

Power Legitimacy and Characterisation in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

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Abstract

This paper examines how Chinua Achebe in Anthills of the Savannah pits literary characters against each other in terms of power possession. The research problem handled is the lack of clarity on characters' power (il)legitimacy. The objective of the study was to show which characters have legitimate or illegitimate power. The research is necessitated by the fact that in the text, an examination of power appearance as compared to such power exercise has not been done. The paper argues that power is exercised by characters who may not be the ones in a normative situation to exercise such power. Gramscian Cultural Hegemony, Postcolonial Motherism and Michel Foucault's Panopticism are the theoretical approaches used. The study type is qualitative while the design used is descriptive and data is analyzed using the open coding method. The key finding in this study is that the power legitimacy that governs relations among the literary characters in the text may be valid or invalid. This leads to the conclusion that in a formal or informal social group, power contestations are brought about by the need for individuals to exercise power they believe is theirs by right while resisting power exercised over them by those they consider to be usurpers. The study benefits those in leadership positions and recommends that those in decision making positions identify and respond to the covert ways through which power is exercised to the detriment of the overt and recognized models.

Keywords: Gynandarist, illegitimation, legitimacy, legitimate power, legitimatization.

Introduction

Anthills of the Savannah by Achebe (1987) is set in a fictitious African state known as Kangan. The action is driven by four characters; Sam, Chris, Beatrice and Ikem Osodi. Sam ascends to presidency through a coup. With Chris' help, he forms the government. The four friends soon find their friendship under test after Sam neglects the drought-ravaged province Abazon. Ikem uses *The National Gazette* to disseminate messages of patriotism with Chris' approval. Meanwhile, Sam steadily runs down Kangan under the manipulation of the West, represented by John Kent, an expatriate doctor and Miss Cranford, an American journalist. Ikem is later accused by Sam of backing saboteurs and agitators from Abazon. Chris is ordered by Sam to dismiss Ikem but he declines to do so. Ikem is abducted by The State Research Council operatives and killed. Chris is forced to run for his life but is also killed by a drunken soldier. Sam is assassinated and another military commander takes over the reins of government.

The Concept of Power Legitimacy or Illegitimacy

According to Fairclough (2003), every individual in a position of authority seeks to legitimize their power by making it acceptable. This means that occupancy of (in)formal offices ideally lead to possession of both power and legitimacy. The power vested on a character should be supported by the requisite legitimacy for there to exist an acceptable state of affairs. Where there is some discordance between power and its legitimacy, disequilibrium is likely to result. Hays (2012) studies the effects of power (il)legitimacy in a work place and suggests that legitimacy refers to the perception that a social situation is governed by proper and just arrangements. In such a situation, the power of social structures is reinforced while in the converse situation, the social structures are challenged through a deviance from the

established norms. Consequently, combining power with illegitimacy leads to no-conformity as power strengthens a sense of independence and illegitimacy engenders resistance to norms.

From Hay's study, it is deducible that a character who exercises power that they do not rightly possess will engender disaffection with those over whom such power is exercised. The position is supported by Raven and French (1958) who posit that the manner through which legitimate power is actually acquired is crucial in determining if the subject upon whom such power is practised will accept his or her subordinate position or not do so. Power legitimacy, in effect, becomes a function of power exercise and the process of such power's acquisition.

A group's acceptance of power exercise is dependent on dogma repetitiveness. Recurrent discourses within a group reinforce aspects of culture a dominant group wishes to impose on the subordinate one. For instance, in Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Papa Eugene Achike's repetitiveness on his family to adhere to Catholicism legitimizes Catholicism as a dogma (Baharvand, 2016). Further, failure to execute the mandate of one's office leads to illegitimation of the agent's power. This is apparent in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Chris, a Commissioner in government makes taunts at the Chief Secretary who suffers from a speech impediment yet a person of his stature is expected to be eloquent. The Chief Secretary is timid and fails to provide direction in a cabinet meeting as he is supposed to do, leaving the control of the agenda to His Excellency (Achebe, 1987: 6). As a result, The Head of State looks down upon his Chief Secretary and regularly mistreats him, a fact that illegitimizes the latter's power.

The text features erstwhile powerful characters who get disempowered after their power undergoes illegitimation. Power illegitimation happens because power is not something that one individual can exercise at all times on all other individuals. Instead, it has been found that:

Power is always mediated by 'social alignments' which are dynamic. Within this dynamism there exists continuous shifts as the subordinated agents seek ways of challenging the actions of the dominant agents... the subordinate agent is never absolutely disempowered, but only relatively so... just as the dominant agent's actions are subject to the problematics of maintaining power by maintaining the allegiance of the disempowered agent's complicity in her disempowerment (Wartenburg, 1990 as cited in Olembo & Kebaya, 2013: 97).

Hays (2012) further posits that a character who has legitimate power enjoys a feeling of independence and recklessness as (s)he knows that (s)he exercises such power rightly and justly. Such an individual displays a decreased tendency to conform to societal norms. Conversely, a character with illegitimate power is likely to conform to societal norms since he or she feels that by trying to assuage the feelings of those who look unfavourably upon him or her, then chances of exercising that illegitimate power with minimal resistance is enhanced. The foregoing explains His Excellency's tendency to treat his commissioners to a cabinet meeting so that the results of the discussions held would be used to give legitimacy to his subsequent actions.

A state of power legitimacy or illegitimacy is not always permanent. In his study on Derrida's work, Lewis (2003) writes that Derrida seeks to shed light on the historical and linguistic assumptions which inform the formation of different types of temporary cultural legitimacies that in turn give rise to certain dominant ideas in the society. It is this ephemerality and transience of the cultural legitimacies that temporarily empower or disempower characters at different times of a continuum. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the cultural tendency of female characters being inconsequential in the exercise of power is

ended when Elewa and Beatrice task themselves in naming Elewa's baby (Achebe 1987: 132).

Legitimizing Symbols

Studies on power legitimacy suggest that for a subject to be under the exercise of legitimate power practised by another, it is imperative that the latter be in possession of a value or standard (legitimizing symbol) that is admired by the former and by the virtue of which the agent can assert his power. Raven and French (1958) posit that power legitimacy is related to the concept of authority legitimacy explored by Weber as well as Goldhammer and Shils (see also Hays, 2012: 50). Raven and French cite the social setting, the age, sex or clan of the agent as being examples of values upon which the legitimacy of the agent's power rests.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the presidency is a legitimizing symbol. The presidency is used to give rise to smaller legitimizing symbols such as ministerial portfolios. The president and his ministers use their offices as legitimizing symbols to validate or invalidate the existing hegemonies in the text. As a result, we see characters who struggle to exercise the power of political office, sometimes legitimately and at other times illegitimately. Interestingly, the president came into power after a coup d'état and was installed into office against his expectations. For this reason, it is arguable that the coup makers are the ones who legitimately exercise the powers bestowed on the office of the president while Sam remains a proxy for the junta. The institution and powers of the presidency as conferred on Sam are legitimizing symbols handed over to him by the coup makers. When Sam is finally deposed by the military, power legitimacy returns to the substantive party.

In the meeting held to get an emissary to Abazonia to prevail upon inhabitants of the area to support Sam's continued rule, the commissioners behave condescendingly towards Sam. They are imbued with terror as they listen to and watch Sam. Chris, in a tone designed to ridicule the terrified commissioners says that:

I could read in the silence of their minds, as we sat stiffly in the mahogany table, words like: Well, this is going to be another of those days. Meaning a bad day. Days are good or bad to us now depending on how His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning. On a bad day, such as this one had suddenly become after many propitious auguries, there is nothing to it than to lie close to your hole, ready to scramble in. And particularly to keep your mouth shut, for nothing is safe, not even the flattery we have become such experts in disguising as debate (Achebe, 1987: 2).

The commissioners are unaware of how Sam came to assume the power of the office he holds. He uses the tension-filled aura to elicit deference and fear from the ministers, in effect legitimizing his power. The commissioners' adherence to His Excellency's whims is therefore erroneously directed at a subject who ordinarily would not engender such tractability.

Ironically, Sam is controlled by a white female journalist who has come to visit Kangan. In what Hungwe and Hungwe (2010: 39) refer to as 'dephallicising of a nation', Achebe casts Miss Cranford, the journalist, as having the power to determine Sam's actions. Sam feels that by giving Cranford picture of Kangan that is in tandem with American foreign policy on Kangan, she will favourably report about his nation. Her skin, nationality and career emerge as legitimizing symbols that Sam can rely on to give his leadership validity and acceptance in the West. Achebe's creation of Cranford, who controls what would otherwise be male controlled spaces supports the thesis that *Anthills of the Savannah* is Achebe's first novel that gives female characters a sympathetic treatment (Chukwuma, 1989;

Kolawole, 1998; Stratton, 1994; Petersen, 2001). It is however to be noted that Cranford is also an agent of imperialism.

Femininity used as a legitimating symbol is evident in the character of Beatrice, a lady who holds the position of Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and is Achebe's moderator of the dominant machoism in the text. Gogoi (2015: 23) writes that '... it is only Beatrice who displays the qualities of a responsible leader. Achebe portrays Beatrice as a modern, educated and progressive woman who maintains a fair balance between tradition and modernity'. When Beatrice is invited to a private party by Sam where she is expected to agree with Miss Cranford's views on American foreign policy towards Kangan, she refuses to do his bidding and instead defends Kangan as an independent and sovereign state that cannot be subjected to the whims of the West. Beatrice's education, civility and independence are the authorial legitimating symbols that define a patriotic Kangan government official.

The power that Chris illegitimately exercises over other commissioners is a legitimating symbol for the oppressive Kangan government. Proof of this is evident when Chris tries to persuade Sam to go to Abazon. Faced with defiance from Chris, Sam loses the legitimacy of his office and resorts to cajoling Chris to do his bidding by dropping the impersonal formality of addressing Chris as Mister Oriko or Mr. Commissioner and instead referring to him as Chris. The use of the first name is seen as being a way of befriending and patronizing Chris so that where a display of officialdom fails, condescension is given a chance.

Sam's insufficiency for his office is evident when we examine the motivation behind his replacement of military members of the cabinet with civilian ones. Having illegitimately acquired power through a coup, he feels paranoid about being surrounded by people with military training due to the fact that their skills in warfare could be used to oust him. In the disquiet that follows His Excellency's retiring of the military cabinet members, Major Johnson Ossai, the Director of State Research Council exercises what would have been His Excellency's legitimate power. This he does by quelling the possible mutinous action of the service men. The narrator affirms the foregoing when he says that:

His Excellency's deep anxiety had been swiftly assuaged by his young, brilliant and aggressive Director of the State Research Council (SRC). He proved once again in His Excellency's words as efficient as the Cabinet was incompetent. Every single action by this bright young man from the day of his appointment has given His Excellency good cause for self-congratulations for Major Johnson Ossai had been his own personal choice... (Achebe, 1987: 14).

It is our contention that the character who should invoke fear in the commissioners is therefore Major Ossai, the head of the secret police and not Sam. The direct control Ossai has on the instruments of violence is a legitimating symbol in Kangan.

The unannounced visit by the Abazonians points at the illegitimacy of Sam's office. We read Sam's failure to elicit trust and loyalty from his commissioners, the result of which is the unannounced visit, as a pointer to the power illegitimacy of his office. To reassert a semblance of power legitimacy, Sam diverts his energy into humiliating Professor Okong. Sam blames the visit on Okong's ineptitude. He then engages Okong in circumlocutions intended to heighten his anxiety:

Very well, then. I shall tell you (who the delegates are). But before I do I want to remind you of that little discussion we had after the Entebbe Raid. You remember? You all said then: What a disgrace to Africa. Do you remember?
I remember, Your Excellency.

Very well. You were all full of indignation. Righteous indignation. But do you by any chance remember what I said? I said it could happen here. Right here. You did, Sir, I remember that very well.

You all said: Oh no, Your Excellency it can't happen here. The way he said it in mimicry of some half-witted idiot with a speech impediment, might have raised a laugh from a bigger audience or at a less grave moment (Achebe 1987:15).

Afterwards, Sam makes it Okong's duty to go and receive the delegation, though the Abazonians would ideally have preferred to meet Sam. Although Okong is learned and supposedly an independent thinker, he condescendingly accepts to run errands for Sam. His academic credentials and political office are illegitimated by Sam when it comes to the exercise of power. The symbol of power legitimation ends up being the ability of the less educated Sam to make the more educated professor run his errands.

Sam's treatment of Okong is antithetic to that of Ikem towards his girlfriend, Elewa. Elewa refuses to be taken home in the evening, claiming she wants to spend the night at Ikem's house. Ikem realizes that Pidgin English has more efficacies when it comes to persuading Elewa to do his bidding (Hu, 1998). In this respect, Ikem's ability to use Pidgin English is a legitimating symbol that enables the educated Ikem to lower himself so that he can bridge the class and relational gap between him and Elewa. Sam's preference of military training as opposed to skills gained in the world of academia points to a recurrent motif in the text: that men of learning such as Okong are mere government facades meant to impress the outside world while in the real sense, they do not freely exercise the power of the offices they hold.

Language as Symbolic Power

It would be the expectation that the different commissioners are given offices that they can handle either by virtue of their peculiar attributes at a personal level or by the nature of their job descriptions. Ironically, while Sam lacks the language to address the Abazonians, he carefully chooses his words when addressing his ministers. In one instance, his well-chosen words are what give the commissioners the green light to make protestations against the Commissioner for Information for his analogizing of Sam's influence over the Abazonians to a rainmaker's spell over a drought stricken population. Achebe satirizes the ministers, who have to wait for a signal from His Excellency before they can know if it is safe to castigate one of their numbers.

Since the government of the day in *Anthills of the Savannah* is led by a deceptively benign but in reality despotic president, careful choice of words during the cabinet meetings is exercised by the commissioners. In recognition of the fact that a carelessly put word might lead to the downfall of its originator, each commissioner talks as slowly as possible, weighing each word carefully before deciding to use it in His Excellency's hearing. It is therefore our proposition that Chris uses language to symbolically cast himself as more powerful than the other commissioners. He cleverly uses the words 'saboteur' and 'dissociate' to scare commissioners and mislead His Excellency as to the direction his remarks are taking (Achebe, 1987: 5). The use of the two words which would normally be used in a discourse to do with subversive activities against the government stirs panic among the commissioners and even His Excellency is momentarily thrown off his poise. His Excellency's anger upon the realization that the words have been used to tease everybody, him included, makes him so angry that he suddenly brings the meeting to an end.

Reference to a possibility of subversive activities against the government is also made by Reginald Okong, the Commissioner for Home Affairs. It should be understood that His

Excellency had initially promised to go and visit the inhabitants of Abazonia but he later reneges. When a delegation of Abazonians make a courtesy call to His Excellency without him having been warned about it, it becomes imperative that a culprit be sought, the one responsible for planning the unannounced visit. The Home Affairs office under Okong therefore affords Okong the legitimacy of suggesting who might be involved. Bader (1988: 67) explains that Okong, in confidence, approaches His Excellency and while first dissociating himself from tribal tendencies, goes ahead to suggest that Ikem Osodi, the editor of *The National Gazette*, an Abazonian himself, is behind the visit. The investigations, harassment and eventual murder that will later be directed towards Osodi by the State Research Council therefore originate from Okong's accusation, rather than from His Excellency himself.

Okong's kind of accusations as to who might be involved in subversive activities against the Kangan government are also made by The Attorney General against Chris. The Attorney General cryptically insinuates that Chris' lack of enthusiasm in the discharge of his duties is interpretable to mean that he does not approve of the current leadership. The Attorney General says that Chris '...looks back to those days and sees you (His Excellency) as the boy next door' (Achebe, 1987: 23). These words remind Sam about President Ngongo's warning to him that childhood friends are the greatest threat to his leadership. Turning President Sam against his childhood friends, a form of 'Mephistophelean advice' (Agyarko-Amoako, 1990: 3) is therefore deftly achieved by the Attorney General, thereby giving his words legitimacy to make Sam distrust Chris.

The use of important sounding words and phrases symbolically gives an aura of power to His Excellency. The foregoing is discernible when one examines His Excellency's directive as to how Okong should deal with the delegation from Abazon. If Okong had hoped that by implicating Osodi he would be extricating himself from the unpleasantness of handling the uninvited guests, he ironically finds himself at the centre of the crisis. His Excellency, to demonstrate that ordinary people cannot call on him unannounced, refuses to give the delegation audience and instead makes it Okong's duty to deal with the Abazonians. Ononiwu and Njemanze (2015: 16) avow that His Excellency's injunction to Okong to tell the delegation that he is unavailable, in a telephone call 'with the president of the United States of America or the Queen of England' suggests that the kind of personalities His Excellency talks to are not mere villagers but important world leaders.

The ability of a character to use language as a symbol of power legitimacy comes to light when Sam invites Beatrice to his expensive and expansive coastal presidential retreat. Sam's invitation is not just an ordinary one because he does not give Beatrice a chance to decline, accept or express any other feeling she might have about the invitation. In a one-sided telephone conversation, Beatrice is told to be ready for a car that would come to pick her later to attend a private party to be hosted by His Excellency. This is a retreat whose high building and maintenance cost epitomizes the ruling classes' disregard of the poor people's woes (Shen, 2000). A postulation is made that Sam's refusal to give Beatrice a chance to say anything about the invitation symbolically points to his belief in the legitimacy of his power which elevates him to a position where his invitation to Beatrice is an honour that does not invite any discussion.

While academic and experience-related credentials are better indices in determining the choice of a character who ascends into a leadership position, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the extent to which a character is able to use language as symbolic power while engaging with another becomes an important factor that may lead to being elevated to a more powerful position. The mentioned use of chicanery to ascend to positions of power is comparable to that found in Irene Salami's drama *More Than Dancing*, and Chimah Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. Azunwo and Ejiro (2015) posit that in the first play, Nora Odaro uses her

ingenuity to capture a political seat while in the second play, Irene uses trickery to ascend to presidency. The two female characters are thereafter able to exercise the power of their offices with the male characters content to follow their bidding. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chris' secretary ensures that she does not put callers through to her boss until she is sure that the person on the other end is the right person to speak to her boss. As the officer in charge of information in the country, Chris attempts to gag Ikem on what he can or cannot write as an editor of *The National Gazette*. This makes Ikem to visit Chris in his office where an altercation between the two ensues. Ikem tells Chris that Chris cannot dictate to him what he writes and dares Chris to sack him if he deems it necessary. As Ikem leaves Chris' office, Chris' secretary says that 'that was short and sweet' (Achebe, 1987: 44) in reference to Chris' dismissal of Ikem from the office. This cynical remark goes unchallenged by Ikem. It casts the secretary as symbolically using the facility of language to exercise the power of her boss' office. She carefully chooses words designed to injure the pride of the visitors to Chris' office.

Chinua Achebe comes out as a gynandarist in *Anthills of the Savannah*. A gynandarist is described as a male writer who is seen as being sympathetic to the female cause (Opara, 1999 as cited in Fubara, 2014). Through Achebe's casting of female characters, the reader is able to infer the writer's approbation of actions attributable to some female characters. The female characters are presented as metaphors of 'feminist agitations' (Nwagbara, 2010: 1). Like Chris' secretary who is seen to hold sway when it comes to the goings on in Chris' office, Beatrice, the girlfriend to Chris exercises the power of her looks and character to determine the direction Chris' life takes. It is she, for instance, who dictates the tempo at which her love affair with Chris moves, a cultural departure from malecentric cultures where it is the men who determine the pace of love relationships. By choice of words, Beatrice therefore uses the symbolic power of language to mediate the tempo at which her intimacy and Chris develops. Later on, her choice of the name Amaechina (which means 'may Ikem's path never close'), further shows the associative power of words with regard to the continued clamour for opening up political and gender spaces.

Symbolic use of language to achieve power legitimacy in *Anthills of the Savannah* is defined by characters' ability to come up with jokes as well as their avidity to laugh at the jokes of those they consider to wield power over them. What Achebe achieves by imbuing characters with a proclivity for jokes and artificial laughter is to demonstrate the extent of sycophancy that powerless characters are willing to go to in an attempt to display a semblance of witticism towards those with power. In effect, by forcing a more powerful character to drop dour officialdom and share in the hilarity of a joke, the powerless character shares a status of power legitimacy with the powerful one. Specifically, General Sam, the head of the fictitious state of Kangan, periodically holds meetings with his commissioners and it is while at these meetings that his ministers report to him about the work in their ministries. The reports are however turned into palavers and tributes to Sam (Akwanya, 2013) rather than objective reports about the ministers' work.

In a lopsided reference to the fact that His Excellency is deemed to be a president for life as no one would dare to openly challenge him, the Attorney General (AG) tells the president that 'You are condemned to serve the people for life' (Achebe, 1987: 5). This backhanded reference to the permanence of His Excellency's rule is designed to be a piece of witticism by the Attorney General, who is out to ingratiate himself to His Excellency. The Attorney General is later faced with the uphill task of explaining to His Excellency who the saboteurs in the government are. This being a difficult task, he tries to think quickly on what answer to give and to gain more time to think and probably ward off the question, he resorts to laughter. This comes about when His Excellency tells the Attorney General that though he is the Attorney General, His Excellency is 'The General' (Achebe, 1987: 22).

The removal of the word ‘Attorney’ to remain with ‘General’ in reference to His Excellency’s power position relative to that of his legal advisor sends The AG into peals of laughter. By laughing ostentatiously at His Excellency’s joke, the AG hopes to make His Excellency forget about the question he had posed earlier to him. As seen later, however, His Excellency is not misled by the AG’s laughter. Once the AG is done with his prolonged laughter accompanied by a dabbing of his teary eyes with his handkerchief, His Excellency, looking composed and unimpressed with the AG’s laughter tells him: ‘You will now answer the question’ (Achebe, 1987: 23). In this paper, the argument mooted is that the Attorney General fails to exercise his power as a legal advisor to His Excellency but instead condescendingly attempts to win the approval of the president through sycophantic attempts at ripostes disguised as declarations of loyalty.

The fact that His Excellency came into power through an ouster of the civilian government makes his Commissioners fear him. To the commissioners, His Excellency’s ascension to power through instruments of violence and coercion is interpretable as being evidence of possible use of coercion on his own commissioners. In the administrative hierarchy of the state, the higher a character’s social standing is, the more power legitimacy he or she has. The power legitimacy vested on His Excellency is comparable to that of the powerful and rigid character of Esteban Trueba, a character in Allende’s *House of Spirits* (Allende, 1982). Smith (2008) demonstrates how Esteban, a narrator in the novel, exercises his power as a patriarch in the society and expects his family members to abide by his injunctions. Esteban adopts a form of language that discourages negotiation (about the correctness of his narration) with other characters. It is this same autocracy in a conversation situation that His Excellency adopts with his commissioners and which the commissioners try to mitigate using affected bawdiness.

The use of pretentious laughter to belie the emptiness and strain that characterizes interactions between His Excellency and his ministers is played out as His Excellency makes comments designed to cast some of the ministerial portfolios as being more important than others. In reference to Chris, the minister for information, His Excellency explains that Chris ‘...owns all the words in this country- newspapers, radio and television stations...’ (Achebe, 1987: 6). Empty laughter from the commissioners follow this remark, each of the ministers trying to win as much approval from His Excellency by appearing to be impressed by the ‘joke’. Some commissioners slap Chris’ back in recognition of the fact that His Excellency has congratulated him. His Excellency’s repartee is continued by the Attorney General, who amid peals of laughter refers to Chris as ‘the Honourable Commissioner for words’. This latter expression is jestingly objected to by Chris, who says that Honourable Commissioner for ‘Words’ sounds almost like Honourable Commissioner for ‘Works’ (Achebe, 1987: 7).

Conclusion

This study revealed that characters have conduct, mien and general disposition that are incongruent with the power expectations vested on them. This means that characters are vested with formal or informal titles but the authority attendant to such offices is not in their purview. Use of uncustomary models of power acquisition was also noted. It was found out that power is legitimately or illegitimately exercised. The understanding of power legitimacy or illegitimacy was understood from an intercourse with Lamanna and Riedmann (1985) who postulate that power legitimacy rests on the fact that in a social group, one party recognizes that another party is the one entitled to exercise power.

This paper has demonstrated that characters in *Anthills of the Savannah* display instances of incongruence between the ideal power exercise situation and the actual one as found in the text. The academic enquiry dealt with is what should be the normative position as far as power exercise is concerned; what is referred to as power legitimacy, as poised

against the real scenario in the text; variably referred to as power illegitimacy. The approach to power studies has been hinged on social sciences where every ability to do something can be conceived as being in possession of power. The main findings of the study are that Sam, the head of the Kangan state is a paranoid president who uses state machinery to suppress dissenting voices. He therefore exercises the power of the presidency illegitimately; the legitimately powerful characters being those behind The State Research Council, headed by Major Johnson Ossai. The paper has also demonstrated that minor characters such as Miss Cranford also exercise power that should not be theirs. The comical dehumanization of the Chief Secretary by His Excellency as a cabinet meeting comes to an end is suggestive of illegitimated power held by the ministers. The recommendation made is that in a formal or informal situation such as familial spaces or work places, family or company leaders should try to identify the indirect power brokers who exercise the power misconstrued to originate from the recognized leader. A suggestion is made for further studies on the significance of reward in the legitimation of the reward giver's power.

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