



Pollution Diaries

Veronika Resslerová, ed.

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Vishal Sen, Pragya Singh, Sumanshu Rao, Gaurav Thakur, Bhupendra Kumar, Param Dharam Singh, Prianshi Gupta, Abishek Stephen, Man Mohan, Manish Gupta, Perry Zutshi, Biliانا Muller, Himanshi Sharma, Risabh Jain, Shweta Kapoor

Commentary by Aleš Čermák

EN [Pollution Diaries] is a work of collaborative writing, a small corpus of texts collected from an online platform that focuses on sharing everyday life experiences from one of the world's most polluted cities. The online platform was active from May 2019 to April 2020, and the participants were students of the Czech language at the University of Delhi.

UTC+5:30
35,6—118°F (2—48°C)
31,9 — 200,7 PM 2.5 µg/m

CZ [Pollution Diaries] je kolektivně psaný text, založený na malém korpusu autentických záznamů ze stejnojmenné WhatsApp skupiny, určené pro sdílení každodenních zkušeností ze života v jednom z nejvíce znečištěných měst světa. Skupina byla aktivní od května 2019 do dubna 2020, přispívali studenti českého jazyka na University of Delhi.

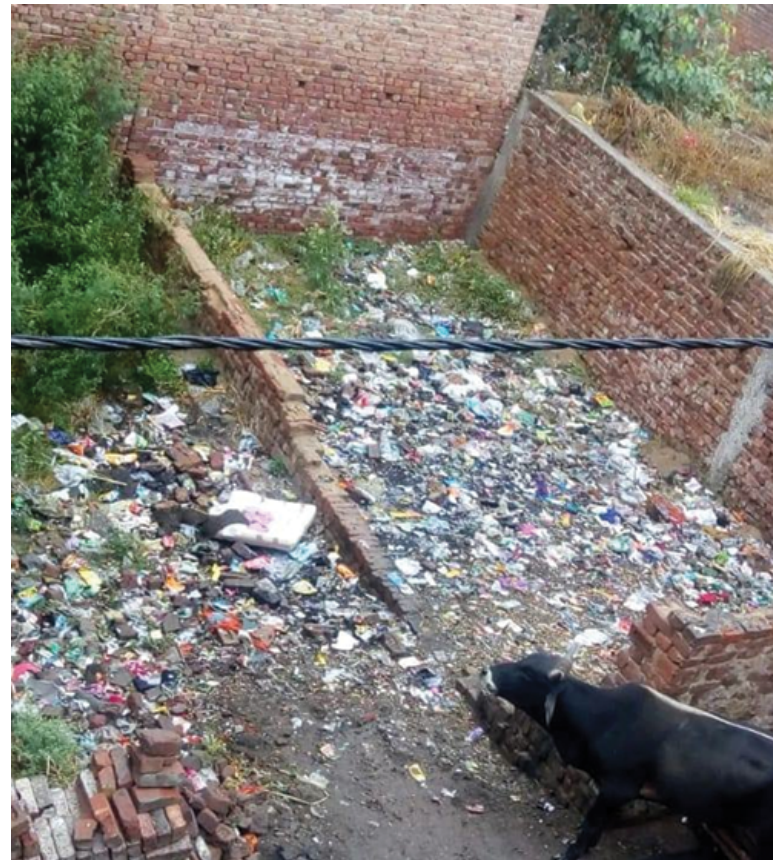
IND [Pollution Diaries] ek online platform ke dwaara sahyogik roop se likhe gaye lekhon ka sankalan hai. Delhi vishwavidyalaya ke Czech bhasha ke vidyarthiyon ne isme May 2019 se lekar April 2020 tak bhaag liya. Sabhi vidyarthiyon ne vishwa ke pradushit shehron me se ek me rehne ke vibhin anubhavon ka ullekh kiya hai.

Pollution
Diaries

People burn the garbage here and when they do, it always makes me cough. It bothers me to see the animals eating plastic bags when they are searching for food.

Lidi tady pálí odpadky, vždycky se z toho rozkašlu. Je strašné dívat se na zvířata, jak jedí plastové pytlíky, když hledají něco k jídlu.

Log yahaan par hamesha kachra jalaate hain jiske kaaran mujhe bahut khaasi ho jaati hai. Mujhko bahut bura lagta hai jab jaanvar khaane ki talaash me polythene kha jaate hain.



A post-Diwali photo. The air pollution irritates my eyes and causes breathing problems. The visibility is poor. Delhi has turned into a gas chamber. Firecrackers have been banned, but people still find a way to buy them. I think there were not so many firecrackers set off as there were one year ago, but the air quality is terrible anyway.

Fotka po Díválí. Mám podrážděné oči a dýchací problémy. Viditelnost je špatná. Z Dillí je plynová komora. Pyrotechnika je zakázána, ale lidi se k ní stejně dostanou. Myslím, že letos nebylo tolik raket jako loni, ale vzduch je stejně strašný.

Yeh Diwaali ke baad ki tasveer hai. Aasmaan bilkul bhi saaf nahi hai aur hawa me pradhushan itna hai ki aankhon me jalan aur saans lene me dikkat ho rahi hai. Delhi bilkul ek gas chamber ban chuki hai. Pataakhon ki bikri par rok toh lagai gayi hai lekin fir bhi log kaise na kaise kar pataake khareed hi lete hain. Pichle saal ke mukaabley iss saal kam pataakhon ka istemaal hua lekin hawa utni hi gandi hai.

Right now, at Kashmiri Gate metro station it is so dusty that everything has become blurry and it makes me choke.

Právě teď je kolem metra Kasmiri Gate tolik prachu, až je všechno rozmazané a dusím se.

Abhi main Kashmere Gate metro station par hoon. Hawa me dhool itni hai ki sab kuch dhundhla nazar aa raha hai aur ghutan si ho rahi hai.

Today, a man with a smoke machine came to repel mosquitoes and other insects. It works, but the smoke makes it hard to breathe.

Dneska přijel pán s kouřostrojem proti komárům a dalšímu hmyzu. Funguje to, ale v tom kouři se špatně dýchá.

Aaj humaare yahan macchar aur keedey maarne waali dawaai ka chhidkaav kiya gaya. Yeh maccharon ko maarne me toh kaafi asardaar hai lekin iska dhooa saans lena mushkil kar deta hai.



These pictures are from a government school playground. I have to go that way to catch my bus whenever I am late for my university classes, but it's difficult since I have to breathe the smell of the garbage. The people who live there told me that the government doesn't provide garbage containers and garbage trucks do not often come by.

Tyhle fotografie jsou ze státního školního hřiště. Musím tamtudy na autobus, když jdu pozdě na lekci, ale vadí mi ten smrad odpadků. Místní lidi mi řekli, že jim vláda nedala popelnice a popeláři nejezdí moc často.

Yeh sarkaari school ke maidan ki tasveeren hain. Jab bhi main class ke liye late ho jaata hoon tab main yahin se Vishwavidyalaya ke liye bus pakadta hoon. Lekin koode-kachre ki durgand me saans lete huye aisa karna vaakai me bahut mushkil hai. Yahaan rehne waale logon ne mujhe bataya ki sarkaar ne yahan koode daano ki vyavastha nahi ki hai aur koode uthaane waale truck bhi yahaan kabhi-kabaar hi aate hain.



This is an open sewer near my house. People come here to empty their dustbins into the water as if it's perfectly normal to do that. But it stinks a lot and the sewer isn't protected by any barrier. When it fills up, the liquid from the sewer mixes with trash and spills onto the road and makes it slippery. When it is raining, the locals can't cross the road. They have to take a different route to reach their homes.

Tohle je otevřená stoka blízko mého domu. Lidi tam chodí vysypávat odpadkové koše, jako by to bylo úplně normální. Ale smrdí to a stoka nemá zvýšený okraj. Když se naplní, voda s odpadky se vylije na ulici, která pak klouže. Když prší, místní nemůžou ani přejít cestu. Musí chodit domů oklikou.

Yeh mere ghar ke paas ka ek naala hai. Log bina kisi hichak ke iss naale me apna kachra faink dete hain. Naale se bahut badbu aati hai aur yeh kisi bhi tarah se dhaka nahi hai aur iski deewaare bhi uuchi nahi hain. Jab naala bhar jaata hai tab saara paani koode-kachre ke saath sadak par behne lagta hai. Sadak par itna kichad ho jaata hai jiske kaaran logon ko sadak paar karne me bahut dikkat hoti hai. Logon ko doosre raaste se apne ghar jaana padta hai.



these microbes as ideal objects which enable us to listen actively to the very idea of life. These microbes are atypical not only because they live without light, but because their life without light distinguishes them from existing epistemological qualifications, which establish human ability to identify and understand what life is. Ignoring the very ability to precisely define what a life is and what it is not is the key problem in the project of the decentralization of man (from thinking). These microbes reside deep inside the Earth, they depend on it just as we depend on the Earth itself.

Pryiashi Gupta: *I was at Kalindi Kunj for the festival, we have to go down to the Yamuna River. There was a lot of foam floating in the water. People said that the foam is from chemicals in the river whenever water is released from the dam.*

The Earth is neither nature nor a deity. The Earth is a new form of political power that needs to be explored over and over again. Man does not mean people, but a special type of existence created from the idea of the Enlightenment and put into operation by industrialization and state regulations, as well as other things. We could say that this man has made a mess in today's world. The present world is therefore a product of this type of existence. Neither nature nor the gods will bring unity or peace, but the people of the Earth can become the earthly craftsmen of peace.

However, the big problem is with the so-called fix-it people, that is the people who say they have a plan. These people are in fact failing and yet we are forced to face their destructive decisions every day. They take as a matter of faith their secular story of technological correction, that is in the (technological) perfection that is yet to come. These people stand behind many scandals and represent the forces of extermination in their most dangerous form.

[Techno-optimism is much worse than techno-pessimism.]

Imagine an integrated system of interconnected computer users. Or the frantic fleeing of immigrants across borders, or the transfer of capital investments to various off-shore locations.

These world flows are not only interconnected, they also switch channels and re-map geography. Let's imagine the necropolitical border progressing from the Greek coast towards our front door. Lesbos is now next door. The boundaries swirl around us, pushing us closer to our own bodies. Imagine earthworms searching for nutrient-rich soil. Meadows, forests in which they can survive. They will only survive if they encounter the proper conditions.

The Earth is a spatial phenomenon, an autopoietic sphere that has created its own stabilities and instabilities. There is no difference between healing ourselves or healing the Earth. The healing of our bodies and minds is and should be linked to the healing of the Earth. There are many medications, but most of them only temporarily relieve the pain. The Earth is in danger and all of its species are exposed. Imagine eating a piece of bread. If we eat the bread with an awareness of what we are doing, we will also be aware of the Earth, the clouds, the rain, the people, in that piece of bread. Bread cannot exist on its own. Imagine what it would be like to find yourself in a completely quiet forest in which no sounds can be heard. Would it be a dead forest, a forest museum or a forest of the living dead? Either way, we find ourselves on the border between life and death.

Bhupendra Kumar: *This evening, there was a dust storm on my way home. It irritated my throat and eyes.*

Pryianshi Gupta: *Today, a man with a smoke machine came to repel mosquitoes and other insects. It works, but the smoke makes it hard to breathe.*

Sumashu Rao: *The situation is becoming unmanageable. The wind is carrying in a massive blanket of smog. Reports say that the rapid increase in pollution is because farmers are burning field stubble in the neighbouring states. I saw children coughing and the number of patients in hospitals is going up, too.*

A change of imagination is also part of a new kind of relations. If we take something really seriously, it means that at that moment we become able to design new possible worlds and inhabit them with new kinds of practices and skills. This opens up opportu-

Birds are chirping all around; beautiful sunset, no honking cars.

Všude zpívají ptáci; nádherný západ slunce; žádná troubící auta.

Chaar aur chahakte panchi, khubsurat sunset aur shaant gaadiyan.



Edited by: **Veronika Resslerá**
Commentary by: **Aleš Čermák**
Photos by: **Vishal Sen, Pragya Singh, Sumanshu Rao, Gaurav Thakur, Bhupendra Kumar, Param Dharam Singh, Pryianshi Gupta, Abishek Stephen, Man Mohan, Manish Gupta, Perry Zutshi, Biliانا Muller, Himanshi Sharma, Risabh Jain, Shweta Kapoor**

Czech translation: **Veronika Resslerá**
Hindi translation: **Abishek Stephen**

English proofreading: **Lloyd Dunn**
Czech proofreading: **Zuzana Resslerá**
Hindi proofreading: **Abishek Stephen**

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