

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in the CCTV's sight.

by Theodore Dalrymple

Arriving in England for the first time after the referendum, I half-expected to find scenes of xenophobia all around me. But there were none, partly, I suppose, because the natives are so heavily out-numbered in the area around St Pancras.

In fact nothing much seemed to have changed except the Prime Minister and the cabinet. As I passed Euston Square station, I paused to listen to a tall black man, with the seat of his grey flannel tracksuit perched half-way down his buttocks, talking loudly into his mobile phone and gesticulating wildly for emphasis. I am told that the fashion for lowered trousers arose in solidarity with or imitation of prisoners who are not allowed belts in case they should hang themselves, just as the fashion for baseball caps worn backwards arose in imitation of prison visitors who tried to get as close as possible to the prisoner they were visiting through the glass partition separating them, therefore turning the peak of the cap backwards. Imitation, of course, is the highest form of admiration.

I could hardly be accused of eavesdropping, since the young man was speaking so loudly in a public place. His tone was aggrieved, not that of injured innocence but of injured guilt, which of course is a very much stronger emotion.

'They're trying to say I hit this white bloke and he went down. They're not looking at what led up to it. It must be on CCTV, but they're just not looking.'

It must have been on CCTV because everything these days is on

CCTV. He paced up and down in his agitation. Evidently he had attacked someone in a station.

My train was in three minutes! Three minutes! And they're trying to say...'

I didn't catch what they were trying to say: in his agitation he loped out of range for a time. I suppose *they* were trying to say that he had gone to the station with the express purpose of attacking the white bloke who fell to the ground. When he came back into range, he said, 'See all that can happen in two minutes!' Let that be a lesson to us all! Our whole lives can be overturned in two minutes. 'It was madness!'

I walked on, past a furniture store that said in large letters on its window, 'Inspirational sofas.' Is anyone actually *inspired* by sofas? The young man inspired me more: for the truth is that I love what I hate.

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