

## e-Xplo in East London Found Wanting: Vertiginous London (circa 2003) \*

\*Found Wanting – Vertiginous London served as the narration for the East London tour. The text was read by Adam Bowman. The idea emerged through extensive reading and research, exploring the layers upon layers of discourse surrounding and enveloping the city of London in general and East London in particular. Rather than attempt to make sense of all the material in a direct or orderly manner, the strategy was instead to allow London to appear embedded within its fog of history and folklore, both forgotten and remembered, trashed or reclaimed.

We remixed some of the texts we found to be interesting and most related to our tour, gluing it together with original texts, texts that were inspired from our own time in the city, text from advertising along the route of the tour, text spoken by people we met or interviewed.

The entire script was divided into “tracks”, broken into short fragmentary lines, sometimes words, and even silences, and each night placed into random order and played in a different sequence than the night before. What emerged was an unordered narrative rendering of a city, new, unique each night, a vertiginous London, half emboldened, half weighed down by its history, and sometimes most alive inbetween the cracks and silences in the narratives.

- 1 Question: How does one speak about a city one does not know?
- 2 How does one speak about a city one does know?
- 3 The word complicity often comes to mind and I think about my own complicities, and I'm not just talking about big bad America here.
- 4 This is the wealthiest planet in the universe. We should all be living like kings
- 5 (Silence for 5 seconds)
- 6 Whatever your origins or standing in the wider world, to be waiting in a bus stop here at this junction is to have joined the ranks of the underdog.
- 7 And that is enough for a tentative opening.  
The initial exchange is likely to concern the invariably inadequate doings of they who run the bus service so badly ...stacking up the buses so that none come for a half an hour ...  
and then five rush through all at once. Or chopping the bus route ...  
into smaller and smaller sections so that nobody can be sure that the bus,  
when it finally does arrive,  
will take them more than half way to their destination.
- 8 People swap stories about the time when the first deregulated buses
- 9 ... showed up bringing a further touch of visual anarchy to the increasingly chaotic London street Scene.
- 10 The cream and purple vehicles of Kentish buses
- 11 ... came thick and fast on the first day

- 12 They still reeked of plastic glue and the drivers didn't always know where they were going
- 13 There are hilarious stories about passengers guiding them along the route or covertly hijacking them
- 14 And leading them through dismal housing estates, right up to their own front door.
- 15 When the bus finally arrives. Everything changes.
- 16 Conversations break off as people prepare to board through a whole series of time sanctioned maneuvers.
- 17 Nobody could mistake what happens when the bus arrives at Dalton junction for an entirely orderly cue
- 18 (Silence for 5 seconds)
- 19 But neither is it just the advance of a mob following the law of the jungle. Each time the bus pulls up, the crowd negotiates a messy but still intricately structured settlement  
Between the ideal of the orderly cue and the chaotic stampede.
- 20 This result is far from perfect  
It may drive the elderly and the frail off the bus all together.
- 21 (Silence for 5 seconds)
- 22 It may occasionally trigger a fierce trading of insults. Racist outbursts and even exchange of blows.
- 23 But it is still governed by an etiquette that dictates how far the disintegration can be allowed to go.
- 24 The biggest threat to the inner London bus cue doesn't come from cultural degeneration at all.
- 25 I already know how to describe the scene.
- 26 Small traces of planes flying over by
- 27 He was never attracted to pistols because he believes every bullet has a name on it
- 28 Our man may not fear thieves. They all know him, not that he is always broke. Indeed at times he has money to burn, but they are aware that if push comes to shove, he know how to handle a knife.
- 29 With time, travel loses its attraction
- 30 (Silence for 5 seconds)
- 31 That is unless one has spent so much time abroad.
- 32 Let's not forget that tourism is tied intrinsically to social, political, and economic privileges.

- 33 Let's not forget also that tourism, like any business is always in search of expansion into ever growing markets, and at its own pace, producing a sort of packaged city, a consumable and consumer friendly city, for not only visitors, but also residents alike.
- 34 In all my years as a tour guide, I always had the deepest sense that the definitive tour of the East End would not be given by myself, but someone visiting London, who would during the tour, interrupt me, and begin to inform me of her or his family's history here, and the circumstances which prompted their arrival, and later their departure.
- 35 Question: What is it, to know a city? How or when does one know a city?
- 36 And I wonder is there anything redeemable in the experience of the tourist?
- 37 How does one begin to think or consider the pleasure of the tourist?  
I don't know, but spectacle, consumerism, malls and city architecture designed like a leisure park, maybe its not so much a question of pleasure as it is about consumption.
- 38 Is there a particular facet of pleasure that is unique to the tourist's experience outside of the pleasure of consumption?
- 39 (silence 4 seconds)
- 40 I ask so many questions, I begin to tire myself sometimes. Sometimes I think about the answers implicit or implicated in my questions and other times I think about the falseness of the formulations. Bergson. Deleuze. And other times, just want to answer my own questions. And in a straight language or at least in science fiction, so that all are alienated equally.
- 41 How can we think or invent a relation to the city that is also one of discovery and exploration, possibly even pleasure, but does not reduce itself to yet another passive form of consumption?
- 42 Question and Answer: How would for example, cruising be different from touring? In California, one gets into the car, with no particular destination in mind, driving becomes its own end, one cruises as a social activity, as one would cruise in the park, looking for some action, cruising is tied to movement, a social movement, the cruiser travels in a basically more disinterested way than the tourist, who is often swaddled in the stereotypes of monuments, since for the cruiser the culture comes under the indirect.
- 43 Answers: I always hate it when people tell me what to do, but you should take more walks in general, alone preferably. Walk to places you know, but at times you are never there. Walk to places you don't know, to see what else is happening.
- 44 Its simple, but the slightest detour from the everyday, opens up to other days spent differently.
- 45 Oh, to refrain from the polemics, the truth games and yet to also remain in or retain a, position, a critical position.
- 46 Question and Answer: Do you ever feel like you have completely failed at conveying something concise, cogent, digestible? Maybe this is your only success.
- 47 I try to sometimes think about a three dimensional map that would operate more or less like an archive of sounds, linked to and recorded at particular spaces. Each point would then retain sounds from different times. From these acoustics, a new topography, not just based on space, but also time.

- 48 Should one reconsider the role of cartography, within one's relation to the city?
- 49 I sometimes think about a three dimensional map that would also operate more or less like an archive of sounds, linked to and recorded at particular spaces, at different times. With each point, one would be presented with different sounds recorded at different times. From this, a new topography as well as cartography could emerge, not just based on space, but also time, as well as fragments and traces of the lived.
- 50 (silence 2 seconds)
- 51 As to become a stranger to one's own land. The circle grows even tighter
- 52 As it draws closer and closer to home
- 53 Since I couldn't venture very far this Autumn, I decided on a simple excursion to the East End.
- 54 How lucky the British are, they manage to write and read entire chapters of first hand observation unencumbered by the slightest contrivance of fiction.
- 55 (Silence for 5 seconds)
- 56 In Paris by contrast they want their things sprinkled in anecdotes and love stories preferably ending in death or marriage. Our neighbors have a talent for realism that delights a talent for absolute truth. Indeed novels will never be able to render life in all its bizarre complexities.
- 57 You invent man but are incapable of observing him.  
What novels can vie with the comic or tragic stories contained in a police gazette?
- 58 Maybe I can begin this journey by describing exactly what we're about to see.  
One way of describing it would be to just physically travel through the place. The first bit is a very long road  
we continue through housing projects, stores, and restaurants and more stores, commercial outfits mixed with residential areas.
- 59 Question: When was the last time you took a vacation?  
When was the last time you took a vacation at home?  
(pause 2 seconds)  
When was the last time you could afford to take a vacation?
- 60 Slow and dark. The street is a wider street than is normal in London. You continue up and you will get to an overpass. On the overpass, you may be lucky and see the moon. On most days, you'll just see some buildings. The rent goes up and down. And soon after we're on the highway. At least that's what you might think. But we're not. We've just floated into a little neighborhood. We make a left, the street is called, something, something familiar. Lorton. Lansford. Linger. We go into the street, garbage strewn everywhere on the street. It's a dirty city. My microphone sits here. Newspapers on the ground. Hope we are not lost. We haven't forgotten anything. Hope those textile workers still need a job. Hope you see how the street has an internal logic or illogic. Constantly shifting.
- 61 Like I alluded to you earlier, there are problems. Hardly, mostly refuse on the street. We arrive at a carpenter's place. We turn left here and continue down into our neighborhood. Hackney Wick is what they call it. Several huge high-rises knocked down for low rises. Low riders. Cruising past. Hollywood Boulevard. Not sleepy enough to say anything creative. So I keep talking. Waiting I guess interminably.

Waiting to let the night remind me, of what I have forgotten yet again. All our discussions and talks, the familiarity of your face. Your eyes. We continue gluing things together with our eyes. Together for about a few minutes.

- 62 Mostly refuse on the street. Refuse (garbage). Refuse (to deny, say no). Resist. And what exactly to resist?
- 63 I wonder if leisure or pleasure is not at odds with politics at the end of the day, and if there is a politics of pleasure, with pleasure, how can that politics be a responsible one?
- 64 Almost forgot to say, ladies and gentlemen, to your left and right, what still remains of East London
- 65 East London, has a special relationship to books
- 66 People tormented themselves obsessing with the image of oblivious yuppies enjoying a massage and slurping champagne where slave-driven women once ached with phossey jaw: even if one can't put a preservation order on ancient misery, surely there were still some historical dues to be paid.
- 67 Other 'elements of history' had already been incorporated as desirable features, and a monument dedicated to the memory of Annie Besant's intervention would only bring further 'enhancement' to the loft-living lifestyle of Bow Quarter.
- 68 It suited the landscape developer and also pleased the Public Art Development Trust by proposing to work on site over a period in which he would encourage visits from schools and attempt to involve residents in his activities.
- 69 When I remark that I can't see much sign in Annie Besant or the strike in his proposal, he replies, with all the abruptness of an offended artist, that he's not a 'literary' sculptor and moreover, that the developers should have chosen somebody else if that's what they wanted.
- 70 The Bow quarter became an a British experiment in Loft Living. The development was now said to have its roots in the American warehouse revival: 'the loft-living concept says you take a space of character and enhance it.' Where the ordinary house-builders talk of Laura Ashley wallpaper and fitted carpets, 'the loft-livers talk of sandblasted brickwork, timber floors, skylights and galleries.
- 71 Here was the Bow Quarter going beyond mere style to claim a full blown philosophy for itself. Loft-living was American; its roots lay in squatting, and as the Quarterly expressed it in what amounted to a public relations task for the developer, artists and craft workers who started the movement off, merging home and work in low rent scenarios in or near the urban core.
- 72 So this was the revised offer, by buying into the Bow Quarter you could have the 'aura' of loft-living without the hassle of squatting or doing up your own warehouse. Here was Bohemia with the rough edges smoothed off.
- 73 You are at a loss to describe the city.
- 74 The poor, now derided, once celebrated yuppies, had bought into Bow Quarter found themselves stuck with a useless receipt on their deposits, and obliged to complete a dream that was suddenly dissolving before their eyes. The receiver was quick to assure them that the project would be going ahead, but it was with equal alacrity that he cut through the glossy promise of George Kozlowski's brochures to insist that his

only contractual obligation was to provide flats – not pasta shops, fitness instructors, skating rinks, swimming pools, or libraries. Indeed, he entered the fray sounding more like a council housing officer than a man committed to bring off the ‘ultimate in metropolitan lifestyles.’

- 75 You look at it now and it’s quite easy to see why it’s called the Isle of Dogs.
- 76 It starts and ends without you.
- 77 It precedes you, it enters before you and it exits at night, or it exists most at night.
- 78 In another city with even greater history with even greater stories and linkages to other cities and places.
- 79 Locked up tight your jaw refuses to say a word, to utter a phrase that might be construed as description beyond your knowledge,
- 80 Then you wonder about the present. Of presence.
- 81 And you want to keep people in the present, experiencing the present. But then the present contains the past. The near past that was the present, and the past past.
- 82 And then it gets esoteric, the words keep coming like an assemblage of little post it notes, but you can’t speak them, you can’t narrate most of these things. They’ve got to be lived through, you know
- 83 You can only try and open up people’s way of thinking. You know, just give space for some ideas. How about I keep free floating through this? You know you resist all that, you know, you know.
- 84 You know resistance and.
- 85 The sound of planes almost about to land. T-shirt on half way, letting the cold air come in, and a slight erection, and the erection is really just a story, there’s no truth to it, its just to arouse people’s sensuality.
- 86 It might just overwhelm them. The difficulty of these kinds of beginnings is that there’s no real place to start, there is no tour, there is only a cruise.
- 87 And we don’t mean a cruise ship. We mean cruising, moving, drifting, looking for partners, associates, happen stance, standards, bystanders, happening, holloway road, hobo, has this got anything to do with this project?
- 88 You know what I mean? Words slip in and I think Canary Wharf. We have to see it. At night, moving through it. It might mean missing something else. What to edit out. It must be a sight to behold. A private city, a mirrored city, reflecting the emptiness of new labor, of invisible work, with drastic results, equally difficult to see.
- 89 A city regeneration plan that doesn’t ever work, it just grows like weeds.
- 90 (silence 3 seconds)
- 91 The proofs set up, were nicely put together, from what we could both read. And there is always doubt, like a melody, holding all your attention. And in the meantime, expectant. When will they arrive? Will ... uh.. You will see why I am so hesitant to say anything about this city To speak about the city, with so many historians and experts around, it seems an unfitting tale, to try and transcribe this text, because there’s a radio

version and a television version. They both are, for eighteen or fifteen minutes, highlighting what's going on in the rest of the world.

- 92 The ambassador to Iran went...
- 93 Remains of St. Paul, remains of Patti Hearst. Remains of the day. Oh Chico! What did you do here? How do you read me working in this mode, this space, this place, misplace. You know, cash money, ... cash money, cash ... money. Someone should be there like, in the morning, or in the evening.
- 94 Patrick Keiler in the intersecting journey quests across town in his film, London, planted his camera in many heart-stopping viewpoints, riverscapes, Arcadian upstream prospects. Sun dappled inner city courtyards. These alignments were magnificently right. They agreed so closely with my own private catalogue. Locations were visited at the right hours of the day. I recognized and respected most of Keiler's choices, belonging as they did to a fully realized alternate city, a version that floats above or alongside the streets through which we hustle about our business.
- 95 Keiler's retrieved London
- 96 In this place, the past had somehow got ahead of him.
- 97 It was uncontaminated.
- 98 Working a route through the confusion of Broadway, we're safely delivered to known ground. Climb into a cab of any of the heavy cranes and you can see Hackney Marshes. A few scrubby acres from broken sheds along the shunting yards, were once known as Chapham Farm.
- 99 I worked there through an Autumn and long cold Winter loading and unloading containers, broken palette boards, burning in oil drums, cheap scab labor, under 25 pounds a week. Brought in to circumvent the Union stranglehold on the docks.
- 100 There are fantasy cities, container units stacked on mud were a trial run for the real thing, the republics of glass.
- 101 England's nobility had gotten used to country life and many made their main residences there, coming to town for a brief social season.
- 102 Country living had become more or less emblematic of the group, a separate and exclusive subculture. Meanwhile though a new wealthy commercial and manufacturing class had risen up to take the nobility's place in the city.
- 103 In the London of Victoria, public baths barely existed, except as exotic entertainment spots and until the 19 century, the vast monotonous blocks of worker barracks housing almost never included so much as running cold water.
- 104 (silence 2 seconds)
- 105 The supply of labor was so bottomless and the pay so miniscule, that standards in housing virtually disappeared. Landlords could rent anything with a roof and walls.
- 106 Typhus cholera and other diseases of bad sanitation burned through the city, killing rich and poor indiscriminately, tuberculosis especially thrived in the dark dirty moist overcrowded conditions of the slums, where one room per family remained the rule for decades among the working poor. And perhaps two percent of, ...(pause) And perhaps ten percent of the population lived in lightless basements.

- 107 Living conditions that would have seemed less than human two centuries earlier became absolutely normative in the new Industrial London as the dim stench and dirt of the factory oily coal dust got into everything, black coats became the predominant male costume of the managerial classes, an upward because the soot didn't show. Smogs of coal smoke persisted all winter long and killed thousands. The technical innovation of industry and the degradation of urban life advanced at a steady inverse ratio. Mumford became a mad dog in his writings in the subject of 19<sup>th</sup> century urban life. In these... he wrote of the London slums in the Culture of Cities, "a race of defectives was created, he went on, there have been periods in the past that exhibited great animal ferocity, gashing or burning the flesh of people who had sinned against the prevailing moral code or theological beliefs, but the 19<sup>th</sup> century smugly conscious of its new humanitarian principles converted such outright brutalities into a slow quiet process of attrition and ... , a minimum of schooling ...
- 108 A minimum of rest, a minimum of cleanliness a minimum of shelter
- 109 One of the blokes with a cockney accent and a thin acne scarred face standing in front of a curtain booth makes a gesture that is unmistakably obscene and at the same time incomprehensible.
- 110 A grey pall of negative virtue hung over the urban improvements of the period and its highest post was the expansion of these minimum conditions and these negative gains, never was human plight ..... .... so wide spread, never before had it so universally been accepted as normal, normal and inevitable, not only the absolute unfitness of this environment but its extraordinary quantitative multiplication.
- 111 Almost all the housing of this kind was built under lease holdings of as long as 99 years, ..... an arrangement unknown in America. Its other salient characteristic was its remarkable monotony, not only did the buildings possess a numbing uniformity, even the austere townhouses of the very rich in blocks like Wilton Crescent, but in .... the better streets, shops and services were kept away from their ground floors, diminishing convenience, amenity and variety for pedestrians.
- 112 (silence 7 seconds)
- 113 At the time of the fire, the population of London, stood at 300,000, it would double by 1700, terrible though it was the first, ...(pause) terrible though it was the fire presented London with a tremendous opportunity to re-order urban life on a scale suited to... scratch all this shit.
- 114 At the time of the fire, the population of London, stood at 350,000, it would double by 1700, terrible though it was, the fire presented London with a tremendous opportunity to reorder urban life on a scale suited to what its ..... future demanded, this opportunity was botched. .... Bold personality that he was, Charles the Second could not overcome the legacy of the Civil War which had shifted the power to the secular authorities.
- 115 Parliament, the Corporation of the City and the rising business interests and these bodies could not overcome their conflicting interests for the greater good of London's future.
- 116 The city that Louis Napoleon took over as Emperor was a rat maze of poorly connected narrow disorienting streets, Medieval in character with a century's long accretion of tightly packed buildings falling into decrepitude, it was the miraculous disadvantage of Paris to have escaped a great fire like the one that cleaned out London in 1666, the ancient building of Paris's East End including the great mansions of the old nobility had been subdivided into working class tenements at appalling densities. Said to exceed the later slums of Lower Manhattan. .... Neither sunlight nor fresh air could

penetrate the miserable dwellings, disease flourished to the extent that recorded deaths fall outnumbered baptisms, compensated by a steady rural immigration

- 117 For all the deviousness of Haussman's methods, he proved very sound in accomplishing his public works goals, deficit financing of new boulevards and sewer and water systems worked, and pretty much in the way Haussman had intended, the value of building lots along the new boulevards rose sharply as the new boulevards took shape out of the wreckage of demolition and a bourgeoisie could sense something new and Exciting was being accomplished.
- 118 Tragic scenes include things such as columns, pediments, statues other ceremonial objects.
- 119 Comic scenes are inaugurated with images of private dwellings, balconies, rows of windows.
- 120 Satiric sets have more sylvan scenery, trees, grottoes and mountains.
- 121 The vacant lots did get filled with fine new buildings, providing much improved housing for an expanded upper middle class. Over time many of the insalubrious .... old quarters lying between the new boulevards were themselves gentrified. The ancient buildings renovated and lifted greatly in value. The poor shifted more and more to the city's margins. The end result of Haussman's financial activities was a great material improvement of the city. The finely detailed boulevards with their gleaming new limestone faced apartment blocks, cafes, bistros, theaters and department stores became a model for modern urban life all over the civilized world. They generated large volumes of new business that made the quality of life, better for all classes. .... (I can honestly say that I disagree with myself here.)
- 122 Driving through the streets of London, I imagine what would have happened, if after the great fire, some Haussman like figure would have decided to just pave everything away, create huge boulevards, transform London into a "Modern" city. I guess this im-modernity of the city, preserves a sort of charm about the city, as mapped as it is, there is a vertiginous quality to the organization of the streets.
- 123 One lane roads, navigating through the city using these roads, buses, one after another, people, unclear where they're going or where they're coming from. Anyway, .... I promised that I didn't have much to say about the city, only little fragments, so I'll stop here.
- 124 This is a book about London like no other.
- 125 (silence 2 seconds)
- 126 I use the same method of projecting myself into a time when my mind seemed empty of words, this I would do while walking in the woods, or driving in the industrial parts of the city, once again, I waited some time for results, one day, as I was driving in the streets, and about to throw out my garbage on the street I felt this weakness in my chest, strange green, yellow reddish spots appeared in front of my eyes, with a vertiginous sensation of being sucked into a vast empty space where words did not exist.
- 127 Leave, I was going to say leave all that. What matter who's speaking? Someone said: what matter, who's speaking? There's going to be a departure. I'll be there. I won't miss it. It won't be me, I'll be there. I'll say I'm far from here. It won't be me, I won't say anything.

- 128 The relation of a city to its past is quite strange. The way things are organized libraries, memorials ... things which are retained like walls, like old roman walls, Hadrian walls, aging walls, Islington walls, Hackney walls, each of them preserving them, hoping by recollecting the past to inspire perfected acts in the future.
- 129 In medieval maps, the city is a collection of isolated monuments, no accurate sense of scale, not reflecting the measured distance between objects, Renaissance maps on the other hand, sought to accurately reflect order of monuments, ... significant places in the city. Simultaneous to realistically represent the topography of urban space, these Renaissance maps sought a new spatial and symbolic totality, a city submitted to a radial order, converging on focal points and regularized squares framed axial roots became the matter, (pause 4 seconds) framed axial roots became the major structural device as it were, relationship of cartography to perspectival projection, surveying, mapping, which could accurately locate and scale objects in three dimensional space and represent them on a planar surface.
- 130 Processional routes flanked by parallel rows of buildings of uniform heights, porticoes, rows of trees, directing the spectator's view toward the focal point or culminating square.
- 131 Theatric arrangements are mirrors, held up to society, often reflecting the perfected image of a well ordered city, these stagings are really civil portraits intended to be remembered, architectonic forms of the stage inserted into urban space, establish these theatrical compositions as focal points, a kind of artificial memory device.
- 132 Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a work of art, the city carried a moral order of aesthetic forms, bringing the memory of a harmonious society to public review in the contemporary city on the other hand, the city of the spectacle, all that remains in the drama of the architecture in the city, is pure visual form, we are asked to submit to the show, suspending judgment.
- 133 A number of performances are going on at the same time, in many rooms, on many levels. Spectators becomes performers and vice versa. Some participants willing and others unwilling, seem forced to be there. The characters include the passerby, the cruiser, the speculator, the topographical agent, architect, cartographer, flauer, tourist, voyeur, consumer, homebuyer, developer, refugee, the artist, the squatter, the exile, the immigrant, the security guard, the cameraman, the reporter, the chronicler ...
- 134 Suddenly there is no blue in the city.
- 135 (silence 5 seconds)
- 136 Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose to the temporal limits shifting our experimental theater into past time.
- 137 We can talk about cities in general or in specific, but there are other conditions that are of interest to me. Sometimes I think about the night.
- 138 How is it that night came to be night? That it bore the responsibility of retaining all that we cannot comprehend, all that we cannot see, all that we would rather sleep through?
- 139 Imagine a night so bright, so flawlessly lit, that absolutely nothing would escape the gaze of the night watchmen's eyes.
- 140 It is at night, on these walks alone that I think the ghosts of the city can finally meet my own ghosts.

- 141 Still it is night that affords us a city in its solitude, in its infinite theatricality, in its staginess, in its successive, yet measured perspectives, it is night that retains the inherent mystery of the city and arouses one to see in it, in the night ...
- 142 Yellow lights, London streets, night time, drizzle, no fog and the lights remain an orange yellow all the nights through.
- 143 More than just a subset of reflections with a city, the night represents another time-space.
- 144 At night, one encounters the city alone, in the vulnerability of quiet and silence, some qualities of a place are easier to discern, the city, or at least its planning, its architecture, transition from background, to foreground.
- 145 For each story I tell of a place, I exclude a thousand or so others, my math is poor, but I can deduce that the numbers are not in my favor.
- 146 The night also brings us closer to other cities, bars, taxi drivers, sex workers, security guards, night gives way to other cultures, less spoken for or of, at night, even with the all seeing cameras, certain imbalances or weaknesses become more apparent, less noise, less traffic, the night creates a different order, thus, the city at night becomes less unique somehow.
- 147 (silence 2 seconds)
- 148 The night as a truth serum, in the faltering visibility of darkness, it reveals what is both and unique and completely repetitive about a place.
- 149 My thoughts are less important to me at times, this moment, I doubt further my necessity to say anything.(Silence 5 seconds).
- 150 It all begins to sound like one self-important rant, maybe I would prefer to read you the news:
- 151 (Silence 3 seconds)
- 152 At night it is often easier to listen. The noise fades and the moans through still lit windows at 4:30 can be heard from across the street, birds begin their songs, we are left right back at square one, tracking our best fears and losing it all and that is how it had to go to learn the lesson of life and that is the kind, I am always letting myself down and not just you, I love you dad, mom, I'd get any of the things you wanted, but you, anyway, now the kid is in custody, and the expressway needs renovations.
- 153 There are always exceptions, there are cities in which night is day and day is night. But even then, the night often serves as night, only with more force, more lawlessness.
- 154 Each city has its shifts, I often romanticize the graveyard shift.
- 155 My own personal soft spots. Late night clerks in old crummy hotels. And you can't deny it, you suffer from knowing that you are more fearful at night, and this fear, even with all the surveilling eyes of the world, is yours now, you can do with it what you like.
- 156 Sometimes I tend to monumentalize things I see.
- 157 In the imagination of the tourist and more and more the resident of a city, the map of the city is really a key connecting a circuit of shopping and leisure centers with cliché sites of memory, memorials, statues, mainstream history, mainstream economy.

- 158 How to stop this litany of clichés, give up speaking, stop aestheticizing, stop fetishizing, stop taking risks.
- 159 If I was suddenly dropped in a place, a new city, and they told me you've got one month. I'm sure I'd discover some interesting things, but I wouldn't know them, I wouldn't really know them.
- 160 What you get at the end of a month is maybe very interesting, always something quite strange, but not quite deep either.
- 161 Tourism is tied intrinsically to social, political, and economic privileges, ...
- 162 If I could tell you where to begin to speak, I would tell you not here and not to speak.
- 163 But then I'd also like to suggest that you speak, speak without stop, until someone listens or a particular kind of silence can emerge.
- 164 Or how, you know. Or when.
- 165 In what mode?
- 166 Should you be speaking?
- 167 Hmm. I should reconsider the start or at least the conclusion.
- 168 You know the story, but I will tell it to you again.
- 169 This little bit. Fragments of London.
- 170 Private Lives. These shitty little poems, notes I wrote. And I have said nothing you didn't already know.
- 171 Arrivals. Well you know. Stop pretending you don't, maybe You should be writing this, you're so much smarter.
- 172 Maybe you can say something fresh, and new, like those lovely developments out further east.
- 173 The cult of the new, would only tear further into any notion of an engaged critical practice.
- 174 One thought, one set of ideas, repeating themselves, spawning off shoots, until something takes hold, not a new idea or thought, but an interesting one.
- 175 The task would not be to change the city quite yet, but to change one's relation to the city.
- 176 City in Decline
- 177 (silence 5 seconds)
- 178 Corporation of London, Bank of England, McDonald's with British Flag
- 179 The obviousness of the obvious makes it somehow worthwhile thinking about.
- 180 Cactus. London Fog.

- 181 Amateur poetry contests, book clubs, veteran's groups, police, poverty, and the dead of hunger, conviviality of café life, close circuit cameras, no privacy, no public, no space, no further, no future, empty bars, and departing flights prompting an arrival elsewhere.
- 182 Yes you can never reach the end of a city, but the city can reach its end.
- 183 You know the drill.
- 184 (Silence 3 seconds)
- 185 Step outside for a minute will you?
- 186 "This road could be any other, so why is it this road?" he asks politely.
- 187 Sure make it fun, something strange, people listen more this way.
- 188 And you mean to tell me that this has some relationship to London?
- 189 Status. Orbital. Coughing up exhaust
- 190 You never account for all the angles, you just can't, and if you try to, you arrive at an incoherency or madness, that may be interesting, but runs the risk of incompressibility.
- 191 Member's Only and things of little matter, importance.
- 192 If I leave, you will say I am sad. Little, slight observations. Judging by what you said before.
- 193 The importance of being earnest, the importance of being gay, happy, sad. Wilde. Dorian Gray in the East End. Jack the Ripper. Jack London. London's Burning with its past.
- 194 And all the changes don't quite amount to what happens when those folks, usually men, usually white still, wear their suits and show up with the money.
- 195 Stay, and end my last days here,
- 196 If you leave now, you have really left. You have finally left and you should never, turn back, or come back. You may think about it, but do not succumb to doubts. You have left and that is final. It was never a home anyway.
- 197 But this is a place of departures. They all left here, some by choice and others by force. Do you remember. You came to this place, at such and such a day, at such and such a time. Lines, stolen and forgotten. Miles End. My Land. Mi Lan. My language. My language is doing funny things. Funny things.
- 198 Utopia? Never heard of it, so what, where is it, I would tell you not here.
- 199 And you may know the story, but I will tell it to you again.
- 200 Small traces
- 201 (silence 5 seconds)
- 202 Its all very clever. The design is nice, but I'm curious what they have in mind. Why the beginning so exclusive. More exclusive than exclusive. Can we go now? Was it too

big of a group, or are we supposed to invite him? Should we get drinks now? Everybody's got drinks. The famous Grey Grouse, something like this. Anyway, the bread is getting old and we need to eat it, but you say you're tired of eating bread everyday. Its not cutting it for you. Its not cutting it for me, I wonder where I'm gonna get it from. That's the question.

- 203 I don't want to speak any of the stories I used to, but I have a soft spot for the Anarchists in the East End. 1886 was the year, the Freedom Press was founded. Can you imagine a meeting on the corner of Fulbourne street, with Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Gorky, and Litinov raising consciousness and funds for the new revolution?
- 204 The best democracy money can buy.
- 205 And like this, memorials in general suffer for lack of memory, even if they're bus stops, the community hall, maybe we can do it there, inside the community hall, straight down into our neighborhood, we pass the blue place if we want, maybe on the way back. Its hard to really imagine it.
- 206 No apologies, justifications or simplified explanations should be the policy all day and night.
- 207 I want to understand what he is saying. I don't want it all garbled up, by necessity, but this is a clear and raw version recorded on DAT, so right now Crow is going to use his mic. The very minimum. You're going riding around. Make sure you sign a waver. Make sure you let us know, you take full responsibility of the damages. Make sure you continue in this neighborhood of our's and exploit it and consume it.
- 208 So what's left? How to maintain our critical distance, models. This question remains. Eran will talk about everything, you just have to ask an open ended question. And my words keep cracking and its hard to say, what's more interesting for anyone involved.
- 209 Each step seems more difficult and we try to get sleepy, so as avoiding this so at the end we approach it from the bottom and I wonder if this challenges us. Coming from the bottom and top of the street. Makes us think, it makes us rethink.
- 210 Even electric cars run out of some basic fuse link up with the engine. Its crazy. Maybe a part of the engine was taken out. And I think I'm getting cold, that's the problem. One of these days they will fix the place up, nicer. You know, I have a confession to make, I've never been anywhere.
- 211 I presume the question is one of carefulness, what's good, Sure I could hold on while you get your tea with milk. All very good, many years of hard work.
- 212 I guess if I had to choose, not for the ambience or the music, but maybe it was a combination of both. You see his grays will come out as black. And my black, god knows they're trying to sell for two million quid.
- 213 Jack Pritchey is helping us all. He's about 87. He told me, put in what you get out.
- 214 If I have to sit here and pay a thousand pounds a year on this shit system, I might as well speak my mind.
- 215 If I could tell you where and when to begin to speak, I would tell you not here and not now.  
I would tell you not to speak.
- 216 Stay quiet, entertain silence.

- 217 (silence 4 seconds)
- 218 You mean, I shouldn't speak?  
Who should speak, then?  
Who has the right to speak, who has the right voice to speak?  
Mine is a faint voice. Kindly tune accordingly. I won't be changing it one way or the other.  
But my voice is my voice.
- 219 So in whose voice does one, should one speak?
- 220 Stay, and end my last days here, or in strangeways, dagenham, barking, blackwall, bloody foreigners they keep hollering. They will die shortly, so do not bother leaving.
- 221 Precision. Squalor. Boundaries. Statistics. Private Lives. Cruise Ships. Colonial City. The many modes of speaking in circles, about the city, and did you realize how they keep talking about leaving the country?
- 222 You know how buses are embedded in English culture. Beatles. Ken Kesey. And your regular childhood trip to the countryside.
- 223 And now you and I come to grips! Who the hell, what the hell are you after anyway? You know the kind, with their cowboy boots, starting this whole story over and over again. Too easy, don't let me go there. You know what happened the last time, they tried to change this neighborhood.
- 224 Illusions.
- 225 I was happy in the haze of a drunken hour.
- 226 If I imagine a radio program, for East London. Forget it! Why do you keep coming back to these same old modes and stories. This whole thing is a failure. We should just keep talking about the failures. How you and I failed. And how we will never amount to anything. What you have, the other does not. And what you have isn't much, but you are happy. Maybe not drunk but happy.
- 227 I promise to stop preaching. You keep asking me to speak clearly, and I cannot help my vocabulary. You hear me? You want to tell me how to live and see this place. You know how long I lived here, you know how much you don't know? Ok, he washed the dishes, I know, he's not that bad after all, he always cooks soups and plays the violin. And she makes all the money, so what are you complaining about?
- 228 You, you, you, you, you, how many times will you, you, you, you, you, how many many times will you, you, you, you, how many, how, how many times, many times, many many times will you?
- 229 Wouldn't you say this has something to do with psycho geography? Give it up, and tell me about the narrative of your film.
- 230 Ok, the screen is empty, and then a sidewalk creeps in. Lights. City lights, I never was one for setting up the scene, but boy were they great. Those light trouser-ed cruisers. Maybe we could have a good time. Good time.
- 231 No time for more than this, the bell has just started.
- 232 I know it's awkward.

- 233 Each word, another myth or legend, or possibly a thought, thoughts in audition for parts  
maybe the first or second time, there is something fresh about them, but re-cast in the same role, the ideas also suffer.. And then you finally understand what is eating at me.
- 234 (silence 5 seconds)
- 235 If the revolution were to come, and this city reconfigured, what would you be willing to give up, or maybe you don't have so much, or maybe you have more than you know.
- 236 Your arrival only marks the fact that you have never arrived. That you will struggle to arrive til the day comes, when you finally leave here, and will you remember what I said.
- 237 I am not the disembodied voice of god, but if you saw me sitting on my couch near my satellite television, you might think so.
- 238 Only an irreversible decay can bring about its metamorphosis into real architecture, placing it within the irrevocable order of historical works.
- 239 Its decay is its opportunity.
- 240 The consumer society does not seek to establish itself in time, nor even to transform its durability into authority.
- 241 It thrives on the basis of instantaneous presence, and repeatable impulsiveness.
- 242 You know, when I say don't laugh, I'm serious, laughter is the best means of fostering consumption.
- 243 The euphoria laughter induces, makes consumers feel secure, exonerates their hours of toil by giving them the double reward of the product at the best price and the pleasure of buying it.
- 244 (silence 3 seconds)
- 245 Thus we are witnessing the decompartmentalization of the industry of the spectacle, which, on the strength of its victories in the realm of leisure, now aims to carry out its wholesale assault on all areas of human life,
- 246 Particularly those of work and consumption.
- 247 This is the entertainment that invades reality rather than escapes from it.
- 248 Once the boundary between the serious and the playful is effectively destroyed, what critical forms can there be to restore spaces of differentiation or moments of separation within the very heart of the civilization of total leisure.
- 249 In other words, the tour
- 250 East is the new West. And the old west was in Milan or Roma, Guiliano Gemma and Leone.  
Who knew the eastern would be so goddammed popular a program on television.  
Warmongering and the like. Flags, pissing and burning them, but which to choose?  
And If I keep talking about cities you might get the idea I have little sex, but why slide into yet another cliché?

- 251 "There you are," said the Hopper, a wealth of admiration in his voice. 'E was quick. 'E was jest nat'rally born to it, e' was'.
- 252 And I found myself questioning why this man and his mate, hard workers mind you, I knew from their talk, should have to seek this type of lodging.
- 253 The Reverend W. N. Davies, rector of Spitalfield, took a census of some of the alleys in the parish. He says:
- 254 (silence 5 seconds)
- 255 'Drive me down to the East End' I ordered, taking me seat.  
'Where Sir?' he demanded with frank surprise.  
'To the East End, anywhere. Go on.'
- 256 In one alley there are then houses – fifty one rooms, nearly all about eight feet by nine feet – and 254 people. In six instances only do two people occupy one room; and in others the number varied from three to nine. In another court with six houses and twenty-two rooms were 84 people – again six, seven, eight, and nine being the number living in one room, in several instances. In one house with eight rooms are 45 people – one room containing nine persons, one eight, two seven, another six.
- 257 The chief trouble with these poor folk is that they do not know how to commit suicide, and usually have to make two or three attempts before they succeed.
- 258 In this final chapter it were well to look at the Social Abyss in its widest aspect, and to put certain questions to Civilization, by the answers to which Civilization must stand or fall.
- 259 Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that ....
- 260 It's the ideal central London location for the busy commuter, close to the Tube, in a desirable part of town, but with only one drawback – no space for even the most basic domestic comforts.
- 261 A flat where you can do the washing up in bed.
- 262 Not only did the houses I investigated have no bath tubs, but I learned that there were no bath-tubs in all the thousands of houses I had seen.
- 263 Not only was one room deemed sufficient for a poor man and his family, but I learned that many families, occupying single rooms, had so much space to spare as to be able to take in a lodger or two.
- 264 The city poor folk are a nomadic breed, so they migrate eastward, wave upon wave, saturating and degrading neighborhood by neighborhood, driving the better class of workers before them to pioneer on the rim of the city, or dragging them down, if not in the first generation, surely in the second and third.
- 265 And I thought of my own spacious West, with room under its sky and unlimited air for thousands.

- 266 There's a lover's view of the narrow courtyard from the bedroom window, from where its occupier could lean out and happily shake his neighbor's hand as they comment on how delightful the drain pipes look in sunlight.
- 267 (silence 4 seconds)
- 268 We had checked in at the Jungle Retreat, which was comfortable, but not flashy. Accommodation was in bamboo or stone built huts with open air en-suites fashioned mainly from rock, lending a Flintstone flavor to it all. We were met by our exotic hostess who offered us tickets to a free massage that evening.
- 269 The bar was rocking when we arrived, with some local elephant trainers singing and dancing. We pressed hard to arrive on time for our massage.
- 270 Maybe deep down I assumed we wouldn't see a tiger and so I didn't need to worry about being attacked.
- 271 The issues you are dealing with are so very complex, ... a lot of these words are losing their usefulness in terms of actually discussing what's happening. It's much more complicated, it can't be compartmentalized into nice categories that academics and policy makers like to use.
- 272 Spittlefield is an extreme case. There is in the East End, these different layers of racial and ethnic difference. Difference in economic powers, education, ...
- 273 Day by day I became convinced that not only is it unwise, but it is criminal for the people of the Abyss to marry.
- 274 The Abyss seems to exude a stupefying atmosphere of torpor, which wraps about them and deadens them.
- 275 The unseen holds for them neither terror nor delight. They are unaware of the Unseen.
- 276 This would be a talk all its own, a history of how they came to be where they are.
- 277 The new east is twenty miles further east.
- 278 (silence 5 seconds)
- 279 So one is forced to conclude that the Abyss is literally a huge man killing machine,
- 280 'What do you expect to do in the end?' I asked them. 'You know your growing older every day.'
- 281 There's an expectation often by the dominant, white English culture, that when they deal with the Pakistanis or Bangladeshi's they are dealing with one large community. There are educational, political, economic differences, we are not looking at coherent ethnic groups.
- 282 There is this critique of corporate multiculturalism, but there is also
- 283 'After you have been out all night in the streets,' I asked, 'What do you do in the morning to eat?'
- 284 I stopped a moment to listen to an argument on the Mile End Waste. It was night-time and they were all workmen of the better class. They had surrounded one of their number, a pleasant-faced man of thirty, and were giving it to him, rather heatedly.

'But 'ow about this 'ere cheap immigration?' one of them demanded. 'The Jews of Whitechapel, say a-cutting our throats right along?'  
'You can't blame them,' was the answer. 'They're just like us, and they've got to live. Don't blame the man who offers to work cheaper than you and gets your job.'

- 285 'And wages always come down when two men are after the same job. That's the fault of the competition, not of the man who cuts the price.'
- 286 As night drew on, the city, became a blaze of light. Splashes of colour, green, amber, and ruby, caught the eye at every point.
- 287 The Carter fifty eight years of age, has spent the last three nights without shelter or sleep, while the Carpenter, sixty five years of age had been out five nights.
- 288 As I walked up Mile End Road between the Carter and the Carpenter, I noticed that Both kept their eyes upon the pavement, as they walked and talked, and every now and then one or the other would stoop and pick something up, never missing the stride the while. From the slimy spittle-drenched sidewalk, they were picking up bits of orange peel, apple skin, and grape stems, and they were eating them.
- 289 They picked up stray crumbs of bread the size of peas, apple cores so black and dirty that one would not take them to be apple cores. And these things these two men took into their mouths, and chewed them, and swallowed them; and this between six and seven o'clock in the evening of August 20, year of our Lord, 1902, in the heart of the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen.
- 290 These two men talked. They were not fools, they were merely old. And naturally, their guts a-reek with pavement offal, and they talked of bloody revolution. They talked as anarchists, fanatics, and madmen would talk.
- 291 Being a foreigner and a young man, the Carter and Carpenter explained things to me and advised me. Their advice, by the way, was brief and to the point; it was get out of the country.
- 292 In spite of my three good meals that day, and the snug bed I could occupy if I wished, and my social philosophy, and my evolutionary belief in the slow development and metamorphosis of things – in spit all this, I say, I felt impelled to talk rot with them or hold my tongue. Poor fools! Not of their sort are revolutions bred. And when they are dead and dust, which will be shortly, other folks will talk bloody revolution as they gather offal from the spittle-drenched sidewalks along Mile End Road to Poplar Workhouse.
- 293 In the night, one's thoughts go from city to city, from one place to another, and the air is full of incomprehensible signs, while the street-walkers and the pushers, the bourgeois opera-goers, the couch potatoes chewing on their toothpicks and the losers in the suburban pubs dream of another life in each other's place.
- 294 In the night, we walk aimlessly through cities, having lost ourselves a little, and the image of the city effortlessly transcends the streets through which we are walking. What are you going in search of, sleepless, towards morning, in the streets where churning, loose sand has taken over from the life that still glowed there a few hours before?
- 295 The further away we get from the center, the more political the atmosphere becomes ... outlying neighborhoods, suburbs are the state of emergency of the city

- 296 Of all the ideas that were formed or circulated in this century about the nature of modern cities, those of Walter Benjamin have become the most widespread – and hence the most petrified into a cliché.
- 297 Talking about cities always using a kind of metaphor. And as I recently read somewhere, petrified metaphors can soon become dogmas of their own.
- 298 Often it was only through distance, through leaving a city again, that I understood what had happened to me; as if the constantly oppressive presence of the image of the city itself had got in the way of the experience that I was having.
- 299 The next morning, I arrived in Old London. The town was bathed in the yellow light of six in the morning. A shattering silence lay over the bits of the M25 which were still remaining. Looking at those bits, I had traveled back centuries in time. Seeing it before the great invasions had begun, seeing it before New London was built, scrap heaps and corduroy pants, ...
- 300 Don't think coming home means you are coming home to what you know. Home is usually something completely different.
- 301 Home is can be more alien than abroad: it's a place where things become invisible, where we stop or forget about using our senses to explore.
- 302 At home we put our powers of observation into neutral.
- 303 Home is the place that gives us the calm that we need to be able to think about things that are further away.
- 304 At home, things hide beneath their familiarity.
- 305 That is what we call home, it's the place where we can be alone with ourselves, undisturbed, not because we are somewhere, but because we are nowhere. The place and things become so invisible that we have time to create a space in our heads.
- 306 Thoughts, reflections, broodings, or imaginings but also self-reproach, anticipatory embarrassment, this endless haggling which leads me to speak about the people who I know at home, the familiar ones, the ones I run away from, when I leave home.
- 307 I was born here and I was raised here and I took some stick here.
- 308 Inspector don't you know, don't you care, don't you know about love.
- 309 I could speak in tones, louder than bombs. But my voice is already affected quite a bit.
- 310 One always has to speak through others, even when speaking, in letters, in words, in the name of the other, watching the world go roun and roun.
- 311 Smashing cars just to get out of the block.
- 312 I smurf up your side.
- 313 Ice on my bullet as soon as I pull it.
- 314 Take a sip and percolate.
- 315 Ride or don't ride at all.

- 316 Every time I come around your city, bling bling.  
Every time I buy a new ride bling bling.
- 317 And not a whole lot of us get rich, but like the old saying goes  
Aint life a bitch.
- 318 I aint trippin off of shit, it's a good thing.
- 319 One quid and six null.
- 320 Tingling tangling maids and drinking hoes.  
A silver lining for a thirty two inch cloud.
- 321 Doing more with less as thirty two percent went to waste. And fortune faded, when a  
killer came to town.
- 322 Robocop three follows football.
- 323 Kelly wanted cream.
- 324 Cheers mate, for the five pound spill on it.
- 325 There's a time and a place for polite conversation, it was two hours ago.
- 326 Put tomorrow on ice.
- 327 Be here now.
- 328 She's got it all, but it isn't enough.
- 329 No matter where I go, home is never far away.
- 330 And did you know, Becky Anderson just downloaded her first music track. In Vilnius,  
the same image, same product, only with a Lithuanian name.
- 331 At some point you exhaust yourself. The possible trajectories.
- 332 If we give up the representational quest and move into the real of poetics we might  
begin to examine the figural forms of this deconstructed city.
- 333 Differences, the rupture between then and now, here and there, and the memory of  
things and events that have never and can never reoccur I the present.
- 334 Our sense of urban totality has been ruptured long ago. Thus our personal memories  
of places visited actually arise from a horizontal juxtaposition of different images, not  
one of synthetic wholes.
- 335 It is the tourist who takes notes, catalogs experiences, follows guidebooks and  
itineraries, searching for a synthetic city tableaux and official narratives; to the contrary,  
the observer travels through space and time, alternating perspectives, experiencing  
fragmentations and permutations that may never coalesce into coherent view.