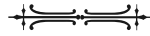


INSTRUMENTAL PATRONAGE: LEON AND HANNA



Leon as a Bossy Patron

If physical appearance can reflect one's societal role or status—as Edward Gifford (1929: 3), Marshall Sahlins (1963: 288), and Paula Brown (1990: 97) have suggested—then Leon's appearance presents a stereotypic “caricature” (Sahlins 1963: 289) of a colonial patron.¹ Comparing political structures in Polynesia and Melanesia, Sahlins points to differences between the types of leaders of these two societies, which even their physical bearing reflects. The Melanesian “big man,” he says: “seems so thoroughly bourgeois, so reminiscent of the free-enterprising rugged individual of our own heritage. He combines with an ostensible interest in the general welfare a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation. The historical caricature of the Polynesian chief, however, is feudal rather than capitalist. His appearance, his bearing is almost regal” (ibid.: 288).

Leon was a tall man, had a respectable (not too big) belly, gray-white thin hair, which was receding at the forehead, a tanned face, and an overbearing look of contempt. However, Leon seemed to me to embody a colonial patron not only in physical dimensions. His characteristics were manifest in “bearing, appearance and manner—in a word personality” (ibid.: 288). Leon's attitude was communicated in the way he talked, in his gestures, in the way he walked, and in the demeaning remarks he made with regard to local people, and of others (Israelis, for instance) as well. I often felt that Leon despised the local people, their customs and manners, and that he gave them very little, if any, credit for their integrity, competence, proficiency, and sincerity. He seemed to treat the local employees of the irrigation project, the junior ones in particular, as his inferiors, and seemed to view most senior government officials with whom he had to deal with as collectively corrupt, selfish, and primitive.

Brown has noted that the physical size and strength of leaders “has often been mentioned especially where leading warriors are politically important” (Brown 1990: 97). Although this argument relates to the Melanesian context, I suggest that in Western societies the physical dimensions of leaders—whether they be political, military, or whatever—is of significance. I suggest that leaders do not “happen to be” physically big, but are probably preferred, through certain social mecha-

nisms, to “small men,” and more importantly to (small and big) women. The latent link between leadership and the “big man” implies a gendered connotation that is ignored in most discussions about the “big man”. Simon Harrison (1993) points to the gendered implications of physical differences, latently associated with the role of violence and warfare. He suggests that the symbolic idealization of men’s power constructs a community that is “externally bounded against ‘enemies’ and internally structured by inequalities of age and gender” (ibid.: 148). Following Harrison, John Gledhill notes that Sambian men of Papua New Guinea justify their dominance as necessary for defending society. Their dominance “rests on a peculiarly male essence, *jerungdu*, which is a life-force substance embodying uniquely masculine qualities of bodily and spiritual strength” (Gledhill 1994: 34).

Indeed, perceiving Leon as representing colonial, male dominance embedded in an individual’s body is a far-reaching idea. However, Leon’s bodily presence, body language, non-verbal expressions, and strong voice all had an impact on his counterparts. It is not clear whether he was aware of it and if he consciously used his physical attributes to impose his views and demands on others, but it seems that these masculine components could not be ignored. Thus, Leon’s relative height was conspicuous in his interactions with local men and women, most of whom were shorter than him. Thus, for instance, Leon used a “manly,” harsh, cold voice, which sounded threatening, especially in his encounters with women and subordinates.

Nevertheless, despite his arrogant airs, his prejudiced remarks, and offensive manners, sometimes Leon would reveal different features of his personality. On such occasions he would show sensitivity, express feminist views, and expose himself as vulnerable. Clearly, as any behavior should be understood against the background of its relevant social context, the extreme shifts in Leon’s style of communication across diverse social scenarios can be understood by referring to the specific encounters in which he engaged, and the constraints they entailed. Goffman suggests that an individual’s social identity is related to a performance “which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance” (Goffman 1959: 22). In this vein I suggest that the colonial arrogant (male) patron, which Leon seemed to be, was a role played and changed by him, adapted to specific situations, to other participating actors’ self-presentations, and reflected his own compliance with the role he assumed.

This perspective introduces the essential need for ethnographic descriptions of complex situations and of the intricate behaviors of participants, which provide a detailed choreography of events and of their multifarious human nuances. Thus, I will use the detailed descriptions of encounters Leon was engaged to enable me to draw a portrait, from which a more complex understanding of a colonial male patron can be derived.

From my very first contact with Leon, when he phoned my hotel room in Kathmandu (described in the previous chapter), Leon established his superior

position in our future relationship. By reproaching me for not calling him and my husband to inform them about the delay in the flight from Bombay to Kathmandu, and by using a hostile tone to address me (although he had never spoken with me before and had not yet met me), he made me feel irritated and worried. I became very anxious, and I worried about having to live in the same house as this unpleasant person while I was in Nepal.

Leon's animosity during our first telephone encounter may have stemmed from his sense of responsibility for my safety, and his genuine concern for me as a foreigner in the country. However, I was left with a lingering feeling that his concern was insincere, possibly reflecting his own worries about the anticipated outcome of my imposed presence, and having a total stranger invading his privacy (as he was at the time the only person living on the premises). Yet, a couple of weeks later, after sharing living quarters in Bhairahawa, taking our meals together, walking or driving together to the office of the irrigation project, sharing office space, and engaging in friendly conversations, we became closer and he felt at ease with me, as I did with him. This closeness encouraged Leon to trust me and consequently to consider me a suitable partner for sharing gossip and judgments on other people. Thus he felt free to tell me about his bad experience with my predecessor, Tovi Fenster, using certain crude expressions to describe her "snobbish" manners. According to him, they had had several hostile interactions, following which she left the house and moved into a local hotel.

Leon's negative experience with Tovi Fenster could explain, at least partially, his initial antagonism and reservations towards me. However, in light of various encounters that I witnessed, an alternative explanation can be given regarding his frequent use of intimidating verbal and non-verbal communication. His aggressive, domineering style was predominantly evident in his interactions with local people of lower social status, including those who worked for him at home (in Bhairahawa and Kathmandu) and in the Project office. It is plausible that because Leon wanted them to serve him to the best of their ability and not to mess around, he felt that a strict, unequivocal attitude toward his staff was required. His bossy attitude, from this perspective, was rational and practical. Therefore, separating work relations and personal relations, "eliminating all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (Weber 1948: 216), was probably perceived by Leon as an inevitable part of maintaining good working relations, for his benefit and for the Project's sake. Thus, "the more perfectly the bureaucracy is 'dehumanized'" (ibid.: 216), the better it serves to ensure domination over the staff.

This argument is also applicable to our first telephone conversation. Leon's aggressive tone was instrumental in making clear from the very beginning who was the boss. It was most important for him to make me recognize his dominant position and my relatively lower standing, so as to preserve complete control over "his" Bhairahawa home. This is compatible with some of the comments he made about Tovi Fenster, being someone who took pride in her aca-

demic status, which irritated him. In other words, I was implicitly warned to act humbly and respectfully.

Presenting himself as an all-knowing expert was a conspicuous feature of Leon's domineering attitude. In our numerous discussions, Leon repeatedly revealed that he enjoyed playing the role of expert in relation to the women's development project, as he elaborated authoritatively on the women villagers' literacy competence and needs. Thus, for instance, his interventions in the process of hiring teachers for the training course of village teachers,² during which he pretended to be knowledgeable about literacy teaching, were sometimes irritating and sometimes ridiculous. Leon's behavior, which was probably intended to convey an impression of his command over the situations he was part of, could sometimes become amusing. This happened, for instance, after a meeting that took place at the Projects' meeting room, where I presented the women's program to the WGOs and the AOs. The presentation was prepared by Anita and me, and was translated by Anita into Nepali. As soon as Anita and I entered his office, Leon addressed us both with his critical comments. He told me that I should not have spoken about the program with the Project junior employees, while Anita was criticized for speaking too fast, thus making it impossible for people to follow her, and also for using Latinate words that they could not understand. He claimed that he knew enough Nepali to notice her use of words that were not part of the vernacular. It may be that Leon was venting his resentment at my "unauthorized" encounter with the junior irrigation project's staff. The fact that Anita and I did not consult with him about my presentation was probably annoying and an affront to his expectation of having full control. Leon expected his subordinates to show respect, obedience, and complete loyalty.

Thus, Leon's posture and familiar conduct could be easily perceived as arrogant, patronizing, pretentious, and sometimes even wicked. However, his social performance was more complex, and it also contained humane gestures and responses. In Marie-Benedicte Dembour's terms, he was not a "baddie" (Dembour 2000: 202). Exploring domination in the former Belgian Congo, Dembour realized that the retired officers she interviewed were not the "baddies" she had expected encountering. In the course of meeting them and analyzing their narratives, she confronted her own prejudices and "disgust for colonialism" (ibid.: 202), a situation which revealed to her the complexity of colonialism and of individual colonialists. I conclude that Leon's personality should be understood in more complex terms than "arrogant colonialist" or "domineering boss," and that, like the Congo, the irrigation project "was a place inhabited by people 'like those we meet everyday.'" (ibid.: 202).

Complying with Hanna's Dominance

Leon's behavior towards Hanna, his wife, as I witnessed it on a few occasions, provides another example of his context-dependent domineering conduct. Hanna stayed in the couple's rented house in Kathmandu, which was paid for

by Tahal. She joined Leon in Bhairahawa only once during the three years of his stay in Nepal. Every Thursday at noon, Samir, Leon's driver, would take him to the airport to catch a flight to Kathmandu, where he would spend the weekend with his wife. Returning on Monday morning, Samir would pick him up and bring him back to the office.

Hanna seemed to be a very different person from Leon. She was friendly, pleasant, and very hospitable. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that in her relationships with her staff (a cleaner, a cook, a driver, and a gardener) she took up the matron's role very convincingly, although she did not employ the same harsh manner as her husband. This difference can be explained, apart from personality differences, by the fact that Leon, but not Hanna, was engaged in organizational performance, holding an authoritative position. This meant, probably, that Leon assumed he was expected to display his unquestionable control over his employees. Because he was more dependent on the staff than she was, he had, or thought that he had, to make it constantly clear to all that he was the boss and that he expected everyone to serve him to his satisfaction. Moreover, as an outsider, without knowledge of the local language, he had to be on his guard with respect to any possible resistance or opposition, which could cast doubt over his authority.

Hanna's basic dependence on the local staff, on the other hand, was more limited. She needed the cleaner and cook for domestic chores, but could do without them from time to time when they left her. She also needed the driver to take her shopping in the local bazaar, a significant activity of hers in Kathmandu. However, because I spent much more time with Leon than with Hanna, my characterizations should be considered tentative rather than conclusive. Thus, for example, it is possible that Hanna treated her employees no better than her husband.

Furthermore, as the irrigation project approached its end and Leon remained the last Israeli representative in Bhairahawa, it became evident (certainly to the local people around him, but possibly to himself as well), that he was not really needed and had made hardly any substantial contribution to the project. If so, Leon's tendency to present himself as vitally important and in control can be understood as a reaction to these changing conditions. Bossing others around was, therefore, a means to enforce his presence and convey the impression of his indispensability. This understanding derives support from Goffman's (1959) emphasis on the impact of a participating audience on the individual's self presentation, and from ethnographic studies carried out, for instance, by Emanuel Marx (1976), Eyal Ben-Ari (1989), Gideon Kunda (1992), and myself (Hertzog 2007).³ These case studies demonstrate how people adjust their performance to changing circumstances, and how they utilize social skills and physical advantages to convince the audience what they should think about them and how to respond. Leon's rough behavior suggests that he had to work hard to impose his unwanted presence on senior and junior local employees of the irrigation project.

While Leon was struggling over recognition of his control in Bhairahawa, Hanna was engaged in socializing and shopping for “folklore” in Kathmandu. In fact, she became a competent expert in local handicrafts and her house was furnished and decorated with exquisite taste, with beautiful ornaments and genuinely artistic items. A considerable part of Hanna’s life was devoted to socializing with other women, mainly the spouses of diplomatic representatives and professional staff, most of whom were from overseas. Hanna can be described as an “incorporated wife” (Callan and Ardener 1984), a personal dependent of her husband, and “ranked solely in terms of the status” (Gartrell 1984: 166) held by him. Being a high-ranking official’s wife, she was a “materially privileged woman” (Callan 1984: 3). She clearly extracted as many benefits as she could from her socioeconomic position, in terms of luxury, comfort, and a “kind of glamour,” in Lidia Sciamia’s (1984: 64) words. In her account of academic wives, Sciamia describes the advantages that were enjoyed (or expected) by incorporated wives at Cambridge University: “They did hope to reap their rewards on this earth—and rewards sometimes did come with their husbands’ achievement of senior positions which granted the women too, some active involvement in the inner circles of the ‘good society’” (ibid.: 64). It appears, therefore, that Hanna had “a life of her own” (Ardener 1984: 41), enriched with social activities and personal enjoyment.

When I went to Kathmandu, Hanna invited me to accompany her to one of the women’s garden parties that took place at the luxurious Shangri-La Hotel in town. The party was presented as a charity event intended to raise money for the poor in Nepal. Most of the women present were the wives of diplomats or of foreign consultants, and some were volunteers in NGOs. We paid a 100 rupee⁴ entrance fee, which also entitled us to light refreshments (samosas and biscuits), served in the lovely garden under colorful parasols. The event looked like a typical colonial tea party (reminding me of similar ones I had seen in movies). The women were beautifully dressed, holding their teacups, chatting with an authoritative air about the situation in Nepal and its poverty.

I integrated very easily into these conversations, many of which were about local social topics. I assume that my questions, and the fact that I was new to the place, presenting myself as a hired gender consultant, provoked these topics. Two other Israeli women also attended the party: Rina, who had arrived the day before from Israel for a one-month stay to help out the Israeli embassy with some communication problems; and Yael, the wife of the security person at the embassy. While I was eating my samosa, Yael questioned me about why I was in Nepal. Before receiving a reply, she explained: “So much is done for the Nepali people but nothing is changing ... So what is really being done? What can be done to change things?” I started to explain patiently what I was doing, and what I wished to do. I revealed to her my ideas about developing handicraft production with an entrepreneurial project, but she was not really listening. When she noticed one of her acquaintances she seemed very pleased to have found an exit,

and she rushed toward her friend and never came back to continue the conversation with Hanna and me. This type of small talk went on for some time, until it started to rain and everybody left in a hurry. Hanna invited me to join her for dinner, which was cooked and served by her cook and servant. The driver waited for me outside until I left the house, and took me back to the hotel.

That garden party reflected the social distance that exists between foreigners and Nepali citizens. “Real” Nepal was, for those women, far away from their daily affairs. The “whiteness” of this group of privileged foreign women highlighted the ethnic distance between “natives” and people from overseas. Thus, the tea party and others of its kind contributed, indirectly, to symbolic “racial” stratification (Gartrell 1984: 166–185), in which male foreigners’ wives were incorporated into the (neocolonial) development system through socializing with their expatriate female peers. This argument finds support in studies of colonial wives, like that of Janice Brownfoot on *memsahibs* in colonial Malaya. She argues that the *mems[ahibs]* “played a distinctive part in both the colonial order and its demise” (in Hillary Callan’s introduction 1984: 6). Studying British wives in colonial Uganda, Gartrell similarly found that officials’ wives contributed to racial exclusiveness “passively by providing a self-contained society for white men, as much as actively through their behaviour towards colonized people” (ibid.: 6). Being involved in charitable activities provided colonial women personal satisfaction and they filled “part of their leisure time by good works: starting baby clinics for Africans, teaching literacy classes, Red Cross work” (Gartrell 1984: 176).

Apparently, doing charitable work for the distant, unseen poor, and avoiding close contact with them, suited these “incorporated wives” very well. Hence, Hanna could live in Nepal and not live there at the same time. She lived, in fact, in her own sheltered house, beautifully decorated with Nepali works of art, and enjoyed a comfortable routine. Her lifestyle resembled that of rich upper-class people anywhere else in the world. She was served from early morning until late at night by poorly paid local employees, often went shopping to find bargains, socialized with the wives of high-ranking foreign officials at garden parties, and hosted guests (like myself) generously, with the help of her servants’ labor, at home. Thus, unsurprisingly, Leon was anxious to get back to this “civilized paradise,” and to get away as often as possible from the “wilderness,” where he had to bear the intensive, close presence of local people. Also, coming back to Kathmandu meant, from Leon’s point of view, joining Hanna, with whom he probably did not have to worry about threats to his authority. Indeed, Hanna was the “ideal colonial wife,”⁵ and as such she fulfilled supportive roles, such as facilitator “of tensions reducing informal socializing...” (Gartrell 1984: 172), and similar to colonial wives, she provided unpaid and unrecognized services to her husband.

When the two of them were together Leon appeared to be a courteous person, showing Hanna respect and care. It was apparent that in their (publicly

displayed) relationship Hanna was the more dominant. Leon did not oppose her in anything and always seemed eager to please her. She was the one who decided what to buy for their Kathmandu house, what to eat, with whom to socialize, and so on. When I went to Kathmandu, Leon and Hanna invited me to join them for a tour of the vicinity and for lunch at a restaurant in one of the most beautiful locations in the region, overlooking the city from the hills. Hanna took care of all the details: our itinerary, the duration of our visit to the tourist shop, and what the two of them would eat. Leon uttered not one word of disapproval. It seemed very clear who the boss was.

When in Bhairahawa, Leon would phone Hanna every other day and have a long talk with her. To me it appeared to be a sort of ritual. While on the other days we remained chatting for some time in the dining room, after having finished the meal, on these evenings Leon would finish his dinner on time to leave for his telephone conversations with Hanna. Then he would shut himself in his room and talk with Hanna, sometimes for hours. He was not seen until the next morning. Hanna provided, so it seemed, “companionship, the reduction of loneliness” (ibid.: 168).

Sometimes Leon would tell me about his conversations with Hanna. It was always evident that Leon profoundly respected Hanna’s advice, and he often used to quote her. One of Leon’s oft-used expressions was, “Hanna said I did not come to save Nepal.” He used this expression, for instance, when I stated that, if it turned out that the heads of Tahal did not really intend to implement the women’s project, I would consider returning to Israel. My spontaneous statement came as an emotional outburst when I was taken by surprise by Leon’s announcement about the poor chances of realizing the women’s project (this will be described in detail at a later stage).

Alarmed by my reaction, he tried to calm me by quoting Hanna’s magic phrase that we cannot save Nepal. This expression suggested that Nepal’s situation was hopeless and there was no chance of bringing about any meaningful change through one’s work and expertise. It also implied that since it was, in any case, impossible to save Nepal, one should rather limit oneself to matters over which one had some control, renounce wider responsibility for the outcomes of projects of which one is part, and look out for one’s own personal interests. However, the main point is Leon’s adherence to Hanna’s professed understanding of both his personal problems and of real life. She was the only person with whom Leon could discuss “the day’s doings in his own idiom” (ibid.: 168).

Hanna’s life in Nepal and her relationships with Leon offer an illuminating example of a “colonial service” context. Although the two were part of a post-colonial era, living in the contemporary bureaucratic context of development projects in poor countries, the resemblance between the patterns and norms of this situation and the colonial past is striking. I suggest that these similarities are related to the power structure embedded in both situations. This structure involves the construction of a categorical separation, in seemingly different

organizational contexts, of foreigners from local people and of men from women. Gartrell notes that the “organizational type” of colonial rule can be compared to other organizations, such as corporations, the military, and the diplomatic service, in all of which “a predominately male body of employees is hierarchically organized” (ibid.: 166).

Leon and Hanna were part of a “colonial” setting, which obliged them to comply with given gendered roles, status and etiquette, enabled them different spheres of activity, and rewarded them accordingly. Whereas Leon received a high salary and position, and relied on his wife for companionship and moral support, Hanna enjoyed social advantages and a glamorous life, and depended on her husband for her economic needs.⁶

The Betrayed Patron

A clash between Leon and Sam, a foreign consultant, concerning the salary of Raju, Leon’s secretary, offers another example of how Leon relied on Hanna’s advice and reassurance in stressful circumstances. Sam, a young American and Leon’s friend, had attempted to intercede on Raju’s behalf, supporting his claim for a raise in his salary. Leon explained to me that Sam had betrayed him and expressed his contempt for him. He announced that their friendship had come to an end and that he would never meet Sam again. However, according to what Leon told me, Hanna advised him not to be so hasty in ending his friendships. “After all,” she said, “how many friends do you have?” To this she added a warning: “And to whom can you turn to when something happens to you?” Indeed, Hanna’s practical advice revealed her awareness of Leon’s isolation.

Apparently, Leon felt that he was alone among strangers who could not, and perhaps would not, like to help him were he to end up in trouble. Moreover, he may have suspected that they might even endanger him. Hanna’s common-sense advice offers an example, drawn from daily-life interactions, of Emerson’s analysis of “balancing operations” (Emerson 1962: 35–40) for reducing power differentials in social relationships. Attaining an alternative social contact, which provides one with the goal one desires, reduces one’s dependency on the sole person who possesses the needed resource and that person’s control over one at the same time. As Leon did not have any alternative meaningful relationships with anyone apart from Sam, he therefore depended heavily on Sam for his friendship.

It was obvious that in Leon’s and Hanna’s minds, local Nepali people could not be considered “real,” reliable friends, and so Leon could trust only an outsider like himself as a close friend. Sam, a foreign English-speaking man, was the suitable person to befriend. Indeed, this assumption could have been the outcome of not being made welcome by the local people, especially not in Bhairahawa. This seemed to be the case, as Leon’s local acquaintances were people with whom he was working, who either responded to his bossy manners in kind, or simply preferred to keep their relationships with him formal and

limited to professional matters. The fact that Sam was able to develop closer relationships with the locals suggests that people distanced themselves from Leon because of his perceived arrogance. Leon's complaints about not being invited by his Nepali colleagues to their homes implied that he was hurt by their reserve. However, it appears that he nevertheless preferred to keep a clear distance between himself and local people, and refrained from maintaining relationships with them outside of work.

There is, however, another possible interpretation regarding the issue of Leon's apparent contradictory modes of behavior: his arrogant attitude towards Nepali people on the one hand, and his warm, respectful attitude toward Hanna on the other. Leon's need for Hanna's support and friendship seemed to be very basic, as she offered him unconditional and continuous support. Hanna was there for Leon, providing him with "the nurturant and restorative functions widely ascribed to wives, who were expected to provide solace for the stresses of organizational life and to send their men back ready to work with renewed vigour" (Gartrell 1984: 168). Hanna also provided Leon with a sense of belonging, furnishing him with a family base and a stable marriage, which, "... the confidence placed" in it "is generally well-founded" (Callan 1984: 22). She created "a place of trusting and giving" (Bourdieu 1996: 20) for Leon, which enabled him to endure the tensions of life in Bhairahawa.

Thus, Leon profoundly depended on Hanna, and was therefore obliged to be respectful, generous, and compliant to her. Conversely, Leon's job with the irrigation project was secure and anchored in a written contract by Tahal, and which explicitly stated the duration of his assignment in Nepal. Hence, he did not depend on local officials, neither the junior nor the senior ones, for his contract, or work conditions. They had little or no impact at all on his employment status. These were secured in his contract with Tahal. It follows, then, that Leon depended on Tahal and was obliged to them by his contract with the company. As a permanent employee, sent by Tahal to development projects in other countries in the past, Leon was committed to, and relied heavily on, the company for most of his professional career and employment.

Obviously, therefore, Leon's dependence on his Nepali counterparts (in terms of essential daily needs in Nepal) was relatively limited. This could account for his apparent arrogance towards them, especially towards the junior employees. Yet, senior officials in the irrigation project could complain about him to his superiors in Tahal and also to the World Bank officials. They could also have had some impact on work conditions in the office. This partial dependence forced Leon to take into account these officials and any reprisals they might make, should they disapprove of his conduct.

Although Leon's outward behavior can be described as that of a bad-tempered authoritarian, he was, nevertheless, vulnerable at the same time. The conflict with Sam reveals this perspective. The heated row with Sam started (or so, at least, I thought for some time) from a friendly conversation I had with Raju,

Leon's quiet, dedicated, and competent secretary. One day when Leon was out of the office, Raju told me that he wanted to go to India, his country of origin. When Leon heard this, he reacted angrily and demanded that Raju not leave, insisting as well that he continue working for him until his return to Israel. Raju told me that his son lived with his parents in India, and studied at a good school where Raju himself had studied as a boy. His wife, a Nepali woman, also wanted to go to India, although her family lived in Nepal. Raju assumed that they could both find secretarial work in India, and he felt that people were nicer in India than in Nepal: "They are not like the Nepali people whose only interest is money. Without money they will not do anything for others, just as human beings. Poverty is less terrible in India, and here in Nepal men treat women badly and there are a lot of drunken men here." Raju was very bitter and told me that even after ten years of living in Nepal he had not succeeded in acquiring Nepali citizenship. Consequently, he could travel only to India.

When Sam came to visit me one evening, while Leon was away in Kathmandu, I told him Raju's story. We were having a couple of beers and chatting openly about the usual things—the irrigation and literacy projects, the corruption of Nepali officials, how they were being bribed—and comparing this state of affairs to Israel and the United States. Feeling at ease, I told Sam about Raju's intention to go to India and work there.

The next morning when I came back from a meeting I found Sam leaving Leon's office. As he left the room, Leon was angrily muttering something about Raju's misbehavior. Raju did not understand, or pretended not to understand. It took me some time to realize that Leon was referring to Raju's intention to stop working for him and leave for India. At first I thought that Leon had found out that "his" jeep had been used a few days earlier, when he was away in Kathmandu, to take Raju's mother-in-law to the hospital. For a few minutes I felt concerned for myself, because Raju had asked me for permission to borrow the jeep (as Leon left the keys with me), and I had no choice but to grant it. But when Leon spoke, it became clear that he was furious about Raju's intention to leave him, and I felt relieved. Nevertheless, at the same time I felt guilty and ashamed for having given away Raju's secret. (Later on I found out that this was an ongoing issue, but at the time I did not know this.)

Raju was in a panic and kept apologizing for his "misconduct." Leon told him repeatedly and coldly that he had to announce his intention to leave one month in advance of his departure, and said: "You cannot just get up and leave, like your sister-in-law did" (she had worked for Leon before Raju). Leon also frequently reminded Raju that when he started to work for him he was very inefficient, but that thanks to his guidance, Raju's work had improved considerably. Raju brought up the issue of his salary, saying something about being offered better pay somewhere else. Leon reacted aggressively: "Everyone is entitled to look for better pay ... Please yourself and go ... But let me know one month in advance." Raju seemed anxious. He said that he did not mean to leave

Leon and that he knew he had to announce his resignation one month ahead. Leon replied to Raju's talk about his salary by saying that he had already raised his salary considerably, and that Raju's salary was higher than anything paid in other places in Nepal for similar work.

This dialogue went on for two days, with minor nuances. Leon sounded very angry and hurt. As I thought that Raju's troubles had started because I stupidly revealed his secret to Sam, I apologized whole-heartedly to Raju for telling Sam about his intention to leave for India. Raju did his best to reassure me, insisting that it was not my fault and that the information had come from Sam, with no connection to me. When I saw Sam, I told him quietly that he should not have told Leon what I had told him about Raju. Sam was embarrassed, and he denied that he had brought up my information about Raju when he had talked to Leon.

The affair demonstrated Leon's way of producing an atmosphere of anxiety and caution around him. He conveyed a sense of threat to people who interacted with him. While Leon and I were walking to the office one morning (due to a strike organized by the Maoists that prevented Samir from driving us there), I used the opportunity to defend Raju's behavior. Doing so also served to ease my guilty feelings for having caused Raju his troubles. I explained to Leon, very carefully, that Raju had simply expressed a wish to live in India, and had not mentioned any concrete intention to quit working for Leon. I went on to explain that Sam had inadvertently misinformed him of things. Leon tried to calm me down, saying that no one had suggested that I was the cause of the conflict. I was evidently acting out of anxiety and concern about a potential reprisal by Leon, as a consequence of taking sides against him.

Leon, so it seemed, reacted to the tension I was experiencing, but preferred to ignore the main problem behind the affair, namely Raju's request for a higher salary. Leon's behavior revealed that he was annoyed and felt betrayed by someone he considered a close friend, and was furious over the fact that any employee of his would dare to threaten his entitlement to administrative services (good secretarial services, for instance). Out of my own anxiety, I responded to his interpretation of the situation by saying: "I am not worried that people will know that I was the one who revealed Raju's story, but rather feel bad that I might have caused Raju's problems." Leon was surprised and asked if it was I who had brought up the story. I confirmed that I had, adding that when Sam came to visit me I had told him, confidentially, about Raju. He did not seem to be surprised about Sam's part in the story, as the dispute over Raju's salary had probably begun before I became involved in the affair. Leon said that it would never be the same between him and Sam. "I gave him so much and Sam gives back so little, if anything at all, in return. Our relationship will never be the same again. What happened is that when Raju brought up his demand for a raise in his salary he said that everybody, even Sam, was telling him that his salary was low. Sam knows, as he is an American, that in America nobody reveals any information concerning his salary to others."

Imposing Discretion for the Sake of Dominance

Secrecy concerning salaries is an important means of controlling employees. By obstructing their access to this vital information, delegitimizing the essential act of comparing wages, employers ensure their employees' compliance with prevailing working conditions. From Leon's point of view, quite probably, Sam had undermined this strategy, and consequently failed to identify himself with Leon's side in the power structure. The fact that Sam was a friend must have annoyed Leon in particular, because if he could not trust even a close friend to be loyal, then his sense of security must have been threatened.

The crucial role of secrecy in constructing and preserving elites' interests and power is highlighted by David Vincent (1998). Analyzing the pervasive culture of secrecy in Britain, Vincent suggests that the social changes brought about by industrialization in the nineteenth century forced the British ruling elite to replace its codes of behaviour in which formal rules were not required because an individual's status depended on the approval of his close acquaintances. The "control of knowledge", served to guarantee "Historic identity, security, and income" (Vincent 1998: 51). This argument supports Robert Merton's (1973) insiders'/outsiders' doctrines (ibid.: 99–138). Merton claims that the contemporary problem of "patterned differentials among social groups and strata in access to knowledge" (ibid.: 102), is a long-standing problem in the sociology of knowledge. Doctrines of the insiders, based on class, race, ethnicity, age, sex, etc., include the claim that the outsider has a structurally imposed incapacity for access to knowledge. Outsider doctrine involves claims of access to knowledge grounded on the assumption of socially based detachment.

Discretion and other bureaucratic means, such as "bureaucratic language" (Ferguson 1984: 40), were obviously essential to the irrigation project in order to preserve the privileges of the privileged and to sustain the hierarchical structure, which reflected the differential division of economic benefits, mainly in terms of salaries. As long as those at the top could ensure that people kept quiet about their salaries, they were able to maintain control over their employees. This is true for both poorly paid and better-paid individuals. Guaranteeing the discretion of the former was essential for avoiding the emergence of collective awareness concerning working conditions, following which an organized action to improve them might arise, by "coalition formation" balancing operation (Emerson 1962: 37).⁷ The discretion of the better-paid group was essential in order to avoid ongoing pressure over pay aimed at the heads of the irrigation project, which would have impinged heavily on the budget. Obviously, this state of affairs ensured people's dependence on those who controlled the budgets, some of whom were subordinate to Leon, and others to Thapa.

Naturally, every employee (at any rank) strived for a higher salary. Bargaining over raises and buying-off people's compliance could work only in an individualized system by ensuring the ongoing one-sided dependence of employees on their employers. Besides imposing discretion, employees' de-

pendency could be maintained by preserving a fairly uniform low wage for most of them. Indeed, any collective pay rise would have a far-reaching impact on the budget. Also, the irrigation project heads could pay their low-ranking workers in informal ways. For instance, Leon had an arrangement with Raju that every morning he would come in at 9 A.M. (Leon arrived some fifteen minutes later), open the windows, and empty the bin. He used to pay Raju for this service an additional sum of 300 rupees (about \$5.00) per month. Leon had another arrangement with a man that was in charge of serving tea in the irrigation project offices. The man brought a jug of water every day to Leon's room, and was paid 100 rupees (less than \$2.00) per month.

Leon seemed to believe that the local employees needed less than he did. This perception was apparent not only in relation to Raju, who, although poorly paid, was nevertheless paid better than other low-ranking employees who performed similar secretarial work. Gupta's salary, as an employee of Tahal, was much higher than that of the local employees. In fact, after Thapa, his earnings were second highest among the local employees of the irrigation project. When he asked for a raise, Leon reacted antagonistically. This came up when Leon and I were walking home from the office on one of the many strike days. Gupta walked with us part of the way until we reached Buddha's Square (a small traffic island in the center of town with a statue of the Buddha in the middle), where he turned on to another road leading to his home.

Continuing our conversation from the morning, I asked Leon about Gupta's salary. Leon said it was 67,000 rupees (about \$1,100) per month. He then complained that he had raised Gupta's salary considerably in the last year and a half. I asked Leon what Gupta would do with such a substantial amount of money (in local terms). "Would he buy a car?" I asked. He replied: "They keep the money for old age, by then they cannot enjoy it any more. Gupta would not even pay 10 rupees for a rickshaw to come and visit the bachelors' house." Leon's reply obviously reflected his annoyance over pay-bargaining encounters, his bitterness about the fact that Gupta refrained from socializing with him, as well as his lack of respect for the Nepali people. However, it also demonstrated my own ethnocentric view regarding the subsistence needs of local people.

The cost estimate of the women's project, which I submitted for approval to the heads of the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Bank, demonstrates the considerable gap between wages among employees, depending on who their employer is—Tahal or the Nepali party (the department of irrigation in the Ministry of Agriculture). The budget proposal recommended the employment of two "Women's Groups Coordinators (WGCs)"⁸ explaining that:

at the moment the coordination and supervision of the project and of the women's group organizers is done by Mrs Khanal [Anita's surname], who is paid by Tahal. However, as the project is about to be enlarged significantly (from some 60 active groups up to 300 groups) it necessitates the

employment of at least two Women's Groups Coordinators. The two WGCs salaries are calculated for a 17 month period, starting from January 1998 (when some 240 groups will be added gradually to the project) (6).

In practice, Anita was the only coordinator employed by the irrigation project, and her salary was \$72 per month. She was also provided with accommodation in Bhairahawa. Tahal paid Anita's salary, as the Project's local consultant. The difference between her salary and mine was conspicuous. My salary was approximately \$3,500 per month; that is, fifty times more than Anita's salary. But that was only part of it. I was also paid an extra \$290 per month for working overtime or on Jewish or local holidays. Also, for each day of my stay at the bachelors' house I received a sustenance allowance of \$75, all of which added up to an extra \$2,500 (for my whole visit). In addition, an extra sum was paid to cover days when I traveled (from and back to Israel, and my three nights and days in Kathmandu). Health, life, and luggage insurance were also paid for.

Significant wage gaps between local and foreign employees were not unique to the irrigation project. This state of affairs is embedded in the development industry generally. In the Nepali context, Judith Justice reports: "For a foreign staff member or advisor in Nepal, the United Nations Development Program budgets \$75,000 per year, or 1 million rupees, excluding agency overhead. By contrast, the official cost to the government for a Nepali officer is between 20,000 and 30,000 rupees per year, yielding a ratio of one foreigner for every thirty to fifty Nepali counterparts" (Justice 1989: 38).⁹ Hausner reports that a "local hire, a Nepali contractor, will earn half the rate of an internationally hired contractor, even with identical credentials, and often more experience" (Hausner 2006: 326).

Nevertheless, Anita's salary was twice the amount of the WGOs. According to the cost estimate I submitted, the WGOs, who were employed by the irrigation project, "will be employed until its termination in May 1999. Their salaries are thus calculated on the basis of 21 months, starting in September 1997." Each of the eleven WGOs earned \$37 per month. The program recommended recruiting another nineteen WGOs to "carry out the task of organizing 300 women's groups." The total for salaries of the village teachers was calculated on the basis of \$13 per teacher per month. The 300 teachers that the program recommended recruiting were "village women with basic education (8–10 classes)," and they were expected to teach two hours a day, six days a week, for nine months.¹⁰

Control of information about employees' salaries—by means of secrecy, taboos, one-to-one bargaining—was apparently employed by Leon to maintain his dominance over people who depended on him in the project, and at his homes in Bhairahawa and Kathmandu. Leon's endeavors to prevent leakage of discreet, insider information are an example of Weber's concept of the "official secret," a "specific invention of bureaucracy," and which is "fanatically defended

by the bureaucracy” (Weber 1948: 233–34).¹¹ Secrecy, so it appears, divides “insiders” from “outsiders,” employers from employees, and most importantly those who control access to the organization’s resources from those who do not. It follows, therefore, that secrecy is crucial to the preservation of dominance and the privileges it entails.

Serving Tea and Power Differentials

Obtaining social power necessitates the presentation and preservation of hierarchical distance. Consequently, bossing people about and introducing strict social distance between himself and others was a predominant feature of Leon’s daily encounters with the people around him, especially with those who worked for him. One such example was connected to serving hot drinks: who should serve them and who they were to be served to. Leon used to prepare hot drinks for himself a few times every day. Feeling uneasy about making coffee only for myself on one of my first days in the office, I asked Leon and Raju if they wanted me to make them coffee. Leon accepted my offer but reacted with hostility in regard to my intention to make a drink for Raju: “No! You are not offering him coffee.” I was surprised, and Leon explained that it was wrong for me to serve Raju, as he was expected to serve Leon and myself and not the other way round, and that I should not mess up the hierarchy.

On another occasion, while offering Leon a cup of coffee I dared to say: “I want to offer coffee to Raju too. It is very hard for me not to do that.” Leon repeated his objection to such a gesture, saying uncompromisingly: “Soon he will think that he deserves to be served coffee.” Leon was clearly annoyed and disturbed by any seemingly trivial matter that was probably perceived by him as undermining the order of things in the office, thus posing a threat to his self-evident position as the boss. Bound by Leon’s instructions I felt like a collaborator, and hence when Leon was away I apologized to Raju for not offering him coffee in Leon’s presence. However, when Leon was not there I used to offer Raju coffee, but Raju would never accept the offer.

It appears, then, that assuming a superior attitude and creating clear social distance was, in Leon’s eyes, an inevitable practice necessary for maintaining his dominant position. Hence, his behavior was deliberate and not just a matter of bad manners. From my point of view, as a temporary visitor, his behavior was unbearable and seemed to bespeak his evilness. However, unconsciously I took advantage of this situation by presenting myself as Raju’s ally. Moreover, I used this issue to gain Anita’s respect and trust. Talking with her over a cold coke I told her that Leon would not allow me to serve Raju coffee: “I find it difficult to manage in a place where such a distance between people prevails.” She responded warmly. Identifying with my approach, Anita brought up her own bad experiences with superiors in one of her previous work places. At another place, she recounted, which was “very different” from the irrigation project, friendly working relations prevailed between junior and senior employees. That is to say, reveal-

ing my feelings about Leon's insistence on maintaining social distance indirectly and unintentionally served my interest in getting closer to Anita.

Leon's attitude in relation to serving hot drinks in his office was apparently a departure from the prevailing norms concerning tea drinking on the Project's premises. Serving tea was usually carried out by a specific person, who was considered as occupying the lowest position in the Project's hierarchy. More importantly, drinking tea reduced social distance between people belonging to different social categories, based on professional status, bureaucratic position, gender, and so on. Tea was generally made with cooked milk (chai) rather than boiled water (which was how it was drunk in Leon's office). Drinking chai was an integral part of any meeting or social gathering within the irrigation project's premises, whether with people from the project or those coming from the outside. Whenever people came for meetings with officials in the office, chai was immediately ordered.

However, the more interesting phenomenon in relation to drinking chai was the habitual social gatherings which took place every day in the officials' rooms. The daily gatherings in Pandit's room were, probably, the most noticeable ones. Whenever I came down to Pandit's room (his office was on the first floor, beneath Leon's office, which was on the second and top floor of the irrigation project's building) it felt as though I had arrived at a noisy party. The room was almost always crowded with some five to ten people, cheerfully chatting and joking. As the space was rather small and chairs were few, people often used to share seats. The people in Pandit's room were mainly his own staff, lower ranked workers such as the male Association Organizers (AOs) and the female women's groups organizers (WGOs). Senior officials like Gupta would also join the cheerful group occasionally. Sometimes even the chai-man would join the party. Nevertheless, hierarchy was maintained there as well, although in a more subtle way. Pandit always sat at the head, behind his desk, while the others sat around. The male AOs usually sat to Pandit's right, whereas the female WGOs sat in front of him and were usually the ones who shared seats. When I entered the room the atmosphere invariably became more formal, and a seat was offered to me by one of the WGOs.

In bureaucratic terms the "tea-parties" could be considered a waste of time, lacking efficiency, causing a break-down of the hierarchical order, and even jeopardizing the organization's goals. However, it appeared that although illegitimate from the point of view of formal organizational rules, these social encounters were indispensable events, contributing significantly to the irrigation project's sustainability. As people were very poorly paid and their employment conditions were shaky and temporary, the informal socializing and friendliness could somehow alleviate feelings of bitterness, frustration, and helplessness. Being aware of the approaching termination of the irrigation project on the one hand, and of its questionable contribution to the villages they were working for and of which they were part on the other, these enjoyable meetings

offered them opportunities to talk and joke. These encounters clearly reduced the personal tensions and frustrations of junior employees, but also brought together higher and lower-ranked people, reintroducing human, egalitarian components of friendship and solidarity into the hierarchical and alienating context. This social networking event possibly also contributed to everyday mutual help, though I cannot be certain of this. As “class relations are both captured and disguised within bureaucratic networks” (Ferguson 1984: 40), the “informal” gatherings of the irrigation project’s employees “dissipated power” (ibid: 17) and eliminated formalism. My sudden entrance into this set up, a foreigner unable to speak Nepali, and identified with the irrigation project’s superiors, seemed to disrupt the social mingling. Nevertheless, I do not see these social encounters as anecdotes of a “latent function” (Merton 1957: 68) in organizational life that indirectly contribute to its ongoing efficient and steady functioning.¹² Rather, I suggest that these events were inseparable from the organization’s everyday operation, and fly in the face of the Weberian concept of the formalized, hierarchical, and rational structure of organizations.

The Jeep: Symbolizing and Contesting Superiority

Leon’s efforts to maintain a hierarchal structure, with himself at its apex, were clearly demonstrated in relation to “his” jeep. He would never sit anywhere else but in “his” seat, beside the driver. The only exception was in the few cases when he rode in Thapa’s jeep. On occasions when Leon allowed me to use his jeep, if he himself was using Thapa’s vehicle, it was implied that he was doing me a favor, signaling approval of my behavior and upgrading my status. And permission to use his jeep would usually entail some preconditions. On one occasion, Leon instructed me as follows: “You can have the jeep, but there is a problem. There is an empty gas container in it, which has to be filled up, and another smaller container. You can drive to the gas station, fill it up, and then bring it to the bachelors’ house. After that the jeep will be available to you.” When I complained that what was being asked of us would take too long and would considerably reduce the time we had for traveling to the villages, he compromised, and instead told me to leave the empty container at the filling station. On another occasion, at which Thapa was present, Anita asked Leon if she could have “his” driver. Leon replied: “As soon as I know what happens with your employment [i.e., if her contract was to be extended by the local irrigation project’s manager], then I shall have no objection to you using my driver.” Thapa instantly interfered and, referring to the jeep that was provided for the women’s project, told Anita: “You have your own vehicle and you don’t need to depend on any other vehicle.”

Providing us with a vehicle and a driver was, or so it seemed, an arena for competition between Leon and Thapa concerning who had seniority in the irrigation project. Leon was willing to consider our use of “his” jeep when he realized that Thapa had offered us his vehicle and driver. On the other hand, Thapa’s decision to provide us with his vehicle and driver was prompted by our discus-

sion with Leon about whether or not we could use “his” car and driver. The car was promised by Thapa soon after I arrived at the irrigation project premises, but did not materialize until the abovementioned encounter some weeks later.

The jeep, so it seems, was a symbol of—and a means for establishing—status and power, a means of manifesting control over people and property. Making clear that the jeep and the driver were “his” and were there for his use enabled Leon to consider himself and to be considered by others as a powerful person, competing only with Thapa over the highest position in the irrigation project. In a way, the jeep with the driver signified Leon’s extended embodiment. The symbolic function of a vehicle, provided to senior officials for their personal use, as signaling status and organizational power is discussed by Reuven Shapira (2008) in his study of moral leadership on kibbutzim. Shapira argues that the privilege enjoyed by activists and leaders of having an “attached car” in the formative period of the kibbutz played a major role in symbolizing their high status. The “fancy American chauffeured cars” of the main leaders, he argues, “clearly negated their preaching and stood out in a society where private cars were very rare” (ibid.: 61).

Leon behaved as if the jeep belonged to him and therefore was not available for other people’s use as well. Whenever he was asked by the irrigation project’s employees to give them a lift, he showed his resentment openly. Leon seemed irritated by their requests and for being obliged to stop on the way or sometimes to go out of his way for them. He spoke about them as impudent, as taking advantage of his property, and as imposing on him, leaving him no choice but to let them join the ride. Indeed, his readiness to give someone a lift would vary according to the person who asked for it. Offering Gupta a lift was another matter altogether. Leon was explicitly glad to have him in his jeep. However, this warm welcome for Gupta was exceptional, as Leon did not like to bother with either higher or lower ranking passengers.

The hostile exchange Leon had with one of the irrigation project’s engineers demonstrated that the relative status of a project employee would not move Leon to offer them a lift. During one of our regular breakfast chats, Leon told me about an irritating incident with one of the project’s local engineers. The previous day he had given a lift to a few people. When he arrived at the bachelors’ house, he found out that two men were still in the jeep, one of them the engineer. Leon was furious and told him angrily that this should never happen again. That was not the first confrontation Leon had had with the engineer over giving him a lift in his jeep. Leon told me that some time ago he had given the engineer a lift when he was returning home at night from a party. Leon told the driver to take the engineer home first, which meant that “we had to go through the fields and I got home half an hour later.” Leon resented feeling exploited by the engineer, or by anyone for that matter. For him, using “his” car, “his” driver and “his” time to bring anyone home was unforgivable.

The only gesture Leon considered acceptable was to take people part of the way, dropping them off en route to wherever he was going, although he grum-

bled while doing it. This was done more willingly with higher-ranking workers (Gupta, in particular) than with others, but in no case was it acceptable to go out of his way, at any time, to take people home, whether higher or lower in rank than him. In this matter, as with tea drinking, Leon's attitude was in contrast to local people's norms. Thapa, who also had a project vehicle, would always take other people with him, and send his driver with other workers to carry out their assignments.

The seating arrangement in the jeep also signified for Leon the level of personal importance. Leon would always sit to the left of Samir, the driver. The only exception to this was when he was with Thapa, in Thapa's vehicle. Furthermore, the "appropriate" seating order had to be kept not only in Leon's presence. He insisted that I too made sure that I got the "better" seat in the vehicle. His instructions on how to behave according to my status took place when he joined Anita, three WGOs, and myself in the women's project jeep on our way to meet women in the villages. When he was seated in the front seat next to the driver, Leon asked me sarcastically if I would permit him to have the front seat. Indeed, there was no other option for me but to "allow" him to sit in "my" seat. Moreover, until that moment I had not noticed that he had seated himself in the front seat. This act seemed so "natural" that only following his comment did I realize that he conceived of occupying the front seat, by the driver's side, as the self-evident right of a boss. As I had previously paid no attention to the symbolic meaning of the seating arrangements, preferring always to sit behind with the WGOs and Anita, it was only then that I realized that he had, as far as he was concerned, pushed me away from "my" privileged seat, and therefore felt uncomfortable. Taking the front seat without permission might have reflected his covert ideas about a woman's place, for if a similar encounter were to take place in a non-formal setting Leon would quite probably offer me, as a woman, the more comfortable front seat while taking the back seat for himself. I suggest that the symbolic importance attributed to a specific seat depends on the specific socio-cultural context, and indicates structured power relations.¹³ According to European etiquette, for instance, respect is revealed to those at the back side of the car. Thus, the back seat is offered to guests, who are being chauffeured by a driver at the front. The host would sit next to the driver at the front or with his guests at the back. However, in this case, taking the front seat does not emerge from Leon's good European manners. "Pushing" me to the back of the car is explained by his need to get control over the "better" seat, as a way of signaling his formal superiority (and, hence, his entitlement for a better position in the car).

Leon's rhetorical question probably reflected a conflict between acknowledging the obligation to respect status privileges, mine in this case, and his urge to appear to have a higher status than me, in terms of both the irrigation project and gender relations. As I sat behind, feeling crowded between Anita and the other three WGOs, I made a move to go to the back of the jeep, behind the four of them. Leon was infuriated and said to me "the one who renounces honor

will not be honored." I replied instantly "the one who chases honor, honor runs away from him."¹⁴ He did not give up and responded cynically. Then he turned to the other passengers telling them determinedly that on the way home he had to go to the travel agency. However, we did take Anita home first.

Using "our" vehicle to go to the travel agency to get his ticket for his regular Thursday flight to Kathmandu meant that, although he acknowledged the fact that the vehicle was not "his" but "ours," he still allowed himself to use it for his own purposes, ignoring the other passengers' needs and/or wishes. Thus, Leon's behavior suggests that he perceived the women's project and the women working for it as inferior to him.

As much as Leon tried to protect his monopoly over his jeep, he failed to achieve complete control over it when he was away. For example, on one of his weekends in Kathmandu, Raju phoned me to tell me that his mother-in-law was hospitalized and that he and his wife wanted to visit her. To do so he wanted to use Leon's jeep, and as Leon left the keys with me when he went to Kathmandu, Raju needed my cooperation. He asked me to send Samir, the driver, with the jeep to his home, and begged me not to tell Leon anything about it. I agreed and asked him how long he would need the vehicle for. He said that the visit should take around an hour and a half. Then he asked me if my computer was okay (the previous day he had helped me repair it), although I had told him that morning that the computer was working fine. He added instantly that if any problem came up with the computer over the weekend I should call him and he would gladly come and help me out. He gave me his neighbor's telephone number, in case I needed to get in touch with him.

Raju needed my cooperation to ensure that Leon did not find out about his use of the jeep, as Leon never allowed anyone to use it but himself.¹⁵ Thus, Raju and Samir could be considered thieves for taking Leon's property without his permission. My complicity in their act was acknowledged by Raju's offer to help me out with my computer, an offer made to reward me for my cooperation. This example demonstrates how junior employees reacted to Leon's attempts to exert total control over things. The power relations that Leon nurtured indirectly motivated people to lie and cheat in order to get out of him what they considered to be project property. It is likely that from their point of view Leon was using the project property illegally. Leon had effectively requisitioned a project vehicle for his own private use and had forbidden others to use it, unless they were serving him.

Raju and Samir may have been manipulating me as well, assuming that I would be unable to refuse Raju use of the vehicle for an emergency. They could have used the car for any purpose whatsoever without my knowing it. If that were the case, it would emphasize further the strategies adopted by the workers to get even with their domineering boss, and exercise some ownership over property that they might have considered as belonging in some way to them as well. Thus, Leon's anxiety about being "exploited" by local people had a basis in reality, and

such exploitation in fact took place without his knowing it. This was a two-sided situation, in which Leon had control over people and property on the level of overt, formal reality, and low-ranking employees had their own ways of obtaining latent control and advantages. Gaining forbidden access to the jeep, which symbolized to a heightened degree Leon's status and power, undermined the secure and orderly world that Leon strived to create.

The fictitious nature of Leon's perception that he was in control of what he viewed as his employees and property echoes with other studies that reveal misleading images of "control" (e.g., Burawoy 1979; Strauss et al. 1981; Greenberg 1982; Kunda 1992). Tannenbaum's assertion that "organization implies control" (Tannenbaum 1967: 3) conveys an impression of self-evident stability, the "formalization, codification, and enforcement of rules and regulations" (Kunda 1992: 220).¹⁶ This conceptualization of organizational life ignores dynamic aspects, which are essentially embedded in organizations, and which render elasticity and vagueness to the meaning of organizational power and control. Thus, for instance, Strauss et al. (1981) suggest that organizational control is related to ongoing negotiations between participants in an organization, and Michael Burawoy (1979) suggests that consent is not automatic and must be worked out. Challenging Goffman's (1961) argument that dichotomized power differentials between officials and clients are essential for achieving organizational goals, Ofra Greenberg (1982) argues that even in institutions where power differentials are extreme—such as prisons—control is neither absolute nor stable, and needs to be negotiated daily through informal exchanges between prisoners and warders.

Stressing his control continuously must have involved considerable effort on Leon's part. However, I suggest that the protective boundaries that he worked hard to construct around himself and his self-proclaimed property were, in fact, fragile and penetrable.

A Ridiculed Patron

This double-faceted reality of power-relations, whereby they were both exerted and undermined, was revealed in other ways as well. Most people who interacted with Leon, including myself, seemed to experience considerable stress and unease. People were obviously scared of the man. Thus, in Leon's presence, reactions to his intimidating behavior ranged from uneasy laughter and smiles to frozen silence, hesitant mumbling, and ingratiating comments. However, behind his back the lower-ranked employees never missed an opportunity to mock and ridicule him. Such was the case when Anita and Raju used Leon's momentary exit from the office to laugh at him. I was curious to know what they were laughing about. Anita explained that a few minutes earlier, in Leon's presence, Raju and she were talking on the telephone in Nepali with someone who did not speak English. Leon did not allow them to speak Nepali in his presence and, therefore, talking with someone from outside the irrigation

project office in Nepali meant that they were ignoring his demand, and this implied their ability to disobey him.

The advantage of their common language enabled Anita and Raju to get even with Leon. The two of them turned Leon into their common enemy. They clearly had a mutual interest in belittling Leon, who was domineering toward both of them. Their resentment over Leon's humiliating expressions made them allies, and encouraged them to break down the structured distance between them. Resisting Leon's domination covertly, by ridiculing him behind his back, Anita and Raju regained some of their self-esteem, enabling them to perceive themselves as empowered and less vulnerable, while Leon was stripped of his power and importance. However, belittling Leon occurred by way of trivial matters, such as speaking Nepali in his presence. This indicated his subordinates' relative lack of power, certainly their lack of formal power. On the other hand, Leon's formal power was found to be worthless in situations where he was not present, and in his own office too his perceived control could be easily ridiculed.

Writing about the resistance displayed by subordinate groups to domination, James Scott (1985, 1990) has analysed acts of "everyday resistance" and the "weapons" employed by relatively weak groups. The weak may use simple means to resist those who dominate them—such as slowing down, faking illness, false consent, theft, falsely claiming ignorance, sabotage, and so forth. In this form of class struggle, the weak refrain from direct symbolic confrontation with the authorities and with the norms of the dominating elite.¹⁷ I suggest that tactics, such as the ones used by the irrigation project's employees—and similar to ones used by the women immigrants whom I have previously studied (Hertzog 1999)¹⁸—should be called "latent resistance" rather than "everyday resistance." This proposition follows Feierman's (1990) claim that if everyday resisters want to be effective they cannot reveal their intentions openly, because the authorities are too powerful for a vulnerable group to confront directly.

Anita tried to let me join their discreet coalition, although she did it cautiously. When Leon left the office later (after the abovementioned encounter), Anita and Raju were smiling at each other like accomplices to some mischief. I asked why they were smiling and Anita said: "We are afraid of him". "I know what you mean", I replied, and she asked: "What do you know?" Obviously, she was testing me, trying to find out how far I would go in my criticism of Leon. Anita had to be careful with me, especially after my unfortunate role in the dispute over Raju's salary. As much as I tried to be her friend and not just her co-worker, Anita had to take into account the fact that I had intensive interactions with Leon and was directly under his supervision in the office and at the bachelors' house. Indeed, Leon and I had a common employer and shared the same nationality, language, and the like. These factors inevitably affected my relationship with Anita and made the social distance between the two of us sometimes seem unbridgeable.

When Anita disclosed to me her secret that she was staying with her aunt in Bhairahawa instead of in the house provided for her by the irrigation project, she asked me not to tell Leon about it. Trying to help her, I suggested talking it over with Leon and asking him to allow her to stay with her aunt. She reminded me of Raju's bad experience with my good intentions, and claimed that if Leon knew about the matter he would reduce her accommodation allowance. Living with her aunt was not only nicer and more comfortable; it was also a way to save some extra money. It appears, then, that in order to achieve their objective—be it regaining self-esteem, using the jeep, increasing their salary, or whatever—employees used secrecy, deceit, and other such strategies no less than their employers, who themselves strove to preserve their power and its advantages (Vincent 1998).

It follows that the suppressed power conflicts built into bureaucratic settings, between those who possess formal power and those who lack it, introduce unconventional, delinquent, violent (Marx 1976) and other socially or legally forbidden acts. This applies to both the oppressed and their oppressors, employees and employers of all ranks. Following Ferguson, I conclude that bureaucracies are “political arenas in which domination, manipulation and the denial of conflict are standard operating procedures” (Ferguson 1984: 17).

Abusing the Defenseless at Home

The most blatant expressions of Leon's offensiveness were revealed at home, in the bachelors' house. The more vulnerable the people around him were and the more they depended on him for their sustenance, the more likely they were to be offended by him. Humiliating his house staff—the caretaker and his daughter in particular—was an integral facet of his social interactions. Karki, the caretaker, was a short, thin man in his middle sixties. He had heart problems as a result of a heart attack he had suffered some years before, which had left him with speech difficulties and a limp. He spoke very little and in a kind of mumble which was very difficult to understand. One morning, at the dining table, while serving breakfast to Leon and me, Karki handed Leon a list of the items he had to shop for that day. This was a routine occurrence. Every few days Karki would approach Leon, waiting for him to go over the list and approve or change it. Upon returning from his purchases, he would regularly hand over the receipts to Leon to be reimbursed. When Leon saw the list that morning he looked at Karki and said harshly: “Here, nobody buys oil”. Then he turned to me and asked, in a cold voice: “Do you want your food cooked in oil?” “No,” I replied instinctively, as Leon probably expected of me, and added, “but the mashed potatoes we had yesterday were cooked in oil, and were very tasty.” Leon sneered. “That was only mashed potatoes,” he said.

When checking the receipts Karki handed him, Leon used to spend a considerable amount of time inspecting every item and every figure, making sure there was no mistake whatsoever. Whenever he found the smallest mistake, even if a few rupees were missing in Karki's tally of all his receipts, he would rep-

rimand him angrily. Leon presented these inspections as a legitimate necessity to ensure the honest management of his money. These instances, in which Leon treated his staff like servants, showed him to be a wicked boss. Watching these scenes silently made me feel like Leon's collaborator, taking advantage and enjoying privileges on account of the helpless, obedient staff. My insignificant attempt to support Karki by complimenting him on the mashed potatoes, and my usual silence in relation to Leon's offensive behavior against Karki, accentuated my acquiescence. Although Leon's behavior was hard to bear, I nevertheless accepted it.

Ranju, Karki's daughter, was a pleasant and nice-looking woman in her mid forties. She used to come regularly to help her father out and cook for Leon (and for me, when I was there). She too was often humiliated by Leon. One night, when Ranju served us dinner, Leon suddenly called Ranju in a very loud, scary voice. I was startled. "What's happened? Are there any ants in the salad?" I asked. Leon replied sharply: "Taste it and find out." Ranju came in, very anxious, and Leon shouted at her angrily for putting a sour-sweet spice in the salad. Ranju froze. The incident made me feel sick, and for some time I refrained from talking to Leon.

Trapped in an extremely unpleasant situation involving a marked imbalance in power, and identifying with the offended while being associated with the offender, all I could do was to engage in passive tactics. I searched desperately for a rational explanation for Leon's outburst and employed the protest sanctions of a powerless participant, such as avoiding verbal communication with the offender. Leon's offensive treatment of Karki and Ranju seemed to illustrate the most extreme instances of his domineering ways. As Leon's collaborator, albeit a reluctant one, I could not even be perceived by Karki and Ranju as someone in whom they could confide or to whom they could reveal their feelings. With no clue as to how the two reacted when we were not present, but cognizant of their apparent fear and instant compliance with any of Leon's demands, I tend to think that their reaction to their subordination must have been different from that of the irrigation project's junior employees. In other words, subordination is complex and relative; thus Raju's, Anita's, and others' resistance to Leon's aggressiveness was likely to be significantly different from that of Karki and Ranju. Had Leon treated the irrigation project's employees like he treated those who worked for him at his home, he would probably have paid dearly for it.

Reflecting on Leon's aggressive attitude toward Karki and Ranju may raise some doubts concerning Sherry Ortner's claim that "the dominated too always have certain capacities, and sometimes very significant capacities, to exercise some sort of influence over the ways in which events unfold" (Ortner 2006: 143–44).¹⁹ It does make one wonder whether explanations of resistance have gone too far, blurring the implications of cruelty, exploitation, and other dehumanizing forms of power that emerge in oppressive situations and structures. Guita Grin Debert offers a similar critique. She argues:²⁰

Drawing inspiration from Gramsci, [studies of resistance have] focused on the resistance strategies that organized social practices among the popular sectors. [These have] produced a new kind of romantic view of popular culture in which power, counterhegemony, and resistance are central analytical categories. However, insofar as these categories are used pervasively to approach all domains of social life in the same way, they run the risk of becoming empty concepts. (Debert in Nader 1997: 726)

I argue, however, that settings, which are distanced from the public's eye and separated from the public arena entail a much greater potential for inflicting injustice, exploitation, and other perils on individuals.

Bribery, Drunkenness, and Ethnocentrism: Cooperation and Mutual Dependence

Allegations about Nepali officials' corruption were a favorite subject of Leon's at our common meals at the bachelors' house. Nevertheless, although he spoke about corruption with obvious contempt, he never acknowledged any responsibility that might be attributed to Tahal or to any other foreign organization engaged in projects with the Nepali government. One story that illustrates one end of the spectrum of corruption involving development projects concerns the presents Tahal used to give to senior officials. Bottles of Johnnie Walker whisky were the standard gift that Leon used to buy with Tahal's money for senior heads of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The issue of the whisky pay-off came up when a local holiday was approaching and Leon had to buy some bottles. He sent a letter to his superiors asking how much he should spend. When no reply arrived, he sent a fax to the head office in Tel Aviv, requesting urgent advice about the specific amount of money he could use for purchasing the bottles. He recounted the episode as follows:

Some time ago ... the general director of the Ministry of Agriculture wrote me a letter saying that it was not acceptable that senior officials be offered cheap whisky [red label Johnnie Walker]. He made it clear that they should only get black Johnnie Walker, which cost some \$40 a bottle. Then he sent me a long list of more than sixty people that should receive two whisky bottles each for the holiday. Luckily enough, he did not demand green Johnnie Walker, which is the most expensive whisky. I wrote to Tahal asking them what I should do and they replied that I should get red Johnnie Walker and add some conserves, such as tuna, for each person. Only the most senior officials should get black Johnnie Walker.

Naturally, Leon ignored the fact that corruption necessitates the participation of the givers of bribes, and that he was on the bribing side of the exchange. When the Nepali officials were bribed by him and his employers, they evidently

were just as corrupt as the Nepali officials. Like other overseas agencies and NGOs working in developing countries, the Israeli company used personal pay-offs to senior officials so as to allow them to secure their position in Nepal.

Scholars like C. Wright Mills (1956), Scarlett Epstein (1973), William Jansen (1978), and Robert Chambers (1983) have recognized the institutionalized perspective of corruption since the 1950s. Mills argued that although “there may be corrupt men in sound institutions,” nevertheless, “when institutions are corrupting, many of the men who live and work in them are necessarily corrupted. In the corporate era ... the executive feels less personal responsibility. Within the corporate worlds of business ... the higher immorality is institutionalized” (Mills 1956: 343). Mills pointed to the connection between corruption, “corporate worlds of business, war-making and politics” (ibid). More recently, Carolyn Nordstrom has argued in a similar vein: “corruption is about transnational profiteering—it entails a highly cosmopolitan, twenty-first-century form of international warlordism ... It’s not just the story of bleeding a country. It’s about owning it” (Nordstrom 2007: 57–58). In the development context, it has been suggested by Peter Griffiths that bribery is inevitable for consultancy firms that want to work with Third World countries, and “there is not a lot the consultancy firms can do about this: they pay or go bust” (Griffiths 2003: 243). I suggest that the corrupt practices of foreign agencies working in Nepal is morally as problematic as those of the Nepali officials, because both parties collaborate in illegal activity. On both sides the officials functioned allegedly as individuals, but were, in fact, backed up by their organizations. Indeed the disguised terminology, calling the whisky bottles “presents”, suited both sides.

The exchange of whisky is also suggestive of certain socially denigrating connotations. Discussing the stigmatism associated with alcohol in the context of a Self-help Groups (SHGs) project in Bhil villages in India, David Mosse suggests that “Abandoning alcohol was often ranked as the most significant change brought about by the project” (Mosse 2005: 216). He argues further that the SHGs appeared to “morally delegitimise social capital mediated by alcohol ... After all, alcohol has long been a core symbol of Bhil underdevelopment, and renouncing *daru*²¹ a Brahmanic virtue and idiom of progress and modernity...” (ibid.: 217). An implied connection between bribing the officials with whisky and the alleged social problem of alcoholism emerges indirectly from Fenster’s gender activities project proposal. She writes:

Alcoholism is one of the major and severe problems in the area and is the first problem to tackle if the objective of the Project is increasing the level of living. This is a common problem in most of the Project Area. This problem affects families both financially as most of their income is spent on drinking and it also affects the increase of violence in the family. There are legal means to help these women but the problem is social and cultural ... But it is obvious that in-depth action must be taken in order to combat this phenomenon. (Fenster 1996: 9–10)

While the Nepali senior officials received whisky, with its connotations of drunken natives, ill-health, debt, social conflict, and underdevelopment, Tahal received profitable deals, pretending to have obtained them due to their professional competence. This state of affairs fostered the image of polarized encounters between the sober and the drunken, West and East, rich and poor, patrons and clients, and expressed the degrading dependence of the Nepali people on foreigners' aid.

These "presents" symbolized the inferior position of the Nepali government, like many other governments in developing countries. They have to comply with the World Bank's constraints and demands concerning the companies they should work with, accepting foreign consultants instead of hiring local people, complying with their relatively high salaries, and so forth. Discussing the pressure exerted by the World Bank and other development funding agencies, Susan George (1988), Mark Smith (1998/2001, 2007), and Wickens and Sandlin (2007) emphasize in particular the World Bank's interventions in education and literacy policies, which "seem to rest so heavily on the work of foreign, Northern scholars and agency staff" (Smith 1998/2001). These interventions are born of economic conditions which face many countries of the South. Economic dependence on loans and grants by international agencies, such as the IMF and the World Bank, has allowed those agencies to dictate economic and other policies to recipient countries. It has shifted control of education and literacy programs "from national governments to the agencies themselves" (Wickens and Sandlin 2007: 289).

However, the expectation of, and demand for, presents can also be understood as a reminder of the dependence of foreign agencies (Tahal in this case) on the Nepali government for permission to carry on their activities in Nepal. The need to negotiate over the number and kind of whisky bottles to be offered to Nepali officials, over the number of people who should receive them, as well as the need to purchase the bottles, put Leon in an extremely vulnerable position, of which he was fully aware and which made him furious.

To conclude: Leon's persona combined a number of facets. He seemed to enjoy relating to people as his inferiors, domineering "weaker" others and insulting them when they failed to please him or disappoint him; at the same time Leon also revealed friendliness, warmth, and even vulnerability. Which aspect of his character Leon embodied in a specific situation depended on how he perceived the people he was interacting with, whether they were considered more or less powerful than him, whether they were people on whose help, support, or cooperation he depended, whether or not they had access to things he wanted, and so on.

The following chapters build on the foregoing analysis and suggest that Leon's hostile attitude was not coincidental, and nor was it a matter of bad temper. It will be showed that Leon's attitude to others, and that of other senior irrigation project officials, had little to do with personal characteristics or inclinations, but rather emerged from their hidden agenda, their reluctance toward the women's program, and from their role in the organization. They did not want the women's program to materialize.

Notes

1. Edward Gifford wrote that in Polynesia people would say sometimes: "Don't you see he is a chief? Look how big he is!" (cited in Sahlins 1963: 288). Differentiating Melanesian self-made leaders from ascribed chiefs, Paula Brown, meanwhile, suggests that "physical size and political prominence are conceptually linked in some areas and languages" (Brown 1990: 97).
2. These interventions will be described at length in the Chapter 4, which focuses on the village teachers' seminar.
3. Analyzing the social context of violent behaviour, Emanuel Marx (1976) proposes the term "appealing violence" to signify the part played by the audience in violent encounters. He argues that the assailant's aim is "to appeal to other persons for a way out of his impasse" (ibid.: 63). The sense of playing a role which is adapted to situational constraints is well illustrated by Eyal Ben-Ari (1989), who describes "Soldiers with masks", who flexibly adjust to situations that impose conflicting demands from the perspective of their ideological views. He offers an illuminating example of the seeming paradox of Israeli men who are peace activists (like himself) participating in oppressing Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories, while fulfilling the role of officers. Kunda's expression "presentational rituals" illustrates the instrumental aspect of playing organizational roles, defined as "occasions for enacting, enforcing, and reinforcing the display of the managerially sanctioned member role and are thus a mechanism for mediating normative demands and normative responses" (Kunda 1992: 159). My own study of bureaucracy offers an example of the roles people play in daily life, trying to convey manipulated impressions to their social surroundings (Hertzog 2007). Bureaucratic staff invest great effort in producing an appearance of formal power in order to achieve recognition of their roles, their professional skills and authority. However, these are exposed as rather limited in reality.
4. Which was equivalent to less than \$2.00 (One dollar's worth was about 58 rupees).
5. Gartrell (1984: 172) argues that the "ideal colonial wife" contributed to the British colonial system in various ways.
6. Hanna's position puts me in mind of Margaret Mead's account of *taufu* in Samoa. According to Mead a *taufu* is "a princess title" (Mead 1973: 75). Her privileges include the receipt of "gifts, dancing and singing for her benefit ... when a visiting village comes" (ibid.: 76). Moreover, the wives of titled men take "their status from their husbands ... The wife of the highest chief receives the highest honour, the wife of the principal talking chief makes the most important speeches. The women are completely dependent upon their husbands for their status in this village group" (ibid.: 77–78).
7. Emerson suggests four "balancing operations" which "operate through changes in the variables which define the structure of the power relation as such" (Emerson 1962: 35). "Coalition Formation" is "Operation number four". It "increases the power of weaker actors through collectivization... coalition formation is the one most commonly recognized as a power process... the coalition process is basically involved in all organized group functioning... this illuminates the role which power processes play in the emergence and maintenance of group structure in general" (ibid.: 37).
8. "Women's Groups Coordinators" ("WGCs"), is another title for "local gender consultants" (as Anita was). This term is used in my report (page 6), suggesting to hire two local consultants instead of one.
9. These amounts are derived from Shrestha (1983: 1).
10. Quoted passages are taken from my report (Hertzog 1997: 6).
11. Max Weber further suggests that "bureaucratic administration always tends to be an administration of 'secret sessions': in so far as it can, it hides its knowledge and action from criticism" (Weber 1948: 233–34).
12. Adapting Freud's terms "manifest" and "latent," Robert Merton distinguishes "between the end-in-view and the functional consequences of action" (Merton 1957: 62).
13. The social implications of seating codes and arrangements have been analyzed by several scholars. Jules Henry (1963), for instance, demonstrated the connection between row arrangement in the American classroom and power relations between teachers and students.

Analyzing the connection between caste and symbolism in South-Western Ethiopia, Gunnar Haaland (2004) points to the manifestation of the “up-down schema” in seating arrangements “for members of different castes, for example in the market place, and in the side members of different castes will take when they meet each other on a path; the higher caste person will take the higher ground” (84). Marc Forster (1998) elaborates on the symbolic implications of seating arrangements in early modern German Catholicism. He writes: “Conflicts over seating took place at several levels... over who should determine seating arrangements...” (69). Robert Tittler (1992) writes about “Seats of Honor, Seats of Power: The Symbolism of Public Seating in the English Urban Community, c. 1560–1620.” It appears that seating arrangements and norms entail far-reaching implications in terms of class, ethnicity, race and gender. One important example is the segregating arrangements concerning seating in public transportation, as Rosa Park’s story unfolds. Park’s refusal (on December 1, 1955) to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, became the symbol of the the modern civil rights movement. An example from the Israeli context is the separation imposed in public busses that drive through orthodox neighbourhoods, between men and women, and the distancing of women to the back of the busses.

14. These phrases borrow from Jewish traditional writings. The original phrase says: “the one who chases honour, honour runs away from him and the one who renounces honour, honour chases him.”
15. Leon’s offer to let me use his jeep to travel to the villages took place against the background of the power struggle between him and Thapa, as suggested earlier.
16. Arnold Tannenbaum argues “it is the function of control to bring about conformance to organizational requirements and achievement of the ultimate purposes of the organization” (Tannenbaum 1967: 3).
17. Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) suggests that acts of resistance carried out by powerless groups disclose larger processes of social power.
18. The pronounced power differentials between women immigrants from Ethiopia and their paraprofessional welfare aides (*Somchot*) provides a similar example (see Hertzog 1999). Although the *Somchot* rudely invaded the women immigrants’ lives, the latter were not completely passive and vulnerable. They used to react indirectly by gossiping, and ridiculing and criticizing the latter’s enforced patronizing manners while they were not present. Ignoring the *Somchot*’s demands and interventions the women immigrants could regain their self-esteem and collectively overcome the humiliation.
19. Sherry Ortner suggests that resistance is a form of “power-agency” which “includes everything from outright rebellions at one end, to ... a kind of complex and ambivalent acceptance of dominant categories and practices that are always changed at the very moment they are adopted” (Ortner 2006: 144). Laura Ahearn’s study of Magar villagers in Western Nepal (Ahearn 2001) offers another example of suppressed people’s potential power to resist oppression. Ahearn discusses “marriage by capture,” a practice of low cultural value involving kidnapping the bride, as a way of overcoming parents’ authority. This act of resistance undertaken by youngsters exposes the unstable control of parents despite the traditional system.
20. This is Debert’s comment on Laura Nader’s lecture at Sidney W. Mintz Lecture for 1995 (published in *Current Anthropology*, December 1997).
21. *daru* is distilled liquor (according to Mosse’s [2005] Glossary).