

decoded+delhi+denuded=Google+Search

PARVATI SHARMA

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www.orchy.com/dictionary/bigdic-d.htm

*Results from the search string: [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=delhi+
decoded+and+denuded&btnG=Google+Search](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=delhi+decoded+and+denuded&btnG=Google+Search)*

A search engine is a little like an oracle, a fortune teller, the three witches: the connection, a code, the request, the wait, the result: a cryptic, encoded, multidimensional answer that could mean almost anything –

[Delhi Dreams: sheher.com: new delhi: horoscope: dreams: pay close attention to your dreams... your dreams are a little on the dramatic side... your dreams will be of assistance to you... dreams are fuzzy and hard to remember... dreams can be a big help in the ideas department... a dream sequence should be of help to you as you receive some warnings that will help you through the week]

– but seems always to contain a cryptic, encoded, multidimensional truth, a logos that awaits the right seeker. For the rest, truth is information, information truth and what you get is what you see. The search result, based on keywords, is at best a probable approximation of the request, outside the boundaries of temporal and spatial organisation. Entirely useless in many hands, it demands intuition and luck in the user, (so Google has an “I feel lucky” button that connects to a single, random site that might otherwise be hidden in the 17th page of an ordinary search) as well as the ability to adapt what has been sought to what has been found.

There are two sides to a search: the real and the virtual, or almost-but-not-quite-and-perhaps-more. Real Delhi online is Delhi off-line copied and pasted on an html document. The parameters are complaint, anger, pathos, film reviews, personal reminiscences, alternative perspectives. The central lock is that Delhi exists for those who exist outside it; for the rest it is nothingness, and its descriptions thrive by virtue of its dearth.

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The Rediff Diary: Amberish K Diwanji
(<http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/jun/09diary.htm>)

"In an earlier diary, I had complained that Delhi is not really fit to be India's capital. Two summers in Delhi... my conviction has been strengthened by the way it treats its lesser citizens. It is shocking. This city is wonderful if you are rich, terrible if you aren't... Delhi is fast becoming a truly Marxist land where the state is withering away and the denizens of the *Rajdhani* have increasingly turned away from the government to other means... to get their work done. The extremely positive aspect of this is the gainful employment it has generated. For instance, the constant power shortage has led to a massive market in the production of inverters and generators. And while the rich buy the brand names, dozens of 'grey markets' have cropped up, selling inverters and generators at a far lesser price".

The thought might then meander lazily to "jets of crimson beetle-nut spittle sail[ing] through the air, briefly catching the sunlight before splattering anonymously into dusty corners, in Lala Lajpat Rai Market" (Jeff Greenwald, http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/1.02/dishwallahs_pr.html). More tenacious, it may open Kamran Shafi's column (<http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/columnists/kamran/article-kamran.htm>), "The city has a chronic electricity problem, the power switching on and off, dipping and surging at will, such as we have never seen; its telephones are most erratic... While I can get on the Internet from

"On May Day, in the year that the Manifesto of the Communist Party turned 150, a man stopped his pick-up on a Los Angeles freeway overpass, sat in it for an hour drinking beer, patting his dog

my village home via my server in Taxila in twenty seconds flat, you can sit for hours in Delhi trying to log on... Its roundabouts are used as badly as ours incoming vehicles forcing their way in... And yes, when the traffic police are not looking, Indians too run the red lights".

Foreign views, usually tinged by a Gulliveresque bafflement-cum-smugness at being able to connect with such difference, written, like everything on the net, with keywords not words, make clear how Delhi's chaos is nowhere near as 'exotic' as even foreign views may try to persuade. The chaos is no lights, no water, no phone, bad driving, too much noise: like walking into a house with a TV blaring in every room. "Other than the train being 1 hour and 15 minutes late, little else went amiss in New Delhi" (<http://www.frankjamesmd.org/diary/friday.htm>).

Delhi looks at itself with more simulated surprise, unwilling to concede its self-awareness. Four members of the Fair Trade Survey post a report on child labour in the jewellery workshops of Shakoor di Dandi. "The entire locality is divided in small narrow lanes... The smell of chemicals makes one sick... There are around eighty small workshops... with average number of eight workers working in the area of 5x6 feet room without ventilation... It

was sad and also amazing... in those squalors the little craftsmen were working without sufficient light and seemed as if they were content with their fate. The darkness or heat, the skin diseases hardly mattered! Their eyes told the story of no hope and dreams... They came to the city to glorify their life... There was not enough to eat. The life was dull".

and talking on a cell phone. Then he shouted something unintelligible, waved a flag, set the truck on fire, left the dog burning like a torch, skipped to the edge of the overpass, wondered whether to jump, and finally killed himself with a knife...

Articulate Delhi distances itself from those for whom it tries to speak, and the surprise provokes little beyond good deeds for the day. Jamila Verghese, part of Leela Shukla's Tourist Escort, established in the 1950s and guide to, amongst others, John Kennedy, and self-admittedly responsible for putting Delhi on the tourist map, writes that her joy was "when rustic bystanders would find themselves included in our tour regardless of which celebrity we were currently showing around. We spoke to them in Punjabi or Hindustani... translating it for our foreign tourists. This was the first time the lower income Delhi *wallas*... had entered their own monuments without being bullied and browbeaten by the liveried guards at the gate. They gaped unbelievably, breathed wonderingly, '*Behnji*... were these really our *rajahs* and *ranis*?' There was always a heart lift in our answer".

The point here is not to analyse the text – "sad and amazing", "little craftsmen", "hope and dreams", "gaped unbelievably", "heart lift" are less than subliminal codes for 'not us' and 'thank god' – but to show how the control of knowledge and the means to knowledge also allows the control of information. The net does not encourage textual analyses, but it does turn information into a view/perspective. A search bombards the seeker with a glut that turns, almost unconsciously, into an image. It is almost impossible to follow just one link in a search; the lack of physical discipline – the scroll bar, the 'Find' box, hypertext that deliberately cuts any argument short, cutting and pasting – the difficulty of reading long passages on-screen, multiple windows, composing e-mails while surfing psychedelic sites, the hypnotic glow of the screen all turn a search into an experience, and the result into an impression.

An equally valid Delhi, then, exists where it is presented as impression – tangentially and undescribed. For example:

Spate of Violent Crimes Rocks Delhi

(http://www.delhiindia.com/News/spate_of_violent_crimes_rocks_delhi.htm)

"The National Capital Region of Delhi convulsed under a spat of violent crimes... Four members of a family, including two children, were brutally killed at their home, a college-campus feud went way beyond the usual fisticuffs and ended with the murder of a student leader... Rs. 10 lakhs was looted from a van in Faridabad, an industrialist's son was shot

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at in Gurgaon after a protection demand was ignored, and two school-bound children were forced into a van and driven away in South West Delhi, apparently by their estranged father”.

Extract from “The Buddha Smiled”, co-winner of the NYU press prize for hyper-fiction (<http://www.nyupress.nyu.edu/hypertext/moulthrop.html>)

“On May Day, in the year that the Manifesto of the Communist Party turned 150, a man stopped his pickup on a Los Angeles freeway overpass, sat in it for an hour drinking beer, patting his dog and talking on a cell phone. Then he shouted something unintelligible, waved a flag, set the truck on fire, left the dog burning like a torch, skipped to the edge of the overpass, wondered whether to jump, and finally killed himself with a knife... In Delhi, a teenager tested positive for HIV. She had been to the cinema two weeks earlier, had felt a little pinprick on her back. Her fingers came away smeared with blood. On her back was a small sticker: ‘Welcome to the world of AIDS’”.

Extract from *The Man who Turned on the World* (<http://www.psychedelic-library.org/holl5.htm>)

“Before Tim and Nena left for New York to catch the plane to New Delh... there was a receiving line and we all filed past with our presents... Some gave hashish, some gave bags of excellent grass. Some gave mushrooms. A snuff box of cocaine. A quantity of LSD. The entire range of mind-expanding substances were proffered to the newly-weds... When Tim and Nena left we carried on with the celebrations into the dawn and watched the sun edging over the horizon as the earth heaved over and took us into another day... Tapes would arrive at New Delhi via American Express and would be delivered to Tim and Nena, about a mile away in Almora. ‘Dear Tim and Nena, We’re missing you very much... We’ve... been reading Rene Daumal’s *Mount Analogue* and our souls are climbing the mountain. Our bodies too: we’ve built our own mountain from chicken wire and plaster of paris, and we’ve painted routes and markings on this mountain, a metaphoric statement of where we’re at... We are sending you some LSD by next mail, to c/o American Express, New Delhi. Enough for 40 trips. Love from Millbrook”.

In Delhi, a teenager tested positive for HIV. She had been to the cinema two weeks earlier, had felt a little pinprick on her back. Her fingers came away smeared with blood. On her back was a small sticker: ‘Welcome to the world of AIDS’”.

Delhi as capital (both city and currency, a code and an impression) and, mainly, located. In the diffuse world of the net, Delhi, as much as Los Angeles and more than Almora, is an undeniable space in which murder happens, AIDS is a problem, where people go to and come back from. “If hypertext means anything to our emerging, expanding information culture, it might find its significance in passing along the dual memes of diversity and connection” (Stuart Moulthrop: <http://www.nyupress.nyu.edu/hypertext/moulthrop.html>).

The psychedelic experience is set in Delhi, hyper-fiction needs Delhi to establish itself as fiction. Without this tangential reality, writing and thought are lost in the interlinked intangibility of cyberspace. Delhi implies connections outside cyberspace, acknowledges that the reader/viewer also exists outside the login and the nickname, abstractions of the self. Delhi (along with 'crime', 'AIDS', 'American Express', 'LSD') is amongst the anchors that tie these documents to search strings, without which there might not be any difference between reality and virtuality.

This is not a theory specific to Delhi – although given the tremendously unequal distribution of information and technology, it is most apparent in the region; nor to hypertext – most off-line discourse is located similarly. However, while an off-line text incorporates the awareness of its environment (fictional or real) as an essential part of its creation and consumption, any online narrative recognises its off-line 'source' (here 'Delhi') as, say, a snatch of conversation overheard at a party. The whole conversation exists as information in a linked database, but the snatch only establishes one's presence. In an alternative world where the self cannot act except through representation, it becomes perhaps vital to state that in another dimension, it is (anodyne, linear, cricket-loving) present.

Conclusion

#delhi fondly remembers aYeSha... attained immortality on the 19th of January 2001 "Ayesha iam very sorry for being so late noone even told me u died it was desi only u k u were something which cant be expressed in words... and we wanted to stand b4 u for ur sorrows and everything has a time period with it today iam here maybe tomorrow i join u too God knows... don't worry iam coming soon to give u company upstairs u see me very chipkoo types bhee kaise aapko akela chod doo dar lagta hai akele bachhe haan willl join ya very very soon promise".

Etymologically, 'articulation' is the movement of limbs in action, very bodily, organic. A dislocated articulation is, in some ways, a dislocated limb, a broken body – so that most attempts to control articulation begin, logically, by controlling the body. In a place where the body does not exist, however – in NCR Delhi, #delhi, New Delhi, c/o Delhi, Delhi on a tourist map, Delhi Diary – articulation, until it completes a process of transformation, is hesitant, touching, and absurd.