

The Inauguration**Naveeda Khan**

On 26 November 1997, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif inaugurated a new highway connecting the capital city of Islamabad to the historic city of Lahore. The six-lane, 333-kilometer-long M2 Motorway, which took five and a half years to complete and cost 987 million U.S. dollars, or 45 billion Pakistani rupees, was the first American-style highway ever built in the Indian subcontinent.¹ Nawaz Sharif claimed as much as he shouted “There is not one motorway in the entire Hindustan” from his Caravan of Progress bus, which traversed the road from Islamabad to Lahore during the Motorway’s inauguration.² Camels bedecked in festive colors danced in step to the beat of drums and Punjabi folk songs, while foreign and local dignitaries and members of the press looked upon the start of something new. However, the inauguration carried premonitions of troubled times ahead as onlookers complained of falling victim to pickpockets, government officials took an unofficial holiday to attend the cavalcade, public cars were impounded to provide transportation to the Motorway, and the windscreens of cars shattered as people drove onto the hard shoulder of the road despite instructions to the contrary.³ The road appeared to be not yet free of the old habits of the corrupt state and the unruly crowd.

In the year that followed the Motorway’s inauguration, Nawaz Sharif’s claim that one hundred thousand vehicles per day would ply the road within the first few months alone, allowing the state, or rather its creditors, to make money hand over fist through tolls, service charges, and, later, tourism, had fallen far short of reality.⁴ By 1998, a mere five thousand vehicles had been coaxed into using the road per day, despite promises of “sale” or toll-free days.⁵ Pakistani officials claimed that this was due to slow public adaptation to new technology. However, recent enthusiastic support for flyovers, dams, luxury coaches, and nuclear bombs in Pakistan would suggest that this was not the case. How do we account for the Motorway’s lack of popularity?

Debates in the Pakistani press provide us a useful point of entry into

this question. Commentators complained that the Motorway was doomed to fail because roads ought to reflect the nation's state-of-the-art development.⁶ Given the poor state Pakistan was in, developmentally speaking, the Motorway was out of step with its environs. In other words, the Motorway's modernity far outstripped that of Pakistan's. Although everyone agreed on this point, there were those who felt that it was not necessarily a bad thing. The Motorway was here; in other words, Pakistan's future was here, and it gave the nation something to aspire toward assimilating within itself.⁷ Pakistan had the chance to be modern again,⁸ with this second chance being unexpectedly delivered by the famously befuddled Nawaz Sharif (which in itself was cause for amazement).

What these debates pointed to was a certain lack of fit between the Motorway and Pakistan. This lack of fit was articulated in the press in temporal terms: was the Motorway in the present, near future, or distant future of Pakistan? This discussion raises for us a second question: given its present unpopularity, how might the Motorway relate to Pakistan's future? This question gains urgency if we consider that Islamabad, the planned modernist capital of Pakistan, remained as yet unassimilated within the imagined geography of Pakistan some forty years after its inception. As the oft-cited expression goes, Pakistan begins where Islamabad stops. How might the Motorway avoid the fate of remaining a stranger to Pakistan?

We get a sense of the lack of fit between the Motorway and Pakistan by attending to how the Motorway was experienced in the years immediately following its inauguration. Moreover, our exploration of the effects of perception, habitation, and sociality fostered by the road's mediatic and material qualities also suggests how the Motorway may relate to Pakistan's coming modernity.⁹ It does so in such a way as not to outstrip nor augur this modernity but rather to cut a swath across it by anticipating Pakistan's future in a mode previously unarticulated. By explicating this mode of anticipating Pakistan's future I hope to draw out the experience of Pakistan's modernity specific to the Motorway.¹⁰ In so doing I contribute to recent conversations within social theory on how to characterize a modernity that moves beyond thinking of it as either singular or multiple, and how to delineate the relationship between the state and its citizenry that moves beyond the assumption of a disciplinary state and an inherently trespassing people.

Roads and Communication

The promise of the Motorway was to revolutionize communication. In his inauguration speech, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proclaimed, "The

construction of the motorway in the highways *communications* system is a milestone in the developmental history of Pakistan.”¹¹ Sheikh Inaamul Haque, then minister of communications, was quoted as saying that “the Pakistan Motorway is a revolutionary addition in the *communications* system of Pakistan.”¹² Furthermore, Sharif claimed that the Motorway would create “greater national unity,” and Haque expected that “fast transportation facilities and [the] motorway” would “speed up economic development” and “promote cultural integration within the country.”¹³

These inaugural statements assume a relationship between roads and communication that is necessary to parse out in this section in order to explore later: (1) the promise of communication hitched to the Motorway, (2) how the promise was actualized upon the Motorway and experienced by travelers of the road, in order to get at (3) Pakistan’s modernity specific to the Motorway.

The conceptual route I provide below linking roads to communication relies upon works largely focused on North America. This choice derives from the observation that the Pakistani elite, in addition to being geopolitically aligned with the United States since the Cold War, has also been drawn to reproducing certain archetypical aspects of U.S. urban life. Thus, such elements as wide roads, the culture of the car, strip malls, and fast-food restaurants were evident in Pakistani cities much earlier than in neighboring India or Bangladesh long before one heard talk of globalization and its effects.¹⁴ Finally, the American highway system is the source of inspiration for Pakistan’s highway system. The Motorway is represented as an American-style highway. Yet this is not to say that the American experience substitutes for the Pakistani one, for it is the intent of this paper to spell out the specificity of the Pakistani experience of the Motorway. However, one can fruitfully attend to these prior works to understand how roads retain their relevance for communication, that promise of a relatively seamless and free exchange of information and ideas among people, in the time of the telegraph, the telephone, and, more recently, the Internet.

In the summer of 1939, Futurama, the General Motors Highway and Horizons exhibit at the New York World’s Fair, gave the 5 million Americans who saw it their first taste of a future determined by an advanced highway system crisscrossing the entire United States. Norman Bel Geddes, the exhibit’s visionary, followed this exhibit up with a book, *Magic Motorways*, in which he laid out the rationale behind such a highway system.¹⁵ Besides the fact that such roads would cut down on traffic congestion, enhance driving safety, and render more efficient everyday life amid a whole host of positive effects, roads would also have a beneficial effect on communication: “Roads are not ends in themselves but means to ends. They depend on and are designed for human enterprise. Other inventions bring the world

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to us. But the car enables us to go out into the world ourselves. Communication of ideas and emotions thus established has the effect of bringing the country into a closer unity.”¹⁶ For Geddes, roads held a promise of communication that was greater than their disparate parts. Roads, via the car, brought us to the world, as the world awaited us to discover it and one another within it. And through this worldly encounter, itself generative of an intersubjective traffic of emotions and ideas, unity ensued.¹⁷

Yet, in his 1964 classic, *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan, the seer of new media, departed from Geddes’s idea of communication.¹⁸ McLuhan claimed that roads belonged properly to communication, understood by him as the transportation of bodies and goods, prior to the coming into being of electricity. With electricity came electric pulses, foreshadowing the telegraph. Communication, now understood as information flows, took flight from roads.¹⁹ Roads, once home to couriers and later to newspapers, were no longer central to successful communication.

James W. Carey’s *Communication as Culture* helps us to bridge Geddes’s and McLuhan’s disparate understandings of communication.²⁰ In line with McLuhan’s thinking, Carey saw communication as always effecting newness through its need for new technologies in its quest for imparting information to the greatest number.²¹ Here the focus was on spatial reach rather than on the temporal. However, there was another understanding of communication hovering over this one, as that of an ideal over its actualized form. It was the archaic understanding of communication that linked it with notions of “sharing,” “participation,” and “fellowship” and that aligned Carey with Geddes’s line of thought. For Carey, it was through communication that the mysterious unity that interested Geddes as a possibility immanent among men in the world was brought about. This was communication with a temporal reach, as cultural transmission across generations.²²

Thus Carey helps us to understand the way in which promise and actuality exist alongside each other within the act of communication. Yet he doesn’t quite help us to understand why roads would retain so much significance in aiding communication in both senses of the term, as information flows to the greatest number or as both generative and expressive of national/cultural unity. Why herald the Motorway as a revolution in communication in Pakistan in the late 1990s? Recourse to Friedrich Kittler’s *Discourse Network 1800/1900* provides us a framework by which the road may once again relate to communication.²³

The discourse network (DN), which holds conceptual sway for Kittler, is a particular linkage of power, technologies, discourses, and bodies that together comprise a historically specific notation system. For a DN, communication is not an act per se but an outcome of the successful working

of the entire notation system. This picture of communication as a skein of connectivity brings into sharper focus the *mediality* of the technology within the DN, that is, its respective storage, retrieval, and transmission capacities, as well as its *materiality*, which can prove to be a recalcitrant agent in its own right, insofar as it generates obstructions within the DN affecting its output. We are thus able to relate the Motorway to communication in that the road is like any communication technology with medial and material elements within the DN extant in Pakistan. And it is through this DN that the road maintains particular relations of connectivity to the body that traverses it and that also has mediality and materiality intrinsic to itself.²⁴ While the road indexes its participation in a DN by the conjoined effects of its mediality and materiality upon the specific form and content of the DN's communicative output, the body does so by the perception, habitation, and sociality that the DN engenders in it, that which I have called *sufferance*. Here I am taking sufferance to be the bodily affect specific to a particular DN, that is, the body's expression of pathos even as its capacities are extended and reconstituted by the DN. With this relationship among roads, bodies, and communication more clearly articulated, we are better positioned to attend to the promise and actuality of communication hovering over the Motorway.

The Promise of Communication: The Grand Trunk Road/The Motorway

What was the specific promise of communication of the Motorway? Once again Friedrich Kittler suggests that we locate ourselves between two DNs, at a point of exteriority to both, in order to speak to the specific configuration of technologies and bodies internal to each DN. The oblique (/) in the title of his book *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* provides shorthand for this location. It is this productive location of the in-between that I seek by hitching the DN of the Grand Trunk (GT) Road of the 1800s to that of the Motorway in the 1900s.²⁵ Dating to the sixteenth century, the GT Road runs east to west from northern India through Pakistan. It was first metalled and made usable for wheeled traffic by the British in the mid-nineteenth century. At inception, the road was three tree-lined-lanes wide, with a faster, broader carriageway in the middle.²⁶ In 1927, K. M. Sarkar, a British-employed chronicler, culled the history of the metalling of the GT Road from government records. In his short monograph, *The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab*, he described how the section of the GT Road which lay in Punjab was graveled, paved, cemented, and bridged between 1849 and 1886 to prepare it for "wheeled traffic."²⁷ Thus pre-

pared, it was the first modern roadway in India, an unknown before the advent of the British in South Asia.

There are close parallels in the thrust of reasoning employed in arguing the usefulness of the GT Road and the Motorway for defense and trade purposes respectively:

Lines constructed directly for military purposes incidentally served commerce, while the commercial roads were often used for the transit of troops, stores and ammunitions.²⁸

Lastly, it [the GT Road] is the great outlet and channel for the import and export trade between India, Central Asia and the West.²⁹

Compare these with the following:

From the defense viewpoint, the Motorway will allow safer and expeditious movement of troops, armour and logistics during peace and war.³⁰

The Motorway once completed will become the trade and commerce artery and a major economic conduit connecting South with Central Asia, Russia, Turkey and Europe.³¹

The above quotes would suggest that the arrival of the GT Road in its modern incarnation in the nineteenth century decisively shaped the arrival and discursive reception of all future roads in the subcontinent. However, it was not simply the case that the GT Road prepared us to understand the inception and integration of the Motorway. Rather the very emergence of the Motorway was necessary to elucidate the particular discursive thrust of the GT Road, to understand its actual communicative importance. Thus, for Pakistan, the GT Road and the Motorway may be taken to inhabit the two sides of the oblique in DN 1800/1900 respectively.

For Sarkar, the colonial chronicler, a crucial marker of the GT Road's modernity was the heroic service it rendered to the British as *the* important conduit of communication during the dreaded Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, when a revolt within the Indian army spread to the "native" populace: "It [the GT Road] can claim to have saved India for the British. Troops had to be brought hastily to the siege of Delhi; stores and ammunition sent to them; constant *communication* kept up with the head-quarters. All this would have been impossible, indeed the capture of Delhi itself would have been impossible, at least for a considerable length of them, without this roadway."³² By transporting goods, men, and messages, the GT Road proved its success as a mediatic technology.

However, Sarkar did not exalt the mediality of the GT Road alone. He was equally preoccupied with its material dimensions.³³ In his paean to the GT Road, Sarkar extolled the material dimensions of the road, its exact number of bridges, culverts, drains, and trees, its picturesque qualities, and its hostelry facilities:

These tracts [of the route] though unadorned with trees and unrelieved by picturesque features are studded with well-peopled villages, blest with two harvest in the year, and are the homes of a sturdy, industrious and skillful peasantry.³⁴

To provide a mere road-way from one end of India to another would by itself be useless, if it were not supplemented by serais [hotels] and wells at suitable intervals, and shady trees along the roadside to protect the travelers from the scorching rays of the sun.³⁵

For Sarkar, the road existed not only to aid communicative flows but also to be experienced as a sojourn through everyday life, with travelers nourished by intermittent rest along the way.

Yet Sarkar's exaltation of the GT Road's mediality and materiality sat uneasily with a quote inserted at the conclusion of his monograph: "The ignorant Sepoys," wrote Lt.-Col. Edwardes to Montgomery in 1858, 'rising against European civilization, were slow to appreciate its [telegraph] imperial triumph, and the wire was not cut down till it had done its work and electrified the Empire.'³⁶ It would appear from this quote that it was the telegraph, and not the road, that made possible the "military and political communication" necessary for British success in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny. If that was the case, then McLuhan's claim that roads were only secondary to communication would be proven true. Perhaps Sarkar, experiencing modern roads and telegraphs at the same moment, was unable to register the primacy of the telegraph over the road in facilitating communication, and the road's heroic role as a mediatic technology was revealed dramatically to him at the very moment of its demise as such.

However, I would argue that for Sarkar the GT Road was as effective in aiding communication as the telegraph. It is my claim that through its admixture of mediality and materiality the GT Road put itself on display for the rebels of 1857, sidelining the telegraph to allow it to get on with the work of supplying information to the colonial empire. The communicative importance of the GT Road lay in its being watched, in people sojourning there, thus diverting attention from the movement of information overhead. Consequently, the road and the telegraph each did its part within DN 1800 in effecting successful communication.

What this analysis seeks to reveal was the importance the DN of the

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GT Road gave to differential access to communication, with the British kept well informed by the telegraph while the rebels were diverted, hence felled, by watching the display of the road. In contrast, the DN of the Motorway promised equal access to communication for all. To remind ourselves, in his 1997 inauguration speech then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated that the Motorway would create “greater national unity.” Sheikh Inaamul Haque, then minister of communications, predicted that “fast transportation facilities and [the] motorway” would “speed up economic development” and “promote cultural integration within the country.” In other words, the Motorway promised equal and speedy access to information, thereby leveraging social equality, national unity, and cultural and religious integration, and thus propelling Pakistani society into the twenty-first century.

However, unlike the mediality and materiality of the GT Road that worked together to pull off successful communication within DN 1800, the mediality of the Motorway was at odds with its materiality within DN 1900. In other words, if the mediality of the Motorway was analogous to a widespread telephone network, its materiality introduced cuts into this network. Let us first explore the mediality of the Motorway. Once again we do this by contrast with the GT Road, but in this instance the GT Road of recent years. By the late 1990s (at which time I was in Pakistan), the sides of the GT Road were less picturesque than Sarkar had painted them in 1927. They were now choked with the architectural markings of human settlements, with signboards and public telephone systems, and crowds of dubious origins, all potential communicative relays. After all, the GT Road ran right through cities, towns, and villages. Nor was the road physically cordoned off from its environs. Hence local traffic (pedestrians, bicycles, motorbikes, and rickshaw vans) intermittently intermingled with and rendered dense long-distance movements upon the road.

In sharp contrast, the Motorway circumvented human settlements. It unfolded through large agricultural tracts, deserts, and salt ranges. It rose clear above them. Its borders were sharply marked, not only warning off trespassers but also physically deterring movement across its sides. It could not be entered and exited at will, only through clearly designated pathways called link roads. Consequently, the Motorway had clear sides. Moreover, the state maintained a strict monopoly over the signage permissible along the Motorway. This ensured it a space cleared for its own messages while leaving the receiver of these messages in no doubt as to their source.

Some messages displayed information, while others expected exchange with Motorway users. For instance, on the way to the Motorway one found signage bearing the icon of the Motorway (two parallel tracks) alerting us that we were nearing it. Once on the road we might find overhead signs

announcing mileage to destinations or the rare billboard announcing “Petrol-Food.” These signs flashed information, expecting no exchange. Other Motorway features such as tollbooths, police patrols, or service stations expected exchange. A site of seamless communication was the tollbooth, where cars, buses, and trucks queued to pay tolls ranging from 200 to 700 rupees to the friendly but incorruptible personnel. In fact, the Motorway was the only toll road in Pakistan, that is, it was the only effectively taxed service while tax evasion and collection abuses were rife elsewhere. In return for paying tolls, Motorway travelers received informational flyers titled “Specific Instructions for Motorway” put out by the special force assembled to police this road. The tollbooth was the first point of exchange on the road where the state conveyed a set of messages to road users and expected replies, in this instance in the form of a tax, and thus accomplished a successful flow of communication.

The state hoped that the flow of communication would continue via the travelers who, by committing these instructions to heart, would make themselves into ideal relays for future exchanges with the state and, moreover, relay this pedagogy to a wider network of Motorway users. At the time of the inauguration of the Motorway, special lectures were organized by the National Highway Administration (NHA) to educate Pakistanis on the specifics of the road. At the same time, editorials and letters in the newspapers reflected a concern among Pakistanis that they ought to reconstitute themselves as drivers prior to using the Motorway. In other words, increased facility with using the Motorway relied as much upon enhancing the driving skills of its users as with making the Motorway responsive to traveler needs.³⁷

The brightly colored brochures, distributed by the Motorway Police and bearing the insignia of this special force, established further possibilities for communication. These indicated the importance of the telephone network in organizing the imagination of communication on the Motorway:

If anything that could be dangerous falls from your vehicle or any other vehicle, stop at the next emergency telephone to tell the police.

If your vehicle develops a problem . . . you should: try to stop near an emergency telephone (you will find them at intervals along the hard shoulder).³⁸

The state expected to hear from Motorway users through telephones, as an advanced telephone system threaded the road ready for use by a press of the button. This system meshed with the wireless- and laser-equipped

cars of the Motorway Police stationed at discrete distances along the road, and an emergency call would call forth a police officer to the rescue. The Motorway Police was a new generation of police in Pakistan, where police corruption and abuse were common complaints in the media. This police force had been outfitted with new uniforms, provided service-oriented training, made part of a buddy system whereby older, more experienced police officers chaperoned and guided novices, and, most important, given double the salary of the ordinary police to re-create it as an important link within the DN of the Motorway.³⁹

While the Motorway strove to emphasize its mediality as akin to a tightly stitched yet widespread telephone network, it was also very mindful of its materiality. Its material dimensions were painstakingly recorded in reports circulated within the National Highway Administration and faithfully reported to the press. While these reports recorded salient facts about the road, they also reaffirmed its borders and strove to establish clear spatial relations among humans, animals, and other things traversing the road.

The definition of a “Motorway” is a multi lane roadway, dividing functionally opposed traffic and having complete control of access. Motorways are designed and built as “Prime Movers,” which means that motor traffic may move at predetermined speeds, economically and uninterrupted over controlled distances.

The Motorway will be a six-lane facility with three lanes in either carriageway (each direction).

The Motorway would be completely fenced on both sides for control of access.

Fly overs and underpasses would be constructed to carry secondary road traffic over/under the Motorway. Cattle creeps would be provided at frequent intervals for the passage of animals.⁴⁰

In another tally, we learn of the full scope of the Motorway with its 6 lanes; 11 interchanges to facilitate entry and exit to various towns and proposed industrial zones; 35 flyovers and 190 subways/underpasses for the crossing of the local population; 106 bridges, including major river bridges at the Lahore, Soan, Panead, Chenab, and Jhelum rivers; 90 box culverts; 937 pipe culverts; 10 service areas with provision for landscaping; and innumerable dykes and chutes for drainage protection and the safety of the embankment slope. In plain areas, designated speed was to be 120 km/hr, falling to 100 km/hr for rolling terrain and falling further

to 50 km/hr in the Salt Range area because of its sharp gradient change from 200 meters to 750 meters over a mere fifteen kilometers.⁴¹

The Motorway song produced in anticipation of the opening of the road included the words “Pakistan Motorway” sung repeatedly. It drew attention to the singularity of this road, as did Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s words, “There is not one motorway in the entire Hindustan.” Like the song and slogan, the Motorway monument also celebrated the road with no reference to a before or a beyond.⁴² Erected at the Islamabad end of the road, it consisted of two twenty-one-foot-tall metallic plaques on either side of the road that were miniatures of the Motorway. It was as if the road was a closed circuit within which messages achieved perfect insularity and circularity.

However, such insularity and circularity revealed the Motorway’s vulnerability to internal disruptions to communicative flows. At the same time, the Motorway’s concern with its material borders indicated a vulnerability to external intrusions. If, as I have claimed, the GT Road put itself on display to engender *watching* in its travelers, the Motorway, with its vulnerability to internal disruptions and external intrusions, engendered *watchfulness* among its travelers. While I will draw out the distinction between the two modes of perception in the following section, let me simply flag that watching constituted an efficacious part of communication for the DN of the GT Road while watchfulness was a product of a perceived communicative failure of the DN of the Motorway.

The Promise Actualized: The GT Road/The Motorway

The oblique (/) between the DN of the GT Road and that of the Motorway obviates any causal relationship between the two roads. The GT Road did not simply anticipate the Motorway. Rather, the emergence of the Motorway in the 1990s, with its promise of equal access to communication, retrospectively highlighted the importance given to differential access to communication by the GT Road at its moment of inception as a modern road in the 1880s. Moreover, reading this differential access back upon the GT Road from the Motorway’s present allowed us to draw out the communicative import given to *watching* as the mode of perception engendered by the GT Road among its travelers. At the same time, watching as an efficacious part of communication of the DN of the GT Road highlighted the anxious nature of *watchfulness* as the mode of perception engendered by the Motorway among its travelers. By showing watchfulness to be a perceived instance of communicative failure upon the Motorway, I explore the following questions in this section: How

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did earlier communication actualize upon the Motorway? And what set of effects, tagged as bodily sufferance, did this process produce? Once again, the oblique between the GT Road and the Motorway allows us to answer these questions by drawing out the distinction between watching, as it continues into the GT Road's present, and watchfulness upon the Motorway.

In 1927, Sarkar prophesied the prominence of roads over all other modes of transportation. He anticipated the death of railways with the arrival of the motorcar and the multiplication of roads:

Though it is true that in many places old routes were superseded by the Railway, yet, on the whole, the effect of Railways was to stimulate the construction of roads and develop their traffic. . . . The steam engine, which has antiquated the bullock-cart and the *dak-gharri*, is today in its turn being superseded by motor-cars requiring petrol rather than stream, and no rails at all. Tourists all over the world prefer the motorway to the Railway because it gives them more freedom to move about as they live.⁴³

Yet this was a tall claim for its time. In actuality, railway construction, begun in 1853 by the British, preceded and facilitated the paving of the GT Road and other extant roads to better service trains and to provide the populace access to them. Moreover, trains were better suited than motorcars for long-distance travel. In short, the GT Road competed with the railways for travelers, often losing out.⁴⁴ Hence the experience of the GT Road and the railways were intertwined in South Asian history. Thus the mode of watching intrinsic to the GT Road was partly informed by the watching engendered by trains and together formed the background against which the watchfulness engendered by the Motorway gained its anxious resonance.⁴⁵

Railways and metalled roads have been psychologically associated with death since their inception. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch has shown for Western Europe, when railways were first introduced they inspired tremendous fear in their passengers. Unaccustomed to moving at such high speeds, passengers imagined that their bodies were hurtling through space and would most likely end up mangled or dead in an imminent crash. They quickly adopted resting on cushioned seats, reading, gazing blankly out the window, and sleeping to distract themselves from their thoughts.⁴⁶

In the Indian subcontinent, however, trains aged and slowed down.⁴⁷ We are told by Syed Abdul Quddus, a concerned Pakistani citizen analyzing the ailments of the railways, that “overage” had “led to the imposition of speed restrictions on the entire system which had resulted in reduced line capacity.”⁴⁸ With delays and accidents endemic, South Asian passengers had to develop mechanisms other than those described by Schivelbusch

to distract themselves from the frailty of railways and the possibility of death. If railway journeys in the West brought on a new, “panoramic” mode of perception of landscape, that is, the “tendency to see the discrete indiscriminately,”⁴⁹ perpetually slow or stalled trains allowed passengers in the Indian subcontinent to assimilate movement and to see discrete units of activity. Slowed trains, therefore, brought absorption in the landscape unfolding outside train windows. “At Badami Bagh, just outside Lahore, a town of grass huts, cardboard shelters, pup tents, and hovels of paper, twigs and cloth, everyone was in motion—sorting fruit, folding clothes, fanning the fire, shoeing a dog, mending a roof.”⁵⁰ If train passengers had time to register fleeting figures and their activities, the figures too made the passengers the object of their unhurried gaze: “I saw one man; he portended a hundred more, all facing the train for the diversion it offered, unhurriedly fouling the track.”⁵¹

Traffic across the GT Road was similarly the object of watching for those who lingered along its sides. Perhaps this was that act of watching that formed part of the DN of the GT Road in the 1800s, which put the road on as display to divert attention from the telegraph lines overhead. Conversely, travelers on the GT Road also looked out the windows of their vehicles, but theirs was a somewhat different watch from that of train passengers. Although they looked out and were similarly absorbed in the unfolding scene of human life alongside the roads, they also frequently looked up front so as to be on the watch. Bus and truck drivers in South Asia have the reputation for being “killers,” for driving under the influence of drugs, at breakneck speed, or without adequate rest. Their manic performances made fearful road trips. Moreover, vehicles constantly wove in and out of the variegated traffic on the road, sometimes moving into lanes with traffic moving in the opposite direction, to gain advantage. Thus, to ward off their fears of imminent death, travelers on the GT Road practiced a mode of habitation by which they constantly watched the road ahead for possible dangers and obstructions. They expressed a liking for speed changes, which vehicles must maintain to allow for sudden intrusions from traffic moving in the opposite direction, for these abrupt changes kept them alert in their watch. And their frequent stops at towns just alongside the road were reminders of their continuing life-fullness and occasions for GT Road travelers to engage in intense bodily activity, such as shopping, arguing, defecating, and so on.

How did this variegated mode of watching relate to the mediality of the GT Road? In DN 1800, watching the GT Road played an important part in ensuring effective communication as the road diverted attention from the telegraph lines overhead. With the British long gone, watching no longer needed to serve this purpose of diversion. However, it still played

an important part in ensuring communication on the GT Road as watchers now stepped in for the telegraph lines they once overlooked by acting as relays within the extant DN of the GT Road. Consider, for instance, the necessity for communication in the event of an accident. Accidents were commonplace on the GT Road. In each instance, at each locality, no matter how seemingly desolate, a crowd gathered. James Siegel's description of the Indonesian crowd resonates well: "The Indonesian crowd is an effect of rumor. . . . Instead of being a group, emblem of the nation, themselves being made known, they are . . . *a mere line of communication*, running from scandal to authority."⁵² Lacking communicational aids (telephone or telegraph), the crowd transmitted messages in the form of rumor from the site of the accident to the authority figures squirreled away along the roads.⁵³ Moreover, these rumors also moved in the opposite direction—that is, news of the authorities' imminent arrival and the punishment they were to levy had the crowd throwing in a few kicks and punches at the wrongdoers. These rumors were like electric pulses and strings of people the wires in telegraphy. Thus, watching on the GT Road continued to facilitate communication.

The Motorway introduced a new landscape, one no longer through human settlements but through deserted countryside and uninhabitable deserts and salt ranges. This landscape was coupled with the promise of speedy and safe travel: "If cars could be kept apart, traveling in each lane at uniform speeds, with physical separation between the lanes and automatic control between cars to provide equal spacing, cars could travel with safety at much greater speeds than they do today."⁵⁴ At the high speeds mandated upon the Motorway, that is, 100–120 km/hr, old fears of being crushed to death returned. But the alien landscape of the Motorway could no longer be inhabited in familiar ways. Passengers had nothing to look out upon along the roadside. Nor could they keep watch ahead as the streams of traffic were kept physically separated on the Motorway. All they could see up above was the looming horizon blurred by the sun. These circumstances made naught of the familiar acts of watching intrinsic to the railways and to the GT Road.

Along with these now irrational old fears of being crushed to death arrived new ones. The most insistent among them was that Pakistani motorcars were not equipped to travel the Motorway, despite the fact that automobiles in Pakistan are imported.⁵⁵ Almost everyone who first entered the Motorway in merry expectation remembered the time the metal bodies of their cars shook and the wheels wobbled as they pressed their cars to the required speeds of 100–120 km/hour.

"M2 is a no-man's land for those with unreliable vehicles. . . . Qarar Shah, a Lahore based banker still shudders when recalling his experience."⁵⁶

“Those compelled to stay on the road as their own bodies demanded release have defecated on their seats because rest stops were so few and far in between.”⁵⁷

This fear was quickly followed by the fear that the Motorway was not equipped to deal with such faulty vehicles. And the limits upon the Motorway’s caregiving system immediately became apparent. Indeed, as soon as the Motorway opened to the public, users noticed that there were few petrol pumps, car workshops, or rest stops along the way. Nawaz Sharif had failed to take into account the regimen of care required by the reconditioned cars, overweight trucks, and dilapidated buses in Pakistan to whom he desired to give the gift of speed.

The Motorway had been cordoned off from its surrounds. However, its borders were not successful in keeping out intruders. Its attempts at insularity from its surrounding landscape quickly developed leaks. First came the animals that prevented the seamless flow of the Motorway: “Be vigilant while driving on the motorway. You may hit stray dogs, jackals and foxes.”⁵⁸ Then the local population failed to see the necessity for the fence along the road: “As many as 18 cases have been registered against ‘fence cutters.’ Fencing was put up the entire stretch of the road, but that too proved ineffective as farmers cut them to reach their fields directly rather than walk down to the nearest crossover.”⁵⁹ Finally, “unsocial elements” were fast-tracked by the superior road with smugglers shipping goods faster than ever before, and *dacoits* robbing vehicles in relative privacy.

Another criticism directed towards the M2 and M3 . . . is that they will boost smuggling and decrease the freight rate, particularly of “fast-moving” goods, such as cloth and electronic items.⁶⁰

The Islamabad-Lahore motorway failed to attract Eid traffic between the federal and provincial capital. . . . “I chose GT Road for my Lahore-Islamabad travel as it is safe,” said Tarique Mehmood, a resident of Lahore. . . . Due to poor safety standards against robberies on motorway, commuters follow the suit. At least 10 buses were looted on the motorway in the week preceding Eid.⁶¹

The Motorway Police has decided to make national identity cards compulsory for passengers traveling through public transport, besides making their videos as they start their journeys. . . . “These steps will help us to stop dacoities and robberies on the Motorway,” the official said.⁶²

The intrusion of animals, farmers, smugglers, *dacoits*, and, more recently, murderers into the road made things not what they seemed to be, such

that those who appeared as stranded victims could well be *dacoits* in disguise. Soon this etiology of suspicion traveled to encompass one's fellow travelers. The following story was related to me by three different sources, which may either prove its veracity or reveal it to be an emergent urban myth. Either way, the story was very telling of how the Motorway was experienced as ungrounding the familiar:

A group of Tablighi Jamaatis, that is, a Muslim missionary group, set off on a bus journey from Lahore to Islamabad across the Motorway. They spend most of their time reading the Koran. Halfway through the journey they tell their fellow passengers that they wish to share sweets with them as the Jamaatis have successfully completed one reading of the entire Koran. The other passengers joyfully take part in the celebration. However, the sweets are adulterated by sleeping medicine and pretty soon the entire bus falls asleep. The Jamaatis make off with everyone's possessions.

It was in the face of these external disruptions to the flow of traffic that the promise of communication of the Motorway was perceived to fail to materialize. To remind the reader, its promise was that of a tightly networked exchange system between the state and the travelers. The Motorway deliberately disabled other communicative aids on the grounds that it was itself a mediatic technology within which messages were to achieve perfect circularity between the state and the travelers. Come what may, the state would transmit information preparing travelers for what lay ahead, coaching them on their part. In exchange, the state would make itself available at the touch of a telephone button. Assured through this system that a swift reply and service were close at hand, travelers experiencing any kind of trouble were told to park unobtrusively so as not to attract the attention of any incoming traffic, and drivers were forbidden from stopping to collect passengers or from providing any help along the Motorway.

However, it soon became apparent that the communication system was not all that it was cracked up to be. The promised circularity of messages was vulnerable to internal disruptions. In the event of vehicular breakdowns, distressed travelers sometimes could not find an emergency telephone pole close by nor find a policeman to come to their rescue. And even if such help was forthcoming, the Motorway's capacity for help was easily exhausted:

If not helped by the Motorway Police (MP), those in trouble may have to experience a grueling wait for hours and look on haplessly as vehicles speed by.⁶³

If a car breaks down, its occupants are stranded. . . . The traffic police assist them, but have no resources to repair their cars.⁶⁴

Rather than a continuous loop of communication between the state and travelers, messages continued to flash from overhead billboards and electronic signs from the state. Without the possibility of reaching the state, that is, of intervening into its unidirectional flow of messages, travelers were left in enforced and helpless silence. With the state in partial eclipse, the countryside at a remote and inaccessible distance, people and things not what they appeared to be, and one's individual and vehicular frailty exposed, travelers returned the silence with watchfulness: "Be vigilant while driving on the motorway."⁶⁵

This watchfulness was marked by a directed scrutinizing of all boundaries, those of one's body, one's vehicle, the road, and beyond. However, it was quite distinct from the watching engendered by the GT Road in that it did not provide for the possibility of communication. Instead, it arose out of the perceived failure of communication, rather, the failure of the mediality of the Motorway. Moreover, this essentially helpless watchfulness was continually undercut by a new threat, that of sleepiness. With nothing to look out at or to look out for, Motorway travelers—drivers and passengers alike—experienced drowsiness. The following reveals the novelty of sleep for Motorway travelers: "The main cause of the accidents on the Motorway is that the drivers fall asleep, and the vehicle after hitting the median barrier turns turtle. . . . But drivers are not the only ones who experience drowsiness when traveling on the Motorway—passengers traveling on buses feel the same. Besides being alien to the interactive culture of GT road, M2 offers nothing other than landscapes to engage a traveler's attention."⁶⁶

An accident, which once provoked curiosity and wide-eyed observation, now provoked terror and avoidance. When the Motorway's communicative aids failed, accident victims, unable to communicate with the state, were engulfed in silence. Even if crowds could form, which they could not as the emptiness of the new landscape diminished the reach of rumors, passersby, no longer trusting their senses, refused to form crowds, creating another ring of silence around victims. Initially, Motorway travelers had to be told repeatedly, even threatened with punishment, to prevent them from stopping for any reason. Now they would not stop no matter how pitiful a sight greeted them along the way. It then took an act of government, such as the arrival of a prime minister upon a scene of an accident, to draw attention to the breakdown of communication:

A car rammed into the side-wall along the Motorway near Chakwal Sunday morning. Three injured men were writhing with pain alongside their dead and there was no sign of any medical aid coming their way. The elite Motorway Police and rescue teams were not even aware of the tragedy despite being

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equipped with latest communication gadgets. But the Prime Minister, who was driving to his hometown in his car, perchance passed by the unfortunate vehicle. On seeing the crushed car, the Prime Minister asked the driver to pull over. . . . Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who waited for the police for half an hour, took serious note of their delayed action. He was also disgruntled over the absence of Motorway Helicopter.⁶⁷

The Experience of Modernity Specific to the Motorway

We kept going, a solitary bus given company by a few cars and jeeps. I looked around to see if anyone else was experiencing confusion or disorientation [at, what seemed to me to be, the incongruous presence of this road in Pakistan]. Everyone sat quietly at his/her individual seats, even the children. However, the pink curtains provided were drawn over each window such that everyone sat in shadows even though it was a cloudy day. I sat right behind the driver and, therefore, had the panorama [of the road unwinding] laid out in front of me. The person who sat next to me had her eyes glued to the television screen above the driver on which played and re-played the movie *Scream*, a blockbuster film of summers past in the United States. Even the bus hostess, a model of hospitality I had never encountered before in any bus, sat on a small chair attached to the dashboard facing the passengers with her back resolutely to the road ahead.⁶⁸

I pull this ethnographic moment from my field notes. This moment of collective fixation upon the television screen on the Motorway speaks to a homology between the television and the Motorway.⁶⁹ The first instance of this homology between the television and the Motorway was that of an element of the televisual in the process by which the promise of communication actualized upon the Motorway. The Motorway had promised a continual flow of information through its length and breadth culminating in a circuitry of exchange, akin to a telephonic network, between the state and the travelers. However, with its inadequate and failing circuitry, the Motorway functioned more as a television screen displaying messages from the state.

A closer scrutiny of the formal elements of television (as opposed to its content) helps us to draw out further this homology.⁷⁰ Characterizing the material basis of television as “*a current of simultaneous event reception*,” the philosopher Stanley Cavell poses that “the mode of perception I wish to think about in connection with television’s material basis is that of *monitoring*.”⁷¹ For what does one monitor the television screen? If indeed television is productive of this sense of “simultaneous event reception,” one may monitor the screen for signs of life simultaneous with one’s own:

“others are *there*, if not shut in this room, still caught at this time.”⁷² Thus, the second instance of homology between the television and the Motorway lay in that the former required monitoring of the screen while the later engendered watchfulness of the Motorway as a screen.

Third, this homology came to rest upon the status accorded to the world by the television and by the Motorway. For Cavell, television reveals to us the uninhabitability of the world, while participating in making more uninhabitable this world. It elicits a monitoring of the world, which is now continually traversed by the unanticipated. The Motorway similarly revealed to its travelers the uninhabitability of the world, while contributing to this sense of the world. The landscape through which the Motorway unfolded was alien to most Pakistanis. In introducing its travelers to this landscape, the Motorway in effect introduced them to the uninhabitable in their known world. Moreover, Motorway travelers could not re-inhabit this world in the way they could be absorbed into it as on the GT Road. Finally, although the Motorway sought at least to be a screen displaying the state’s messages at the moment of failure of its circuitry, the most insistent aspects of this world, that which could launch effective attacks upon the Motorway’s screen, continually oozed through it. In effect the Motorway became a screen where the most fearsome elements of the world cavorted, wreaking havoc with one’s sense of familiarity with the world beyond.

Yet, there is a limit to this homology between the television and the Motorway. Television is an accidental invention, initially produced as part of military technology and only later commercially exploited.⁷³ It belongs to no one and, while we can speak with some certainty about the effects of its monitoring, it is hard to say whose gaze it privileges at any given moment. The Motorway, however, was an experiment by the Pakistani state to rise above its past and present as a corrupt and ineffective entity to birth a new rationalized mode of governance. As a communicative technology, its promise hovered over its actuality. It was saturated by the state’s presence, even as the state went into partial eclipse with the failure of its circuitry. It is my speculation that travelers across the Motorway were in effect occupying the watchfulness of the state for the duration of their road trip. They were watching helplessly with the state as communication failed to materialize upon the length and breadth of the Motorway and malevolent forces came into play upon it. To my mind, it was this unexpected correspondence between Motorway travelers and the sentient body of the state that explains the Pakistanis’ discomfort with the Motorway. Its unpopularity was an index of the discomfort of bearing witness to the failure of the state’s sincerest efforts to better itself, at confounding the second chance at modernity, as it were. The Motorway related to Pakistan’s present in and through forging this durational correspondence between

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the state and Pakistanis, in opening up an affective landscape on which Pakistanis occupied the place of the sentient state, registering its fluctuating affects.

Yet here again a return to the homology between the television and the Motorway provides us some sense of how the Motorway may relate to Pakistan's future. Recall Cavell's words that one monitored the television screen in the hope of life beyond one's singular existence intermixed with suspicion toward the nature/intent of this life.⁷⁴ Transposing this insight to the watchfulness engendered by the Motorway, might one speculate that there is a similar hope intermixed with suspicion within this watch? Certainly, Motorway travelers have been very vocal in their criticisms of the inadequacies of the road. However, very few think it is a white elephant, in the way many have come to view Islamabad. Even fewer have actually wished this road away. Most have accepted that the services on the road will improve over time. But more important, they have articulated the hope that they will be reconstituted as better drivers in and through their experience of the Motorway. In their statements I read a modicum of openness to the possibility of improvement by the state as well as by its citizens, an acknowledgment that the Motorway may yet work for them.

Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude with some remarks on how this essay contributes to several discussions within contemporary theory. Since the early 1990s there has been an active conversation on whether to speak of a single Western modernity that works its contradictory magic the world over through the aegis of colonialism and postcolonialism or whether it is more historically accurate to speak of multiple modernities to either allow for multiple origins for modernity or to allow for the distinct trajectories Western modernity takes in each specific instance.⁷⁵ While this essay does not weigh in on one side of the debate or the other, it does suggest that in opening up an affective landscape the Motorway provides a mode of anticipating Pakistan's coming modernity, that of hope intermixed with suspicion, which is perhaps not experienced or articulated elsewhere in Pakistan. In other words, by speaking of a modernity specific to the Motorway I do not argue for a single modernity for Pakistan nor signal the Motorway's modernity as being distinct and multiple from Pakistan's. Rather, I suggest that through the Motorway a new means of anticipating the future emerges with the possibility of inflecting its trajectory.⁷⁶ In essence, I am arguing for a relationship between bodily sufferance and a presaging of the future but one whose outcome cannot be known at the outset.

Finally, I see this essay as making a small contribution to long-standing theoretical discussions on the state. Borrowing from Foucauldian notions of governmentality, theorists of the state have lately tended to focus on the rationalizing aspects of the state in different parts of the world. When pushed on whether Foucault's insights may be so easily imported, they have pointed to the contingencies that mar the full flowering of Foucauldian governmentality in specific instances.⁷⁷ However, this literature has retained intact the relationship between the state and its citizens as one of (diffused/centralized) disciplinary power working upon its objects, as spelled out by Foucault. My essay departs from this assumed relationship between the state and its citizens by suggesting that we may do better to explore how people experience the state within everyday life.⁷⁸ Such exploration has the potential to yield a different picture of the practical relationship a state bears to its citizens, as one of attraction and repulsion, of coming together and moving apart, than that of a disciplinary power issuing out. My speculation that travelers' discomfort with the Motorway may ultimately spring from their inability to look upon the failings of their state at a moment of its sincerest efforts to better itself suggests something of this agonistic relationship of mutual attraction. Their bodily sufferance is a mode of turning away from the Pakistan that is toward the Pakistan that could be.

Notes

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1. See C. S. Papacostas and P. D. Prevedouros, *Transportation Engineering and Planning* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), for a description and history of American-style highways.

2. "'Caravan of Progress' to Gather in Front of Parliament," *News* (Islamabad), 25 November 1997; "PM Leads Motorway Motorcade to Lahore Today," *News*, 26 November 1997.

3. "Poor Driving Habits Turn Motorway into Nightmare," *Dawn* (Karachi),

2 December 1997; Z. Ghani, “Motorway Opening Turns Nightmare for PM’s Guests,” *News*, 25 November 1997; “VIPs Break Motorway’s Rules with Impunity,” *News*, 22 December 1997.

4. “Motorway to Fetch Rs. 2b Toll Revenue,” *Nation* (Lahore), 25 November 1997.

5. “Toll Tax Revenue on Motorway Falls Short of Expectation,” *Dawn*, 17 January 1998; N. Iqbal, “The Flaws in the Flow,” *News*, 15 February 1998; “Heavy Toll Tax on Motorway Challenged in LHC,” *News*, 23 December 1998.

6. The following are just a handful of the newspaper articles that heatedly discussed the merits and demerits of the Motorway: Air Marshall (Ret.) A. A. Khan, “Motorway! But What about Other Roads?” *Nation*, 15 December 1997; S. H. Zaidi, “Motorway—Luxury or Necessity?” *Dawn*, 2 February 1998; Dr. T. Rahman, “Where to on the Motorway?” *News*, 3 December 1998.

7. “Motorway First Step towards Realization of Quaid’s Dreams,” *News*, 26 November 1997.

8. Here I refer to the construction of Islamabad from scratch in the 1950s as a modern capital in order to generate a new citizenry for Pakistan, at that time a newly minted nation-state (ca. 1947). The failure of Islamabad to do so has been closely analyzed by Matthew Hull in “Paper Travails: Bureaucracy, Graphic Artifacts, and the Built Environment in the Islamabad Metropolitan Area, 1959–1998 (Pakistan)” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003).

9. The question of the relation of roads to Pakistan’s modernity is a pertinent one given the nation’s clear fascination with roads as an analogy for its development. A book written by Victoria Schofield to commemorate Pakistan’s fifty years of independence bore the title *Old Roads, New Highways: Fifty Years of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), although it had no bearing upon the topic of roads as such. See also A. H. Dani, “Motorway—a Historical Perspective,” *News*, 26 November 1997, in which a famous Pakistani archaeologist provides a historical explanation for the necessity of the Motorway in Pakistan.

10. Social scientists studying the incursion of roads into remote parts of empires and nations have most often demonstrated that such roads, heralded as harbingers of modernity, function more as the painful marker of modernity deferred. As they fail to materialize modernity, such roads become the mythological and material sites to traffic in disappointment, expiation of spirits displaced, and strategies to evade further incursions. Examples of such work include Adeline Masquelier, “Road Mythographies,” *American Ethnologist* 29 (2002): 829–56; and Mariane C. Ferme, *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). However, few have considered how roads generate their own effects from qualities intrinsic to themselves. In *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), Rudolf Mrázek draws a relationship between roads and language that is worth perusing. He claims that the hardness of roads and the development of expert language to speak of roads bear a common origin in Dutch colonial efforts to excise uncertainty from their authority and in the apprehension of the native populace in Indonesia. This colonial attenuation of language’s attachments to the world was met by concerns over “driver-ness,” or the capacity for the driver to find a place in the world among Indonesian nationalists. See in particular chapter 1, “Language as Asphalt.” In “driver-ness” I see echoes of the idea of the futurity of the Motorway in which I am interested.

11. “Motorway a Symbol of National Unity: Nawaz,” *Nation*, 28 November 1997, my emphasis; “Motorway Network to Bring Rapid Development,” *Dawn*, 23 February 1998.

12. *Nation*, 28 November 1997, my emphasis.

13. *Ibid.*

14. I remember as a child visiting Karachi from Dhaka, Bangladesh, and being carted around such sites by my cousins eager to show me how modern Pakistan was.

15. Norman Bel Geddes, *Magic Motorways* (New York: Random House, 1940).

16. *Ibid.*, 283.

17. Armand Mattelart, *The Invention of Communication*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), provides a genealogy of this idea of communication as intellectual and affective glue for the formation of social and political groups.

18. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).

19. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed.) has the following to tell us about the history of the word *communication*. Once used to refer to the exchange of goods, it is “now rare of things material” and is more often used to mean “the imparting, conveying, or exchange of ideas, knowledge, information, etc. (whether by speech, writing, or signs). Hence (often *pl.*), the science or process of conveying information, esp. by means of electronic or mechanical techniques.” Furthermore, communications goes from being mode of transportation to an abstract process of new technologies. As a latter-day example from the *OED* illustrates: “1955 C. Cherry in *Stud. Communication* 48 ‘The so-called Theory of Communication is a rigid scientific theory. . . . It was originally set up for the purpose of defining the “commodity” which tele-communication engineers sell with their telegraph and telephone systems’” (my emphasis).

20. James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

21. The religious dimensions of this quest are hinted at by Carey, who suggests that it is in the nature of American Christian spirituality to impart the Word to all and for which technological advance was a boon rather than a deterrent. *Ibid.*, 15.

22. *Ibid.*, 18.

23. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Metteer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990). See also John Johnson, “Friedrich Kittler: Media Theory after Poststructuralism,” in Friedrich Kittler, *Literature Media Information Systems*, ed. John Johnson (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 1997).

24. In “Crossing the Media(-n): Automobility, the Transported Self and Technologies of Freedom,” in *Mediaspace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age*, ed. Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy (London: Routledge, 2004), regarding the Segway Human Transporter (SHT), authors James Hay and Jeremy Packer suggest that automobility, a concept largely used to reference the large contextual web within which the modern automobile, the car or more specifically the human body within the car is located, may be extended to attend to the conjoined aspirations for transportation and communication. Thus, the discursive and material

apparatus around the SHT suggests how the body desires to be both transported and expressive/communicative of an inner subjectivity at the same time. Certainly the Motorway may be thought of as doing both, transporting and communicating at the same time. However, to my mind, the concept of automobility still requires more sustained consideration of transportation technology than I provide in this paper, as I am much more interested in the point at which a certain promise of communication is perceived to fail bringing forth very specific bodily responses. See Sarah S. Lochlann Jain, “‘Dangerous Instrumentality’: The Bystander as Subject in Automobility,” *Cultural Anthropology* 19 (2004): 61–94, for an anthropological study of automobility.

25. Nor is this relationship between the GT Road and the Motorway without an empirical basis. Like the Motorway, the GT Road also connects Islamabad to Lahore, being the shorter of the two routes. However, travelers on the Motorway gain a half-hour advantage because of the high speed mandated on the highway. Consequently, the GT Road and the Motorway currently exist as the two viable options for those seeking to travel between the two cities.

26. Anthony Weller, *Days and Nights on the Grand Trunk Road* (New York: Marlowe, 1997).

27. K. M. Sarkar, *The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab* (Lahore: Government Record Office Publications, 1927).

28. *Ibid.*, 11.

29. *Ibid.*

30. “Motorway Network to Bring Rapid Development,” *Dawn*, 23 February 1998.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Sarkar, *The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab*, iv; my emphasis.

33. To remind the reader, *mediality* is being used here to refer to the storage, retrieval, and transmission capacities of a technology, that which facilitates communicative flows. The material dimensions of a technology potentially detract from its mediality (see previous section, “Roads and Communication,” for longer explanation).

34. Sarkar, *The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab*, 5.

35. *Ibid.*, 45.

36. *Ibid.*

37. “10 Rest Area Complexes to Be Set Up along Motorway,” *Dawn*, 11 December 1997; “Special Lectures on Use of Motorway,” *Dawn*, 2 February 1998.

38. Motorway Police, *Specific Instructions for Motorway*, Flyer #1 (Islamabad: Post Office Foundation Press, n.d.). See also Motorway Police, *Specific Instructions for Motorway*, Flyer #2 (Islamabad: Post Office Foundation Press, n.d.); Motorway Police, *Tips for Safe Driving on the Motorway* (Islamabad: Post Office Foundation Press, n.d.); and National Police Academy, “Report on the Training for Police Trainers’ Course,” Central Planning and Training Unit, Islamabad, 22 September–3 October 1997.

39. President Pervez Musharraf had this to say about the Motorway Police as recently as 2003, “‘The performance of Motorway Police is the result of their integrity, courtesy to the people and maintenance of traffic discipline.’ He referred to the importance of traffic order in the maintenance of discipline in a nation and said the Motorway Police are really contributing to bringing about the much-

needed discipline into the nation.” “Police Organizations to Emulate Motorway Police,” 14 January 2003, www.paknews.org.

That there is something incongruous about the Motorway Police is suggested by an Indian visitor traveling the Motorway:

Every so often we spot a Highway Patrol car, radar gun ready and aimed. These cops, wearing Tom Cruise type haircuts, Jackie Chan type sunglasses, kevlar type bullet-proof jackets and driving American type Japanese high-speed sedan cars which appear to be very heavy on the ground, are paid much more than their country cousins, and are supposed to be absolutely incorruptible. They have been re-designated “putrol” by the “truckmen,” and are not known by the petname “thullaa” reserved for their colonial cousins. (“Train to Pakistan 2004: La Hore?” www.chowk.com/show_article.cgi?aid=00003967&channel=gulberg [accessed 16 October 2006])

40. These quotes are from a cyclostyled report, “Pakistan Motorway,” by M. I. Khan (n.d.), available in the offices of the National Highway Authority in Islamabad.

41. Dr. G. Mehdi, “Salient Features Motorway,” *News*, 26 November 1997.

42. “Motorway Monument,” *News*, 27 November 1997. See also Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, “Cartoons and Monuments,” in *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), for other such examples of self-referential political symbols and monuments within the context of Indonesia.

43. Sarkar, *The Grand Trunk Road in the Punjab*, 5, 48.

44. Weller, *Days and Nights on the Grand Trunk Road*.

45. Veena Das writes that the train is “the classic icon of modernity and of journey into modernity” (Das, “The Making of Modernity: Gender and Time in Indian Cinema,” in *Questions of Modernity*, ed. Timothy Mitchell [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997], 185). Yet it takes a young child, Apu, in Satyajit Ray’s first film in his Apu trilogy, to watch the train in the horizon with wonder to restore some mystery to this clichéd image. I would add it restores some mystery to the onset of modernity.

46. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

47. In their study of Coventry, United Kingdom, Phil Hubbard and Keith Lilley suggest that Western modernity does not so much augur speed as much as “differential mobilities,” indicating an underlying politics of speed. Hubbard and Lilley, “Pacemaking the Modern City: The Urban Politics of Speed and Slowness,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 273–94.

48. Syed Abdul Quddus, *What Ails the Railways* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1992), 13.

49. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 61.

50. Paul Theroux, *The Great Railway Bazaar* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 83.

51. *Ibid.*, 137.

52. James Siegel, *The New Criminal Type in Jakarta* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 123; my emphasis. Here, along with Siegel, I take the rumor to be a story without a signature that is transmitted across bodies: we attend to the communicative pathways of the rumor. Scholars who have devoted much greater attention to the force of the rumor, that is, how it is productive of violence and political action, include Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insur-*

agency in *Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982); Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Veena Das, "Crisis and Representation: Rumor and the Circulation of Hate," in *Disturbing Remains: Memory, History, and Crisis in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001).

53. In Kittlerian terms, the crowd functions as a mediatic technology. Vicente Rafael makes use of this enframing of the crowd as technology in his recent article "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines," *Public Culture* 15 (2003): 399–425. See also Mimi Sheller, "Mobile Publics: Beyond the Network Perspective," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 39–52, for an interesting use of fluid dynamics to account for crowds in public spaces.

54. Geddes, *Magic Motorways*, 35.

55. This is what Jonathan Gregson had to say about Pakistani cars and drivers in *Bullet Up the Grand Trunk Road* (London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1997), 235: "What I hadn't yet got used to was Pakistani road manners. These are completely different from the snake-like driving technique that prevails in India. . . . The Pakistani approach is generally more aggressive. They drive faster, overtake more suddenly and cut in more ferociously than their Indian counterparts. This is partly because they have completely different equipments: Toyotas and Nissans instead of underpowered Ambassadors and Marutis; Yamahas and Suzukis rather than Enfields and Rajdoots."

56. "Steps Under Way to Provide Helicopter Cover on Motorway," *Dawn*, 23 December 1997.

57. A. Malik, "The Motorway Malaise," *Dawn*, 5 April 1998.

58. "Beware of Stray Animals on the Motorway," *News*, 6 January 1998.

59. "Premier Takes Action against Motorway Police," *News*, 22 December 1997.

60. Iqbal, "The Flaws in the Flow"; "Motorway Users Complain of Poor Service," *Dawn*, 25 February 1998.

61. Iqbal, "The Flaws in the Flow."

62. "ID Card Possession Made Compulsory for Motorway Travelers," *News*, 8 June 1998.

63. "Motorway Needs Repair Workshops," *Dawn*, 21 May 1998; see also "Emergency Call Network for Lahore Islamabad Motorway," *News*, 26 November 1997.

64. "Motorway Users Complain of Poor Service."

65. "Beware of Stray Animals on the Motorway."

66. Iqbal, "The Flaws in the Flow."

67. "Premier Takes Action against Motorway Police," *News*, 22 December 1997; see also "Motorway Affectees Demand Redressal," *Nation*, 30 June 1998.

68. Author's field notes, 8 April 1999.

69. Margaret Morse, in "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television," in *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), also draws a relation between television and the freeway in terms of "similar principles of construction and operation" that constitute "forms of communication" (193). More specifically, she sees both the television and the freeway engender similar states of "distraction" among their users that tap into an "elsewhere" from the

present. Nonetheless, this “elsewhere” is collapsed into a “nonplace” within her argument, that which is not real. In other words, I see her argument simply reasserts Baudrillard’s proposition that modernity is only productive of simulacra and the deferral of experience. However, in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), Brian Massumi understands the state of distraction to be a precognitive state of mind in which many possibilities in the realm of the virtual juggle for expression/actualization. He locates the possibility for the new within this moment of incipience. I am more sympathetic to Massumi, borrowing from his understanding of distraction in my thinking that the effects generated by the Motorway are replete with both threats and possibilities not yet fully charted.

70. Here I want to distinguish clearly my line of argumentation from those taken by such students of media as Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Purnima Mankekar, *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), who focus on the actual contents of television programs, their institutional and political scaffolding, and their agential reception by a wide populace. I am much more interested in the mode of perception specific to television, shared by the apparatus and its audience. This distinction will hopefully become clearer over the remainder of the paper.

71. Stanley Cavell, “The Fact of Television,” in *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 252. See also Samuel Weber, “Television: Set and Screen,” in Weber, *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), for another interesting account of perception in relation to the television screen.

72. Cavell, *Themes Out of School*, 253; original emphasis.

73. Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991).

74. Morse nicely states the significance of being caught in the eye of the television for America when she says that it is considered a vast wasteland and a waste of time yet requires a devotion allied with the American dream. See “An Ontology of Everyday Distraction,” 193.

75. See the introduction in Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity*, for a good review of this debate.

76. In no way is my interpretation to be read as an endorsement of the Motorway. I have not done sufficient research to speak to the charges of the large-scale displacement of people and destruction of environment visited by the construction of the Motorway. However, I am certain there is a story there. See, for instance, M. A. Shah, “Irregularities in Land Acquisition of Motorway Reported,” *Nation*, 4 July 1998. Rather, I have been more interested in understanding how the Motorway has been affectively assimilated given that it is here, and that more such highways are being furiously built even as I write this essay, and what this assimilation has to tell us about the future. The standing vision of the highway project is to extend the Motorway to Peshawar in the north and ultimately to Karachi in the south.

77. See for instance James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

78. See Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds., *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2004).

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