Moving Rape: Trafficking in the Violence of Postliberalization

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The protests initially provoked by the gang rape and murder of a physiotherapy student on a bus in New Delhi are a profound sign of dissent and disruption in contemporary India. To briefly recount the details of this case, on December 16, 2012, after robbing a carpenter, six men picked up a woman and her male friend in a private, off-duty bus. The men attacked both and raped the woman while driving around Delhi's streets, finally brutalizing her with a metal rod taken from the bus's luggage rack and pulling out her intestines before dumping the two naked by the side of the road. The female victim was flown to Singapore, where she died in a hospital thirteen days after the attack.[1]

The days following the rape saw an upsurge of protests on Delhi's streets against sexual violence and major coverage in Indian national and international news media. International press accounts, in particular, focused on what was called India's "rape culture," explaining the attack in terms of prevailing attitudes toward women in public as sexually available, police collusion in rape, and cultures of shame that blame women for their own violation (MacKenzie 2013). Meanwhile, the Delhi protests brought together several different voices, includ-

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1. As this article was going to press, new and equally spectacular rape cases surfaced in other Indian metropolises, including a gang rape of a photographer who was documenting abandoned factories in Mumbai. This case, too, I would argue, resonates with the politics of gender, class, violence, and urban space I detail here. For an overview of the aftermath of these cases and accompanying protests, see Hundal 2013.

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ing those of Indian feminists who used the popular support around this case as a platform to argue that women's rights needed to be articulated for all women, rural and urban, in a language that moved beyond women's protection and toward freedom of movement and of female desire (Krishnan 2013; Phadke 2013; Venugopal 2013; Walia 2013).

While the recent enactment of strong antirape laws by parliament is a sign of the ferocity of these protests and their ability to affect legal practice (Mandhana 2013), the Delhi rape case may be read in conjunction with similar violence against women returning home in call center cabs that replays the drama of men, women, and class mobility in contemporary India. This reading militates against understanding these rapes as primarily part of a traditional "rape culture." Violence against women in cars reveals the limits of the vehicle as a space protective of privatized economies and private middle-class pleasures at the same time that such violence enacts an overturning of the "right to privacy" through the violation of a woman's body. The car—as symbol and conveyance for modern urban Indian life—is a space of "violence and desire" where "displacement collides with dreams of a better life" (Baviskar 2004: 98). The violence of the moving rape has therefore to be understood within the contradictions of a postliberalization moment (fig. 1).

Figure 1 The ghostly presence of a clean, unmarked call center car on an otherwise dusty and cacophonous street. Photograph by author

The figures of the upwardly mobile Indian woman and the lower-class, periurban man capture the fractures in India's narrative of liberalization. The protests against the Delhi rape case and the subsequent media attention to other cases bring to the surface a "bad conscience" that underwrites much of this narrative. I turn to the car as a site in which gender, class, and space come together. A new social and economic relationship is at work in cars that depends on lower-class men as dangerous subjects even while it makes their labor invisible. At the same time, liberalization promotes women of similar background as modern and upwardly mobile. Although urban middle classes were driving the Delhi protests in the main, it remains the challenge of these protests to at once recognize the limits of liberalization in India and call for the protection of the rights of women who are not urban and upwardly mobile to the same degree as the most publicized victims (Dutta and Sircar 2013). The politics of class in contemporary India run through both sexualized violence and the protests that respond to it.

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In India, the postliberalization period began after 1991, when a series of well-publicized legislative moves lowered barriers to foreign investment, abandoned protectionism, and abolished the byzantine governmental procedures regulating business. Postliberalization has a fractious relationship with what it replaces. Though more goods are available in India than ever before and wealth is being generated in software, mining, and other sectors of the economy, questions of access and corruption, wealth distribution and inequality, continue to make "liberalization" an unfinished business. Once it was assumed that liberalizing the economy would produce more wealth for all Indians, but now many wonder whether it has produced only greater degrees of inequality instead (Gupta and Sharma 2006: 292).[2] Like other "posts" before it, postliberalization suggests that orientation toward "the market" is continuous, ongoing, incomplete, and ambivalent.[3]

This essay reads the case of rape in moving vehicles against the texture of an unfinished liberalization. I argue that the violence of this gang rape and similar cases is firmly tied to the question of lower-class incorporation in contemporary India. In moments of violence, the privatization of business and the private sphere of consumption meet, and the figure of the lower-class male moves to the center by means of the violation of a middle-class woman's body. To explicate the link between economic liberalization, class, and gendered violence, I track the figure of the lower-class, periurban male across three vectors of incorporation.[4] First, I turn to private space, especially in cars and buses, as an example of the discursive suasion of neoliberal philosophy in India that nevertheless contradictorily inserts a labor relation into the politics of middle-class enjoyment. I use ethnographic accounts about the car solicited from call center managers to explore how the car becomes a moving semiprivate space that frames women as dependent on their drivers for protection, at the same time that the public space of the road is framed as a space of navigable danger for men who drive. Second, I look at the

2. Although this critique of economic policy is familiar from general discourses of neoliberalism, I keep here to the language of postliberalization to stress that the growth of the Indian economy after 1991 has produced multiple kinds of mobility that are not easily written as a story about "neoliberalism" writ large. This essay, then, is in keeping with anthropological studies of neoliberalism that stress it as a form of governmentality that intersects and compromises with already-existing modes of caring for populations (Collier 2011; Boyer and Yurchak 2010).

3. For a penetrating account of these two modes of the "post," see Hall 2006.

4. I follow Satish Deshpande's (2003) discussion of class here as a relational construct that is mobilized in multiple ways. While class and caste status often align, it is often the case that class mobility complicates caste orders, especially when that mobility is differentially spread over gender divisions. I refer here to "periurban" populations to mark a zone of indistinction between urban proletariats and rural farmers that is often undertheorized in the literature on caste and class in India.

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practices of control over periurban, lower classes through the disciplining of the behavior between female call center workers and male drivers. I describe drivers as "distanced bodies" as a further elaboration of Michel Foucault's (1995) notion of "disciplined bodies" to indicate how lower-class subjects are incorporated into new flexible and informal kinds of work regimes. "Distanced bodies" are respectful of social distance between themselves and others at the same time that they maintain job-required ties to undisciplined, nondocile tactics. Third, I consider drivers as a category of "watchmen," border figures with an extended genealogy on the subcontinent, meant to protect the new spaces of middle-class consumption. Together, these three examinations allow me to make (partial) sense of this violence as a form of mediation among central and peripheral subjects in liberalized India. While the cases I discuss are specific to India, they resonate widely with sexual violence against women in urban environments in many places. As women enter contingent arenas of work in neoliberal economies, they are subject to violence that at once sexualizes them, reinserts them into the private sphere, and cheapens the value of their labor (Salzinger 2003; Wright 2006; Fitzsimons 2012).

The car—and other modes of private transportation—is a useful site from which to theorize mobility and its limits in contemporary India. The car is a necessary supplement to liberalized economies, where the public transportation infrastructure cannot meet the demand of industries, such as the call centers discussed below, for on-time and late-night travel. The private car is a kind of mobile infrastructure in the Indian city that simultaneously helps focus theoretic attention to the "messiness and fluidity" of cities (Amin 2013), the "leakages" and unintended uses of urban infrastructures (Anand 2011), and the spaces of overlap between material culture, economic shift, and social process (Calhoun, Sennett, and Shapira 2013). The car also is a site where class frictions are lived. In the private vehicle, the working-service classes on which such industries depend are visible in their labor, a necessary component to the smooth "flow" of workers to and from information technology (IT) headquarters and the shopping malls, cinemas, and other symbolic venues of middle-class pleasure. Finally, the car stands in for mobility in a more general way, as it moves through streets sometimes choked with daytime traffic and sometimes eerily empty late at night, laying bare the mobilities and immobilities that liberalization has engendered in urban India. By making the car central to the understanding of violence, this essay calls on all of these associations, highlighting at once the economic, representational, and performative aspects of movement that the car embodies. Considering the lower-class man, the upwardly mobile woman, and the space of the car lays bare the contested space between the economic and social meanings of the private (Kaviraj 1997;

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Gal 2002; Thompson 2009). As a mobile and privatized urban infrastructure, the vehicle in motion is a heightened space in which the lines between public good and private right are blurred, reworked, and made subject to violent appropriation.

Privatization and the Private

The landscape of urban India is dotted with new kinds of privatized spaces. The poor continue to occupy sidewalks and parks, while the wealthy erect gated communities and shopping malls. Liberalization has enabled the middle classes to strategically withdraw from the public sphere (Baviskar 2004; Nair 2006). These governing classes set up the gated enclave, the air-conditioned multiplex cinema, and the shopping mall as the singular yet representative space of the new India (Fernandes 2006; Srivastava 2014). At the same time, the poor continue to claim the right to use and reside on public lands. The occupation of underpasses and overpasses, railroad yards and riverbanks, is the most visible sign of a politics that demands that the state care for its population and a response that the state delivers in the form of both laissez-faire negligence and state welfare and philanthropic gifts—these spaces are internal borderlands from which the state has withdrawn its duty of care (Chatterjee 2004; Gupta and Sharma 2006). One may be tempted to conclude that a kind of détente has been reached, leaving the pavement to the lower classes and the glass arcades to the upper classes, the public to the people and the private to the cosmopolitan citizens. But categories of inclusion and exclusion are too broad to encompass the multiple ways that access to new spaces and practices of private consumption are being negotiated in India today.

Class as social process unfurls in an unmarked space between two senses of the private. *Privatization* in its economic sense signals a further withdrawal of care from public responsibility and the conversion of unionized jobs into unprotected private-sector work and informal labor arrangements (Agarwala 2006; Chatterjee 2004). Meanwhile, *private* as an ideological term aligns family and nation in opposition to, but also supporting, markets and states (Gal 2002; Chatterjee 2004; Kaviraj 1997; Warner 2002). The history of public-private distinctions suggests that the two spheres are inexorably bound up together and congruent, the one helping define the other by negative comparison (Gal 2002; Kaviraj 1997; Warner 2002). Equally important, the boundary between public and private space in daily life is porous and agonistic. As Sudipta Kaviraj has detailed, in India in particular, public and private ideologies are sutured to existing ideas of inside and outside such that the meaning of public space is highly ambiguous.

During the colonial period, while retaining connotations of a space that was

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"inhospitable and full of danger of offense," the public sphere was also the space of "the large-scale operation of modernity, a world of freedom rather than restriction" (Kaviraj 1997: 94). The particular evolution of an inhospitable yet free public sphere in India during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries yielded the concept of a *pablik*, a plebian space that at once signals the democratization of the public sphere and its abandoning by the middle classes in favor of developing their own private enclaves (ibid.: 108). Today privacy is increasingly defined as a mode of governance of the middle class, where the right to spaces of enjoyment is linked to the rights of being a productive Indian citizen—making urban space once again a battleground for claiming rights in the city.

Middle and upper classes intervene in the politics of poverty by making arguments for clearing hawkers from the pavement and demolishing slums on the basis of the right to unobstructed use of public goods (Chatterjee 2006; McQuarrie, Fernandes, and Shepard 2013). The shopping malls and gated IT parks are at the same time staffed by the ranks of the "public" hired as private armed guards, cleaners, and drivers. In this way, the privacy of private spaces is policed by the very public it is meant to shut out, for their own good and in their name. While the middle classes utilize the discourse of public good to claim ownership of public space in the name of the average Indian citizen, lower classes take up and indigenize the notion of the private to similarly claim ownership over space.[5] The guard who secures the shopping mall and the driver at call centers are figures who give clear expression to this process.

Helen Thompson (2009) notes that the public is in the first instance opposed to a private defined as a sphere of economic transaction, and then this sense of the private is subsequently further divided into the realm of the market and the realm of the familial. The car as a mobile infrastructure collapses and makes blurry those distinctions. Within the car, gendered logics both define men as those who drive and women as those who are driven and make the body of the female passenger a site on which the politics of class and the violence of hypermasculinity (Hansen 2001) are enacted. As such, bodies are gendered through the enactment of "moving rape" in homology with how the landscape of sex, danger, and economic prestige is traversed by the private vehicle as a sign of wealth and consumption in the "new" India. In addition to the intersection of class and gender that is worked out in the car, the economic and political geography of the car's private

5. Here the middle class not only is the face of new Indian prosperity and thus has a hegemonic function but also is an oppositional group to lower-class politics of the kind Partha Chatterjee (2004) describes.

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movements suggests that violence at once participates in logics of lower-class masculinity, pleasure in consumption, and femininity as transgressive of class boundaries and subject to violent appropriation.

The specificity of class, gender, and economy in contemporary India occurs against a particular historical and spatial texture that is highly local.[6] The ill-defined space between the privatized and the private—in the sense of both the economic and the domestic—is productive of newly gendered labor roles. In the call center industry, women are given mobility and status but are inscribed in the domestic through a structure of opposition between work and family that divides times of day (day and night) and types of space (private and public) into gendered domains (Patel 2010). Women working at night are considered good economic actors but troubling gendered ones, as they seem in their person to collapse these structuring oppositions. Lower-class men, in contrast, are written out of the corporate umbrella and forced into quasilegal realms. For urban and periurban lower-class men, privatization entails an increase in irregular and unregulated kinds of work, such as in call center industry driving.

Although most recent studies of class in India focus on middle classes and Dalits, or "untouchable" caste groups (Brosius 2010; Fernandes 2006; Pandey 2009), the lower-class urban (and periurban) subject is key in understanding wealth and social inequality in India today. In other words, the study of inequality in India is often dominated by a binary division between the independent cultural practices of rural lower-class and lower-caste subjects and the totalizing aspirations of middle classes, defined by their ability to regulate cultural norms. This lacuna in the literature is scholarly counterpoint to the ill-defined place of irregular urban and periurban working classes in everyday life. In contemporary India, what Rina Agarwala (2006: 419) terms "the informal working classes" have no definable place. Casual workers who do not earn regular wages and receive no social benefits from either employers or the state have largely replaced unionized workers across India, but their relationship with the state and with the narrative of postliberal progress is ambiguous. While men remain undistinguished as mem-

6. This essay combines critical reflections from gender studies on structures of violence and subjectivity with a consideration of the importance of space highlighted by critical geography. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1993) posited an approach to the study of gender, violence, and race that has since been built on through careful comparative analysis.I follow Amanda Locke Swarr and Richa Nagar (2004: 514), who argue, "Extending intersectionality therefore necessitates that we reconceptualize difference as constituted and (re)configured in relation to place-specific struggles over rights, resources, social practices, and relationships." I would add that the use and right to types of space is also an important site of struggle.

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bers of a poorly delineated "informal" working class, women from similar backgrounds can be absorbed into middle-class imaginaries through their incorporation into white-collar or, better, "pink-collar" work in health and IT industries. Indeed, the discussion of the Delhi victim as a "medical student" in Indian and international newspapers (she studied physiotherapy) and the corresponding lack of emphasis on her underprivileged background (her father worked as a laborer at the Delhi airport) suggest that lower-class women attain social mobility through access to these jobs.

The "moving rape" on the Delhi bus and the call center driver rapes can be understood through this twinning of the upwardly mobile lower-class woman and the dangerous lower-class man. Urban and periurban lower-class men are necessary and dangerous subjects in the new India. Threatening behavior is both part of their job description as drivers who maneuver in the service of private companies on crowded and dangerous roads and is a means by which they claim the right to a share in the economic growth of the middle class. Violence mirrors back the lack of protection offered such workers and produces for casual workers a place within what heretofore has been defined as middle-class pursuits. The moving rape lays claim to the private space of the car and to what is perceived as middle-class pleasures, the "pubs, movies, and restaurants" and the pleasures "of being out in mixed-gender company at night" (Patel 2010). The car, at once a status symbol of middle-class consumption practices and a mode of transportation for the call center industry that relies on men who drive, negotiates access to "middle-class" consumer pleasure. The body of the class- and caste-crossing female student and call center worker is targeted for the uneven politics of mobility across gender that such jobs afford. In the moving rape, the dangerous behavior of drivers is turned toward the interior of the car, inscribing on a woman's body and in the privatized space of this mobile infrastructure a muscular politics of access to pleasure through violation.

This inversion of the enclaved private sphere and the policed border is underwritten by economic privatization and the development of worker control through dispersion, which operates through modulation of existing givens rather through disciplinary practices that shape individuals according to a predefined model (Deleuze 1992: 6). Lower classes are incorporated into privatized economies by simultaneously calling on these bodies as guarantors of liberalization and naming them figures of unrest located outside the privileged locales of the new economy. As the following sections will make clear, these moments in which the car is commandeered through violence are made possible by the very cascading logic of privatization that a neoliberal India repeatedly enacts.

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The Private Car

Indian consumers have a complex relationship with cars. A proliferation of privately owned and driven cars and two-wheelers currently ply Indian roads, while manufacturers such as Tata produce cheap four-wheelers aimed at a middle class with global aspirations and increased consumer drive. As a symbol of the buying power of India's middle classes, the car is a private conveyance that can shield its passengers from the heat and dirt of the streetscape.[7] At the same time, the car participates in the renewed chaos of the road as vehicles compete for space and car crashes express the volatility of Indian automobile culture.

Ravi Sundaram's meditation on the car in contemporary Indian cities captures much of this sense of wonder and dread. Sundaram (2009: 170–71) narrates "a traumatic collapse between inner worlds and the shock of public encounters" as highly publicized car crashes in Delhi in the 1990s brought together the human and the machine as a traumatic new turning in city life. If the car crash and its spectacular reproduction in the media resonated with the everyday experience of speed and danger in the city, it also served as a lever to exercise control over lower-class male bodies through the figure of the driver. Sundaram writes of a Supreme Court order in 1997 in response to a road accident in which a private bus fell into the Yamuna River, killing twenty-eight children. The legislation ordered that buses needed to stop at bus stops and that drivers had to be authorized, have photo ID cards, have at least five years' experience without traffic offenses, and wear uniforms (ibid.: 163). Through this ruling, the state cares for its people by relinquishing partially its practices of control to private enterprise. When the state cedes to private enterprise the right to shape its citizenry, public space is itself privatized. To wit, the High Court judgment addressed private buses, tacitly admitting that these vehicles were necessary supplements to overloaded public bus and transportation systems.[8]

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7. In this sense, the car is a private space. As Raymond Williams writes, cars are "private shell[s]" arranged "so that private mobilities can proceed safely and relatively unhindered" (quoted in Gilroy 2001: 81). In addition to Ross (1995), other useful overviews of car culture include Ladd 2008, Hartestein and Liepelt 1961, Stotz 2001, and Uteng, Priya, and Cresswell 2008. A social history of the car in India awaits it author.

8. Sundaram (2009: 163) concludes this passage, citing Foucault's elaboration of neoliberal governmentality, by arguing that "practices that were ordinarily part of the pastoral power of government were suddenly rendered visible through dramatic civic judgments." Yet, rather than this pastoral power (which is exercised through the continuous calculation and management of risk) being "ordinary," it is fractured, precisely because the state privatizes its care of the people, creating care at a distance, rather than extending its management over the population.

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Private buses, like the one on which the Delhi student was raped, ply the road as part of a host of privatized automobiles that make use of the readily available pool of semiskilled labor to act as drivers. Unlike in postwar France, where the car signaled simultaneously Americanization and modernity, challenging the prewar status quo and catapulting the bourgeois couple with their car into the center of a French life (Ross 1995), the domestication of the car in contemporary India replays the dramas of middle-class home worlds through a master-servant relationship (Ray and Qayum 2009). While the domestic couple and family occupy the car on weekends and for outings, during the work week the private car—and private bus—is a transportation supplement to middle-class economies, chauffeuring call center workers to night shifts and transporting schoolchildren to school buildings, circumventing through private means the less reliable public transportation system of India's metropolitan spaces. The car embodies a contradiction between middle-class autonomy and its reliance on a cadre of workers who guard the boundaries of their private spaces.

Aditya Nigam (2013) writes, voicing this fractured nature of the car:

> Before the 1990s we rarely heard of something like rape in a moving vehicle or mowing down of sleeping pavement dwellers by speeding cars. In the period since the 1990s the car has become a virtual space for the playing out of desire—exhilarating and liberating on the one hand and a space of darkness and crime on the other. The car became an extension of the male self—a vehicle for the display of sexual prowess and displaced sexual gratification through speed.

In addition to the car as extension of male aggression, it is command of privatized consumption that is produced through rape. Violence unfolds from the informal economies that exist alongside formal ones and, at the same time, mirrors the privatization of space in reverse, taking out and exposing what is deemed the most private of space, the insides of a woman's body. The private space of the bus mirrors the gated community and the shopping mall, its tinted windows allowing for a horrible intimacy, its continual movement through the city streets a safeguard against having that private sphere interrupted. Although any reading of the embodiment of violence is speculative, the gruesome details of the rape, where a metal rod was used to eviscerate the victim, seem to replay this impulse of reverse privatization. The metal rod turns her insides out, making the female victim's privates part of the accessible semipublic space of the vehicle.

In other moments of sexualized violence, such as those that accompanied the intercommunal violence of Partition, women's bodies were subject to differently

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weighted violations. According to accounts of Partition violence, women were abducted and raped, their breasts and noses were cut off, their genitals mutilated, and fetuses ripped from their wombs in an effort to prevent them from bearing new Muslim, Sikh, or Hindu subjects. Women became spoils in a war among communities of men, and their bodies were violated for their generative capacities—their ability to reproduce (Butalia 2000; Das 2007). The number of rapes after Partition is much higher than in the cases of moving rape I discuss, allowing researchers to establish a pattern of embodied violence. What may be said of the latter cases is that they noticeably do not conform to the pattern of violation in intercommunal violence. In the case of the Delhi student, she is not treated as the property of an enemy nation available for plunder. Rather, she is marked as a standard-bearer of new class relations that define the middle class through consumer citizenship embodied especially in the "modern and urban" young woman.

Middle-class women's sexuality is problematized as part of a growing consumerist ethic (Lukose 2009). As the Indian market showcased increasing amounts of consumer goods and the buying capacity of certain segments of the public—especially those involved in IT jobs—similarly increased, consumption replaced duty as the glue holding together citizen and nation. This "consumer citizenship" repositioned women simultaneously as bearers of a pure Indian tradition untouched by consumer culture and as a condensed sign of a new consumerism marked by modern dress and sexuality (ibid.: 54–131). As women of lower caste and class backgrounds find roads to upward class mobility through pink-collar jobs, they simultaneously are increasingly sexualized, not because they are forced to enter the "sexually charged" space of the car and the street, but because these very spaces increasingly figure as the borderlands of a respectable middle-class imaginary of consumption taking place behind office park and residential compound walls. The right to pleasure, where sex and desire is sutured to middle-class consumption (Mazzarella 2003: 59–148), materializes when men commandeer a private bus to, in the words of one perpetrator, "have some fun" (Mandhana and Trivedi 2012), "fun" perhaps signaling the transformation of the private from the space of domestic reproduction to the space where the fruits of privatization are enjoyed.

Within these spaces the rising discourse of consumption comes full circle. Lower-class subjects claim the right to enjoyment and become an internal border impinging on what it is meant to protect. In these moments, the invisible guarantors of middle-class consumption claim center stage in its field of desire. The

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smoked-out windows are at once a sign of the intimate space behind the glass and an invitation to claim that space as one's own in the "off-hours."[9]

Private space is claimed for the masculinized *pablik* through acts of violence that take up and invert the lack of defined place for lower-class subjectivity in postliberalization India. The next section demonstrates how violence unfolds from a cascading logic of microdiscipline that differently mobilizes middle- and lower-class citizens.

The Transformative Space of the Car

The four-door sedan in India is simultaneously a middle-class conveyance, protecting the occupants from the dust, noise, and inconvenience of public transport, and a space of labor, where the first steps toward imbrication into the Indian neoliberal economy (exemplified here by software services) must be taken by its lower-class and middle-class workers. It is at once a modern convenience and something else—a stressed space of transformation where the realities of the global software clock are impressed on local conditions. These two demands on the car invert the usual formula for vehicular privilege: driving oneself is a luxury, while being driven is an imposition on white-collar workers caused by the conditions of their employment and the conditions on the street. Ironically, while companies use drivers to circumvent an inadequate transportation system, they also contribute to the inhospitable street by making the street a dangerous space of speed and volatility.

The rape of the physiotherapy student in Delhi resonates with attacks on women by their drivers in the Indian call center industry. Though I do not wish to conflate call center rape cases with the Delhi rape, there are certain similarities in the manner of their unfolding that may be carefully teased out.

In the Indian city of Pune (about ninety-five miles southeast of Mumbai), a twenty-two-year-old woman who was the employee of Indian IT giant Wipro was raped and murdered on November 1, 2007, by her driver and another man. The first man had been hired as a driver; the second man got into the front seat of the car somewhere en route. The victim was driven to an isolated area near a village outside of Pune, where she was raped, disfigured by blows from a rock to her face, and strangled with her *dupatta* (scarf). The night she was murdered was her last day of work. According to the prosecutor in the case, the perpetrators, aged

9. In this sense, as Kavita Krishnan (2013) reminds us, "rape is an assertion of patriarchal power, not of sexual desire."

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twenty and twenty-six, thought that her absence would therefore go unnoticed. On September 17, 2012, the Bombay High Court sentenced the two men to death. High Court justice V. M. Kande released a statement: "The manner in which the offence was committed and the deep impact it has had on the society have been considered by us. Any woman will now think twice before taking a cab alone" (*Times of India* 2012). The verdict underlines the transformative privatization that was taking place in the proliferation of the newly private space of the car, a space that loosened the disciplinary structures holding apart workers and drivers.

Talking with the on-site logistics manager of a call center located in the area of Kalyani Nagar, a district on the outskirts of Pune, in December 2010, I asked why call centers used drivers. I was in Pune investigating how the burgeoning IT industry was affecting lower-class workers in the city, and I focused on those men and women who were drawn into service jobs adjacent to programming and call center work, like cleaning, catering, and driving. My attention turned to the question of safety for call center workers because most of the companies I visited had recently implemented a plan to increase safety for women after a series of rapes and murders of female call center workers by the men who drove them to their work in the IT centers of India, including Bangalore and Pune.

Call centers rely on drivers to bring workers to and from night shifts. To be clear, both men and women work in call centers. In the centers I visited, about one-third of the staff were men. I focus on women here because exploring the dynamics of the call center industry reveals, I believe, a gendered division of labor that is barely noticed but extremely important—the support staff made up mostly of men who drive and provide security for the new spaces of economic growth (like call centers) and symbolic spending (like shopping malls) in contemporary India.

Drivers collect workers from their homes at multiple points around a city in a particular order determined in advance. According to this facilities manager, there were at least three reasons for using cars and drivers rather than having workers find their own way to the office. First, call center workers would not be able to find reliable transportation to and from the office because shifts usually started at eight in the evening and went until four the next morning. Second, call center managers needed to ensure that their workers would be there to answer phone calls from the beginning to the end of their shift, starting on time and ending on time. Most managers felt that workers could not be relied on to be punctual enough for the industry, but that timeliness could be assured by using drivers. To facilitate timeliness, drivers were instructed to wait no more than five minutes for each worker, giving them a courtesy call while waiting. If a worker missed the pickup, it would

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be noted in her time sheet and she would be responsible for getting to work. Third, call center staffing worked on a "just in time" workforce model, where there were only enough workers in the office to field the current call volume. As a result, time schedules were calculated to the quarter hour, and the drivers were key to making sure the shifts were populated with enough workers to handle call volume, but not so many that workers were sitting idle. At times, call center volume might increase unexpectedly and drivers could be sent out quickly to collect additional staff. In this way, the call center was able to offer its clients the discount prices on customer service calls that kept the Indian customer support industry competitive.

These three reasons—availability, timeliness, and adaptability—figure the car as a space of microdiscipline, where whoever the call center worker is before and after work is transformed into the punctual, tireless phone answerer of her shift. The disciplined call center worker answers the phone often with a Western-sounding name, always speaks in the dialectically appropriate (British, Australian, or American) English, answers calls efficiently, is polite to the customer, and can make small talk. Such a worker is a different sort of subject from the kind of person she is at home. When she enters the car, she takes the first steps in becoming the call center worker. In other words, control over call center workers is definite and temporally bounded, creating a worker subjectivity (including a temporary Anglo name and accent) that does not have to be maintained outside of work. Entering the "homogeneous space" of the call center demands a transformation from "India" to "the United States" or "Britain" (Nadeem 2011). The driver is key to this transformation.

Though not recognized as such, drivers are equally "call center workers," subject to a different sort of discipline. Getting the workers to the office on time means driving at breakneck speed, not getting enough sleep or sleeping in the car on breaks, and performing late at night and early in the morning. A driver I spoke with acknowledged that the pace of the work was grueling. It was difficult to stay awake during the night shift. At his company there was no common break room, so he took short naps in his car, and when things were particularly bad, he drank cups of tea bought from tea stalls along the road to keep awake. These methods encourage drivers to flagrantly flout traffic laws and drive in dangerous conditions, including being very sleep deprived. Indeed, many high-profile car crashes in Mumbai and surrounding areas have been attributed to call center driver recklessness. The strict propriety of the call center worker is thus undergirded by the encouraged scofflaw driving habits of the drivers; both contribute to the microdisciplinary space of the car, moving the subject from home to office,

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from the local space of life in the everyday to the international space of life on the phone line to Britain or America.

In the car, driver and worker are linked by the imperatives of industry, relying on each other to keep their place and their paycheck in the new economy. At the same time, their roles are in counterpoint. While the call center worker has to maintain the strict protocols of international customer service work by speaking professionally and with a correct regional accent, the call center driver is encouraged to treat public, national laws as a nuisance. They are thereby asked by companies to downgrade the discourse of the "public good," elevating corporate interests above them. The dismantling of the "license Raj," the ongoing act of liberalization that "opened" India to corporate interests and reduced their legal impediments, is here enacted through the dangerous practices of call center drivers.

In the wake of the call center worker murder discussed above and others in Bangalore and Noida (Patel 2010; Nadeem 2011), the call center worker-driver dyad moved to the center of disciplinary attention. Paradoxically, one of the many reactions to the murders of call center workers by their drivers was to strengthen a link between the two. A director of security for a call center told me that the killings were unconscionable, but the problem was that drivers and female workers were getting too comfortable with one another. They came from the same communities, he claimed, and would naturally start talking. It was inappropriate, he went on, for drivers and workers to fraternize, because "men could take advantage." He had decided therefore that in his firm the same driver should not drive the same passengers repeatedly.

This intervention conceptualizes the driver and the female call center worker as similar across the scene of violence. In the moment they are separated out as male aggressor and female victim they are also reconstituted as members of the "same community," meaning of similar caste background. This similarity separates call center workers from other people in the IT industry, like programmers, who are almost always from high-caste and upper-middle-class families (Amrute 2014; Fuller and Narasimhan 2007). The facilities manager's read of the situation suggests that the newness of the call center car is that it is throwing together men and women whose sexuality should be policed by the bonds of socially sanctioned unions. The car figures here as an intimate space away from proper parental authority, where the routine of pickups and drop-offs allows bonds of sociality to develop over time. Though I do not have the data to test whether victims and perpetrators were indeed from the same community, posing the problem of rape in this way implies policing women's bodies to rein in men's sexuality. In this nar-

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rative, men's desire is portrayed as a natural urge, while the problem becomes one of channeling such desires appropriately, toward the correct women in the correct settings (Das 1996: 2418).

After the rape and murder case in Pune, Pune police issued a list of suggestions for female riders. Call centers across the city began issuing these guidelines to all female employees on hiring. I, too, was handed a sheet by the director of security called "Safety Awareness among the Female Employees," given to all women call center employees in the firm I was studying. According to the bullet points on this sheet, I was directed to (1) have at least two to three speed-dialing numbers stored in my mobile phone; (2) avoid/restrict usage of mobile while traveling and be alert / monitor the traveling route; (3) only be dropped off at the proper place; (4) if I was the first person picked up, not board the cab without the presence of an escort during odd hours; (5) not ask for a lift from unknown cabs/persons; (6) not ask for drop-off/pickup directly from a vendor supervisor / driver without interacting with the transport department; (7) avoid personal interaction with a driver/supervisor; (8) escalate [send up the chain of supervisors] any issue related to a driver's behavior/misconduct in a timely manner (even though not of a serious nature); and (9) not discuss/share personal matters with a driver or with fellow passengers while in the cab.

In such advisory documents, the female passenger as much as, if not more so than, the male driver is being taught how to behave in the space of the car. Women are told that the car is not private in the sense that it is not a space of domesticity; it is not a place to discuss private matters. The car is construed in the list like the public space of a bus, in which the female passenger needs to be on guard from unwanted male attention. The privatization of transportation is accomplished by absorbing lower-class men into the space of the car, where they are ambiguous figures that internalize the public space of the street in the private vehicle.

According to the staff of vendor firms (companies to which work is subcontracted), drivers had to follow certain rules if they were to remain employed. They had to wear uniforms and keep their cars clean. They were forbidden from decorating the inside or outside of their cars. According to the vendor manager I spoke with, it was important that they had a neat and clean appearance at all times and practiced good hygiene. They were also trained in manners and etiquette. Drivers needed to get out of the car at each stop and open the door for passengers, saying "good evening, ma'am," and close the door after the passenger got in. They were also forbidden from engaging in unnecessary conversation with passengers. Finally, every week, the fleet manager held a meeting with drivers to discuss any problems that had arisen.

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Training in etiquette, hygiene, and appearance, "techniques of the body," use comportment to instill in drivers a professional attitude toward their work and toward the passengers (Mauss 1973). These bodily practices rely on a long history of training the body to internalize discipline (Foucault 1995, 2007). Important here is the strict bar placed between driver and passenger, a factor that is stressed for both drivers and call center workers. The disciplining of call center worker and driver mirror each other, with the call center employee being instructed in discretion and the driver in respectful distance. Together, they suggest that both the female employee and the male service worker need to be trained in how to be exemplary citizens of postliberalization India. The aftermath of such cases as the call center rape and murder is the consolidation of this dyad as in need of training.

Distributed management—such as that practiced through outsourcing driving to vendor companies—offers a kind of organization that can adjust rapidly to industry needs and removes responsibility for worker well-being from the company's hands. The subject herself is responsible for safety, risk, and conduct, while "dangerous" subjects' behavior is managed, not reformed. In drivers' free time, it is accepted that they will do what they want (within limits), and the solution is to disassociate them from the company. This way of organizing service labor recuses corporations from being responsible for the molding of working-class bodies as good subject-citizens of the state. As long as they are performing their work properly, they can be left to flourish or to exhaust themselves on their own (Povinelli 2011). The nested outsourcing of labor interpolates drivers in contemporary India as dangerous subjects who at once are within and beyond state and corporate control. The scaffolding of hierarchies in the new economy supports control that need only be asserted in certain spaces that belong to the corporation (Deleuze 1992), while responsibility for time outside of work is uncaptured.

Distanced Bodies

The ambiguous position of drivers on the edge of the private intensified in the wake of call center violence. After assaults on female call center workers by their drivers, the industry further reorganized to distance drivers from call centers by outsourcing driver functions. Many companies stopped running their own fleets of cars. Instead, drivers were organized by intermediary businesses. One such business I visited that was typical for this operation was a travel company that organized trips within India and also rented cars. Another, nonvisible side of this business consisted in running a call center driving service.

I interviewed the manager of the travel agency in his air-conditioned back

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office, where he outlined how the call center driver industry had changed to minimize damage to firms. First, he told me, call centers began using intermediaries like him to organize the drivers. He was responsible for recruiting drivers, making sure that they ran on time, and making sure that they behaved properly with the passengers. By "outsourcing" drivers, high-profile companies could distance themselves from driving, reduce exposure to accidents and crime, and minimize responsibility for driver behavior. The manager indicated that having cars owned by third parties was also a means to distance call centers and travel agencies from the actions of the drivers. Before the rape in Pune, travel agencies used to operate their own fleet of cars, but now the drivers organize cars themselves. The driver fleet operators contracted directly with drivers, who had to find their own third-party car owner and make an off-the-books transaction with them. When I asked the manager who these third-party operators might be, he indicated that underworld (mafia) money might be involved, saying that the rumor is that local dons bought fleets of cars and arranged deals with drivers as a means to launder money. Finally, he told me, because the industry does not want to be associated with these drivers in off-hours, travel agencies and call centers do not want their cars with their attendant labels and stickers to be in the hands of drivers. As the manager put it, "We cannot control the actions and movements of the drivers when they are not on call, where they go or park the cars."

Taken together, these measures reorganized the driver-firm relationship in the direction of increased distance. They carried the outsourcing model to the service industry; operations were outsourced that were seen as peripheral to the main business of a firm or as a potential liability to a series of firms, from software companies to travel agencies. This development suggests diffused oversight, where drivers are controlled by a chain of intermediaries rather than by the firms themselves. At the same time, in this model of driver control, latitude is given to the activities of drivers after work. Rather than try to create drivers who will be disciplined at all times, diffused oversight makes certain that drivers are "docile bodies" while at work but "distanced bodies" during their off-hours. The suggestion of mob presence in buying call center cars connotes two kinds of illegality. It hints that drivers already operate in shadowy worlds that have no place in the call center industry. It also suggests that there is something vaguely criminal in the company's attempts to eschew moral and legal responsibility. At the same time, and as an indicator of how the IT economy operates in practice, it betrays the reliance of these globally reputed industries on a large infrastructure of only partially accounted-for free-floating money and labor. Criminality is enfolded into normal business practice as a way of distancing the company from liability. The injunc-

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tion to remove decoration on cars and anonymize them speaks to the imperative to represent companies as clear, efficient, and modern. In the manager's opinion, car sanitization also creates distance between a firm and the activities taking place in the cars of off-duty drivers by "unbranding" the vehicle. The effect is a ghostly presence of clean, unmarked four-door sedans on an otherwise dusty and cacophonous streetscape, ironically highlighting rather than hiding the call center car.

The unadorned call center car presents a distinct contrast to the tradition of vehicular art in South Asia. The brightly painted slogans, devotional messages, in-vehicle shrines, and lights that adorn buses, trucks, taxis, and rickshaws across the subcontinent "constitute a network of unauthorized or semi-authorized spatial insertions" in the Indian streetscape (Chattopadhyay 2009: 121). Vehicular art closes the distance between middle classes and lower classes by giving voice to a lower-class presence in public through a shared vocabulary of slogans, icons, and images (ibid.: 129). The sanitized call center car suggests the erasure of the visible politics of lower-class agitation from liberalized spaces. The unadorned car aligns the roadway with the concerns of private business as corporate persons with a right to infrastructural domination. It sits alongside demands for roadways, water, and electricity that IT companies make on the municipalities of IT hubs like Bangalore. These demands counteract the road as a shared communicative space, where competing claims to the public jostle against one another.

The Sacrifice at the Border: A Reworked Violent Masculinity

In the politics of call center work, and in the mobile infrastructure of the private vehicle that underwrites economic liberalization in India, women and men are linked through their economic roles, and their gender is coconstructed in ways that cut against established class identities. As the previous section argued, class mobility and infrastructural mobility are collapsed such that women are class mobile but rely on men to be spatially mobile. The distinctions of class mingle with the production of gender distinctions to assign men and women of the same class backgrounds opposite roles in industry (Roychowdhury 2013). While women answer phones and perform other "pink-collar" service work, men drive and work in building maintenance and operations (for similar cases, see Wright 2006; Freeman 2000).

Several authors writing about urban, rural, and periurban populations across India have noted the repertoires of masculinity that have emerged in the wake of market liberalization. These forms of masculinity both respond to the disenfranchisement of lower-class men and enable the growth of economies that rely

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on large cadres of informal workers who fill in the gaps in public service even while they cut costs in private enterprise. Lower-class masculinities are articulated in opposition to the performance of femininity and, often, in competition with upper-class and upper-caste masculinity. Vinay Gidwani and K. Sivaramakrishnan (2003: 193), for instance, detail how Dalits and tribals (their term) reject their historically servile position through alternative employment and through forms of consumption that were previously only attainable by upper-caste groups. In the agricultural cotton fields of South India, Priti Ramamurthy notes, boys do night work and are also given a portion of their earnings as pocket money, while girls work during the day and are expected to have their earnings fully absorbed into the household economy. These two moves both "police girls' sexuality because they are not allowed to go 'roaming around' at night" and help reproduce a masculine ideology of personal consumption and occupation of public spaces (Ramamurthy 2004: 761). For these young men, masculinity defined through consumption sits alongside masculinity defined by being a breadwinner (Osella and Osella 2006), two forms of being masculine that Ritty Lukose's (2009) lower-caste informants also struggle with as they make the transition from college life to adulthood. Meanwhile, Thomas Blom Hansen's study of the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena party in Mumbai in the 1990s details the rise of a hypermasculinity that simultaneously exaggerates and boasts of physical prowess, command of public space, and ritualized violence. For Hansen, this violence is performative. It creates a martial Hindu male identity by being retaliatory, spectacular, popular, and purifying (Hansen 2001: 65).

Elements of a consumerist, performative, public, and oppositional masculinity present themselves in the violence of the moving rape. The twinning of the lower-class male driver and the upwardly mobile female worker enacts a "failed" masculinity that is recuperated through the violence of rape that makes of a woman's body an object of consumption while it codes masculinity through sexual violence. This violence redraws "unambiguous" boundaries between powerful perpetrators and their victims. Added to these tropes of masculinity is another one—the violent masculinity of the patrolling border guard. The car driver as border guard is another way that class-specific masculinity is being revisited, urbanized, and dispersed. The border guard represents the ambiguous incorporation of necessary violence in the policing and protecting of the private spaces of neoliberal accumulation.

I have argued that private company and government responses to the case of call center rapes target those in the undefined spaces of liberalized India. Neither elite subjects driving development nor needy subjects receiving development,

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these workers are an uneasy necessity in contemporary Indian economies (Batt, Murty, and Ramamurthy 2010: 128–29; Roy 2007). The disciplinary practices discussed in this article suggest that they are being interpolated as modulated subjects, capable of adhering to tightly controlled work practices but still remaining beyond the ethical compass of the middle class. At the same time, such workers are disciplined not as separable subjects but as those that exist by definition in an unequal dyad with call center workers representing the middle class more generally. This points to a mode of power that while it erects clear boundaries for the purpose of disciplining bodies, blurs boundaries for the sake of efficient utility. This blurring, however, leads not to mobility across jobs but rather to the proliferation of spaces and times of overlap, which then in turn are subject to appropriation. Within this relationship the historical legacy of watchmen has been renewed to shape lower-class men as the guards of middle-class privacy. In the new India, the proliferation of border guards is palpable. At every office park, there is a guard's station; at every shopping mall, uniforms patrol its arcades; in every gated community, there is a watchman. The violence of rape is linked to a history of protection and its counterpart, the threat of violent appropriation. In the current moment, historically specific forms of violence as protection are made into a generalized and anonymous practice.

The figure of the border guard as a marker of caste distinction has a long history. The *vatan* (a hereditary right to land) in some cases demanded the ritual sacrifice of a Dalit and the burial of the body at the borders of a village, an initial sacrifice that endowed Dalit communities simultaneously with rights to land and title and kept them in unremunerated service to the villages, the government, and upper castes (Rao 2009: 257–59). These hereditary rights were also granted to the so-called criminal castes and tribes, who established contracts with agriculturalists to guard their lands, according to Anand Pandian's account of *kavalkaran* (protection). The authority of such watchmen was predicated on their ability to be violent (Pandian 2009: 80). Finally, as in Anjali Arondekar's (2009) account of precolonial and colonial sexual politics, such rights were also granted to *hijras* (a third sex) as representatives of kingly power at the edges of the social order. The *ves* (village border) marked these spaces as sites where the integrity of the inside space of the village was maintained through the border guard, a figure endowed with virility, policing the social while existing on its borders, at once organized within and threatening to violently upend the social order.

The driver, office guard, and shopping mall security officer are heirs to the complicated politics of the border. Such border figures exemplify what Rey Chow (2006: 144) calls "the unavoidability and universality of violence, [which]

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ironically implies a basic, incontrovertible evenness and equality among human beings." The founding of the border figure in violence and the possibility of the violence of such figures are, according to Chow's logic, two sides of the coin of sacrificial violence that can sacrifice a figure in order to enforce social order and can authorize violence as a leveler of social difference. Though Chow presents a universalist reading of the meaning of violence, the dispersion of violence in postliberalization India suggests a more historicized reading of the same.

Bundled together with the robust use of the guard is the long history of violent appropriation as an assertion of lower-caste and lower-class agency. That is, the figure of the watchman is both liminal and on the outside of the social order and guarantees that order through the use of violence as protection. The implied violence of protection has also historically been used by lower-caste and other marginal subjects to assert, appropriate, and maintain authority, however fragile and compromised. Yet the historical particularity of the liberalizing moment inclines toward erasing the politics of class and caste in sexual violence and framing it as the singular urges of savage individuals.[10] As Veena Das (2008) argues, there is an acceptance of violence enabled by the rhetoric of women needing "protection" and needing to police their own dress and behavior and of rapists and men who move against the norms of male civility. Within an extended politics of the border, drivers and guards bring together lower-class, lower-caste subjects and middle-class men, framing male savagery as the necessary guarantor of male civility. Longer histories of violence, such as those embodied by the history of the watchman, may be reenergized and put in the service of the many unfolding projects of liberalization. The figure of the border guard comes to inhabit and haunt the clean, air-conditioned, indeed sanitized spaces of contemporary India.

Conclusion: Public Liberalization

Liberalization is at once a renegotiation of terms of state protection for lower classes and the reinstatement of the private as demanding social protection and maintenance—often by the very public it has otherwise abandoned. Those sub-

10. Mackie 2009 offers a comparative, eighteenth-century case, where the twinned figures of the highwayman and the gentleman both reinforced each other and allowed for the continuation of violence and the violation of women's rights and bodies as a reservoir of male identity. For a useful review of Mackie 2009, see also Rosenthal 2012. For a discussion of necessarily dangerous individuals, see Foucault 1979. Although Foucault begins his discussion of pathology and the law with a case of rape, he does not explore the specifically gendered dimensions of the crime as part of the apparatus of judicial disbelief that he tracks.

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jects who are ambiguously placed within a liberalized economy are configured as in need of retraining, accomplished through management that acts at a distance (Galloway 2010: 87). Both the female call center worker who can claim partial membership in the middle class despite lower class and caste background (Patel 2010) and the male driver who is moved from being the domestic and public figure of authority over such women to being the border guards of their new lifestyle need to be taught how to behave according to these new protocols.

Lower-class male subjects are meant to mark transition points between local and global imaginaries and defend the middle classes' right to private space. In the informal zones of labor organized through progressive rounds of outsourcing and subcontracting, these border figures are not fixed members of a hierarchy—for example, like the driver of a police superintendent who has a fixed position in an established order of things—but are temporally rather than socially bounded to their subordinate roles. The drivers make sure that the economy runs on time, while the guards make sure that the shopping malls remain exclusive. These figures are neither the "have-nots" nor the "haves" of liberalization but guarantee the privacy of the latter.

The court cases and calls for capital punishment in the aftermath of the Delhi case have largely replayed discourses of male savagery and male civility through which perpetrators are framed as "social savage[s]" who must be tamed (Das 1996: 2418). Similarly, despite the educational and situational characteristics (accompanied, at a "decent" hour) that protect the virtuousness of the victim, the discourse of the good and bad women continues to circulate: to date, the lawyers for the defense claim that the cause of the Delhi rape was that the unmarried couple was on the street at night, making the victim fall outside the circle of "respected ladies" (MacAskill 2013). Continuing protests move the discourse away from virtue and protection and toward the interrogation of systematic prejudice in the legal and justice system. If they are to retain their radical edge, they must continue to simultaneously let go of the rhetoric of the dangerous or victimized women and begin to question the legitimacy of a middle-class privacy encircled by those who guard it but do not partake of it—except in the form of violent appropriation.

Meanwhile, the response from the IT industry has been to provide guidelines and tools of management to modulate the behavior of drivers. The goal of these companies is to manage and minimize risk to their reputation and to the safety of employees. One chief operating officer I interviewed suggested providing female workers with the technological setup to work at home as a solution to violence in public space. Such a solution would enfold women in patriarchal domestic space through a technocratic rationale that sidesteps women's rights.

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These contradictions point out the need to delineate more clearly the changes wrought by liberalization beyond the dismantling of state protections in favor of private regulation, especially in places where the protection of the state was never extended in practice to all citizens. Though this article does not take the Delhi protests and similar national protests as its object of study, it is in keeping with the spirit of their politics. I offer these final thoughts not as a diagnosis of a "sick" society with an entrenched "rape culture" (Baxi 2014) but as an examination of the ongoing contradictions of postliberalization, which produce violence that is socially productive (Appadurai 1998) and protests that are socially transformative. In the interplay of privacy as the space of domestic intimacy and privatization as freedom from government interference, the lower-class man and upwardly mobile woman emerge as linked figures marking the limits of, as well as conditions of possibility for, India's liberalization.

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