

When A Form Withdraws Itself

'Speech Performance' as a critical apparatus for 'decolonial aesthetics'

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Q. The act of writing is a continuum, which includes the reader's cognitive response, somatic expression to the text and re-channeling of the initial recording of a text. It is a process of speaking the unspoken, a state of permanent incompleteness and the never-ending, always vulnerable to fragmentation and open to reconfiguration. As one realizes this broader spectrum of 'Writing', all acts related to writing – not only reading, speaking, hearing (the sound), listening (recognizing) and translating but also misreading, misinterpreting, condoning and mistranslating, whether they be intentional or not – become dispositional variables in the grand act of the expression of 'Writing' (I will be using the term 'Writing' in this extensive sense of the word, closer to the act of reinterpreting rather than inscribing). This aspect of writing has been intriguing me for the past few years, and a representing/ reenacting situation where this aspect of 'Writing' is visible has been the core initiative behind my body of performance series.

"Voice", as an intermediary agent, has been the core element in my performance of 'Writing', both in inscribing as well as the physical act of delivering. It is an intermediary in the sense that it brings the private realm of the internal and highly intimate relationship between the writer and the text out to the open, external realm of communication. My performances so far consisted of text reading, where the spoken words were interacting intimately with the external "text installations" – projected texts, videos, text displays, telephone-channeled live performances and live voice-performances via Skype, as well as multi-lingual interactions and self-commentary. Each text present within a performance was *written* with different voice, intent and form, all thrown like a net into an enclosed time/space. This is the general scope of my concentration – performing the engagement with a text, where the subject, through one's own language of expression, becomes an active writer.

For the past few months, I have been scrutinizing the performance works of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha¹. Her works stroke me as similar in the sense that she places the audience in a multiple position simultaneously. In other words, the audience in both cases is the perceiver/receiver of the presented

¹ Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982): artist, poet and writer who radically explored both the internal and external relation between a language and herself by means of a gesture that searches for "the root of the language before it is born on the tip of the tongue". She was born in Busan, South Korea and migrated with her family to the U.S.A at the age of twelve.

Her text works, films and performance documentations are online-archived in Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive (<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf238n986k;developer=local;style=oac4;doc.view=items>). Her works are mostly made in the 1970s when she was a student at UC Berkeley. She was raped and murdered in New York in November 1982 a few days before her first book "DICTEE" was published.

work, but beyond that they are required to consider and ascertain their position as they are immersed in the presented texts/sounds/voices. As a homage to Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, I will be reenacting her methods from *Aveugle Voix* (Blind Voice, 1975)².



Voix Aveugle (Blinde Stimme), 1975, San Francisco, U.S.A

² Die Performerin hockt weiß gekleidet auf dem Boden, vor ihr liegen ein zusammengerolltes Banner und zwei weiße Stirnbänder. Sie bindet das eine davon, auf dem schwarz schabloniert das Wort „AVEUGLE“ (französisch für „blind“) steht, über ihren Mund. Sie bindet das andere, auf dem „VOIX“ (französisch für „Stimme“, „Meinung“ oder „Wählerstimme“) steht, über ihre Augen. Sie steht auf und entrollt das Banner, worauf folgende Wörter, in dieser Reihenfolge, sichtbar werden: *WORDS - FAIL - ME - SANS [ohne] - VOIX - SANS - AVEUGLE - GESTE [Geste, Handlung, Tat]*.

Anschließend legt die Performerin das Banner auf den Boden und führt eine Reihe von Bewegungen aus (Hocken, Berühren des Banners mit der Handfläche usw.); „Der Traum des Publikums: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha“, Generali Foundation, 2004; a catalog edited and translated for the exhibition „Der Traum des Publikums“ from „The Dream of The Audience“ by Constance Lewallen, 2001; an original text, „Exile and the Maiden: The Performance Art of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha“, Katherine Russel Bond, in: Korean Culture, summer 1996.

1. When A Form Withdraws Itself

In a graduation exhibition entitled “Rethinking” (21.06-02.07, das weisse haus, Vienna) I will be presenting two of my performance series: *To Bite the Tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper* (2014-ongoing) and *Aveugle Voix: A Homage to Theresa Hak Kyung Cha* (2016). The title of the work series – *When A Form Withdraws Itself* – refers to the practice I have focused on for the past few years.

Epoché, an ancient Greek term and later popularly used in western philosophy, deals with a moment in which all judgements about the existence of the external world are suspended and thus one is allowed to consciously discover, recover, and deny knowledge, which leads to a practice of being skeptical about knowledge. I was intrigued by the term, even though it is not a correct reference to my practice and concern with regard to its usage developed in a history of western philosophy, for, I believe, it could be applied to the critique of contemporary knowledge production as a method. Despite of its slippery nature, knowledge in the modern and postmodern era has been delivered in a way that one lives in a sole library of a stone-made castle; hegemony of knowledge seems not to know the end and doesn't have to know. I'm here reflecting on my own impression to become “knowledgeable” through a whole education where doubting was not part of a curriculum; knowledge without a doubt.

I've arrived at a gesture of withdrawing in order to refuse a fluent and dominant form of delivery appearing in an institute of knowledge-offer, and even -transfer, which we are used to accept completely. What operates here is also a hierarchy of a language and we have to *choose* a language we would like to deliver and be delivered to us. The gesture of *zurückziehen* is to propose an alternative form of delivery in which hesitating, suspending and postponing become a method to *deliver* instead of calling, attending and offering. Übrigens – zurückziehen bedeutet hier nicht nur etwas zu entziehen, was schon gegeben ist, sondern bezieht sich auf die Bewegung des Ziehens und das ‚zurück‘, nämlich mit diesen Fragen: was heißt ‚schon gegeben‘? Heißt es, dass du es wirklich in der Hand hast, oder ziehe ich es zurück, kurz bevor es dich erreicht? Ist die Erreichbarkeit nur körperlich, oder wird sie auch anders wahrgenommen? Wie sieht eine Form des Zurückziehens aus? Nimmst du es nicht wahr, wenn ich nur zurückhalte, dass es eine potenzielle *Form* des Zurückziehens ist? Was geschieht in der Bewegung zwischen „-halten“ und „-ziehen“? Und dem ‚zurück‘?

2. Aveugle Voix

As Theresa Hak Kyung Cha seeks an alternative relation between *blind* and *voice* by connecting her eyes with “voice” [Voix] – im deutschen-englischen Wörterbuch heißt *blindfold* „die Augen zu verbinden“ – and covering her mouth with “blind” [Aveugle] – insofern hat ihre Mund keine *Sehkraft* zu *sprechen* –, I will delve into the relation between *blind*, *voice* and *to see* in a technical way as well as with a multi-lingual interaction in which a spoken and written text is attached to the condition of the performer’s body – a condition of not technically seeing and speaking.

The performance *Aveugle Voix* consists of two parts; blindfolded [Voix] – the eyes do not see –, I speak, listen to, hear and repeat a text composed of different languages and forms – Korean, English, German and French; a notation of the performance piled on a floor next to to the performance which is offered to the audience to take – *mitnehmen* – and read – *mitlesen* – during



Aveugle Voix
Performance, das weiss haus, Vienna,

the performance. The reading of the notation from the audience parallel to the performance silently interacts with the spoken. Using two dictation devices(voice recorders) in turn, I interact with the recording by either recording live(es wird jetzt geschrieben und wurde gleichzeitig bereits

geschrieben) or using pre-recorded material(ist vorgeschrieben) – in which the spoken is written and rewritten and thus transformed. The performativity of ‘Writing’ without *vision* is to create a detour to *voice*; here, ‘Writing’ is an instrument to measure a distance between *blind* and *voice*.

2.1. Aveugle Voix; To measure a distance between blind and voice

Before the performance an introduction of the performance is read live.

Wenn ich Performance vorführe, gebe ich kaum Information über die Performance. Information, die oft in einer Komplexität gepackt, ist da in und während der Performance und wie ich mit Information umgehe ist für mich eine wichtige Frage. Ich bringe mehr als einen Text in die Performance ein und die Texte sind von unterschiedlichen Form, Intention und Stimme geschrieben. Wenn ich eine Performance als ein zeitliches und räumliches Netz halte, besonders ‚Sprachperformance‘ in der Sprache, Sprechen und Stimme sowie körperliche An- und Abwesenheit gefragt und betroffen sind, was jetzt auf dem Netz eingeworfen – egal ob das Gesprochene, das Geschriebene oder das Gehörte – sind durch das Netz in unterschiedlichen Formen eingedrungen.

Die Frage der Informationslieferung habe ich daher konsequent. ‚Sprachperformance‘ differenziere ich von der Form ‚Lecture Performance‘; ‚Sprachperformance‘ ist nicht eine Vorlesung oder eine Rede, eigentlich dagegen, gegen der Form einer Lieferung, die bei einer Vorlesung oder einer Rede entsteht. Ich versuche eine andere Form, um eine gewisse Wissenslieferung zu kritisieren, die wir komplett akzeptieren.

Bei ‚Sprachperformance‘ trotz der technischen Grenze zwischen Sprachen – zum Beispiel Lateinisch schließt mich immer wieder aus – ist das Sprechen nicht nur als eine Sprache sondern eine eigene Sprache wahrgenommen, nämlich wenn ich auf Deutsch spreche, ist sie also technisch nicht meine Sprache, aber was meine Zunge auf Deutsch spricht gehört zu mir. Im Koreanisch, die meine Mutterzunge ist, ist lustigerweise der gleiche Fall. Die Sprache steht nicht mehr auf meiner älteren Zunge sondern beschränkt sich auf eine Sprache, die ich vorher nie als eine koreanische Sprache gedacht hatte. Die Konsonanten sind getrennt und fragmentiert und die Vokale gefallen oder gemischt. Der quasi Ausgleich

dazwischen passiert alltäglich und davon sollte ich eine andere Wirklichkeit finden, sonst geht nicht.

In dieser Paradoxnatur ist ein Ausländer oder eine Ausländerin eingeladen ohne Sorge zu wandern. In den Wald zu gehen ist ein Geschehen dass der Wald für sie fremd ist und umgekehrt gleichzeitig, also für den Wald ist sie auch fremd.

Das Messen ist zu kontrollieren und reduzieren, was nicht wahrnehmbar auf eine wahrnehmbare Einheit. Es ist eine Kapazität einer Einheit, ein Übermaß zu vermeiden oder eine „vernünftige“ Grenze zu finden. Dafür ist ein Instrument gebraucht. Aber was interessiert mich ist ein Zustand in dem die Grenze von dem Instrument abhängig ist und daher die Kapazität beständig umgeändert oder variabel werden kann. Die Distanz zwischen blind und Stimme ist zum Beispiel ein ungewöhnliches Perimeter, das außer Sichtweite ist; kontinuierliche Linien, die außer Sichtweite *umreisen*. (nicht umreißen sondern umreisen.)



Aveugle Voix
Performance, das weiss haus, Vienna,

2.2. A delivery of information

The process taking place in the performance is not a mere semantic disposition of words, but also a disposition of the voice – from the “voice” connecting the eyes via the voice coming from the voice recorder to the voice into the mouth. Words are spoken, respoken, channeled, written, rewritten and repeated. The mother tongue and *the* other tongue(s) – not other tongues but *the* other tongue(s) precisely indicating the tongues that perform on the tongue of mine – will intervene one another simultaneously. The live-recorded voice will be played using two analogue micro-cassette-corders – Diktiergerät/voice recorder – where playing, pausing, rewinding and fast-forwarding will take place as a part of the performance. The recorded sound is transformed and translated into the sound of my tongue, and the sound is recorded anew, the sound amidst the irreconcilable distance between *blind* and *voice* will be unpredictable even to the performer herself. In a way, it is an improvisational poetry.

A script for the performance consists of three parts; live-voice(a), voice-recorder I(b), and voice-recorder II(c). In the first part – *Voix* (Zustand: blind) – (a) speaks [S1] and recorded on (b) simultaneously. The recorded sound [A1] is played live just after the spoken. During playing, however, the recorded sound is controlled to be paused, rewinded, fast-forwarded and replayed where (a) intervenes in the recording of (b) – one might imagine this taking place in simultaneous interpretation. The intervening (a) [S2] with [A1] is recorded on (c) [A2] which is played afterwards. The audience, thus, hears [S2] as a sort of transforming of the previous performance in this phase. The phase goes through again the same process; the recording of (c) [A3] is interrupted by (a) [S3] and again live-recorded on (b) [A4]. Through the process the words in different languages are fragmented, played with one another and thus the sentences – if one would like to call them sentences – lose its own syntax. (a) speaks further [S4] and the just spoken (a) is recorded on both (b) and (c) this time. And weiter...

,Writing' through (re)speaking, channeling, listening, (re)writing and repeating take place inevitably during the performance where the analogue technique becomes clear to be attached to the performer's act; it is such a simple act to play, pause, rewind and fast-forward and the performer and the voice recorders resemble each other in a sense that the voice(s) has no longer a value of becoming original. It does not matter what comes first or latter, what is written first and the next. Thus, the script for the performance naturally loses its own hierarch of disposed words, on

one hand.

The script, on the other hand, particularly focuses on two words 'blind' and 'far' as a poetic intervention. In Korean the two words are pronounced in a same way and the word ,blind |눈 먼|' is a composition of 'eye |눈|' and 'far |먼|'. "Far voice" – the script/performance begins with ,ferne Stimme' – calls and reflects itself by "writing" itself on the recording device. The voice is written on a micro-cassette-tape which is already overwritten for previous practices for many times and consequently what has been written is barely recognizable, turning into a noise of the material itself. The recording taking place live in the performance is, therefore, a mere gesture of 'Writing', an extended version of a practice and has no priority over other practices; a practice without a final form that is always to be removed and rewritten and whose tracks are left for the next practice. "Far voice" becomes far in this sense as it is recorded not only by a live voice but the once recorded "Far voice" is again recorded in the other device and it goes through this gesture several times as the performance continues. "Far voice" mingling with other words and noises of the tapes is acoustically far away from the performer as well as the audience in the end.

In the second part of the performance comes *Aveugle – Zustand: Stimme*(wordless voice; stumme Stimme) – where the performer is not technically able to speak as her mouth is covered with a blindfold on which *Aveugle*(blind) is written. Sitting still with her face covered, she rewinds two recorders back to the beginning and plays them parallel until the end. The performer is positioned as one of audiences and a documentation of the performance is heard as a non-documented object; it is not a semantic understanding of a documentation but on passage to *Aveugle – Voix*.



Aveugle Voix, Performance, das weiss haus, Vienna, 2016

2.3. Notation: and the spoken 0

The performativity of 'Writing' is here transformed into a choreographic notation which is shown to the audience during and after the performance. A stack of copied paper of the notation stands between the performer and the audience, working as a sort of an fence-entrance for both sides. The notation indicates the sequence of the performance, divided in three parts of (a), (b) and (c). The notation is, nevertheless, not a mere score, since the spoken text is continuously shifting through the act of 'Writing'. The "measured" space of paper – a standard size of A4 – restricts a representation of shifting, yet it shapes the act of measuring and the words involved in it as a structured instrument.



Aveugle Voix, sheets of copied paper, installation view, das weiss haus, Vienna, 2016

The relation between the spoken and the written, a literality and an abstraction as well as performing and documenting is examined here. When the notation is sequential, words take part in the space of writing. They are an interpretation of the performance, but function independently from the performance. And the audience takes a task of reinterpreting through the fence. In the performance I felt that words spoken by myself, words from the devices and the notation constantly counteract each other. Blindfolded, my voice became one of counterparts, an immaterial object

immediately turned into a material. The abstract form of the notation visualizes this turn, yet compensates for the gap between them.

The composition of the performance is shown to the audience in different forms. Elements are appended one another, but not perfectly, as a matter of fact they all exist in an appended form; an appendix that you may assert to have for your book but actually is free to move to be hung on other books. Mutual perception is what takes place in *Zwiesprache*, having a similar nature to that form of appendix. In this sense what consists of a book is not a fixed location – or an inscription – but an appendix you freely take away and append to the other, but never perfectly locate it. The composition is to seek such a form of a gesture that slips and slides.

2.4. Participation – perception; alienated words

For the installation of the performance *Aveugle Voix* two blindfolds, two dictation devices and a pile of hundreds sheets of the copy of the notation are exhibited; it is set for the performance and what remains after the performance. Amidst the scattered fragments of the words across the voice(s) the audience may lose all sense of direction; the voice(s) interferes with one another where the audience realizes the need to establish her/his own sense of direction. This maze has to be transformed into one's "own," and instead of wondering where the exit might be, one has to invent it – a vent – and bring oneself to the "end". What is visible to the audience is the process of internalization-expression. The expression here is a unique translation of the foreigner, a process of rewriting the fragmented perception in an alternative form of language and expression.

Alienated words invite strangers. Rewriting (or 'Writing') is permitted. Here, the *Writer* – unfamiliar with the presented language but still responding via one's own set of languages – is freed from failure and incompetence. The act of responding – channeling through one's body and mind – itself is an expression within a new set of language, a complete 'Writing'. The foreign body floats in a space where words are overwritten, 'Writing' takes place only in presence of a foreign body. Thus, it begins a cycle – a continuum of reinterpreting, recreating; a practice without a final form.

Zu dem Mithören und Mitlesen dürfen die Betrachter*Innen einen eigenen (Um)weg finden, damit sie sich an dem „Ausmessen“ der Distanz zwischen „blind“ und „Stimme“ teilnehmen. As the text is of a finding from exploring the paradox of the distance the audience is invited to remeasure it. Through juxtaposing the transformation/reconfiguration of 'Writing' with the performance, I intend

to explore the realm of alternative communication. The language of sound, spoken words and bodily gestures are in themselves a complete and alienated form. Their interaction is not of merging and harmonizing, but of emphasizing the uniqueness of each form – the incommensurability of all languages. It is hoped that the dynamic and relationship between script/translation, appropriating/writing and audience/performer will evolve.



Aveugle Voix, two blindfolds, two microcassette-corders, installation view, das weiss haus, Vienna, 2016

A2:

- 목소리 ferne Stimme 먼 목소리를 보고 있다

S3: (Aufnahme 1)

- von Wort der Ferne the eye punkt afar hören doppelt punkt 말들로부터 목소리가 멀어지다

- von Wort der Ferne the eye. afar hören: 말들로부터 목소리가 멀어지다

S4: (Aufnahme 2)

- das blinde Wort klammer auf (…pause 7 sec.) klammer zu 눈은 말로부터 먼 the written word from the distant

eye klammer auf 눈이 먼 말들

- das blinde Wort () 눈은 말로부터 먼 the written word from the distant

eye (눈이 먼 말들

Aveugle Voix, 2016



Aveugle Voix, two blindfolds, installation view, das weiss haus, Vienna, 2016

3. To Bite the Tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper

To speak a foreign language; it is an unreflected self-observation to become a foreign body. It is an occurrence to develop a new channel(s) of a body and train them. A state of a constant uncomfortableness provides a certain distance between the (speaking) body and speaking itself; the body alienates itself from speaking. The learned – “old” – body restricts itself against fluency in speaking, withholding itself from the flow. It willingly stays in a bumpy and crumbly surface of its tongue. Yet the mother tongue wishes to walk away far from reality, for that reality does not allow the paradox of the play. The alienation not only keeps the distance but gradually removes the boundaries of speaking organs. Since a physical boundary between organs represents a speaking/ language boundary, the alienated body is a political intervention. The “mother” and the “tongue” are to be reconstructed. Origin, identity, nation and purity need to be investigated and problematized, yet material, feeling and memory are recollected.

A poem spoken in the speech performance *To Bite the Tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper* is one of poems in a book *DICTEE*(1982) by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. The poem (without a title, the chapter: *URANIA ASTRONOMY*) is written in French and English facing each other on opposite pages– French on the left side and English on the right. The poem is, even though French seems to be translated into English at the first sight – and to some extent it is a translation –, two different poems. She does not translate between two languages but in the space of the languages by translating punctuations, appending additional words, crossing between words both in a semantic and figurative sense and creating space through translation as a gesture of seeking a gab in subtle differences. When reading her text work, one would recognize a certain silence permeated into the space of the text; the silence accompanies the text in which she portrays her “silent” expression of (not) speaking.

I as a performer bring three different acts simultaneously in the performance; hearing the poem recorded in French; speaking the English poem; reading (silently) and marking lines with a black marker on the copy of the poem translated in Korean by a Korean translator after Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s death (덕테| Kyung-Nyun Kim, 1997). In Korean translation the French version appears not translated on the left side as in the original of “DICTEE” and the English one is translated into Korean, replaced with the Korean translation. The Korean translation translated from the French

version is written as a footnote on the left-bottom of the page of the French one. Through this strange structure a reader would first have an impression that the French poem is translated into Korean, not the English one. Furthermore the footnote-form translation under the original poem of French is confronted with the English-Korean translation in an interesting way without the translator's intention.



To Bite the Tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper(2014-ongoing)
Performance, IG Bildende Kunst, Vienna, 2016

The copy I use in the performance is only the Korean translation from the English, but the audience could partly see the footnote translation on the very left side of the copy. The performance is an ongoing work since 2014 and intends to be performed “repeatedly”. Each copy consisting of four pages remains marked after the performance.

For the exhibition “Rethinking” the performance *To Bite the Tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper* is not performed live, but the documentation of the performance as an artist book is shown.

3.1. Text–performer relation

The performance has been developed to explore a different nature of a text–performer relation. I hear the French version (*hear*, as I don't have knowledge of French, yet I had a long discussion with the French speaker who spoke the French poem for the recording.) via earphones where the audience is clueless as to what I am hearing. The words are channeled and I try to follow the sound and sometimes words of French by speaking the English version simultaneously. I look for a certain dialogue between what I hear and what I speak; or finding a certain rhythm in the space between texts where not only words but punctuations, lines and space compose of them. The interaction between the languages is hidden from the audience, where the only act presented is the reaction of the performer to the recording.

The recording of the poem in French is an articulate speech. When it comes to *the* French Theresa Hak Kyung Cha used as an alternative to English, Cha's strange French spoken by the French speaker makes it even more inappropriate. Because of the difficulty to act several tasks simultaneously and concentrate on each act the performer need to take the hearing much more slowly than the recording. The voice in French is recorded in an analogue reel-to-reel tape recorder and is, therefore, played, fast-forwarded, paused and rewinded in order to make the performance. The reel-to-reel tape recorder is practically used for the act. Through the hand-gesture of playing, fast-forwarding and rewinding the hidden, multi-lingual interaction between the text and the performer becomes visible, emphasizing the fragmented nature of the text-performer relation.

Words are repeated, moving back and forth. The left hand repeats to turn the round button of the tape recorder forward and backward. The other hand marks another language – which is the performer's mother tongue – as if it had to be aware that the mother tongue exists through this complex journey and thus, the technical mother tongue. The process is to appropriate a language from three languages by internalizing and externalizing them at the same time. The private realm of the internal and highly intimate relationship between the *Writer* and the text is brought out to open.

3.2. Repetition and growing documentation

The performance has been done fourteen times between 2014 and 2016. In the beginning it

was very much a practice to bring different languages and acts into a table and adjust myself to the unusual condition. Ten times of the performance were performed privately and forty sheets of paper of copies remained marked after that. The eleventh and first performance in public took place in January, 2015 at Schauspielhaus in Vienna where the forty sheets were shown chronologically. In this way each performance contains the previous practice as a documentation.

By “repeating” the performance and being aware of the contradiction in repeating I recognized that I find something that are beyond the existing materials playing with me; a space of the text I didn’t see before, breathing in different pauses and (re)collected fragments from the previous practice – it is a subtle difference that, I believe, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha intended to write. A gesture of marking shows the differences of perception which took place in the performance. Continuously marking a copy of the Korean translation becomes a sort of drawing as the practice is repeated. The marked is not to be hidden or isolated from the unmarked but to show a moving gesture of a text reading.

3.3. Documenting the performance

The copies of the Korean translation is considered as a part of performance-installation as well as a documentation of the performance. 56 sheets of paper are contained in a book form and one piece of reel-to-reel tape accompanies them on the left side. The tape is shown solely as an object; not for listening.



혀를 깨문다. 이 언어로 삼킨다
기술이. 더은 기술이. 삼킨다. 더은 더은
더 이상 몸의 기관이 남아 있지 않을 때까지.

기관이 없다. 더 이상.
남자들.

이주. 주구씩. 주구씩. 남들, 마침표들, 그
멈춤들. 선. 선. 선. 후
존재. 후. 모두
존재하기 전

어구들. 소리없는
문자들. 소리없는
페이지들과. 페이지들이. 주머니 가까이
음침함으로 다가간다

뒤에 행이
왼쪽으로. 오른쪽으로³⁶⁾ 비워진다.
남자들을 매달린다.
키무는 비운다.

질 때까지
과後 다
1 종잇장
로 / 말들

36) 원문에는 'to the left to the right' 라고 되어 있는데, 보통 'left and right' 라고 쓰지 이렇게
따로 떼어놓는 경우는 좀처럼 보기 힘들다.

4. Speech Performance as a critical apparatus for ‘decolonial aesthetics’

I grew up in South Korea, where (mis)translating, (mis)reading and (mis)interpreting are of those which have shaped the modern and postmodern history; it is a history of (mis)translating, (mis)reading and (mis)interpreting “the West” in a sense of “ways of life, ways of thinking, ways of being³”. It is an ongoing project which is never to be achieved, and since 1990s it has been accelerated with globalization. This long-term but peculiar phenomenon has been embedded in the educational and institutional infrastructure as well, mingled with a tradition of Neo-Confucianism and the remains of Japanese colonization and the result of Korean war.

When it comes to contemporary knowledge production, delivery matters in translation, as we’ve been busy with it. A hierarchy of language leads to one-way translation, that is, a monologue. When a translation is to create a relationship between the translating and the translated, such a monologue lacks of a relationship. Nevertheless the issue has been barely discussed in South Korea, that is to say, of who translates what for whom. In this one-way translation there appears a certain resistance to its own (con)text and language; it is no longer up to translating and mistranslating, but in need of inter-translating: a dialogue.

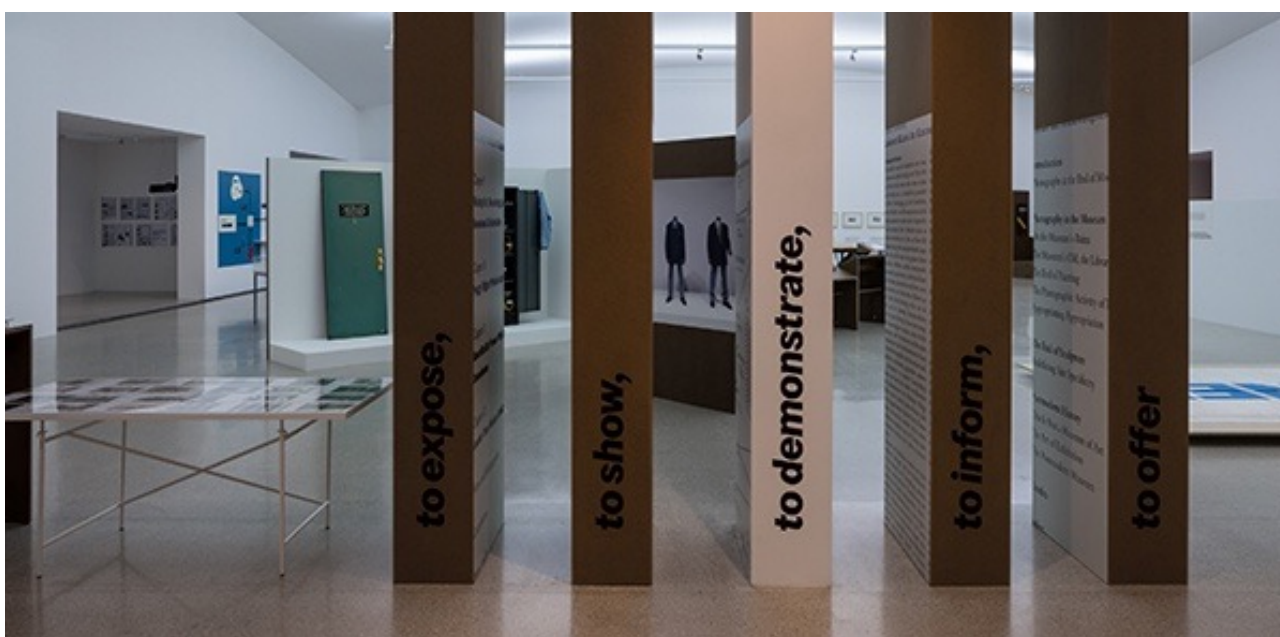


Last year I encountered two research-based exhibitions: “How did we get here” (Salt, Istanbul) and “to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer” (Mumok, Vienna). Even though both intended to rediscover an art praxis of a certain period of time (1980s and 1990s), they

exhibition, *How did we get here* (Salt, Istanbul, 2015), foto source: e-flux

³ “What is contemporary”, Peter Pal Pelbart, *Afterall* 39

had a quite different approach dealing with archives, which is interesting to compare. “How did we get here”, curated by two young curators born in the 1980s (though they prefer calling themselves a researchers), “traces the origins of the current context of Turkey‘ by re-illuminating elements of popular culture and social movements in the 1980s after the 1982 Constitution and military intervention⁴”, while “to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer” defines itself by “looking back at international art activities around 1990s⁵” where despite of extensive and rich materials the „international art activities“ are only limited into some of european countries and the U.S.A.



exhibition, *to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer*(Mumok, Vienna, 2015), foto source: mousse magazine

While the one localizes itself in a place of its own history (and interestingly the curators didn't directly experience the time), the other stretches its body out to the “international” art scene in the 1990s in which a vehicle was gearing up for globalization. Regardless of their unlike approaches, however, it is hard to deny that both employs a common tool for delivering knowledge. A question comes to follow; then, what could be a critical method to investigate archives rather than to produce them? How to problematize tools for archiving? Furthermore, how can research be defined when working with archive materials?

⁴ “How did we get here”, e-flux; <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/how-did-we-get-here/>

⁵ “to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer, Künstlerische Praktiken um 1990”, mumok; <https://www.mumok.at/de/events/expose-show-demonstrate-inform-offer>

In Cha's text work *DICTEE* she recollects and reconstructs narratives including both historical and personal events and figures. By reducing boundaries between nation, history and personal narratives, she criticizes the desire of historicizing and documenting. She speaks "through disembodied yet multiple voices, borrowed citations, and captionless photographs⁶". Even though she followed a praxis of conceptual art which arose at the time in California and was white-male dominant, the structure of the book problematizes a delivery of knowledge by creating empty space between words and paragraphs and borrowing citations without origins.

Translating should be a method to investigate a relation between original and translation and bring it into an emerging space where a preexisting relation between them is interrupted and subverted. Various methods of inter-textuality and cultural translation are applied to 'Speech Performance' to remap archival materials; copying, quoting and borrowing as well as calqueing and plagiarizing are used to problematize a pre-existing relationship around discourse on archives.

⁶ Memory and Anti-Documentary Desire in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*, Anne Anlin Cheng, *MELUS*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Theory, Culture and Criticism (Winter, 1998), pp. 119-133

J'écoutais les cygnes.
Les cygnes dans la pluie. J'écoutais.
J'ai entendu des paroles vrai
ou pas vrai
impossible à dire.

Là. Des années après
Impossible de distinguer la Pluie.
Cygnes. Paroles souvenus. Déjà dit.
Vient de dire. Va dire.
Souvenu mal entendu. Pas certain.

La Pluie fait rêver de sons.
Des Pauses. Exhalation.
Des affirmations toutes les affirmations.

Peu à peu

Impossible de distinguer les paroles
Exhalées. Affirmées en exhalation
exclamées en inhalation
Ne plus distinguer la pluie des rêves
ou des souffles

La langue dedans. La bouche dedans
la gorge dedans
le poumon l'organe seul
Tout ensemble un. Une.

66

I heard the swans
in the rain I heard
I listened to the spoken true
or not true
not possible to say.

There. Years after
no more possible to distinguish the rain.
No more. Which was heard.
Swans. Speech. Memory. Already said.
Will just say. Having just said.
Remembered not quite heard. Not certain.
Heard, not at all.

Rain dreamed from sounds.
The pauses. Exhalation.
Affirmations. All the affirmations.

Little by little

Not possible to distinguish the speech
Exhaled. Affirmed in exhalation.
Exclaimed in inhalation.
To distinguish no more the rain from dreams
or from breaths.

Tongue inside the mouth inside
the throat inside
the lung organ alone. The only organ.
All assembled as one. Just one.

67

Excerpts, *DICTÉE* by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, first published 1982

J'écoutais les cygnes.
 Les cygnes dans la pluie. J'écoutais.
 J'ai entendu des paroles vrai
 ou pas vrai
 impossible à dire.

Là. Des années après
 Impossible de distinguer la Pluie.
 Cygnes. Paroles souvenirs. Déjà dit.
 Vient de dire. Va dire.
 Souvenu mal entendu. Pas certain.

La Pluie fait rêver de sons.
 Des Pauses. Exhalation.
 Des affirmations toutes les affirmations.

Peu à peu

Impossible de distinguer les paroles
 Exhalées. Affirmées en exhalation
 exclamées en inhalation
 Ne plus distinguer la pluie des rêves
 ou des souffles

La langue dedans. La bouche dedans
 la gorge dedans
 le poumon l'organe seul
 Tout ensemble un. Une.²⁹⁾

29) 나는 백조들을 듣고 있었다. / 빗속의 백조들. 나는 듣고 있었다. / 나는 진실의 말을 들
 었고 / 또는 진실이 아닌 말을. / 말하기 불가능하다. // 가기. 몇 년 후에 / 비를 분별하
 기 불가능하다. / 백조들. 최상권 말들. 이미 말해진 것. / 방금 말한. 말하려고 한 것. /
 기억된 잘 들리지 않은 것. 확실치 않다. // 비는 소리를 끄꾸게 한다. / 멈출들을 내어
 쉬는 호흡. / 단언들 모든 단언들을 // 조금씩 조금씩 // 말들을 분간할 수 없다 / 내쉬어
 진 말들. 내어쉬는 호흡 속에 단언되고 / 들어켜쉬는 호흡 속에 감란된 / 더 이상 비를
 분간할 수 없다 / 앞으로부터 / 또는 호흡으로부터 // 그 안의 혀(또한 언어). 그 입 속의
 / 그 목구멍 그 속의 / 그 혀와 단 하나의 기관 / 모두 다 함께 하나. 단 하나.

하나씩 하나씩.
 그 음(音)들. 한 번에 하나씩 움직이는 소리들
 멈춘다.³⁷⁾ 다시 시작한다. 예외들
 멈추고, 다시 시작한다.
 예외만 빼고는 모두.
 멈춤. 시작. 시작한다.
 수축들.³⁸⁾ 잠음. 잠음 비슷한 것.
 동강난 말. 하나씩 하나씩. 한 번에 하나씩.
 금간 혀. 깨진 혀.
 혼합어.³⁹⁾ 말 비슷한 것.
 삼킨다. 숨을 들이쉴다. 더듬거린다. 시작한다. 시작하기 전에
 멈춘다.
 막 시작하려다가, 멈춘다. 내쉬던 호흡이
 갑자기 정지로 삼켜진다.
 휴식. 없이. 휴식 없이 할 수 있다. 부당하다
 시작도 하기 전에 쉬는 것. 휴식의 유예.
 그것들 다 없이
 멈춤이 시작된다.
 정당한 멈춤들이 기대되던 곳.
 그러나 이제는 더 이상 아니다.

37) 원문의 'stop'은 음성학에서 말하는 '폐쇄음 stop'과 관련이 있다고 보여진다. 폐쇄음은
 국어에서 보통 '파열음'이라고 하는 것인데, 파열음은 혀가 입 안의 어느 부분과 맞닿
 아 있다가 터져나오는 소리이다. 그 터질 이전에는 순간적인 멈춤이 있다.

38) 발성기관, 즉 성대 근육의 수축을 말하는 것이다.

39) 원문의 'pidgeon'은 'pidgin'을 의도적으로 비틀 단어나이다. 'pidgin'은 혼성어 또는 혼합
 어라고 번역되는 것인데, 이것은 흔히 식민지 국가에서 많이 쓰이는 정확하지 않은 영
 어처럼 여러 언어가 뒤섞인 권위적인 언어를 지칭하는 것이다. 저자는 'pidgin'을 발음
 이 비슷한 'pigeon(비둘기)'이라는 낱말과 겹쳐서 'pidgeon'이라는 어휘를 만들어내
 고 있다. 여기서 흥미로운 것은, 미국에서는 비둘기가 더럽고 지저분한 새로 간주된다
 는 사실이다. 평화를 상징하는 비둘기는 영어의 'dove'에 해당된다.