

'Rowdy-sheeters': An Essay on Subalternity and Politics*

VIVEK DHARESHWAR AND
R. SRIVATSAN

INTRODUCTION: DENIZEN AND CITIZEN

In the urban landscape of the Indian Modern, the 'rowdy' is a conspicuous, if inappropriate, figure. Cast out by the moral and political codes of modernity, he returns as the reified, estranged figure of modernity

* *Acknowledgments:* (Some names have been changed throughout the chapter to protect the identity of the collaborators.)

Our first acknowledgments go to Radhika and Venkatesh for their unflinching cooperation in engaging with us. We are indebted to their eloquent and clear formulations, which have taught us how not to look at the problem of subalternity. Our friend Shivaji obliged us to keep examining our own presuppositions; discussions with him, as those with Meherban, have been invaluable in shaping the argument of this chapter. We would like to acknowledge Lakshmi, Khaja, Satyamma, Krishnaveni, Shankaran, and Mohan Reddy for their time and cooperation despite demanding work schedules and commitments. Mr Basheeruddin has been an invaluable source of information regarding the actual process of employing and activating the police and criminal codes. We would like to thank Srinivas Reddy, Prithviraj Singh, and Krishna for sharing their views on the problem of criminality and rowdyism. Our progress would have been far more difficult and time-consuming, but for the helpful assistance in material and contacts provided by K. Lalita,

itself. This chapter seeks to investigate how the juridico-legal codes and institutions inherited from the British define the referent for the category 'rowdy-sheeter'; how the police interpret and activate the 'rowdy' in our specific historical conjuncture;¹ and finally, how the 'referent' (or the potential referent) negotiates the institutional and cultural apparatus that generate and demarcate his agency. In the final section we will briefly discuss the politics of citizenship and its relationship to the political space of the subaltern.

In the middle-class imagination, the 'rowdy' inhabits the dark zone of the city, trafficking in illegal, immoral activities; a zone that is invariably in need of law and order, and always threatening to spread to the safer, cleaner habitat of the city. The term 'lumpenproletariat' (lumpen: shabby, paltry; rabble or riff-raff), used as a category in Marxist social theory, also situates them outside any social semiosis of class; a lumpen is precisely one whose relationship to money is unmediated by any value; any bonds of class solidarity or ties of community.² The 'lumpen', then, is subhuman,

Indira, Shivaji, Sunita, M.T. Khan, and K.G. Kannabiran. We are grateful to them. For comments on the penultimate draft, we thank Partha Chatterjee, Shahid Amin, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. The usual caveat, it should not go without saying, applies more than usually.

¹ Also the media. However, from what one gathers, newspapers simply reproduce information doled out by the police. Of course, at a different level newspapers do contribute—indeed, fairly significantly—to the construction of criminality, criminal space as object of both fascination and fear. The cinematic interpellation of the 'rowdy' has produced one of the most durable figurations of the popular imaginary. Raj Kapoor's 'Shree 420', to take the most celebrated example, situates the figure of the 'rowdy' squarely within the urban experience of modernity, and uses that figure to question that experience and the commodification that it entails.

² Marx's celebrated analysis of the lumpenproletariat is to be found, of course, in his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Karl Marx: Surveys from Exile*, ed. David Fernbach (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973). In that work Marx tried to come to terms with a process that began with the promise of democracy and ended with counter-revolution (infantry, cavalry, artillery, instead of liberty, equality, fraternity), thereby bringing to a close the age of democratic revolutions. What is of interest to us is the way a gap seems to open up in Marx's analysis between social classes and the formation of political identities. Indeed, Marx's very explanation of how Bonaparte succeeds in taking over the state by mobilizing the *lumpenproletariat* ('the scum, the leavings, the refuse of all classes') raises questions about how to conceptualize the political and how political identities articulate class-alliances and interests. For an elaboration of these questions and, in particular, an acute analysis of Marx's representation of the lumpenproletariat see Peter

the 'other' (thus subaltern?) from whom the 'yuppie' (the unavoidable contemporary representative figure of the global middle-class) differentiates himself and his social space.

Our analysis of the figuration of the 'rowdy' or 'lumpen' in the contemporary Indian imaginary hinges on two interlocking sets of intuitions:

1. The figure of the 'rowdy' acquires semantic and ideological elasticity in the imaginary of the middle-class by becoming the focus of their anxiety about what they see as the 'criminalization' of politics ('*goondaraj*') and its threat to their precarious class-privilege. This very ideological social description then feeds into the everyday discourse of the ideologues of the middle-class, from Left to Left-liberal to liberal-Right, who invoke 'lumpenization of politics' as an explanation of all that they find disturbing in the social and political life of the nation.³

2. While narratives of nation, secularism, citizenship, public sphere are perceived as eminently suitable foci of our theoretical inquiries and deconstructive energies, the disciplinary and ideological structures that organize the space of our everyday and that differentiates 'us' from the subaltern classes, remain out of focus. If we take the term 'subalternity' as a shorthand for the critique of various 'norming' and exclusionary narratives, such as the nation, secularism, citizenship, etc. can one use that critique to interrogate the everyday practice of 'citizenship' (or 'democracy') that sustain and define our conception of the public sphere? In other words, can subalternity, as a critical category and as an approach, help destabilize existing political identities and conceptualize new ones?

This chapter is structured in two parts: in the first we look at the social institutions and practices that fix the referent of the category 'rowdy-sheeter'. This is a category we encounter most often in the crime page of a newspaper.⁴ We read, for example, that the police have 'rounded up' hundreds of rowdy-sheeters in anticipation of 'communal tension' in the old city. The police of course 'know' them, 'recognize' them; after all, they have fixed the referent of the category in the first place. How do the police 'know' the rowdy-sheeter, what 'sociology' of class and gender, what 'anthropology' of caste and tribe, determine their notion of crime and criminality, and enable them to empirically fix the referent, making it a

Stallybrass, 'Marx and Heterogeneity: Thinking the Lumpenproletariat', *Representations* 31 (Summer 1990), pp. 65–94.

³ 'Criminalization of politics' figured as a major theme of deliberation at the June 1994 session of the All India Congress Committee held in New Delhi.

⁴ We are referring here to newspapers published in Hyderabad. As will be evident, all our 'field-work' was conducted in Hyderabad.

natural/social category of civil society? This 'official' knowledge about the 'rowdy-sheeter' and its reproduction by the newspapers determines the degree-zero of the category, its 'ground', as it were. Our interview with the police attempts to follow the discursive and institutional deployment of the category and how it is used as a means of social control.

In the second part, we present two of our conversations with the 'referents' or 'potential referents'—how we know the latter will be part of our ideological (self-) analysis—in which we try to understand their response to the material and ideological processes that position their agency in certain specific ways. While it is clear that the institutional and cultural power of the stereotype constrain their agency, we will have to find the language and perspective to understand the subject-position that enables them to negotiate (compromise, resist) the dominant stereotype and its practical consequences. What resources—cultural, political—do they draw from, what senses of agency does their milieu provide them? In what way can the discourse of their 'actions' be used to elaborate a political critique of the institutions of our civil society, the presuppositions and telos of our secular Left/liberal politics, and the horizons of our social imaginary that circumscribe and produce the phenomenon known as the 'rowdy'?

Thus we are seeking to outline the relationship between social representation and political identity. Ours is less a history of the present than an engagement with the political present, less a political theory of the lumpenproletariat than an analysis of the politics of representation.

DOCUMENT/APPARATUS/PROCESS

The rowdy-sheet is a record the police stations in the cities and towns of Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) keep of a rowdy. The term 'rowdy-sheet' seems to be specific to the police procedures of A.P., probably also Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, but the same function would doubtless be performed by a similar record of some other name in other places. The A.P. Police Standing Order No 742, dated 8 April 1971, defines the rowdy and prescribes that a rowdy-sheet may be opened for each rowdy under the order of a Superintendent of Police or a sub-divisional officer.⁵ The closure of a rowdy-sheet must also be under the order of a gazetted officer in the police

⁵ Cited in Padala Rama Reddi, *The Andhra Pradesh Police Code (in 2 vols)*, vol. 1 (Panchayat Publications, Hyderabad, 1991), pp. 556–7. See Appendix 1 for the format of the rowdy-sheet.

force, as also its retention beyond a period of two years. The characteristics of a rowdy are defined in this document as follows:

- a. a habit of committing, attempting to commit, aiding or abetting offences involving breach of peace.
- b. persons who have been bound over under sections 106, 107, 108(c), and 110(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (Act 2 of 1974), i.e. those who have been ordered to give security as a bond to keep the peace. These sections of the Cr.P.C. refer to any offence that includes assault (a gesture intending criminal force), use of criminal force (force with intent of committing an offence), mischief (actions causing loss or damage to person, property), and offences of criminal intimidation.
- c. Conviction more than twice in a period of two years under section 75 of the Madras City Police Act (Section 70 of the Hyderabad City Police Act), Section 3 clause 12 of the Towns Nuisances Act. (Committing public nuisance of any kind).
- d. Persons who habitually tease women or girls by passing indecent remarks or otherwise.

Perhaps the specific scale of offence targeted by the rowdy-sheet may be inferred from the description of the conviction particulars of the rowdy under the heading: 'Petty case number'.⁶ A 'petty offence' is defined, according to the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, as one that is punishable only by a fine not exceeding one thousand rupees (excluding some offences under the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939, or under any other law that provides for conviction of the accused in his absence on a plea of guilty).⁷

The last validating clause 'Persons who habitually tease women or girls by passing indecent remarks or otherwise' on the rowdy-sheet standing order, brings under police surveillance a category of offensive behaviour that seems related to an offence described in Section 509 of the Indian Penal Code of 1860 as 'Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman', punishable by fine and/or simple imprisonment for a period of up to one year. However, the police at a local level may interpret this clause in the standing order to construe as 'teasing' behaviour that may not necessarily be constituted as a punishable offence

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 517–18.

⁷ Act No. II of 1974. Section 206, subsection 2. Cited in *Criminal Manual (Three Major Acts)* (Eastern Book Company, Lucknow, 1990). This definition of 'petty offence' is given in Sect. 206 entitled 'Special summons in relation to petty offences', and is qualified as being made for the purpose of this section.

under Section 509 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).⁸ The language of this clause seems to be slightly loose, in that it does not state specific pre-conditions such as being 'bound over' or 'convicted', as it directly does in the two other clauses. What this suggests is that the category 'rowdy' has a property that establishes for itself a specific relationship with (a certain construction of) femininity.

The historical location of the rowdy-sheet and its referent, according to the intention of the A.P. police laws, may be seen more clearly by setting it in a contrastive relationship with another document called the history-sheet, the different standing orders relating to which date from 20 February 1906 onwards. The A.P. Police Standing Order No 733 lays down that a history-sheet be opened for those who are habitually addicted to commit, or to aid or abet, crime.⁹ The criminality envisaged in connection with the history-sheet marks out a domain that differs from, but has areas of overlap with, the rowdy-sheet. The defining characteristics of a person warranting the opening of a history-sheet are as follows:

Known depredators, i.e.

- a) Prisoners released from imprisonment for life, under chapters XII (Of offences relating to coin and government stamps), and XVII (Of offences against property) of the Indian Penal Code of 1860. Professional prisoners who have been convicted for dacoity, robbery, housebreaking, and theft.¹⁰
- b) A person who has twice been ordered to execute a bond for good behaviour on the apprehension by an Executive Magistrate that he is concealing his presence in the jurisdiction with the intention of committing a cognizable offence.¹¹
- c) A person who has once been ordered to execute a bond on being apprehended by an Executive Magistrate as being, among other things, 'so desperate and dangerous as to render his being at large without security hazardous to the community'.¹²

⁸ We are grateful to K.G. Kannabiran for pointing out that the Police Standing Orders are meant for the application at the local operational level by the police, and that the connection between them and the requirements of the IPC are likely to be indirect.

⁹ Padala Rama Reddi, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 554.

¹⁰ *Criminal Manual*. It is likely that the description 'professional prisoner' of the history-sheet standing order as reproduced in the *A.P. Police Code* is a misprint, a clerical error, or refers, inaccurately, to a recidivist offender.

¹¹ Sect. 109, Code of Criminal Procedure.

¹² The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1974, Sect. 110, clause (g). *Criminal Manual*, p. 48.

Persons who are 'such of those registered ex-notified tribe members under Order 736 for whom the Superintendent of Police or the Sub-divisional Officer thinks it advisable to do so on account of their active criminality'.¹³

Persons convicted under any section of the IPC and likely to commit crime again.

Persons, not convicted, but believed to be habitually addicted to crime. The areas of overlap between the history-sheet and rowdy-sheet seem to be clustered around offences involving breach of peace. The difference lies in the history-sheet's apparent special emphasis on offences against property, coin, and government stamps, while the rowdy-sheet's most distinctive characteristic seems to be its specific targeting of a gendered offender: a person who 'habitually teases women or girls' can only be a particular kind of male.¹⁴ The rowdy-sheet format therefore has a sub-heading 'Son of:' in contrast to the more gender neutral 'Father's name/Husband's name:' on the history-sheet. The tables recording the offences on the history-sheet do not have the qualifying tag 'petty', in contrast to the rowdy-sheet which does. The history-sheet requires a listing of convictions, and of unsolved criminal cases in which the sheeteer is definitely suspected; this is far more detailed than the information required to be gathered in the rowdy-form. The history-sheet consists of nine differentially detailed formatted 'pages' of information, each of which may consist of many leaves of paper, in contrast to the two-page format of the other.¹⁵

The deployment of class, community, and caste discrimination heterogeneously within the institutionalized discourses on crime mark what appears undesirable immediately as, at least probably, criminal. The caste/tribe dimension in the police laws is rooted in the colonial definitions of some tribes as 'criminal' by nature—*vimukta jati* (ex-criminal tribes).¹⁶ The rowdy-sheet too has a descriptive subheading 'Caste', which

¹³ *The A.P. Police Code*, vol. I, p. 535.

¹⁴ We do not have the space here to analyse the specifically post-colonial category of 'eve-teasing'. It is clear, however, that the 'rowdy' and 'eve-teaser' are interchangeable and both mark out a space in which 'citizens' and potential 'citizens' (college-going, middle-class, upper-caste boys) will never appear.

¹⁵ See Apps. I & II for the formats of the Rowdy Sheet and History Sheet.

¹⁶ *Vimukta* literally means 'freed'. See S.O. No. 734(3) referred above. Also S.O. No. 806 specifies that a beat constable should gather specific information on the tribal origins of the criminal gang in a village. Cited in *Andhra Pradesh Police Code*, vol. 1, p. 577. Historians have now begun to investigate the colonial construction of 'criminality', 'criminal tribes and castes'. See Sanjay Nigam, 'Disciplining and

in current procedures is filled out rather disarmingly and alarmingly, as either 'Hindu' or 'Muslim'.¹⁷ However, the tenacity of caste (in its current configuration), community and class as definitive factors in the production of the rowdy is attested to by the police and the media. They are clear about the fact that a rowdy is almost never an upper-caste Hindu. He is either a Scheduled Caste, Backward Class, or Muslim, all belonging to a socio-economic (non-) class which by definition resides in a *basti* or slum. The virulence of modern upper-caste sensibility is almost tangible in areas like Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Delhi, where informal household discourse, media articles and police wisdom on criminality and its sociocultural origins all exhibit a neurotic predisposition to reproduce, either directly or in insinuation, the category of caste as constitutive of criminality.¹⁸

Mr Basheeruddin is a circle inspector with a heart disease for which he is contemplating treatment at Buffalo, New York. Elegantly clad in a safari suit he talked to us in his office about how the kinds of petty offences seen on the beat have changed over the past two decades. Pavement gambling, numbers games, even black-marketing of cinema tickets are, according to him no longer observable petty offences. In their place a different range of offences such as land grabbing (implicated frequently in communal 'riots') have arisen since the mid-1980s. Alongside official and unofficial discourses that have changed with the times, for example, to include the new term 'communal rowdy', more widely used since about 1985, the subjects described by the sheet, their suspect status, and the very way in which the form of the rowdy-sheet is used have also shifted in their function. There have been reports regarding communalization of the

Policing the "Criminals by Birth", pt I & II, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 27: 2 (1990), pp. 131-64 and 27: 3 (1990), pp. 257-87; Sandria B. Freitag, 'Crime in the Social Order of Colonial North India', *Modern Asian Studies* 25: 2 (1991), pp. 227-61.

¹⁷ This was seen in six rowdy-sheets which were shown to us during a visit to a police station.

¹⁸ In Hyderabad, there is a whole settlement near the Santoshnagar Police Station inhabited by people who are informally described by the police as a criminal tribe. This was observed during the December 1990 riots, when one of the writers participated in a relief operation in this settlement.

In Vijayawada, the Erukula caste has been described, in connection with domestic theft, as habitually criminal by police officers.

The *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi, 3 April 1992 city edn), has an article entitled 'Police and People—East District: Warped Growth Leads to Crime', which cites the DCP East Zone, Mr Brar, on the subject of the 'criminals from the Bawaria tribes...'

police force, claiming, for example, that rowdy-sheets were being opened in the name of individuals just because their activity was simply 'is a Muslim'.¹⁹

There is, apart from the process of change briefly sketched above, evidence of another historical process of mutation and evolution, following its own time frame and compulsions, but interleaved with the former in a mutually productive way. News reportage on city crime seems to collapse the rowdy-sheets and history-sheets in their descriptions of arrests, shootouts, etc.: 'notorious rowdy-sheets' and 'history-sheets' are used interchangeably. This conflation was reflected in our conversation with crime reporters: to our question, 'who is a rowdy-sheet', they responded with, 'he is the most hardened, desperate criminal whose record is kept in a police station'. References to attacks on the body, robbery, land grabbing, and terrorization by 'causing grievous hurt' (all of which would have come under the purview of the old history-sheet format) are made in connection with the rowdy-sheet (who was, according to its format, initially conceived as a petty offender). News reporters deny any originality with regard to crime reporting and readily admit that they merely take down—even verbatim—whatever the Commissioner of Police or his representative say at the news conferences periodically held to disseminate news about the police's success in tackling crime in the city.²⁰ One police inspector's explanation is simply that the rowdy-sheet is the history-sheet, and that there is no difference between the two. He only differentiates between a 'potential' rowdy-sheet and ordinary rowdy-sheet—i.e. the adjective 'potential' describing one who has achieved the potential of the sheet and is filling the file with a police record of his exploits and punishments, and is therefore a testimony to police vigilance.²¹ The rowdy-sheets themselves (in the police station we visited) show this collapse of function: one of the sheets we saw was used for a (lower caste?) Hindu rowdy who was clearly booked for offences against the body, i.e. stabbing, and another for a Muslim who was found instigating religious discontent and mischief during a communally sensitive period. The same sheet in more than one case has alternating entries of 'petty' and 'grave' offences. Other entries were of a 'petty' nature.

¹⁹ Salahuddin Owaisi, the Member of Parliament representing the Majlis Ittehadul Muslemeen party released a press note stating this about two or three months after the December 1990 riots in Hyderabad.

²⁰ Interviews with the crime reporters of three different newspapers in the city.

²¹ One police inspector consented to be interviewed and also showed us his file of rowdy-sheets with full details for six men in his area.

These preliminary observations need to be verified by a broader sample of police opinion and crime logs before any theoretical arguments on their basis may be advanced. There is, however, another indicator of this tendency towards moving together of various domains of offences in what is termed the 'Andhra Pradesh Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Dacoits, Drug Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders and Land Grabbers Act, 1986'.²² Evident in the title of the act itself, is a collapse of a wide variety of offences, variety of including the rowdy-sheet type and the history-sheet type under the umbrella 'prevention of dangerous activities', which in turn is defined in the act as 'acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order'.²³ It is an act which permits the government to temporarily empower (with no limit on the number of empowerments or their 'spacing') the Commissioner of Police or District Magistrate to detain the specified 'undesirables' as a preventive measure. The document makes it clear that the reasons for its coming into being are the resources and influences of the offenders, the large scale of these activities, and the clandestine manner in which these dangerous activities are being carried out. In a first examination, however, it seems as if there is in the document, along with the agglomeration of these crimes, also (as apparent in news reporters' discourse and police practice) a de-differentiation of the treatment of the petty offender of the rowdy-sheet and the grave offender—i.e. there is (probably for very valid operational reasons) no clear mention of the scale of offence that will result in a preventive arrest. As the next section will attempt to show, much of the local political activity within a *basti* could directly be treated, in an 'eventuality', as within the purview of this act which is known in short as the 'Anti-Goonda Act'.

THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE ROWDY: TWO NARRATIVES

We present here the outcome of some of our attempts to interview men and women from some *bastis* in the city on the issue of rowdyism. The objective of these specific interviews was more to explore how 'normal' residents of the *basti* engaged with what we implicitly assumed was the disorder in their midst. We are using the word 'interview' for lack of

²² Published in the *Andhra Pradesh Gazette*, Part IV-B, (Ext.), dated 28-02-1986. Rptd. in *The Andhra Pradesh Police Codes . . .*, vol. II, pp. 662-9.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 665.

anything better or more adequate. Perhaps it is best to begin by saying what it is not. We are certainly not attempting a 'thick description' of the '*basti*', nor are we trying to present 'sensitive' ethnography of the lives of the people of the *basti* or of 'rowdies'. When we interviewed the police and journalists, we assumed a readily available role: scholars undertaking a sociological study of crime and criminality in Hyderabad. We asked them more or less predictable questions and received more or less predictable answers (even the routine of 'off the record' views, 'real' views as opposed to 'official' views, was understood and played fairly predictably). We did not expect anything different, given the 'public transcript' that allows for such transactions between citizens pursuing different professions. Even the 'hidden transcript' of our transaction (their 'real' opinions about us, the interview, and what we were attempting and vice versa) is equally predictable.²⁴ In any case, what we did with them could be easily classified as 'interview'.

No such 'public transcript' existed for our 'interview' with men and women, some of whom had no slottable identities and for whom 'scholars studying crime and criminality' was not a negotiable slot, even if they understood what that meant, as some of them obviously could and did. We, of course, did want to elicit narratives about the 'rowdy' figure from them; but we were really in no position to offer them a narrative—both plausible and politically scrupulous—about what we wanted from them and why. We had to patch together various kinds of explanations, the responses to which often obliged us to use or fall back on registers and subject-positions that we wanted to avoid (e.g. humanist social worker, compassionate employer, etc.). Some interviews 'failed' altogether; that is, they failed to elicit anything. Such failures, however, demonstrated very clearly that what we are up against is not (only) a problem of style or genre or of epistemological positioning, but of specifying a politics that engages with the question of subalternity in our everyday life. This does not obviously mean that the interviews that 'succeeded', that is, those which elicited some narratives, did so because we were able to 'position' ourselves properly.²⁵

²⁴ The terms, 'public transcript' and 'hidden transcript', are taken from, James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990).

²⁵ For someone who has been 'individualized' by the rowdy-sheet, to answer a question in the course of an interview is, formally, and in terms of its epistemology, to acquiesce to the kinds of disciplinary structure which he has spent his life rejecting: from well meaning questions, such as 'what is a nice boy like you doing in a place like this?' to such things as examination papers, parental interrogations,

At one end of the spectrum, we had Ramesh who understood 'where we came from' and who told us bluntly: 'Why do you want to write about rowdies? You are wasting your time'. In all our conversations, he not only refused any existing line of communication but also systematically subverted any attempt to construct a new, if provisional, transcript that would allow us access to the figure of rowdy on his terms. Indeed, it was obvious that he took some pleasure in baiting us.²⁶ At the other end, we had Narsamma, who worked as a maid for one of the authors. When we asked, 'what do you know about the rowdies in your *basti*', her first response was, 'Yemi antunaramma?' ('What are you saying amma?') in puzzlement.²⁷ She initially did not seem to understand what it was we were asking her. Why should her (male) employer ask her about rowdies, when normally, the man of the house does not address her at all. We explained to her that our interest lay in those people who were constantly in trouble with the police (the problem here was that we had no way of drawing the 'subtle' distinctions between petty and cognizable offences in the Telangana dialect or in a paradigm that was accessible to her). Her first response was that as she no longer lived in the *basti* (a kind-hearted employer had given a one room tenement to live in with her husband and two children in return for her housework); she knew little about them: 'Naku yemi teluvadu' ('I don't know anything'). Even when she did, she never raised her head outside the house, because she was mortally afraid. At that moment, however, she switched the conversation to the topic of black magic and *mantravadis*. She became so engrossed in *mantralu*, and the killing of people through its medium that she continued to talk to us, compulsively and uncharacteristically, interrupting her sweeping and swabbing task many times and coming over into a different room in order

police beatings, and extortions of confessions, failed job interviews. There is no reason why he should see any difference between one interview and another.

²⁶ Interview questions addressed to 'rowdies' often elicit responses which derail the agenda. Sometimes, no answers are offered. At others the answer will be tangential, without directly approaching the topic. Often the answer is such that it sets up a counter question which puts you in a spot: 'What do you want to portray the rowdy as? Tell me that and I will tell you what you want to know'. He will signal his distaste for you by not even wishing you goodbye when you leave, having measured you up and found you wanting by a code of ethics he has learnt to live by. He will often say 'it is a very vast and complicated topic' and even refuse to elaborate the answer, switching the topic and asking the introducer a quite different question: e.g. 'Is this man a brahmin, or what?' or even 'Is he a reporter?'

²⁷ Narsamma often uses the feminine gender to address men in her conversation—it is not clear whether this is an idiosyncrasy or a dialectal variation.

to continue discussing a point she had started to make. Interestingly, in another interview too we found the topic of rowdiness straying into a discussion of *mantralu*.

When we asked another woman, Rashidabee, what she knew about the rowdies in her *basti*, she said that she never raised her eyes on the route between her place of work and home, because it was not her business. She flatly refused to say anything: 'Humko kai ku puchihe saab; ye baten sab mereko to kuch nahin maloom' ('Why do you ask me all these saheb, I don't know any thing about these matters'), and ended the conversation abruptly, wishing us salaam. Another friend of ours, who had promised to ask a woman, working in the housing complex she lived in, to talk to us reported complete failure—the woman refused and brooked no negotiation in the matter. In yet another instance, asking a woman Mallamma to tell us about rowdies in her locality resulted in her clamping down completely: 'Ma basti la-aite yemi ledu; mundugala unde, kani ippudu anta sariga-ayi poyindi' ('There is nothing of the sort in our *basti*; there was earlier, but everything has become all right now').²⁸

Radhika is a Padmashali woman, belonging, in her words, to the highest of the *shalis* among this weaver community. She is married to a Harijan man. She says that she learnt the art of midwifery from her mother-in-law, and had attended to many deliveries even though such an activity was not her caste occupation. Indeed, on the appointed day she arrived late and sleepy-eyed, because she had attended to a difficult delivery that needed attention till dawn.

In response to our question about rowdies, she said now that the organized People's War Group (PWG) activity in her slum was at its lowest ebb rowdiness and gathering of *mamool* from the dwellers was high. However, she also said that even during 1987, when naxalism was at its peak, an increasing number of rowdies posing as radicals used to collect *mamool* from the slum dwellers. Speaking about the radical presence in the slum, she said that sympathy for the Left was very strong in the mid-1980s. The Warangal conference, organized by the PWG was, according to her estimates, attended by more than five thousand men and women from the slum: 'Memandaram, bus kiraya ma paisalato koni poyinam-ayya' ('We all bought the bus fares with our money and went *ayya*'). At

²⁸ The question raised by all this is: what was the end result of these conversational dead ends—starting in good faith, but lapsing into awkward silences, evasive glances and sometimes downright hostility—with people who had no reason to distrust us? In complete contrast, we found people from our own milieu willing to discuss the topic endlessly.

that time, the support for the naxals was about 'rupayee ki aatana' (fifty per cent). Since then, the enthusiasm has waned, primarily, according to her, because of increased police repression on naxalite supporters. At present the support, according to her estimation, would be less than 'four annas in the rupee' (twenty-five per cent). She is very proud that the radicals even now come to her house at midnight each May day, hoist the *lal jhanda*, and sing revolutionary songs. After that they go with whoever invites them and perform a similar revolutionary ritual at their houses. The number of houses that invite them have, according to her, come down to two or three from about thirty or so a few years ago; she and her husband remain the only really staunch supporters of the radicals.

Talking about the nature of rowdyism as she perceived it, she said that the trouble started most often because, for youngsters, solving disputes among neighbours was a way of seeking status and respectability. 'Yepudu kotlata ayitundo, ee pillalu nadumatla vachhi, samadanam cheyaniki try chestaru—paisala koraku' ('Whenever there is a fight, these youngsters intervene, and try to arbitrate between the parties for a sum of money'). Often the matter gets out of hand, and these youngsters would resort to physical violence in order to resolve the matter. The injured party would lodge a complaint at the police station, and the police would book a case against the youngster. Repeated offences would result in their being rowdy-sheeted. We asked her about the history of arbitration in the *basti* (because this aspect of rowdyism surfaced on at least two other occasions). She said that this was a respected practice started by the '*basti peddalu*' (community elders), and continued to this day. The most sought-after arbitrator was Municipal Rangaiyya, who was often appealed to when matters of dispute reached a head. Rangaiyya was the right-hand man of G.M. Maisaiyya, both of whom were among the original inhabitants of this Madiga *basti* in the mid-1970s. Since he was a lawyer, Maisaiyya was chosen as the leader to organize the *basti's* resistance to eviction by the man who claimed to own the land and to lead the people in their *dharnas* and processions for water, electricity, and sewerage connections. By the early 1980s, the number of houses had risen from fifty or sixty to about six thousand. Each house was willingly contributing Rs 10 per month to Maisaiyya as a fee for legal and political representation. Today, however, his stature has fallen. People feel that he has become self-centred, and does not have the interests of the *basti* in mind. Others feel that they have no need for representation because their right to the land they live on has been recognized through the provision by government of power and water. (The recognition of their right by the government, ironically, seems to have

worked against Maisaiyya, who led the struggle for this recognition, and has adversely affected his stature among the people in the *basti*.) Linked in an indirect way to this moment of legalization is the loss of legitimacy of the local arbitration process, and of the respectability conferred on the arbitrators by the *basti*. This is indicated by the institutionalized negation of the acts of arbitration attempted by other young educated men resulting in their becoming rowdy-sheeters and the general loss of confidence in the process of local arbitration itself, going by Radhika's account.) Radhika herself had once *gheraoed* an MLA who was visiting her *basti* and forced her to go round the *basti* to take note of the places needing water-connections.

Radhika admitted that her husband, her second, who has also married another woman, had his picture in the local police station for almost ten years—until about 1984 (this means that he was a rowdy-sheeter).²⁹ Her husband's explanation apparently was that he was standing beside a cart selling bananas, a fruit knife in his hand, when the police on a patrol of the area simply picked him up and hauled him off to the police station, and after a quick trial for a petty offence had a rowdy-sheet opened in his name. She said that the sub-inspector who was in charge of his surveillance, often protected him from policemen from other stations, when they caught him committing an offence in their territory. The reason for protection, according to her, was that she and her husband knew that the sub-inspector Yellaiah and his wife were *mantravadis*, who used to cure physical and mental illness with their black magic. '*Giraki deggara paisalu teesikoni, mantralato vallaku kavalisina mandini champesinru kooda*' ('They have taken money from customers to even kill people by *mantram*'). The sub-inspector protected him, according to her, because if her husband was caught, he would tell on the officer, thus jeopardizing his job. At this point, however, in response to some probing, she switched her story, or rather added another thorny branch to it. She said that one thing she knew about her husband all along was his habit of waylaying women at night and 'spoiling' them. Choking, she declared that she was not afraid to tell the world about this truth. He was rowdy-sheeted for this reason. Detailing the story, she said that she knew that the police officer too had a taste for

²⁹ Although the retention of the rowdy-sheet and history-sheet beyond two years requires the specific orders of a gazetted officer; knowledgeable sources say that these are either routinely granted or overlooked, so that the police may demonstrate their efficiency in keeping under surveillance and apprehending rowdies according to the needs of law and order. Rowdies are also objects of financial transaction: the patron has to bribe the police in order to release the rowdy each time.

young girls, because her husband had once taken her (before they were married) to him for a magical cure and the sub-inspector had tried to make a pass at her. According to this story, the reason why her husband was protected by the policeman was that he too was provided with women. Her husband collected the photograph from the rowdy-sheet, when it was closed, and it now hangs in the living room as a trophy.³⁰

Venkatesh had come home at seven one morning in response to our request conveyed through a mutual acquaintance. As we groped for suitable opening narratives, which explained our interests and opened a mutually acceptable channel of communication, we arrived, by tacit understanding, at a framework of dialogue that positioned us as people interested in 'social welfare' and 'Dalit struggle'. He readily agreed to talk about rowdy-sheeters when we asked him to: '*Memu Mala vaallamu, Tuljapur—Nizamabad distritu ma ooru*' (We are Malas—we come from Tuljapur in Nizamabad district). Ramulu, his brother, was involved in starting up the Ambedkar Sangham there, around 1981–2. He was primarily concerned with resisting Reddy dominance. Ramulu lived a 'neat' life, challenging the landlords with his statements, acts, and style. '*Oka roju ayinanu donga ani pilichi, kotti, katti, kalichi champesinru*' ('They branded him a thief, beat him, tied him up and burnt him').

Two eminent civil liberties lawyers got involved and managed to ensure chief minister NTR's presence at a meeting at the press club. At that time many politicians with Dalit sympathies visited Tuljapur. An immediate grant of Rs 10,000 was secured for the next of kin, and two government jobs were promised. The collector came the next day and immediately gave the sister a job in the B.C. hostel there. Venkatesh who also qualified for a job, got employed as a cook in a hostel run by the state

³⁰ Radhika's account enables us to discern more clearly a few of the problems that may have caused many of our interviews to fail. Put schematically, we could renarrate Radhika's account to foreground her desire to participate in progressive politics. She sympathizes with the PWG; she agitates for social rights. But at the same time the embodiment of social undesirability in her through her husband—a goonda/pimp/rapist/tout—is something which she does not want to suppress from her account of her life. Our renarration would have to face this mismatch between her desire to construct her life through progressive political action, on the one hand, and her ambivalent ties to her husband (he is a Left sympathizer too), on the other. (There is also her enigmatic references to black magic.) Some of our interviews 'failed', it seems to us now, because such difficult moments, rather than marking locations at which inadequate theories need piecemeal repair, demand to be met as nodes of resistance and elision that have the potential to inflect and change our existing public/political transcript.

government for handicapped students in Hyderabad. According to Venkatesh, the sessions court had put the murderers away for life, but a judicial enquiry later reversed the order and got them released in six months. Venkatesh has been living in the Balamrai *basti* in Secunderabad. Some twenty odd families used to live in a part of Balamrai called Ambedkarnagar by the residents, who have been there for about thirty years. Some Gowds who owned part of this land, claimed all of it when it was released by the cantonment. They collected rent from the houses built on their land at the rate of Rs 10 per month over a long period. The Ambedkar Sangham which was formed in 1982 stopped this. The two acres of land left was claimed by the Sangham as theirs. In this area, there was a Madiga family of five brothers; the rest were Malas. These people, Venkatesh says, were professional rowdies, who 'earned' a living solely through *mamools* and other 'illegal' sources.

Venkatesh says that the Sangham wanted to distribute the land they had taken possession of, but the five brothers wanted to sell the land for a profit. (A variation of the story is that the Sangham too wanted to sell the land to earn some money for a community lavatory, which was ultimately built. Government officials, who had never showed up for decades, came by some two months later, razed it to the ground, and replaced it with a 'bigger and better' lavatory. Venkatesh however denies that the building of the lavatory had any thing to do with the incident he was narrating.) Some land was distributed, some sold, and things came to a head. The Sangham decided to have a showdown with the family.³¹ One of the rowdy brothers Achaiiah, who was having a drink at the Kallu compound, began threatening to kill one of the Sangham men. This news reached the Sangham from other visitors to the bar. '*Memandaram, sangham pillalamu ready ayi poyinamu*.' ('We Sangham boys got ready'). A fight began, and Achaiiah was stabbed with a knife which went through his heart though there was no specific intention to kill. He died on the spot. The police arrested all the men (about twenty) present in the area during the fight, including Venkatesh who was singled out as the principal organizer of the encounter. A boy called Venu owned up to the murder (it is not known whether he actually killed the man), so that the others might be let off. Venu, a house painter

³¹ When asked whether Malas and Madigas fight each other, as is often believed, Venkatesh said it was less frequent now than earlier because of the Ambedkar Sangham. When they fight they do so because of Reddy patronage and incitement. Reddy battles are fought on the field by Malas and Madigas—they are set against each other.

by profession, was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for life. He was due to be released in 1994.

Venkatesh says that his people live a rough life. With a salary of Rs 1500, they cannot afford to live in houses like ours, he said. They could barely afford to survive now. In the *basti*, people are not educated—children don't learn because they cannot go to school. Tuition is impossible because no one wants to come to a *basti* to teach. '*Ma pillalu aite polisulato kooda rough ga ne mataladutaru*', (our children talk roughly even with the police) because they know that they will be caught and thrashed anyway.

Illustrating this, he related an incident he had experienced on a bus. He was travelling on the Tank Bund towards Secunderabad. One man gave an 'RTC Staff' signal to stop the bus, got on, and sat behind the driver. The driver asked for his identity, and found that he was not on the staff of the RTC. There was an altercation, and the man got off at Raniganj. The driver however, continued to make a big fuss and all the passengers began shouting at him. '*Mana pillavadokadu*' (one of our boys) among the passengers, was a little more rude and used some rough language. The driver stopped at the James Street Police station and handed *this* boy over to the police—in place of the man who got off! When Venkatesh saw what was happening, he intervened and he too was taken in and locked up; both were thrashed. Venkatesh was booked under Section 70 of the Hyderabad City Police Act (committing public nuisance) and his watch was taken as a security in place of the fine which he could not pay there and then. So far, Venkatesh says, he has 'gone into' the police station three or four times, but his name is not on a rowdy-sheet, thanks to the intervention of some heavyweights.

According to Venkatesh, there are real rowdies who do nothing else for a living.³² He cited examples of these types used by *sara* (cheap liquor supplied by the state government) contractors, who were usually *benami* (anonymous) representatives of major political figures. The rowdies were often used to scare away the competition. Other rowdies specialize in election manipulation, clearing land, etc. This last type usually receives a percentage of the money, or part of the cleared land as a fee.

³² We had earlier scoured the newspapers for the story of Mohammed Sardar, a rowdy with a fierce reputation, whose killing by the police about three months before the communal riots of December 1990 led to speculations that they were sparked off by his death. Venkatesh's narrative of this 'real rowdyism', based on an intimate knowledge of Sardar's territory, has to negotiate this difficult knowledge that threatens to swallow the narrator. It seemed worth recording as a subaltern account of Sardar's life (see App. III).

Venkatesh too seems to believe in the existence of 'real rowdies'; he too wants to be able to distinguish between good beings caught in a web of criminality and real criminals. But who is this 'real rowdy'? Why does that figure seem to re-emerge or redouble just when we thought we could see it retreating?

THE CITIZEN AND HIS DOUBLE

If the political discourse of modernity created the ceremonies around the body of the citizen—subject, his rights and duties, his narratives of selfhood, it also effected a split, a doubling, between the legal—political—moral subject and the empirical subject of political technologies. The transmutation of the latter into the former, the world of subjection into the world of right, has been the 'unfinished' project of modernity. The figure of the 'rowdy' emerges, and constantly duplicates itself, in the very heart of the political discourse whose condition of possibility is, paradoxically, the split or doubling that it tries to overcome.

Thus, when we try to situate the 'citizen—subject' in relation to the world of disorder that constitutes the domain of his politics, we cannot fail to notice his seeming double presence. First, his presence outside, marking the *basti* with his interminable discourse as the site of *goondaism*, irresponsibility, undesirability—and excluding it from his own domain of right, civility, and authority. These exclusionary discourses of the secular 'citizen—subject' emerge from many different institutional locations (the police codes, the media, upper-caste/middle-class Hindu households, family planning agencies, etc.), in connection with a variety of subjects of 'public' interest (criminality, communalism, population, law and order, health, development, etc.). Functioning in the very element of universality (rights, equality, etc.), this subject does not acknowledge its own particular political identity, seeking merely to extend its universality.³³ Paradoxically, the very attempt seems to posit or create zones negating universality.

³³ An almost perfect illustration is Amartya Sen's 'The Threats to Secular India', *Social Scientist* 238–9 (March/April 1993), pp. 5–23. Analysing the rise of Hindu extremism, he diagnoses illiteracy as a major factor (he is too careful a philosopher to say that it 'causes' communal fascism, even though that indeed is the upshot of his argument) in the rise of militant obscurantism: 'Obscurantism thrives on educational backwardness and gullibility' (p. 20). Sen's argument begs the question: why are 'illiterates' (assuming for the moment we know what that category refers to) particularly vulnerable (or 'gullible') to fascist propaganda or militant obscurantism?

The other presence of the 'citizen-subject' is visible in the narratives of Radhika and Venkatesh, *penetrating* them and splitting their discourse irretrievably into 'moral' and 'immoral', 'rational' and 'irrational', 'ignorance' and 'intelligence', 'correct' politics and 'incorrect' lives, etc. The proliferating contradictions of these terms, generated as much by our frame as by the content of their discourse, seems to seduce us subtly into a project of moral rehabilitation. It would be only too comforting to assume that the contradictory subjectivity that emerges in our transcript is something which they bring to us from their daily lives, fully formed, and which they deliver to us in its purity, in response to our questions. Should not this contradictory subjectivity presented to us be seen rather as a symptomatic product, crystallizing obediently within and according to the vectors of our interaction with them? Is it possible that the 'citizen-subject' was present *in* these interviews, invisible to us—because we were him—but very visible to both Radhika and Venkatesh *in our bearing*, compassion, and understanding? What other outcome could we expect from these interviews? As a double presence, both exclusionary and penetrating, the 'citizen-subject' positions himself above the rowdy and his milieu, not just through the content of civil discourse, but also through its very form. Thus, regardless of our intentions of 'not wanting to rehabilitate the rowdy', we, as sovereign authors of the good discourse of politics, tend to reproduce the split.

The most direct illustration of this emerges in the interview with Radhika. What is this 'interview', which in all its informality (we all sat on the floor and chatted over a cup of tea—no tape-recorder) seems to have perpetuated rather than destabilized the power relationships between us? What are these pathways of interaction that force us to revive and reinstate through our 'radical' practice, such implicit, oppressive, objectifying categories as 'interviewer', 'interviewee', 'illiterate', or, for that matter, even 'rowdy husband'? We have to consider the possibility that commonly used modes of political engagement and analysis, like interviews, fact finding missions, news conferences on atrocities, etc. are, in their present uncritically assimilated form, completely unsuited to a

Obviously, it will not do to say they lack secular education (literacy)! Let us note that 'illiterates' in Sen's account play the same role as 'lumpens' in Leftist accounts. For a mirror image of Sen's position but with considerably deeper insights in an understanding of modern politics—indeed of the modernity of politics see Ashis Nandy's 'Paradoxes of Secularism: The Buying and Selling of Religion', *Times of India*, 21 May 1994.

radical politics. Unsuited because they seem to reiterate existing political identities, thereby sanctioning their exclusionary practices. How, then, could this authority we inhabit be refused? How could a transcript be constructed that can exceed what that authority seems to reduplicate? We are not, obviously, calling for moral gestures; what we do need to take seriously is that our politics is not a matter merely of what we think, or the ideals we espouse (the ideals in the name of which we hold institutions accountable), but crucially involves what we are. We hope the previous section makes clear that these subalterns are indeed vulnerable, not to any particular politics but to social representations of all kinds, ranging from the disciplinary power of the 'rowdy-sheet', the developmental perspective of various institutions, to the homogenizing 'gaze' of the 'citizen'. The task, to which this chapter is an inadequate contribution, is to break and displace the power of representation embedded in various institutions and practices so that the question of the political identity of the subaltern can emerge precisely at the intersection of those institutions.

THE ROWDY AS CITIZEN? SUBALTERNITY AND POLITICAL SPACE

In our opinion the two narratives raise an important problem for the interpretation of politics and, more particularly, for a conjunctural analysis of political identities. When the term lumpenization of politics (or its variant, criminalization of politics and its obverse the politicization of criminality) begins to function as a signifier that simply overwrites the agency and activity of a particular space, in this case the *basti*, it cannot but disempower and demean that space and block off any attempt at evolving a perspective within which activities undertaken by those people can be seen as *political*.

To understand this state of affairs, it is worth analysing the function of invoking the 'lumpenization of politics'. The spectacular way in which this term has begun to organize and homogenize the perception of the citizen-subject (by definition the middle-class) attests, more than anything else, to a failure of democratic politics, as it has been conceived of and practised by the Left. For the Left (as for liberals) the problems stated in the discourses of the subaltern are not (yet) political problems; they will have to be rewritten or translated—they will have to come through to citizenship—before they become political.

Radhika and Venkatesh survive in a milieu that has been 'always

already' criminalized. Any activity they undertake, indeed their very agency, almost inevitably gets written out of the public sphere by the disciplinary grid of legality. The discourse of citizenship has a narrow and precise meaning for them—captured accurately in the way the rowdy-sheet functions, symbolically and literally. It would be erroneous to isolate the pure literality of their problems and demands from the symbolic space that they inhabit, which is overdetermined, on the one hand, by the material violence of the legal apparatus, and, on the other, by the symbolic violence of the ideology of 'lumpenization, which is the definition with which the citizen-subject attempts to capture his double, the rowdy-sheeter.

It is the disengagement or disassociation of subaltern spaces by democratic politics that those wishing to occupy the subject position of the citizen-subject refuse to acknowledge. But this raises the important question—which has already surfaced in the last two sections—of how to conceive of democratic politics around the rights of citizenship if the very discourse of citizenship contains within itself a drive to differentiate, to double. This is an extremely elusive question to formulate because the very ideality of the discourse of citizenship makes it difficult to delineate its splitting or doubling as anything other than contingent by-product.³⁴ The logic and the consequences of putting into practice concepts and institutions of political modernity seem always to escape the self-understanding of those concepts or get posited as external to it. We cannot conceive of democratic politics simply as a fight for extending the rights of citizenship; what our interviews suggest is that we cannot any longer view the rights of citizenship as empty slots or counters that anyone can occupy.

What then are the prerequisites of citizenship? One such prerequisite

³⁴ The theoretical question here is whether the politics of citizenship as well as, more generally, the politics of rights, can ever overcome this doubling. For an understanding of the different dimensions of this difficult question, see Michel Foucault's discussion of the 'empirico-transcendental doublet' in *The Order of Things* (Tavistock, London, 1970), pp. 318–22, as well as his remarks on Kantorowitz in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, New York, 1979), p. 29; Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell et al. (eds), *Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991), pp. 87–104; Etienne Balibar, 'Citizen Subject', in Eduardo Cadava et al. (eds), *Who Comes After the Subject?* (Routledge, New York, 1991), pp. 33–57; Partha Chatterjee, 'Secularism and Toleration', *Economic and Political Weekly* 29: 28 (9 July 1994), pp. 1768–77; Vivek Dhareshwar, 'Caste and the Secular Self', *Journal of Arts and Ideas* 25–6 (Dec. 1993), pp. 115–26.

is obviously class. The point we are making, however, involves much more than merely noting that a certain class position allows/prevents people from occupying the slot or subject-position of citizenship. If one of the major conditions of democratization is a certain disincorporation of the subject's positivity—my particularity has no bearing on my participation in the public sphere—not everyone can participate equally in the logic of disincorporation.

The empowering promised by the logic of disincorporation—I speak, act as a citizen—has involved in India the deployment of discursive and institutional strategies that have distributed the privilege of disincorporation in a highly uneven and unequal way; in such a way indeed that some bodies—like the 'rowdy' or the 'lumpen'—will not disincorporate, so tied are their shameful positivity to their bodies. Those strategies are, however, an intrinsic part of the ritual of empowering the citizen. We thus have, on the one hand, what we might call (in homage to Foucault's homage to Kantorowitz) the *excessive* body of the rowdy, and on the other the disincorporated body of the citizen. Of course, the fact that some bodies can reincorporate in the public sphere precisely as fantasmatic embodiments or icons of power—for example, cine-stars and politicians (think of the significance of the giant cut-outs)—far from disproving the logic of disincorporation proves to be one of its effects.³⁵ Therefore, the concept (if it is one) 'lumpen' in the rhetorics of disincorporation as it has come to operate in the discourse of citizenship in India names the 'excess' that will not disincorporate; which indeed seems to proliferate because the logic that creates a certain positivity as excess cannot be separated from the discourse of citizenship.³⁶

In sum, it seems to us that these concepts—citizenship, rights—themselves have a politics; there is, in other words, a *politics* of citizenship that is not external to the forms of power that produces and reproduces the 'rowdy'. Thus when Radhika and Venkatesh try to occupy the subject-position of the citizen they too end up reiterating the doubling. A reconceptualization of democratic politics around the issue of citizenship then

³⁵ On disincorporation and democracy, see Claude Lefort, 'The Image of the Body and Totalitarianism', in *Political Forms of Modern Society* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1986), pp. 292–306; also see the useful discussion in Michael Warner, 'The Mass Public and the Mass Subject', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1992), pp. 376–401. For the reference to Foucault and Kantorowitz, see the note above.

³⁶ On how the excess of identification works in the case of caste, see Vivek Dhareshwar, 'Caste and the Secular Self'.

would have to be based on an analysis of the forms of power mobilized by the concepts of political modernity and the effects they produce on different institutional and discursive sites. If there is an aporia involved in demanding that democratic politics interrogate our political modernity, then it irreducibly defines our political present.

Appendix I

The A.P. Police Manual format for the Rowdy-Sheet:⁽¹⁾

Form No. 88.

Order 742(1).

ROWDY-SHEET

Names and aliases:

No.: Date:

Son of:

age/year of entry:

Caste:

Occupation:

Native place, Police Station and District.

Type of offender, nature of rowdiness and favourite localities for offences, etc.

Associates —

Name, Father's name and caste	Address	Instances of association	Sheet No., if any
-------------------------------	---------	--------------------------	-------------------

etc.

Reverse side of the form:

CONVICTION PARTICULARS

Serial No.	Petty case no.	Brief nature of offence and date, conviction details; Court and C.C. no.; police officers present.
------------	----------------	--

etc.

Remarks: (Here enter further details of rowdiness, details of petitions or complaints useful for a security case, and present conduct).

¹ Inspector-General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, *The Andhra Pradesh Police Manual: Part II—Annexures and Forms* (Hyderabad Bulletin Press, Secunderabad (undated)), pp. 1945–6. Also reproduced in Padala Rama Reddi, *The Andhra Pradesh Police Codes: (2 vols), vol. II* (Panchayat Publications, Hyderabad, 1991 (rpt.)), pp. 517–18.

Appendix II

The A.P. Police Manual format for the History-Sheet:⁽²⁾

Form 87(c)
[Orders 733, 894 & 1002(11)]
History-Sheet

SHEET 1

1. Name and aliases
2. Father's name/Husband's name
3. Caste
4. Trade or Profession
5. (a) Native place (district and police station)
(b) Identifying witnesses (two or three), their fathers and addresses
6. (a) Place of residence with dates and periods
(b) Places visited with dates and periods
7. Class of offender. (Append notes showing MO details, means of transport used, kinds of property stolen, etc., in all case which any such features are distinctive.)

SHEET 2

8. Description (delete what is not applicable). If nothing extreme under the head, delete all sub-heads. (Underline any very distinctive point.)

Approximate year of birth.

Also refer to list of physical peculiarities and Criminal Characteristics

² From the *Andhra Pradesh Police Manual: vol. II*, reproduced in Padala Rama Reddi, *The Andhra Pradesh Police Codes: (2 vols), vol. II*, pp. 514-17.

given under Order 893(3) of the Andhra Pradesh Police Manual Part-I while filling this sheet.

Height (which may be classified as tall 5'8", 6' and above, medium 5'4", short 5'4" and very short below 5).

Build Thin, Medium, Fat.

Hair Colour-Black, Brown, Greying, Grey, Curly (no note about straight hair)
Baldness-Frontal, rear.

Fore-head Broad, Narrow, Wrinkles (Horizontal, Vertical).

Eye brows Arched, Straight, Joined, Thin, Thick, Bushy.

Eyes Black, Brown, Blue, Small, Large, Sunken, Building, Special peculiarities (Squint, Blood-shot, One-eyed, Blind, Artificial).

Nose Snub, Pointed.

Nostrils Wide, Narrow, Straight, curved (Parrot like), Sunken at the root, Special peculiarities.

Ears Large, Medium, Small, Lobe, Large, Small, Hanging, Pierced, Special Peculiarities (Hairy).

Lips Thick, Thin, Hare lips, Protruding Upper lip.

Teeth Small, Large, Protruding, Overlapping, Special Peculiarities, Missing, Gold Pointed, Silver Pointed.

Chin Double, Dimpled, Square, Pointed.

Face Square, Oval, Round, Prominent, Cheek-bones, Prominent Jaw, Flabby Cheek, Sunken-cheek, Pock-pitted.

Moustaches/Beard.

Complexion—Fair, White, Brown, Black.

Legs—bow-legged, knock-kneed.

Feet—Flat foot, Toe missing, Extra toe, Special peculiarities.

Speech—Stammer, Nasal, Feminine, Fast.

Deformities—Hunchback, Stopping, Lameness, Pot bellied, six fingers and other Peculiarities:

Habit

SHEET 3

9. Relatives (those he is likely to visit to be underlined or starred).

Name and Relationship if any	Residence Police Station	Occupation	Reference to History-Sheet
------------------------------	--------------------------	------------	----------------------------

10. Associates (those he is likely to visit to be underlined or starred).

Name, Father's name and caste	Residence Police Station	Occupation	Nature of association & reference to History-Sheet if any
-------------------------------	--------------------------	------------	---

SHEET 4

11. Exact information regarding known methods of disposal of stolen property (cite cases) and names and residence of receivers.

SHEET 5

12. Particulars of past arrests, when and where, and by whom harboured.
13. Localities in which he has committed crime. (Specify any favourite locality and cite offences committed in particular localities.)
14. History of how he became criminal, etc.

SHEET 6

15. Particulars of cases in which definitely suspected, with clear reasons for suspicion, and miscellaneous information useful for a security case.

Section, <i>Modus Operandi</i> and G.I.F. No.	District, Station and Crime Number	Kind of property	Summary
---	------------------------------------	------------------	---------

SHEET 7

16. Particulars of convictions and cases in which acquitted, or discharged (including compounded cases).

Section M.O. and G.I.F. number	Station and Crime No.	Kind and value of property		Court, C.C. number, date and sentence	F.P. Bureau serial no. and date; identifying witnesses; jail number; date of release and return
		Lost	Recovered		

SHEET 8

17. Current doings

SHEET 9

18. Photograph sheet

Profile left.

Profile right.

Full face.

Full length.

Head and shoulders.

Close up photographs of physical deformities with descriptions.

Appendix III

The Story of Mohammed Sardar (as narrated by Venkatesh):

Sardar started out as an auto driver, who lived in 'Pinchum' Lines in Bowenpally. He became friends with Raju, a rowdy-sheeter. Progressing through the stage of being a drinking buddy, he slowly began getting involved in some petty cases. They were both caught for some offences. Raju absconded from the trial, and the police began putting pressure on Sardar. One day Sardar, who was having a drink at a bar in Bowenpally, encountered Raju and his gang of ten friends there. He asked Raju to come and talk to the police as they were harassing him for Raju's absence. Tempers flared and the ten men beat up Sardar, who managed to escape and ran home to fetch a knife. Meanwhile eight of the friends decided to go home, while Raju and another person decided to go after Sardar. They met in a graveyard halfway between the bar and Sardar's house. Then Raju's friend saw the knife and ran away. Raju tried running away, stumbled and fell into a grave. Sardar finished him off and gave himself up to the police. Raju had a friend called Chakali Krishna who was a 'technical mind', or a master strategist, mediating between rowdies and politicians like Channa Reddy, etc. Chakali Krishna ensured that Sardar got life imprisonment. He was earlier an employee of Mushtaq who owned two hundred acres of land in Ailapuram. Chakali managed to acquire the title deed for the land by duping Mushtaq's, and got the land registered in the name of Chanchalguda Ravi, Master Pehlwan, and Rajesh. The case is still on in the Sanghareddy courts. Mushtaq wanted to finish Chakali. He befriended Sardar in prison and waited till six months leave had accumulated at the rate of about fifteen to twenty days a year. He then got him released on parole with a bond of two lakh rupees. Mushtaq's college-going son, who had a gang of college-going rowdies, gave him bombs, guns, etc. As soon as Sardar was released, Chakali tried to have him put back, but Mushtaq managed to get him out again. Sardar first went to Master Pehlwan's *adda* in Begum bazaar and threw a bomb and ran away. (The Begum bazaar bombing incident figures prominently in the fact finding reports of the communal riots of 1990.) He created a lot

of trouble everywhere, but the police did not catch him out of fear. One day, he went to Balanagar to collect *mamool* (protection money) on some land. A police *jamadar* tried to catch him, without heeding Sardar's warning. Sardar shot the policemen dead. After this, there was a police hunt on for him, but they did not succeed in catching him. Chakali had a heart surgery planned in Madras. Sardar passed word to him that he would be waiting for him in Madras. Chakali cancelled his trip. Then a few days later, Sardar went to the Paradise area and was speaking to the owner of Zam Zam bakery. Chakali happened to arrive at Paradise with his bodyguards. Sardar threw a bomb at the group of ten men, and another one in the drain to kill those who were hiding there. As one innocent man, who was dressed like one of the bodyguards, ran towards the Central Telegraph Office, Sardar caught up with him and shot him dead. Venkatesh claims to be a witness to this incident, standing as he was near a cart selling bananas. Then Sardar went to Chanchalguda Ravi and collected two lakh rupees for Mushtaq's land. Chakali prepared to go to Madras, but died of fright in his own house. Three days later Sardar was shot dead by the police. His body, when taken to Bowenpally, was not recognized as his by his wife and son. They refused to accept that Sardar was dead. (Sardar's death was a cause of a great deal of tension in the Bowenpally area.) However Venkatesh says that there was absolutely no link between Sardar's death and the riots, which he felt were part of a political game to topple Channa Reddy.