

## CRISIS LOG (FALSE IMPRESSIONS)

It's rainy.

It's wet.

It's windy.

It's dark.

It's roasting.

It's frigid.

It's crowded.

It's empty.

It's crazy.

I'm sad.

*7 October, London, United Kingdom – Homebodies to antibodies*

There are an infinite and regenerative list of excuses for staying home rather than face the relative unknown that lies beyond my front steps. Even when a home is impermanent, it's common to feel compelled to stay in for an entire day, looking for rest or to re-center the mind. Everyone does it, but this feeling, when considered by others about you, is usually in the negative. 'They are an introvert, they are shy, they are self-centered'.

Outside domestic borders, there are also spaces and activities that provide a public solitude. Swimming, visiting a sauna, shopping. Places to be with oneself, amongst all the others being with themselves, in a flowing stream of mutual isolation.

Whether this is healthy is another matter. The growth of underlying, now-foundational social networks has made non-interaction pointedly evident. It can be argued that the impact of these changes may have twisted our capacity for empathy, exaggerated vanity, and neutralized verbal language. Its most severe

long-term effects cannot be known. Generation X, having pierced the frontier where constructed fictions are inseparable from truth, leaves us to reckon with the antebellum consequences.

This also results in the casual query 'What do you do?' inviting a complex anxiety, probing the medium between the actual and your own fabrication of it. The question's calculated imprecision claims an interest only in the active present, yet really digs at the past and the future – What have you done, are doing, will do. Further, it predicates a circle of characters that have permitted you to function in these capacities. – so, who have you done, are doing, will do.

*22 June, Chicago, United States – Even a brick wants to be a vegetable*

Early in the film 'Indecent Proposal', Woody Harrelson's character David Murphy lectures his architectural history class, narrating a slide presentation with a terrible misrepresentation of Louis Kahn's mythic philosophical exercise, 'Conversation with a brick'. The scene is composed of close-up shots of intent students while a greatest-hits compilation of ancient monuments and gothic cathedrals cascade across the screen. Punctuated by an imperative soundtrack, Murphy intones a saccharine conclusion: 'Even a brick wants to be something'.

In the context of the film, the exercise supports Murphy's position as a naïve romantic, wide-eyed with spiritual confidence. It portends the collapse of David's economic delusions into the arranged purchase of his wife Diana's company by Robert Redford soon thereafter. Yet, it seems part of a vestigial story, otherwise omitted by the Hollywood plot. This character has bungled his way through life into a position of academic influence, while maintaining his peculiar grasp of masculine primacy.

Surely, with Kahn meant, in saying 'honor the brick and glorify the brick', that the best thing an architect can do is get out of the material's way. Bricks are not

yearning for transcendence, or waiting for a singular genius. Bricks only 'want' to be bricks, insomuch as their non-consciousness 'want' anything.

We are defined less by our range and depth of qualities anymore, than by the manner in which we orchestrate our chaos. Aggressively and continually judged, sized up as opponents. Assessing power closes the escape routes to confuse, isolate, and confront your opposition. If you do this, it means you do not do that. If you are this, you aren't something else. Contemporary expansionist economics, sparked by the invention of shipping containers and international standardization, demands classification and adaptability. Social channels further insist one plays at being one thing while never relinquishing your other unique characteristics – just in case.

*10 November, Cologne, Germany – Alone and stranded, without adequate transportation*

Returning to the tense relationship between the individual and their belonging: what's left of the young West, the economically and academically privileged, struggles mightily against its own collective and stagnant assurance of its superior respective national or cultural identities. This, bound in the systemic forces beyond immediate control, resolves as a dissolved sense of responsibility toward the present.

Clearly, this isn't an abstract situation. My own experience of the political tides of the last two years leave me looking back on all the reactionary shifts in Europe and America, and my incorrect read of the advance signifiers in an optimistic light while feeling my learned concept of common sense would prevail, pretentiously assuming my perception of balance would be validated.

The common discourse over the last two decades in the fields of truthiness have cultivated a new demagoguery where what is said is far less important than its

vessel. Our bubbles press up against one another as they multiply, bounce, and flow; the distance between each of us grows smaller as our capacity to reach out past the membrane narrows.