Emperor of Japan. He had absolute power that could not be fought nor resisted by anyone. The legitimate power is the most effective way to control people despite their disagreement. It is used to empower someone to rule a country or organization.

The research found that the coercive power worked properly to control people. It was used when other methods failed and carried through with a threat. In the text, the coercive power was exercised when the character's wishes or commands were not obeyed by the other characters.

In addition to coercive power, the type of power that is used as found in the research is reward power. Reward power is the ability to give people what they want, then ask them to do things in exchange. The reward power is an effective tool in influencing others. In real life, parents usually use the power to control their children. One example is the common practice of offering children rewards for studying at home. They win cakes or other prizes after they have done examinations with good results. These prizes are effective way but they also can be a boomerang for parents because many of the children think they need a reward to face examination. Generally, the use of reward power can achieve the desired results.

The exercising power through expert power comes from special knowledge or expertise. In the text, expert power is needed by Omura in reaching his target. He spent a big amount of money to hire experts in order to give the best for his people. On the other side, Algren was qualified to be the expert because of his knowledge and experiences. Algren possessed the expert power that he could control Omura to give the best deal for him. In general, experts such as Algren had power to negotiate with people who needed their expertise even though their status might be regarded as being low. In real life, engineers who have lower status in an organization may also possess a degree of high expert power because they have extensive knowledge of how the business operates such as knowing where everything is located or are able to deal with difficult situations.

Through *legitimate power, coercive power, reward power and expert power*, the characters in *the Last Samurai* movie control others for their purposes.

Related to the real life, people may use a certain power in every circumstance in order to get what they want. Power relation exists even in the smallest scope of relationship, just like in a family. In one family, parents are supposed to be the leaders of the household and control their children. With their power, they could force their children to attend a school or college they do not wish to attend by threats.

