

Jonathan Aguilera

Ms. Marks-Hamilton

Advanced Literature

3 November 2016

Goliaths Hate Him! Local Author Exposes the Secret to Legitimate Power

Law and order, the values society strives for, requires a delicate balance of power. Power is used to gain control over subjects, but an abuse of power leads to chaos. Power is a misunderstood creature. People often believe that power can be contained exclusively in one source, like the boss of a company. The truth is that everyone has their own advantages. Advantages that can flip any power struggle over its head. In order for authority to establish legitimacy, a personal connection to the public must be made. The key part being that authority must maintain the presence of being in control. Through these actions, the subjects will accept the idea that authority is meant to provide for them and willingly submit to their rules.

Malcolm Gladwell's book, *David and Goliath*, explores the perception of power because as society, "We misread [giants]. We misinterpret them. Giants are now what we think they are" (4). We focus on viewing how power is established in only one perspective. In the case of the biblical story of David and Goliath, it is the physical strength between the two. Gladwell encourages the reader to see power from different angles. He approaches the story with a military perspective. With this in mind, Goliath would have beat David if it were hand to hand combat like he and everyone else anticipated. Yet, David didn't engage in hand to hand combat; he used his sling so he could attack at a distance. He changed the power struggle from hand-to-hand to ranged battle. From the military perspective, it is no surprise that David won.

More importantly, David obtained legitimate power. Goliath's cockiness made him not worthy to win. Gladwell quotes the bible where God says to David, "Do not consider his appearance or height, for I have rejected him...the Lord looks at the heart" (*New International Version*, Sam. 16.7). God has rejected Goliath because Goliath did not hold legitimate authority. What God saw in Goliath's heart was a man who deluded himself into thinking he was a higher being than the others on the field. Goliath assumed all the men on the field would fear him because of his monster-like appearance and never stand up to him. David was the opposite of Goliath and that is why God chose him. David was humble throughout, never boasting of his skills. Although, what separated David from other humble soldiers was his confidence in challenging Goliath even when people around him told him not to. In short, David resembled confidence, while Goliath resembled overconfidence. Goliath had let his guard down in more ways than one.

In order to establish one's power, one must obtain legitimacy. When one achieves legitimacy the public will comply with their rules. Gladwell addresses these issues through real-life examples. Namely, through the relationship of the New York Police Department as they dealt with troubled youth and a when a teacher attempted to restore order in a rowdy classroom. These examples, which will be explored later on, deal with the three rules of legitimacy. The three rules state, "The people who are asked to obey authority have to feel like they have a voice...the law has to be predictable...the authority has to be fair" (208). When these three needs are met, people will comply with the authority figures because they have earned their trust and respect. But, since these three rules have to be all encompassing they leave many questions. An idea as complex as power and how one maintains legitimacy needs to be specific.

However, within one those three laws, where the subjects need to feel like they have a voice, Gladwell asserts that people are driven by emotion. Gladwell argues against the belief of Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf that people evaluate risks in an economic manner. Simply put, if the costs outweigh the gains of an action one would not do it. Gladwell states that, “But that’s precisely where they went wrong, because getting criminals and insurgents to behave turns out to be...dependent on legitimacy”(208). Authority must appeal to the emotions of their subjects as it is the strongest voice they have. People do not think rationally when they are driven by emotion. That is why there are still criminals and insurgents in the most heavily policed areas, because they do not care about the costs. The long term solution is not to increase the presence of authority, but to gain the subjects respect so they have no reason to be angry.

Hiroiyuki Okiura’s film, *Jin-Roh*, answers these questions. The basis of the movie is built on an alternate post World War II Tokyo where the Kerberos Panzer Cops, an anti-terror unit, is fending off the growing rise of guerrilla fighters and protesters. In the first minutes of the movie, the Panzer Cops are shown as behemoths as they chase down a girl in a sewer. The sheer technology they possess from their all-protective body armor to heavy machine guns outclasses the mere molotovs the protesters are seen using in the background. But most importantly are the masks they wear; they cover the face of the individual and the viewer is only left with what they represent, a goliath of authority. Their power is indisputable, no individual can challenge it without being brutally killed. It is this fear that destroys their legitimacy.

One assumes they have all the power in the situation, they are only chasing a girl after all, until a standoff begins when Kazuki Fuse, one of the Panzer Cops, corners the girl. The girl is holding with her a satchel bomb which explodes once its string is pulled. Protocol tells Fuse to

simply shoot the girl before she activates the bomb, but instead he lowers his gun and somberly says, “Don’t” (Okiura 1999). Fuse’s demeanor and reputation of a Panzer Cop tells the girl that he is not trustworthy, that he does not deserve to be cornering her right now. She pulls the cord in an effort to take his life, but at the cost of her own. The scene highlights the idea that the Panzer Cops are human like the protesters. They have the ability to be legitimate but they purposefully choose brutal tactics to appear as monsters. When Fuse attempted to spare the girl, he failed because the Panzer Cops are not seen as legitimate due to the fear they instill. In order to uphold their dominance, the Panzer Cops have become the beasts that the public fears. Fear is the opposite of legitimate power because instead of submitting to fear, the subjects would rather take their own lives than to listen to what they have to say. In order to gain legitimacy as a fair body, authority must not instill fear into their subjects. The subjects will simply return the favor in their resistance by adopting the brutal tactics of their superiors.

So what can authority do instead of instilling fear? They must establish a personal connection with the subjects. Gladwell addresses this when he recites the story of J-RIP, the Juvenile Robbery Intervention Program, and how they gained the trust of troubled youth. These kids were responsible for most of the robberies in the area so they required extra surveillance. Their families did not approve of it one bit. When the police initially showed up to their doorsteps, “[Their parents] would say, ‘Fuck you. Don’t come into my house’”(212). They were hostile to the police because the police, much like the Panzer Cops, represented an entity of oppression and fear. The police were the people that would jail their friends and now they were trying to barge into their house to jail their kids. The cops earned the trust of the subjects by providing for them in their time of need. When the cops personally gave turkeys to these families

on Thanksgiving they were immediately let in and there was “hugging and crying” throughout the whole family (214). The families saw a side of the cops that they had never known before. When they saw this kindness, the cop’s earned their legitimacy as they were let in the house.

Jin-Roh explores the redemption of legitimacy with Fuse’s relationship with Kei Amemiya. Amemiya is the sister of the girl who used the satchel bomb, and after Fuse initially sees her he feebly explains who he is. He’s reluctant with his feelings around her because he felt responsible for the death. Yet she is indifferent to who he is. When he asks her why she doesn’t blame him she responds with, “You were both doing your jobs”(Okiura 1999). She admits that she is still grieving yet she has forgiven Fuse’s action. Forgiveness is a concept rare in this society, where both the police and the protesters wildly lash out at each other. By admitting that Fuse was doing his job, she acknowledged the power he was supposed to represent. She accepted that Fuse, or any of the other Panzer Cops, would have to protect the peace by killing the threat her sister represented. In response, Fuse opens up to Amemiya and they become friends. When J-RIP brought the turkeys, they were expressing that it’s their jobs to help the community and that they would forgive these families. The families then in turn forgave the cops when they let them into the house. This relationship benefited both authority and the subjects. Authority's first step to establishing trust and legitimacy is through forgiveness.

So how should the authority treat its subjects after gaining their trust? Gladwell highlights what not to do in his analysis of the teacher Stella. Initially, the students are “perfectly well behaved and attentive” at the start of class (205). They respect the teacher and the environment they are in. This all changes when Stella starts to slowly read out loud to the class with another girl. The slow pace caused the students to suddenly become disobedient as their

actions ranged from turning their backs to doing cartwheels. Gladwell explains this phenomena in that “If the teacher doesn’t do her job properly, then the child will become disobedient”(205). Stella was ignoring the other kids in her class through this activity so there was no value in this activity for them. They would go back to their well-behaved selves if she decided to stop.

Jin-Roh expands on this concept as Fuse, the student in this case, has a trust issue with Amemiya. His trust issue is a response to the fact that Amemiya’s courtesy was a ruse. She was to gain his trust and lead him to a museum, where he would be framed for an illegal arms deal. This would further discredit the public’s opinion on the Panzer Cops. Despite knowing this, Fuse goes to the museum and rescues Amemiya as they nearly die in a police chase. They escape to a rooftop, where she wishes to “go somewhere far away. Where no one will know us” as she wishes to leave her deceptive life behind (Okiura 1999). This was her apology to Fuse as she offered him a new future. But Fuse saw that escape is not the solution, as Amemiya’s actions, and the protest group she represents, would follow them wherever they go. He instead gives her up to the Panzer Cops, and dons his armor to hunt the remaining protesters. Amemiya breaks down into tears and yells, “You know I wanted to go with you. If we died together...I know I would have had a place in your heart”(Okiura 1999). Again, Fuse saved her when he had to option to leave her in the museum. From the shakiness of her voice to the tears on her face, Amemiya’s feelings were sincere and Fuse knew this. She wanted to do what was best for Fuse by getting rid of the Panzer Cops altogether. Her actions were misguided as she nearly killed him in her act of deception. A problem where her solution was to run away.

This whole issue can be framed in Gladwell’s point of view where Fuse chose to be disobedient due to Amemiya’s failure of being trustworthy. Much like when Fuse refused to

shoot the protestor, her sincerity is rendered null because she had no legitimacy. Authority must be honest because the subjects will not abide to simply what is “good for them”. The subjects must be convinced, not deceived.

So why hasn't authority adopted these principles yet? It all goes back to the idea that although power is not absolute, people do not realize it. In Stella's classroom, Gladwell cites that the student's disobedience is a display of power in itself. This disobedience would cause Stella to rethink how she should teach, where she would ask herself, “How can I do something interesting that will prevent you from misbehaving in the first place?”(206). This train of thought would aid Stella as the subjects would submit to her authority and be willing to learn. This is because submission does not happen automatically, as Stella must appeal to their interest in order to have a calm classroom setting.

Jin-Roh as a whole challenges the idea that someone can entirely be a David, or a Goliath. Power works off relationships, like student-teacher, and it is the same with the Panzer Cops and the protesters. The Panzer Cops make themselves out to be Goliaths, embracing the fact that they represent beasts. When two police instructors are watching new recruits train, they explain that people become Panzer Cops because, “There are those who take comfort living as beasts, no matter how much pain they have to endure”(Okiura 1999). The Panzer Cops see themselves as a necessary evil for the public. They use ruthless tactics as a means of efficiency to combat the protesters. But from what we've seen with Fuse and the protester with the satchel bomb, they too can become the victim to such a violent mentality.

The movie then analyzes the story of Red Riding Hood. Amemiya gives Fuse the book after they first meet and he begins to see himself as the wolf and Amemiya as Red Riding Hood.

When one sees the broad story of Red Riding Hood, Red Riding Hood is always portrayed as the victim and the wolf as the predator. The two never switch. The mentality where Fuse believes himself to be the wolf was a key part of Amemiya's deception. She acted as a victim that would lure the wolf right to her grandmother's house, the museum in this case. The most provocative moment is at the end where Fuse returns to Amemiya. In order to keep the protesters unaware of her whereabouts, the Panzer Cops have to kill her. Even worse, it has to be Fuse who has to kill her. Fuse's superior reasons this because, "This is the moment where you end the tale of the beast who got involved with a human. Put an end to it now while you are still the beast"(Okiura 1999). It is implied that Amemiya, in her work with the protesters, has killed more than Fuse. She had deceived the Panzer Cops and government authority and would be seen as a criminal to the public. Yet, that is exactly why Fuse has to kill her. He must take the mantle of the beast and have her be seen as a martyr rather than a terrorist. In the end, he shoots her and the camera pans to the book of Red Riding Hood he had received earlier. The book is broken and burned, a symbol that the simple philosophy that power can be seen as beast and victim is destroyed. To uphold order and be seen as legitimate, authority must do what is necessary to make the subjects sympathetic to one another. If Amemiya was left alive, a separation would have been made between the protesters, causing infighting.

Although authority must connect to the subjects to be seen as legitimate, they must still take the responsibility of acting as a superior. Authority is expected to make the tough decisions that the public would not commit on their own. In essence, the subjects expect the authority to tell them what to do. What has to happen is that the subjects need to have their feelings considered in these tough decisions. The idea appears to be contradictory but Gladwell and

Jin-Roh illuminate the fact that although people will not approve of what authority represents, authority can still achieve legitimacy by reminding the subjects that they are there to provide for them. Authority reminds the subjects that they do not see them as a problem. The biggest mistake that authority makes is when they attempt to relate to the subjects while seeing the subjects as evil. This perception inhibits the ability to relate to them personally and the subjects will see that. It is not a matter of how authority feels in the end (Amemiya's feelings of regret were sincere), but how they act in the process of obtaining legitimacy. What authority does when they are being looked up upon is the most delicate process. A process that can leave a trail of tears to the subjects if it is being taken advantage of. The subjects are vulnerable and if wronged, they will be even more mistrustful of authority than when they started.

Even today, disobedience or rebellion is seen as noble because time and time again authority has repeated the process listed above. Perhaps it is simply human nature to take advantage of the vulnerable subjects that causes this to repeat. It would explain why it can happen from the smallest level of a classroom to totalitarian countries like North Korea.