

... At stake, for certain, is our capacity to address, in an analytic, an aesthetic and an ethical way, questions both of difference and control. Questions of difference, because both in dreams and on the streets, in our mediated domesticities and in the physical, bodily movements across cities, we are continuously confronted by the other, the stranger, the neighbour. And questions of control, because in those movements, through dream-worlds and life-worlds, we are continuously struggling to make sense, to make and secure our identities, to hold the line between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the comforting and the threatening.



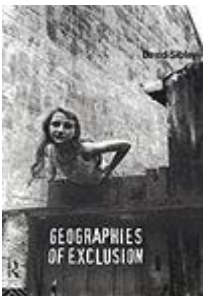
PROBOSCIS CULTURAL SNAPSHOTS NUMBER FOUR: JANUARY 2003

Private Reveries. Public Spaces.



I should say that the house shelters daydreaming... the house protects the dreamer... the house allows one to dream in peace (Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*)

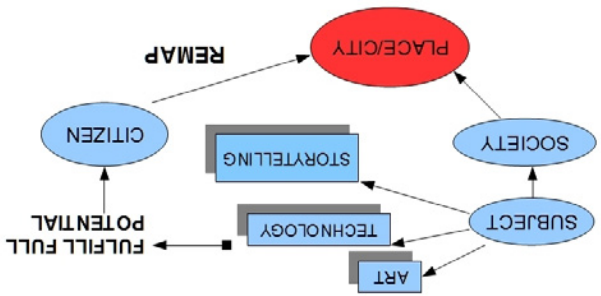
The house as haven but if the desire for a purified environment is not shared by all members of a household house becomes a place of conflict (David Sibley)



Control

The architecture of the city sharply defines social relations by means of categories such as inside/outside, public/private thus stressing the gap between a subjective and a social experience of the urban environment, the gap between the self and the city

Yu-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*



These excerpts are extrapolated from the visual essay I have been composing at Proboscis loosely based on Proboscis' work and projects. First it developed as a concise mind map which outlined the fundamental design underpinning Proboscis' long journey – according to me obviously. It then evolved and bloomed in different and unexpected directions, drawing on my past knowledge, feeding on fortuitous connections and new sources of inspiration. It was elaborated following different paths, or 'themes', even if I found myself juxtaposing pictures or quotations, originally designed for separate 'themes', pleasantly coming together. The lines I have drawn are just some of the infinite possible threads I could have kept to. This is my own series of allusions, suggestions, relations.

INTRO



Visual Essay - Place/Space/City

Elena Festa

"Benjamin's flâneur is a response to a world in which sense is disjunct, scattered, crystallized in detail. The flâneur is the collector and connoisseur of detail. He is a sensibility as opposed to an intelligence. His highest aspiration is to become a medium, a precipitate in which the scattered particles of sense can reconstitute themselves. [...] The flâneur is, thus, dedicated to the surveying of space, for it is only in space, in the network of layered particulars, that the successive images of time are concretized. Space exists to take the print of time."

●●● be active

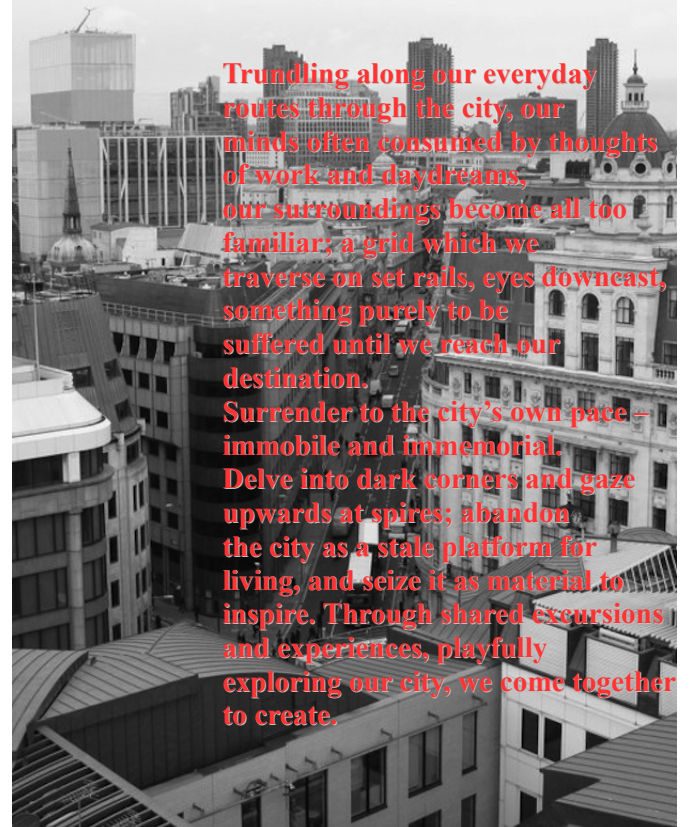
*Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 1922*

●●● do not succumb to the city

The city is an immense archive, a stratification of previous lives, stories, discourses. It is a site where personal and public trajectories meet, clash and collide in an ever evolving text.

City As Material An Overview

Trundling along our everyday routes through the city, our minds often consumed by thoughts of work and daydreams, our surroundings become all too familiar; a grid which we traverse on set rails, eyes downcast, something purely to be suffered until we reach our destination. Surrender to the city's own pace – immobile and immemorial. Delve into dark corners and gaze upwards at spires; abandon the city as a stale platform for living, and seize it as material to inspire. Through shared excursions and experiences, playfully exploring our city, we come together to create.



To travel, and to perform our travel, in this environment we plug in, choosing a circuit. Here, as opposed to the discarded 'grand narratives' (Lyotard) of the City, the Walkman offers the possibility of a micronarrative, a customised story and soundtrack, not merely a space but a place, a site of dwelling. The ingestion of such a privatised habitat in public spaces is a disturbing act. Its uncanny quality lies in its deliberate confusion of earlier boundaries, in its provocative appearance 'out of place.' Now, the confusion of 'place,' of voices, histories and experiences speaking 'out of place' forms part of the altogether more extensive sense of contemporary semantic and political crisis. A previous spatial hierarchy has had increasingly to confront an excess of languages emerging out of the histories and languages of feminism, sexual rights, ethnicity, race and the environment that overflow and undercut its authority. The Walkman is therefore a political act? It is certainly an act that unconsciously entwines with many other micro/activities in conferring a different sense on the polis. In producing a different sense of space and time, it participates in rewriting the conditions of representation: where 'representation' clearly indicates both the semiotic dimensions of the everyday and potential participation in a political community.

Tain Chambers - "The Aural Walk"

-anarchology → excavate LAYERS of meaning and understanding to get beneath the surface

Visual Essay - Place/Space/City

Elena Festa

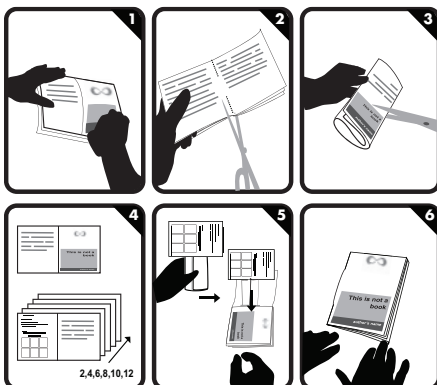
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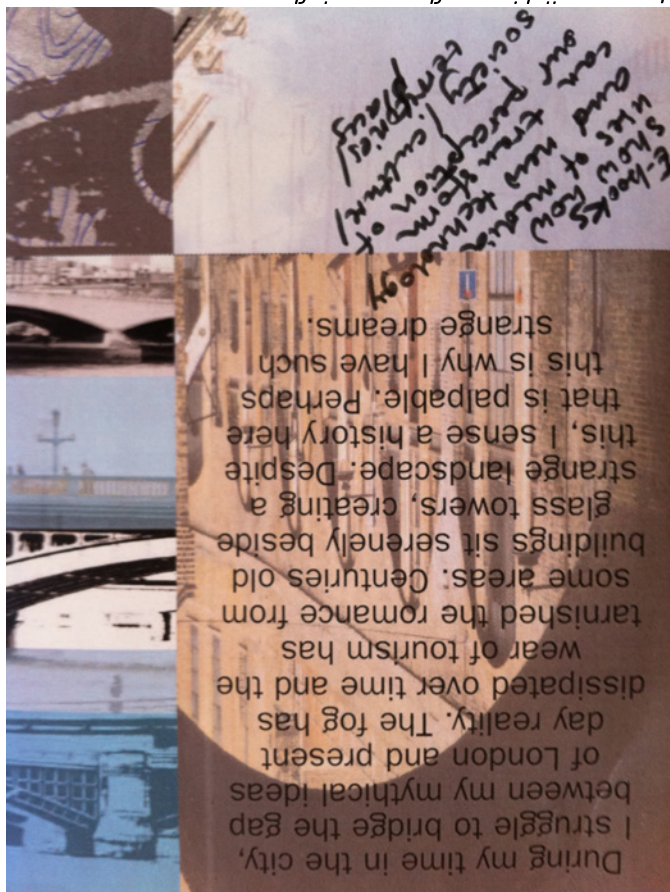
One of four eBooks created during an internship at Proboscis

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<http://bkltr.it/p71VF9>

joyce majiski – confidences, influences, passages



sonic geographies

Sonic Geographies takes sound as the entry point for excavating and mapping urban experience and invisible infrastructures of the city.

A series of experiments and scenarios are being developed that operate as maps and journeys but also as highly personal renderings of sonic experience – sounds of the personal world in conversation with sounds of the city.

The mappings attempt to excavate the layers of sound that make up the city and create strata of difference: from the sound of a city's church bells to the shifting sonic signatures of traffic, music radio and the layers of wireless communications. Sound eludes systems of representation: this process of excavation will entail developing a graphic language and notational system for representing and articulating sonic difference, and the inter-relationships that occur as urban experience.

The excavation is designed to open up a new space of enquiry into the experience of the city, and how sound functions as a kind of infrastructure for understandings of place and geography particular to contemporary conditions in the city.



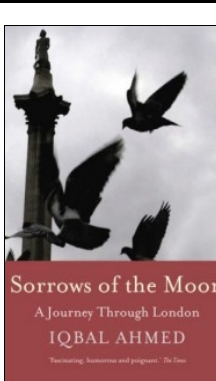
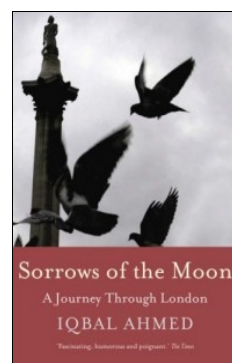
- the city street is a liminal space (psychologists call *liminal space* a place where boundaries dissolve a little and we stand on the threshold)

Night, Sukhdev Sandhu).

The streets carry a note of elusive, disturbing, electrifying mystery that is not concealed by its supposed complete regulation. The layers underneath, piling up little by little, create a dense bundle of voices and meanings to be heard and interpreted. The street is a site to enjoy and play, a site to survey and describe, to contest, claim and reinscribe. The **STREET** stands for the fortuitous and the transient, for wandering, mobility, arrival and departure, a proper metaphor for the travelling poetics of the postmodern migrant condition.

Mapping the Streets

**** Ahmed adopts the flâneur stance** (destabilising, 'other' perspective, text vehicle for translocation >> see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Translocation*)



Sorrows of the Moon
A Journey Through London
IQBAL AHMED
"Fascinating, humorous and poignant" - The Times

penetrating and poetic book which draws a personal trajectory on the map of London. It explores petty story-lives of peripheral characters, often marked by resignation, loneliness, failure. This dominant tone of melancholy blurs and dampens the enthusiasm and the celebration of London diversity, underlining how the common destiny of the capital and of its people is one of sorrow and isolation. Observed on a clear night from Parliament Hill, the moon, which acts as the unifying image across the book inspired by a poem of Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal*, wraps and encloses the city in a fate of sterility and desolation.

“Alex Hiller, a marketing and consumer expert at Nottingham Business School, points out that there is no conflict between *anomie* and *consumption*: “If you look at Baudrillard and other people writing in sociology about consumption, it’s a falsification of social life. Adverts promote a fantasy land. Consumerism relies upon people feeling disconnected from the world.”

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/09/uk-riots-psychology-of-looting>

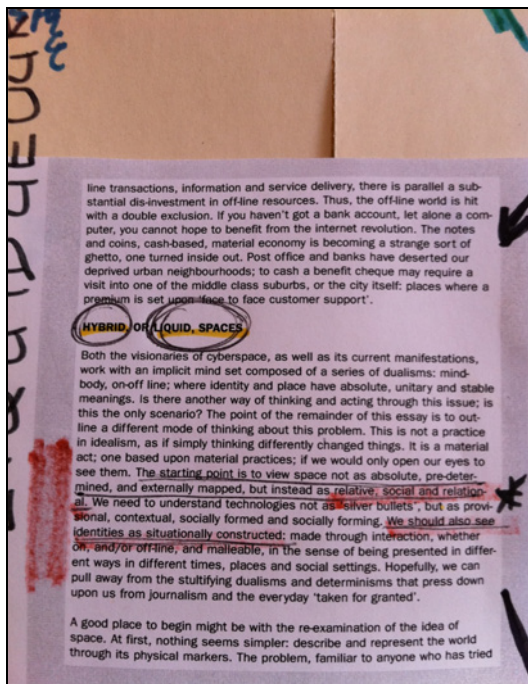
The shocking acts of looting may not be political, but they nevertheless say something about the beaten-down lives of the rioters

THE UK RIOTS: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LOOTING

“The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed and **social control** is anchored in the new needs which it has provided”
Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*



LAYERS



relational >> space, identities

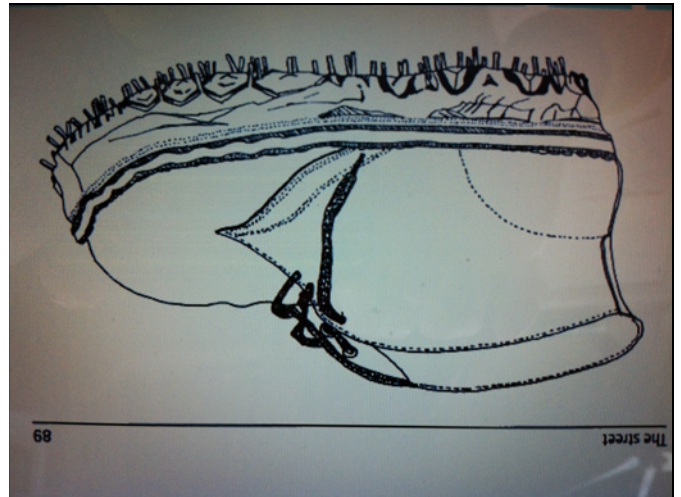
ROOTS/ROUTES

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*



a style that privileges grip and purchase and which facilitates a stubborn, lingering street presence

THE RACE ISSUE ENTERED THE STREETS (1970s)



Black British Writing

“the figure of the **house** is not merely figurative. Housing did not emerge out of the blue as a primary signifier in early postwar black British writing but during a period of acute housing shortages in which the dwelling had established itself as a key arena of racial contestation” - James Procter, *Dwelling Places: Postwar*

The **street** and the **house**: openness and closedness in Postcolonial London.

Because of its colonial past London is a metonymy of imperial power and its multicultural present is a depiction of a sort of colonization in reverse. Since the start of decolonization London has incessantly become the home of millions of people arriving in the hope of better living conditions. However, the new demographic configuration of the city led to social tensions but also allowed new forms of identity to be formulated in terms of a worthwhile and enriching hybridism.

The fluctuation between barren prejudice and enabling agency is studied through the analysis of the alternation of closed and open spaces. The closed space can metaphorically refer to a sense of claustrophobic paralysis where the migrant hides from a hostile and denigrating urban space.

The closed space can be either a damp place –in fact somber basements keep occurring in these novels – which limit the freedom of the subject, or the embodiment of a *home* which conveys a sense of belonging and fulfillment. Similarly the openness to the city and the act of walking can represent either a liberating deed and an action of political significance, or a restless wander through an alien jungle.

Ali, Monica, *Brick Lane*, 2003..

Ball, John Clement, *Imagining London*, 2004

Jacobs, Jane, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, 1996.

Levy, Andrea, *Small Island*, 2004.

McLeod, John, *Postcolonial London*, 2004.

Sandhu, Sukhdev, *London Calling. How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City*, 2003.

Smith, Zadie, *White Teeth*, Harish Hamilton, London, 2000.