migrants to flee their homelands, Europe paradoxically fashions itself a victim to an external aggression. This illogic is a pattern discernible in the words and actions of the aggressors in all three of these events. Consequently, each *lieu de mémoire* demonstrates a contradictory memorial impulse that widely diverges depending on who (aggressor or victim) is doing the recall. Thus, by collapsing the temporal continuities of these three events, Ourahmane exposes their intersections. In the process, she reveals how each *lieu de mémoire* competes, overlaps, and resignifies the next, suggesting the construction and fragmentation of migrant identity as two continuous and opposing processes that extend from the colonial past to the present and back again.

This multidirectional resignification is encapsulated by the movement and transformation of the gold chain. As a family heirloom, it passes from mother to son on less than certain terms. Sold to Ourahmane, she brings it to London (we can only conjecture as to whether the young man was able to replicate this journey), where it is transformed into a pair of teeth. The integration of one tooth into Ourahmane's body emblematically reverses the loss of the gold chain by the mother at the hands of her son. Likewise, the act of integration re-enacts and resignifies Ourahmane's grandfather's self-mutilation, forming a new, embodied memory that becomes a form of inheritance in its own right. Thus, time and geography enter into these paired teeth, which, through the irreversible process of implantation, become simultaneously separate and the same: marking separate actions of the same kind, physically the same, but physically and permanently separate in space.

This pairing of oppositions is carried through to the title of *In the Absence of our Mothers*. On the one hand, the title relates to the defiance of acting without permission. Tayeb undertook the extraction of his teeth in defiance of French occupation. Similarly, Ourahmane speculates that the young man's pursuit of escape from Algeria was carried out without the permission of his mother. His actions reflect a larger generational defiance, as Algeria undergoes a mass exodus of its young people to Europe, their choice to leave their 'motherland' seemingly undercutting all that their forbearers fought for during the Algerian War.[43] On the other hand, the title relates to the experiential consequences that follow this exodus. Exiled from Algeria, separated from family, migration has led to the experience of displacement. This trauma is not necessarily physical or visual, but embodied and sustained by the memory of what once was. Ourahmane's project is ultimately the impossible task of representing this psychological wounding — this void — created by the loss of one's family history, one's national identity, and one's sense of place in the world. Her work, however fragmentary and speculative it may be, seeks to comprehend this loss, becoming a permanent evocation of her bonds to a past not truly past.

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43 Ourahmane, interview with Veronica Simpson.

THE HEADLESS REAL

Yen Noh

> The real is positioned both before and after its representation; and representation becomes a moment of the reproduction and consolidation of the real.
> —Judith Butler, *The Force of Fantasy*[1]

> Writing re-marks the hole in the signifier, the inability of words to convey meaning exactly. The intimacy of the language of speech and the language of vision extends to their mutual impossibilities.
> —Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked*[2]

The Headless Real is a performance script. It is based on a script I first performed in 2019 at Dutch Art Institute, which I have revised for this publication. Attending to the possibilities of the speech/writing act, the piece revolves around the performance of language, vision, memory, and representation. The parts of the script were originally enumerated in order for me as a non-English speaker to learn by rote, creating a distance from both the speech and the audience. The Korean text, which helped me memorize and which I never spoke in public, has been left in this version as a trace of the labour of translation. The script includes stage annotations made after the fact.

I thank Cleo Foole for the script's design, Sven Lütticken for the annotations, and Jaehoon Shin for the Korean copy-edit.

Yen Noh is an artist currently living and working in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Her work engages with anti-colonial 'paralanguage' that performs the language's materiality as an enabler to resist linguistic norms and representational violence of colonization. She uses performance to unearth and recreate practices by those who are unthought by the constructive force of history and its white/male dominion of culture. Her research so far has been on the Korean-American poet, filmmaker, and artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, the 1920s Japanese art group MAVO, the Korean architect, poet, and artist Yi Sang and his partner Geumhong, who was a sex worker, with whom she explores signification as its bodily practice.

1 Judith Butler, "The Force of Fantasy: Mapplethorpe, Feminism, and Discursive Excess" *Differences* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 106.

2 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 6.

The performer stands straight, centrally. Taking tissues from a crackling package, she crouches on the floor and cleans it, drawing invisible arcs around her with her arms. Kneeling down, she peels a mandarin orange and munches parts.

Sitting with hands on knees, eyes closed; shifting legs to one side, she places one hand on the floor. Present yet remote, in a zone she has conjured up; untouchable.

1

I first heard the sound of coins falling on the floor.

처음에 동전들이 바닥으로 떨어지는 소리를 들었다.

2

Then I smelled burning plastic.

그리고 플라스틱이 타는 냄새가 났다.

3

I was clutching my father's brown-coloured trouser legs, begging him at his feet to stop taking the coins I had saved for my mother's birthday for months.

나는 바닥에 엎드린 채 아버지의 갈색 바지를 붙들고 그에게 엄마 생일을 위해 모아둔 내 동전들을 가져가지 말라고 애원하고 있었다.

4

When I looked up, the coins were still falling, but he was headless.

고개를 들었을 때, 동전은 여전히 떨어지고 있었지만, 그의 머리가 없었다.

5

Where the head was meant to be was a dark void.

머리가 있어야 할 자리가 어둡게 비어 있었다.

6

The father was standing still on both feet, sucking my outcries in the growing hole of his visual inadequacy.

아버지는 여전히 두 발을 디디고 서 있었고 그의 불완전한 시각적 틈은 나의 비명을 빨아들이면서 점차 팽창했다.

The right hand moves from the floor to the right knee; the left hand is nested nearby. They will stay like this.

7

Reflected by the sunlight sliding from the living room's window, the coins were so dazzling that I had to close my eyes.

거실 창으로 미끄러져 들어오는 햇빛에 반사된 동전들이 지나치게 눈부셔 나는 눈을 감았다.

8

As I felt the warmth landing so heavily on my eyelids, everything was light.

눈두덩 위로 묵직하게 내려앉는 온기를 느꼈고 모든 것이 가벼웠다.

9

Every word was light.

모든 단어가 가벼웠다.

10

The gravity was back, and when I awoke the event remained soundless in my memory.

중력이 돌아왔고, 깨어났을 때 그 사건은 내 기억에서 소리가 사라진 채로 남아 있었다.

11

The coins were still falling down, clashing without clinks.

서로 부딪치며 떨어지는 동전들은 짤랑거리지 않았다.

12

My mouth cried out, but mutely.

내 입은 말 없이 소리 지르고 있었다.

13

The beauty of the sonic absence terrified me more than the sensory deprivation itself.

감각의 박탈보다 더 공포스러웠던 것은 소리가 부재한 아름다움이었다.

14

In dreams and symptoms there were many attempts to revisit the original scene, many negotiations to defend myself against the headless father—the *real* "that is not 'really' there."

꿈에서 그리고 증상으로 최초의 장면을 다시 방문하기 위한 수많은 시도가 있었고 머리가 없는 아버지—"'실제로' 거기에 없는 것"으로부터 나 자신을 방어하기 위한 수많은 협상이 있었다.

15

The flickering reflections of the coins gently dropping from the burning piggy bank became imprinted on the loops of my vision, but the scene remained wordless.

타버린 돼지 저금통에서 가볍게 떨어지는 동전들의 깜빡이는 빛의 자국이 내 시각의 무수한 고리들로 묶였지만, 그 장면은 여전히 무언으로 남아 있었다.

16

This is the real.

동생을 깨우지 않기 위해, 그리고 아버지의 호기심 어린 손의 말없는 강압으로, 나는 입을 닫은 채 순순히 누워 있었다.

20

I didn't beg or cry out this time because I anticipated it.

나는 그것을 이미 예상했으므로 이번에는 빌거나 소리 지르지 않았다.

Stillness: no gestures, no tics. All effort is channelled into the speech act.

21

I anticipated him already too long.

나는 그를 이미 너무 오래 예상했다.

22

I didn't let him oversee my speech nor confine it.

나는 그가 나의 말을 감시하거나 가두도록 두지 않았다.

이것이 실재다.

17

As my breasts were fuller, they were touched by the father.

아버지가 막 부풀기 시작한 내 가슴을 만졌다.

Here, a different memory is being activated than in the stories she started with. These are cited words, and the rhythm is subtly different: the rhythm of print translated into speech, embodied and haunted. She blinks repeatedly.

18

His right arm was put around my shoulder as my brother was sleeping on his left.

그의 오른팔이 내 어깨를 감싸고 있었고 내 남동생이 그의 왼팔에서 잠들어 있었다.

19

Not to wake him up and in the silent coercion of his curious hand, I was lying still, holding my mouth shut.

23

Then his tongue pushed out my sore, tender tongue.

그러자 그의 혀가 나의 부드럽고 쓰라린 혀를 꺼냈다.

*"She mimicks speech. That might resemble speech. (Anything at all.) Bared noise, groan, bits torn from words."**

24

Dear father, your penis is inscribed in my murmuring.

아버지, 당신의 자지는 나의 웅얼거림에 새겨져 있어요.

25

In social reality, my body—seen as an ongoing 'visible marker'—has continued to undergo and confront such routinized sexual violence in the varied forms of sexual and racial assaults and microaggressions.

사회적 현실에서 내 몸은 시각적 표식으로 계속해서 작동하며, 성적, 인종적 공격과 비난의 여러 형식으로 그와 같은 성적 폭력을 일상적으로 마주하고 겪었다.

14 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1.

* Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *DICTEE* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 3.

26

I didn't speak again; not only because of the first terror in the acknowledgement of my physical inability to resist.

나는 다시 말하지 않았다; 저항하지 못하는 내 몸의 신체적 무능력을 인지해야만 했던 공포 때문만은 아니었다.

27

But also because I wanted to cut off any potential exchanges of gazes through which my body was always already exposed to the trap of visibility.

내 몸이 이미 항상 노출된 시각의 덫에서 어떤 잠재적인 응시의 교환도 고립시키고자 했기 때문이다.

She lowers her head ever so slightly. Because of the angle, she can open her eyes without meeting the gaze.

28

"The real is read through representation, and representation is read through the real."

실재는 재현을 통해 읽히고 재현은 실재를 통해 읽힌다.

32

"Performance, insofar as it can be defined as representation without reproduction, can be seen as a model for another representational economy, one in which the reproduction of the Other as the same is not assured."

재생산 없는 재현으로 정의될 수 있는 한에서 퍼포먼스는 또 다른 재현적 경제의 모델, 즉 동일자로서의 타자의 재생산이 보증되지 않는 모델로 보일 수 있다.

33

"The relationship between the real and the representational, between the looker and the given to be seen, is a version of the relation between self and other."

실재와 재현적인 것, 보는 이와 보이도록 주어진 것의 관계는 자아와 타자의 관계의 한 판형이다.

34

"This relationship between self and other is a marked one, which is to say it is unequal."

29

"Each representation relies on and reproduces a specific logic of the real; this logical real promotes its own representation."

재현은 실재의 특수한 논리에 의지하면서 그 논리를 재생산한다; 이 논리적 실재는 자신의 고유한 재현을 증진한다.

30

"The real partakes of and generates different imagistic and discursive paradigms."

실재는 여러 다른 심상적이고 담론적인 패러다임을 생산하고 그것에 참여한다.

31

"If the visible real is itself unable to constitute a reliable representational real, its use-value must lie elsewhere."

가시적인 실재 자체가 믿을만한 재현적 실재를 구성할 수 없다고 한다면 그것의 사용 가치는 다른 곳에 있어야 한다.

자아와 타자의 이런 관계는 표식된 관계, 말하자면 불평등한 관계이다.

35

"It is alluring and violent because it touches the paradoxical nature of psychic desire; the always already unequal encounter nonetheless summons the hope of reciprocity and equality; the failure of this hope produces violence, aggressivity, dissent."

그것은 심적 욕망의 역설적 본능을 건드리기 때문에 매혹적이고 폭력적이다; 이미 항상 불평등한 만남은 그럼에도 상호성과 평등에 대한 희망을 불러온다; 이런 희망의 실패는 폭력, 공격성, 불일치를 생산한다.

She is no longer sitting as straight as before. Almost imperceptibly and probably unintentionally, the spine has begun to curve.

36

"The trap of the visual field is that it seems to promise to show all, even while it fails to show the subject who looks, *and* thus fails to show what the looker most wants to see."

28 Phelan, *Unmarked*, 2.

28 The Korean translation is by myself and based upon the translation by Hosil Yang for her seminar on Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* in 2009 at Seoul National University.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 3.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 24. Emphasis by the author.

시각 장의 덫은 심지어 주체를 보여주는 데 실패하고 따라서 보는 이가 가장 보고 싶어 하는 것을 보여주는 데 실패하는데도 불구하고 모든 것을 보여주겠다고 약속한다는 점이다.

37

"The potential for a responding eye, like the hunger for a responsive voice, informs the desire to see the self through the image of the other which all Western representation exploits."

반응하는 눈의 잠재성은 반응적 목소리에 대한 갈망처럼, 타자의 이미지를 통해서 자아를 보려는 욕망을 특징짓는다. 이것이 모든 서구의 재현이 타자를 이용한 방식이다.

38

"Breaks in the reciprocity of visual exchange offer opportunities to disrupt the neat substitutions of the psychic economy of seeing."

시각적 교환의 상호성을 해체하면서 우리는 보기의 심적 경제를 교묘히 대체한 것들을 붕괴시킬 수 있다.

39

"Until the image of the other can be other-than a cipher for a looking self, calling for greater visibility of the under-represented will do nothing to improve the quality of our political or psychic imaginations."

타자의 이미지가 보는 자아를 위한 부호와는 다른 것일 수 있을 때까지 불충분하게 재현된 이들에게 보다 많은 가시성을 요청하는 일은 우리의 정치적, 심적 상상력의 질을 개선하는 것과는 무관할 것이다.

40

"The work of theory, under current economic conditions, can only be, for most of us, a labor of love."

현재의 경제적 조건 아래서, 이론 작업은 우리 대부분에게 단지 사랑의 노동밖에 될 수 없다.

41

"Insofar as love is a labor, a trying, an essay, like theory, it cannot be anything but an offering, a giving of what one doesn't have, a description and transcription of what one cannot see or prove with visible evidence."

사랑이 노동이고 힘든 일이며, 에세이이고 이론과 같은 것인 한, 자신이 갖지 못한 것을 헌납하는 것이며, 다른 이들이 볼 수 없거나 가시적 증거를 가지고 입증하지 못하는 것을 묘사하고 필사하는 것이다.

42

"At the limit of the physical body, at the limit of the blind eye, at the limit of the signifier, one sees both the knowledge of failure and the performance of belief propped up on all sides by serious and comic doubt."

물질적 신체의 한계에서, 눈먼 눈의 한계에서, 기표의 한계에서, 우리는 진지하고 가벼운 의심에 전적으로 기대고 있는 실패의 지식과 믿음의 퍼포먼스 둘 다를 볼 수 있다.

43

As a child, I convinced myself it was a headless phantom that vacuumed my speech and blinded my eyes.

아이였을 때, 머리 없는 유령이 내 말을 빨아들이고 내 눈을 멀게 했다고 믿었다.

44

But it was me, refusing to see the father as he never responded to my speech.

그러나 아버지가 내 말에 결코 응답하지 않았던 것과 마찬가지로 그를 보기를 거절한 것은 나 자신이었다.

45

The headless father is not my dream work, nor a psychological illusion.

머리 없는 아버지는 나의 꿈도 심적 환영도 아니다.

46

The imagination of the impossible can be an exercise to call for a real "that is not 'really' there," to account for something that revisits and threatens us without leaving a word on our tongue.

불가능한 것을 상상하는 것은 "'거기에' 없는 실재"를 요청하는 연습이며, 우리의 혀에 어떤 말도 남기지 않은 채 우리를 반복해서 방문하고 위협하는 것을 설명할 수 있다.

37 Ibid., 16.

38 Ibid., 26.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 32.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 33.

46 Ibid., 1.

47

The visual poverty of the headless father cannot be written, and yet is the marking of the sore, tender tongue.

머리 없는 아버지의 시각적 궁핍함이 언어로 쓰일 수 없음에도 불구하고 그것은 내 부드럽고 쓰라린 혀가 새긴 표식이다.

48

The real of the headless father, the headless real, troubles the reproduction of reality.

머리 없는 아버지의 실재, 머리 없는 실재는 현실의 재생산을 문제 삼는다.

49

It does not promote representation by way of 'the looking self,' nor does it secure reality; the hollowness in place of a head sabotages signification for the looking eye.

53

Unseen in being seen and never fully there, we can both precede and exceed the inscription of vision and meaning.

보이는 동시에 보이지 않고 그 자리에 충분히 존재하지 않으면서 우리는 의미와 시각의 표식에 선행하거나 그것을 넘어설 수 있다.

54

This broken gaze enables us to stumble; to stutter, mumble and mangle the name on the tip of our tongues in resistance to linguistic violence—the violence of words without our mouths, measuring and representing the visible and victimizing individuals.

이 부서진 응시를 통해 우리의 혀끝에서 그 이름을 더듬고 웅얼거리고 버둥거리고 난도질할 수 있다; 그를 통해 우리의 입이 없는 말들의 폭력, 측정과 재현의 가시성과 개별적 피해자로 제한되는 언어적 폭력에 저항할 수 있다.

그 실재는 '자기-보기'의 방식으로 재현을 도모할 수도 있는 현실을 보장할 수도 없다; 머리가 있어야 할 자리에 놓인 빈 공간에서 보는 눈을 위한 의미 작용은 상실한다.

50

Yet it cannot be separated from the father's gaze and language.

그럼에도 그것은 아버지의 응시와 언어로부터 분리될 수 없다.

51

This headlessness cannot be processed without the name of the father.

머리의 부재는 아버지의 이름 없이 수행될 수 없다.

52

How do we break away from it?

우리는 어떻게 그 이름으로부터 탈주할 것인가?

55

By affirming and performing the headless real, we would immerse ourselves in an erotic desire to dance together at the zero degree of signification.

머리 없는 실재를 긍정하고 수행하면서, 우리는 의미 작용의 0도에서 함께 춤추는 에로틱한 욕망에 잠길 수 있을 것이다.

56

We can then hold the name in our blind voice: *A-ppa.*

우리의 먼 목소리로 그 이름을 잡을 수 있을 것이다: *아버지.*

Raising her head, she addresses the audience.

56 "Blind voice" is the English translation of the Korean-American poet, filmmaker, and artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's 1975 performance Aveugle Voix. In her performance Cha covered her eyes and mouth respectively with "voix (voice)" and "aveugle (blind)," touching and physically engaging with a cloth banner on which words were stenciled, e.g. AVUEGLE; VOIX; SANS; MOT; ME; FAIL; WORDS. Cha was raped and murdered in 1982 in New York a few weeks before her novel *DICTEE* was published.