

“... like a tenant in a rented house. Where are you now, homeless heart? Caught in a hinge, or secreted behind drywall, like your nameless predecessors now that they have been given names? Best not to dwell on our situation, but to dwell in it is deeply refreshing. Like a sideboard covered with decanters and fruit. As a box kite is to a kite.”¹

On the occasion of the opening of the first-ever direct flight from the Polish city of Wrocław to the South Korean capital, Seoul, the head of the local branch of the multinational corporation, LG Group, proclaimed that the flight would serve to “[close] the psychological distance between the two countries.” They likely invested in the connection because more than half of the Korean community in Poland lives in Lower Silesia where Wrocław is the regional capital. Many of them work in South Korean companies, including the world’s biggest lithium-ion battery production facility, owned and run by LG.

This stuck with me. But, of course, it wasn’t a surprise to read about a higher-up manager in a large conglomerate speaking positively about an attempt to safeguard their workers from the sense of painful isolation that may arise in someone when they find themselves working far away from home. This flight is meant as a remedy, I thought. A high-speed link that short-circuits any such homesickness.

However, this statement pertains to a more general condition which is hardly resolved through this manner of well-intentioned Taylorism. It is the psychological condition of homelessness resulting from living with a lack of familiar language, customs, foods, media – friends and family, and so forth.² And this way of life is a consequence of a state of things which, by now, have been given many names: planetarity, or omnipresent technological acceleration, accidental computational megastructure, singularity, or even just machine time.³ Named here, are various theoretical attempts at mapping the technological rupture in the psycho-social landscape in which contemporary life plays out. The *planetary* aspect of this is that the same computational logics appear across all global classes all at once. The child of the software engineer, who’s not allowed a smartphone before they turn fifteen, and the poor teenage farmer, who turned their remote existence into a live-stream operation, are both reacting to the same system of instantaneous digital transmissions.

I remember once asking a friend if they thought they were punk enough for planetarity. I asked because I believe – as I did then – that planetarity has a far more depressive affect than one might immediately think. It is not exactly cosmopolitanism... it’s not Boarding Gate-style sexy globalism.⁴ It’s rather a sense of immense scale and a deflation of subjective meaningfulness. It is an oppressive feeling. It is inescapable. It is a feeling of an off-set home, a home that is only ever just out of reach. It’s *disorientation*.

It hurts to accept that you are not going to wake up one morning and feel at home anywhere and that the only real antidote is the moment of clarity you find when staring out

¹Homeless Heart, Quick Question. John Ashbury, 2012.

²Post-Europe, Yuk Hui, 2024.

³Machine Time, Seth Price, 2022

⁴Boarding Gate is 2007 globalist crime drama directed by Olivier Assayas.

the airplane window with last night's designer drugs still rippling through your veins. The actual tranquillity is a moment fully enclosed in transit. The publicly prescribed solution manifests as the sense of uncanny familiarity that you might experience at a bar, at a club, or at a clothing store – for that matter – where it is obvious that its entire interior has been downloaded from a curated database.

This is to say that the creeping feeling engendered by this current state of the world comes from the simultaneous evaporation of things you think you know and their substitution by the incredibly generic. I guess you can try to guard yourself from this, similarly to what LG tries to do for their workers, but clinging to tradition in alien loops sounds like a cope to me.

It all reminds me of a famous note about the creature of the snail and the genesis of stupidity: "The emblem of intelligence is the feeler of the snail [...] Meeting an obstacle, the feeler is immediately withdrawn into the protection of the body, it becomes one with the whole until it timidly ventures forth again as an autonomous agent. If the danger is still present, it disappears once more, and the intervals between the attempts grow longer."⁵ The snail senses nothing with its feelers retracted, but it is home. The condition of homelessness gives you no choice but to naively send out your probes, while knowing too well that they may only come back bruised. The homeless know that there is no shelter from the new and nor should there be.

⁵Dialectics of Enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer, English ed. 2002