

The Failure of Intellectual Memory: Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea in *Mind the Gap*

Christel Stalpaert

In her book *I, Etcetera*, Susan Sontag describes the recollection of memories as something that relieves the pain, as something that comforts and helps. 'It's a pleasure to share one's memories. Everything remembered is dear, endearing, touching, precious', she says (Sontag, 2002, p. 42). She looks for the reason for this feeling of comfort in the fact that we know nothing whatsoever about the future. 'At least the past is safe – though we didn't know it at the time. We know it now. Because it's in the past, because we have survived' (ibidem). But what if the demons of the past keep haunting the present in a most horrifying way? What if the present cannot explain the past, and vice versa? What if memories are too huge to be produced on a psychoanalytical theatre stage? What if memories are not comforting, but confronting and devastating? What if memories and recollections do not provide us with something to go by, but, on the contrary, make us dizzy with chaos and throw us out of gear?

Memory studies have theoretically wormed their way into performance studies. The continuing growth of interest in concepts such as 'memory', 'trauma' and 'amnesia' generated a 'discursive explosion' that troubles many theatre scholars'.¹ The way performances deal with emotional or psychological injuries that leave scars, has been widely debated over the years. It is accepted, however, that human beings possess a need to draw meaning from traumatic experiences and to communicate this in narratives. Recent developments in memory studies tend to view narratives as being part of a 'memory regime', as 'the kinds of knowledge and power that are carried, in specific times and places, by particular discourses of memory' (Hodgkin and Radstone, 2004, p. 2). Theatrical narratives used to bridge the traumatic experience are also simultaneously 'productions' of a specific discourse of memory. Narratives 'acting out' or 'working through' traumatic experiences create binding understandings of the traumatic event to create a 'collective trauma' that constructs shared identities and – as a consequence – nationalities. The constructive power of trauma-narrative to create history, identities and nationalities, has been outlined by – for example – Dominick LaCapra, Miriam Hansen, Shoshana Felman and Joshua Hirsch, and has foregrounded the constituting patterns of classical dramatic aesthetics.²

Besides this postnarrative shift, one of the most powerful and influential trends in

memory studies involves revisions of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis (ibidem, p. 24). In subverting the opposition between thought and sensation, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Luce Irigaray provide a postrepresentative – or a-presentative as Deleuze would put it – alternative to logo-central theories of trauma and testimony.

One could say that revisions of classical dramatic aesthetics, on the one hand, and Freudian or Lacanian psychoanalysis, on the other hand, mark a regime shift in memory studies. In dealing with *Mind the Gap*, a drama written by the Flemish author Stefan Hertmans for the Brussels Kaaitheter in 2000, I would like to investigate the theoretical potential of a postdramatic theatre aesthetics on the one hand and a postrepresentative aesthetics of intensities on the other hand in the field of memory studies, more particular as to contemporary theories of trauma and testimony. First, I would like to dismantle the principle of narrative reporting, based on the tool of simple interrogation, as a disciplinary technology, both in a psychoanalytic and in an aesthetic sense. The way Hertmans gets at 'the truth' of the traumatic experience of the main characters differs from the usual discourse of (psychoanalytic) confession and of flashbacks. Instead, a stream of images and voices testifies to the traumatic experience that narrative cannot contain. Second, I will investigate the way intellectual memory fails and how – in its gaps – affective images and corporeal memory appear. The kaleidoscopic stream of images and voices, the harsh poetic text that the spectator has to deal with, and the cold, empty stage generate an aesthetics of intensities that gives the spectator a mind-blowing experience. Third, I move from the individual or personal field of the characters to social elements. Hertmans's *Mind the Gap* is a contemporary political statement in the sense that the author did not look for a catharsis within a classical dramatic aesthetics, but for a painful and embarrassing actualisation of the Greek tragedies, echoing voices of contemporary war and traumatic events.

Interrogation as tool of the Truth or monologue as lamentation?

Mind the Gap brings together the story of three women from ancient Greek tragedies and has the failure of knowledge and intellectual memory as its central theme. *Mind the Gap*, in fact, stages Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea as the three protagonists of a new play in which they recall the tragic and cruel events they were involved in. They are a testament of the past. Antigone talks about the past when she's about to hang herself; she has already been locked up in a cave as punishment for wanting to have her brother buried. Clytemnestra already despises her husband Agamemnon for having his youngest daughter, Iphigenia, sacrificed (Oresteia). Medea has already killed her children to take her revenge on Jason.

Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea are names that have been carved into our collective memory, along with their well-known stories. But in this narrative, in this 'plot', the 'gap' of the unrepresentable and unspeakable individual traumas of these women gapes. Hence the title of the play, *Mind the Gap*. How do author Stefan Hertmans and

director Gerardjan Rijnders, who premiered *Mind the Gap* in November 2001 with his theatre company Toneelgroep Amsterdam, aesthetically deal with this traumatic gap in what can be called postdramatic theatre, a theatre that moves beyond the narrative patterns of classical dramatic aesthetics?

In *Mind the Gap*, Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea do not remember who they were. They do not seek the authentic state or the essence of their identities; they remember or scan the past for as many snapshots as possible of their ever so mobile entities. Past and present, individual and collective memory, virtual and actual world are not separated from one another, they co-exist. As a result, the Aristotelian ideal of a clear arrangement (Eusynopton) is no longer at stake in *Mind the Gap*. In constructing Medea's character, for example, Hertmans no longer availed himself of the linear-successive, teleological paradigm of the classical dramatic aesthetics, but instead of the so-called palimpseststructure. This palimpsest-structure refers to the structure of the parchment roll that permits the erasure of certain words by scratching the surface of the parchment, and hence creating the possibility of writing over the erased words. This palimpseststructure is often used in post-colonial and cultural studies to describe the ambiguous situation of the colonized (female) subject. '[It] is a fitting metaphor for colonization, one of whose consequences is the forcible erasure of all traces of people's history, culture and way of life in order to replace them with the colonizer's'. But at the same time, the palimpseststructure offers a way out of the constructed colonized identity 'as complete erasure is impossible, there always remain traces, even if it may require a special light in order to decipher them' (Donadey, 1996, p. 888). If decipherment is even possible.

The individual memories of the three women in *Mind the Gap* are for this reason very diverse and often paradoxical. The traces of the past do not unite into a clear-cut 'image' of the women and how they used to 'be' in the past. *Mind the Gap* is not about a (re)tracing of one past. It is about the failure of the intellectual memory to understand the cruel and tragic past completely.

Interrogation is considered an effective tool for (re)tracing the past. Psychoanalysts and policemen often use interrogation to get at the 'truth' about past events.³ In recollecting their past, Antigone and Mnemosyne⁴ explicitly refer to these interrogation techniques.

ANTIGONE

Mademoiselle, he says, the
Subconscious is a language.
I know, doctor, I say, I
Know. The subconscious is a language.
Then I can leave.

(...)

MNEMOSYNE

Would you like to turn away the light?
Can I smoke a cigarette?
Can I take a nap?
Do I have to repeat my name again and again and again?
Will you stop staring between my legs while you interrogate me?⁵

In *Surveiller et punir*, Michel Foucault described interrogation as a disciplinary technology that moulds the deviant body into the normative body. In Western societies, interrogation is formalised in rituals of confession and psychoanalytic sessions. The method of interrogation gives the interrogated subject the impression that one is addressed in a dialogical communicative situation and that one can respond as a 'free' subject. However, Foucault notes that the discourse of confession actually disciplines the so-called 'free' subjects even more firmly within existing power relationships. Kate Soper similarly pointed out the deforming, normalising and regulating of (female) experience by the dominant discourse where 'getting at the "truth" of our experience, and naming its name, may neither be as voluntary nor as liberating as we have been led to believe' (Soper, 1993, p. 46).

The French philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray, in this context, criticizes the bogus dialogues of traditional psychoanalytic sessions.⁶ In a mutual dialogic transfer, there would at least be an attempt to exchange meanings, leaving room for mutual respect and 'understanding' in the sense of negotiating between 'I' and the 'Other', rather than 'fitting' someone into preconceived notions and familiar concepts. The French post-structuralists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari wrote a similar critique in *L'anti-Oedipe*.⁷ They described traditional psychoanalysis as an imaginary theatre that does not really ask questions, but instead installs an imperative in the psychoanalytic interrogation. The psychoanalytic question is a rhetorical question. 'Ce n'est pas de la suggestion, c'est du terrorisme' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p. 53).

In *Mind the Gap*, the regulating power of interrogation, disguised in a so-called liberating dialogue, is stripped of its illusive mask. The questions, answers and recollections of Antigone and Mnemosyne are nothing more than echoes in an empty space. They receive neither answers to their questions, nor reactions to their observations. Dialogue has become a painful monologue, confession has become a long lamentation. The stream of words does not explain; instead, it expresses pain, doubt, hesitation and suffering. The rhetorical power of the word has become one big sigh.

There is a deliberate short-circuiting of dialogue into monologization. Hertmans deliberately translated the tragedies of Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea into mono-

logues. It is not a theatrical form that is constructed like a monologue, where one actress single-handedly plays or speaks all the roles of a play or text. These are monologues in the strict sense of the word, but not in the traditional dramatic aesthetic sense of the word.⁸ Whereas Aristotle's *Poetics* and his unity of action avoids confusion and prefers harmony and comprehensibility, the postdramatic structure of *Mind the Gap* is marked by parataxis and simultaneity. The three monologues of Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea are derived from three different tragedies, but they are staged as one and the same performance. The three women are not even aware of one another most of the time. They don't seem to hear or see each other. They don't react to one another's words. Their words are directed at the audience, not at one another and they don't talk at cross-purposes. Apart from the static impression the audience receives, this speaking in the same direction gives viewers the impression that they are seeing a chorus. (Lehmann, 2006, p. 129). Reduced to the choral and monological lamentation, it creates a polyphonic monologue rather than a dialogue. Despite some analogical themes and genealogical connections, synthesis and unity is eluded and the spectator is mostly left wondering 'whether there exists any real connection in what is being presented simultaneously or whether this is just an external contemporaneity. Parataxis and simultaneity result in the failure of the classical aesthetic ideal of an "organic" connection of the elements in an artifact' (ibidem, p. 88). As the play develops, the spectator has to 'zap' from one story to another, to shift from one level to another. What commences as three narrative trajectories soon multiplies into a kaleidoscope of – sometimes contradictory and ambiguous – memories, revealing bits and pieces of the complex situation of the three women. A situation one will never be able to fully comprehend. It is true – as Jan Kott says – that the theatrical monologue offers a look inside the protagonist's thoughts (Kott, in Lehmann, 2006, p. 127). But, in *Mind the Gap*, this view becomes overwhelmingly kaleidoscopic.

A stream of images and voices

The ideal of a clear arrangement (*Eusynopton*) is at the forefront of Aristotle's *Poetica* and the means of attaining it is the unit principle of a logical sensory-motor connection. A para-logical order links the significance-generating symbols of cause and effect, of action and reaction. In this classical dramatic aesthetic, memory consists of a set of flashbacks, which respects the unity of action and hence is displayed as the function of the narrative plot (Deleuze, 1985, p. 67-75). The action is only temporarily delayed in order to find – in the past – reasons for the current behavior. After the flashback, the action is picked up again, and is, now psychologically motivated. The character that displays his past through memory, completes his teleologically targeted action (ibidem, p. 75-80).

In *Mind the Gap*, there is room for the non-logical, traumatic memory that narrative memory cannot contain. The ambiguities in recalling the past, the disappearance of a

logical use of time, the associative way of describing things et cetera, all point to what Mieke Kolk called 'a traumatic acting out as a manner of "story"'. In this acting out 'the authentic traumatic experience has not yet been assimilated into a clear-cut story about something' (Kolk, 2002, p. 143). As a consequence, the individual memory in *Mind the Gap* is not only a tool of Reason and Logos, but also of the body. Intellectual memory fails and in its gaps, affective images (Deleuze, 1985) and corporeal memory appear. Mnemosyne describes, for clarity's sake, how someone should hold his head. If it is not done in this manner, dizziness ensues. When the logo-central paradigm finally loosens its grip, 'mind-blowing' corporeal memory can haunt the stage. Antigone describes how she awakens in the middle of the night, enjoying for a few moments dim memories and dreams. And then, suddenly everything is gone. What remains is the tormented body. Eructation of sour acid from the bottom of her belly. The darkness, like thick treacle, suffocates every breath in her throat. Cold sweat on her breasts, her fingers picking her worn out and soaked night shirt.

Marcel Proust famously distinguished between intellectual memory, or 'the insipid and unattractive state of *anamnesia*', and involuntary memory, 'which spontaneously releases highly coloured "extra-temporal" moments from oblivion' (Thiriet, 1989, p. 331). In Proust's *Jeunes Filles* the best part of our memory is described as located 'outside of us (...). Outside of us? Within us, properly speaking, but veiled from our own gaze, in a more or less prolonged state of oblivion. It is only thanks to that oblivion that we can occasionally regain the being that we once were' (ibidem, p. 331). In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, oblivion is seen as the best foundation for the miracles produced by emotional memory. The experience of a 'Madeleine trompée dans une tasse de thé' unleashes the whole story of Combray. The crumpling of the napkin, the trip on the uneven paving stones in the Guermantes courtyard are similar manifestations of involuntary memory. The use of the faculty of memory as advanced by Proust does not unite all of the faculties harmoniously in an act of recognition; the faculty of memory is confronted with its own differential limits, pushed to its involuntary realm, not forming a 'common sense'. In Deleuze's reading, Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* is a 'vast experience (...) freed from the presuppositions of both recognition and common sense' (Smith, 1997, p. 31).

Antigone's descriptions are reminiscent of Proust's involuntary memories as well as of the incidental happenings Roland Barthes randomly recollects and illogically connects in his *Incidents*.⁹ Barthes compares the intellectual memory with an image of a picture postcard, whereas involuntary memory recalls the complexity of the experience. It is 'not just a functional means of communication but a sort of complex experience in which a continuous spectacle simultaneously occurs (...) and the memory of an ancestral practice, that of walking, of the slow and rhythmic penetration of the landscape, which then assumes different proportions' (Barthes, 1992, p. 6). Barthes is convinced that with his body, which is his childhood, as history has made it, he can enter these

realms of reality in his fashion (ibidem, p. 7). At the age when memory is first formed, someone acquires only the sensation of the 'realities' they afforded: 'odors, exhaustion, sounds of voices, errands, changing light, everything that, with regard to reality, is somehow irresponsible and having no meaning except to form, later on, the memory of lost time (...) childhood' (ibidem, p. 7). Body and cognition are connected. Not in a romantically pre-reflective or pre-natal domain of primitive experimental richness, but in what Deleuze calls the realm of intensity. This demands a rethinking of the body and mind split. 'The body doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated. Intensity is asocial, but not presocial – it includes social elements, but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels of functioning, and combines them according to different logic' (Massumi, 1997, p. 223).

Mind the Gap does not only roam the individual field or the personal level of the characters. It infolds contexts and includes social elements. The corporeal and involuntary memories of Antigone are intersected with descriptions of images that are reminiscent of news flashes. Images of death, torture and rape, that echo the images seen on television and the testimonies of raped victims during the Yugoslav Wars. Antigone's descriptions of her past mingle with the description of an image of a young girl, about eight years old, a victim of a natural disaster in Latin America, stuck with her injured body in the ruins of a house, trying to hold her head up so as not to drown in the dirty water. Antigone's monologue reminds us of the camera filming the little girl as she collapses. We clearly recognize this familiar image from television. The images that are described are images that belong to our collective memory, to our mental photo archive, as mediated by television. It is similar to the June 8, 1972 image of the little girl, Kim Phuc, crying and naked, running for her life after a napalm bombardment in Vietnam. Everybody recognizes this image. It encapsulates the horror of the Vietnam war, squeezed into ten square centimeters.

We have been bombarded by images. You think it's finally over. Until you start to write about it. Then it all comes back again, like vomit in your throat (Hertmans, in Sels, 2001).

In the spectator's mind, the girl's last gasp as she collapses in front of the camera, her silent 'no', mingling with Antigone yelling 'NO' against all prohibitions. In this way, Hertmans looks for the tension between personal, corporeal memory, collective memory, and 'public' images of cruelty to actualize Greek tragedies. He wasn't seeking a catharsis within a classical dramatic aesthetics, but for a painful and embarrassing actualisation. There is no catharsis, so that in the end, he can say, 'you don't know which way to go with your emotions' (ibidem). Catharsis in dramatic theatre is 'the bringing about of affective recognition and solidarity by means of the drama and the affects represented and transmitted to the audience within the frame' (Lehmann, 2006, p. 21). In *Mind the Gap*, the polyphonic monologues, the co-existence of past and present, in-

dividual and collective memory, virtual and actual world, prevent recognition and solidarity. The spectator is definitely shaken and overwhelmed by the images and voices of disgust and suffering. Hertmans counteracts the cognitive recognition, and the attendant processes of dramatic identification, with an aesthetics of intensities and perceptibility or an open perception that is not and cannot be turned off. The énoncé or expression of a postulated idea (in this case a memory) becomes énonçable; pure possibility.¹⁰

It is up to the spectators to determine whether they want to open up their various faculties to the free circulation of affects, or appeal to the logo-centric subject of knowledge, which, in any case, falls short of its centralizing function.¹¹ Delight or frustration; the stream of images and voices is so overwhelming in *Mind the Gap* that a critic wondered whether this could still be considered theatre. The monologues never turn into dialogues. There is no dramatic action, but a harsh poetic text that the spectator has to deal with. The dramatic text is long and director Gerardjan Rijnders decided not to edit the text down. In two hours, the audience has to absorb some 125 pages of words, words, words. Moreover, the actress Marieke Heebink speaks very quickly, without pauses, as if she wants to catch up with time while she is speaking. A few times the voices mingle (Stuivenberg, 2002). The result is what Lehmann calls a 'repletion (...) of sings', a 'dialectic of plethora', 'plenitude' in a postdramatic theatre (Lehmann, 2006, p. 89).

Dilution, deprivation and an emptiness of action

But the staging of the tragedies as three mingled monologues also has another effect. Lehmann pointed out that the monologue 'is often deprived precisely of that which the theatre author was traditionally meant to produce with its help: namely the electric suspense towards the response and progression' (ibidem, p. 126). The women's reflection on and memory of the past prevails over any suspense the plot may hold. In *Mind the Gap* a 'poetic-epic reconsideration has taken the place of the dramatic development' (ibidem, p. 126). Director Gerardjan Rijnders deliberately chose for a detached de-psychologicalization of the text. He is convinced that a text needs to be 'said', not psychologically interpreted. The big emotions, the tempos of speech, the streams of images and words encounter a stylised way of acting, a dilution, deprivation and emptiness of action, a stillness of movement. Lehmann described how 'for someone who expects the representation of a human – in the sense of psychological – world of experience, it can manifest a coldness that is hard to bear' (ibidem, p. 95). *Mind the Gap* is provocative because it presents death with terrifying coldness.

Indeed, scenographer Erik Kouwenhoven and light designer Imeen Rijdsdijk created a tough, cold atmosphere. The scene reminds us of... nothing. It breathes the emptiness of a Deleuzian *espace quelconque*. A critic described the stage as 'a subterranean, weird construction of tubes that feeds on the city like a worm. (...) the emptiness that tough-

ens, dulls, and kills' (Borremans, 2001). It is in this cynical sphere that Antigone, Clytemnestra and Medea meet, at the moment of death, where human relationships are so empty and pale that it is difficult to refer to them as relationships. We meet people whose identities are fading and who neither understand each other, nor themselves anymore. In this failure of knowing, the trauma of the three women re-appears in its non-comprehensible and unspeakable coldness.

The subconscious is a language – the failure of language

ANTIGONE

Deep is the water.

Deep is the mouth.

Despite numerous attempts at psychoanalysis, the complexity of the traumatic past remains incomprehensible and unspeakable. Psychoanalyst Cathy Caruth in a recent book wrote about the traumatic experience and the faculty of remembering: 'The experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level, and this failure to arrange the memory in word and symbols leaves it to be organized on a somatosensory or iconic level: as somatic sensations, behavioural re-enactments, nightmares and flashbacks' (Caruth, 1995, p. 172. See also: Kolk, 2002, p. 144). One can only wonder then whether words can be a proper tool for plumbing the depths of traumas. Antigone ironically repeats Lacan's words that the subconscious is a language, because language creates a distance between the word and the (traumatic) experience. The symbolic order installs a border between it and the real order or pure experience (Caruth, 1995, p. 25). The traumatic experience belongs to the realm of the real order. The real order has not disappeared and continues to influence our lives, but it evades meaning and signification. The realm of the real is, that's all we can say about it. All of the rest is silence(d)...

(...) le mot (...) est (...) une présence fait d'absence (...) le symbole se manifeste d'abord comme meurtre de la chose (...) l'être du langage est le non-être des objets (Lacan, 1966, p. 276, 319, 627).

But to 'read' the past can first also be – what Roland Barthes describes as 'to perceive (...) in terms of (...) the body's memory' (Barthes, 1992, p. 8). It is to this vestibule of knowledge and analysis that the writer is assigned: 'more conscious than competent, conscious of the very interstices of competence' (ibidem, p. 9). Stefan Hertmans echoes these thoughts in poetic language, conscious of the very interstices of his competence to grasp the gap. The language of a writer demands patience. Time to let the cruelty of what has happened sink in and then let it arise in the form of an image. Nightmares and dreams have altered the image, however. It is no longer a realistic image, a picture postcard of the past (Hertmans, in Sels, 2001). In this sense, Hertmans's elabo-

rate poetic language, the overwhelming stream of words and images more closely resemble the traumatic experience than the clear-cut report written on the spot.

In the beginning of this article, I quoted Susan Sontag to describe the recollection of memories as something that relieves pain, as something that comforts and helps. In *I, Etcetera*, Sontag also dealt with other tools of knowing. She confronts the reader with short stories about the nature of knowing, our relationship with the past, and the future in an alienated present. America is the terrain she explores. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, our perception of New York is irrevocably connected with the image of the collapsing twin towers. The images were repeated endlessly and entered our collective memory. Sontag's description of a 'wounded city' (Sontag, 2002, p. 48), 'a veined city' (ibidem, p. 36) has been infected by these images. For her, an American city as seen from a distance, reminds her of 'a cosmic smudge, a conglomerate of bleeding energies. Close up, it is a fairly legible printed circuit, a transistorized labyrinth of beastly tracks, a data bank for asthmatic voice-prints. Only some of its citizens have the right to be amplified and become audible' (ibidem, p. 35). In 2007, Sontag's observations prompt some questions. Were citizens allowed to speak out about their traumatic experiences after the attacks of 9/11? And if so, who were the ones who were considered to be United States citizens? What aspect or aspects have been underreported by the mainstream press? Did the media create a collective memory to give this traumatic past a univocal explanation? How many voices disappeared into the folds of history and our collective memory? After all, politics is the art of what can be spoken.

Mind the Gap reminds us of the unspeakable and unrepresentable in traumatic experiences, and of the inherent failure to comprehend tragic events. It is important to expand the field of the self-evident, wide response, to listen to the silence behind those citizens who have obtained the right to speak up and have their voices amplified. 'We know more than we can use. (...) And we don't know enough', says Sontag, echoing Deleuze's alternative image of thought (ibidem, p. 25). In *Différence et répétition* Deleuze refers to Plato's *Republic* and his distinguishing between two types of sensations. The first sensation is the object of recognition and leaves the mind tranquil and inactive. Recognition correlates to the ideal of common sense, which unites our faculties in voluntary and harmonious consent. Deleuze compares recognition, or intellectual self-appropriation, with the processes of re-territorialization. He calls them 'the reassuring familiarity of encounters with the known' (Patton, 1997, p. 8). He argues for the installation of deterritorializing processes; those 'hesitant gestures which accompany our encounters with the unknown' (ibidem, p. 8-9). The second kind of sensation forces us to think and gives rise to thought. Recognition gives way to a fundamental encounter. Following Plato, this fundamental encounter renders the soul perplexed and puts it in motion. It is the involuntary discord that triggers the mind and demands further inquiry.

A finger is never anything but a finger, but a large finger can at the same time be said to be small in relation to a third, just as what is hard is never hard without also being soft, and so on. (...) sensibility compels the intelligence to distinguish the large and the small from the sensible appearances that confuse them, which in turn compels the memory to remember the intelligible Forms (Smith, 1997, p. 31).

Deleuze diverges from Plato, however, in the sense that he does not deal with contrary sensibilities and dualisms – large versus small and hard versus soft – but with a rhizomatic network of differences. Deleuze also counters Plato's innateness of *Ideas* with the notion of thought 'without image'. To mind the gap is then not to subordinate the eye to the model of recognition, and to break through preconceived notions. To mind the gap is to leave room for the 'discordant accord' between the demands of reason and the faculties of imagination. To mind the gap is to love a variety of relations and intensities. Let a gapping wound disfigure the harmonious accord. Love its scar.

Sometimes I see her in a picture, in the newspaper – a Taliban woman who unveils her face, against the Law; a Kosovo woman who stares empty-eyed from behind barbed wire. But here, the story, the anecdote, threatens to reduce what happened down to human size and makes it a little more bearable.

No, there should not be anything bearable about her, except for the distance she keeps from her own nightmares. To understand the Greek is to know that we will never understand. This hiatus, this gap in our memory of experiences. Caesura (Hertmans, 2001/2002, p. 35).

Christel Stalpaert is professor of Theatre Studies (the performing and media arts) at the Universiteit Gent and has published numerous articles on the subject of the performing art landscape. She is an editorial board member for *Documenta*, *Theater Topics* and *Studies in Performing Arts and Film*.
e-mail: christel.stalpaert@ugent.be

NOTES

- 1 Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone compare the present-day fascination with memory with the 'discursive explosion' around sex that Michel Foucault traced from its beginnings in the seventeenth century (See also: Hodgkin and Radstone, 2004, p. 1).
- 2 The 'acting out' and 'working through' of the collective trauma of the Jewish Holocaust in Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* (1993), for example, is related through the tale of Oskar Schindler, a Catholic businessman who was instrumental in saving the lives of over one thousand Polish Jews during the Holocaust by hiring them to work in his factory and keeping them from being sent to the Nazi concentration camps. The narrative film claims to have historical worth by showing – towards the end of

the film – a procession of now-older Jews who worked in Schindler's factory, reverently placing stones on his grave. The actors portraying the major characters walk hand-in-hand with the actual people they portrayed, literally linking fiction with fact. *Schindler's List* is often compared with Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* to denote the specific 'memory regime' of classical narrative films.

- 3 Sigmund Freud displayed a continual commitment to interrogation as an effective tool in an analytic setting. In popularizing the 'talking-cure' – an idea that a person could solve problems simply by talking about them – Freud looked for evidence of psychic and bodily trauma by means of interrogation and confession. The underlying knowledge or truth is waiting to be recovered. The technique for its retrieval is the spoken word. The status of speech as a means of externalisation has been questioned by, e.g., Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Luce Irigaray.
- 4 Mnemosyne is an interesting secondary figure in *Mind the Gap*. She is the goddess of memory who provided poets with an indispensable memory to recollect the narrative and to demonstrate their eloquence and fluency. But in this play, she can only say that she does not remember anything anymore.
- 5 Translations from Dutch by CS.
- 6 In the 1960s, Luce Irigaray participated in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic seminars. She trained as, and became, an analyst, but had some basic problems with the status of the spoken word in the traditional analytic setting. In her writings, she exposes the male ideology underlying the western system of meaning and language.
- 7 For psychoanalysis, desire is conceived in terms of lack. In *Anti-Œdipus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim that desire does not come from lack, as in the Freudian understanding, but is instead a productive and real force. Psychoanalysis limits desire to that of imaginary fantasies. Hence, the analytic session as psychoanalytic theatre is a fraud, as Deleuze and Guattari put it.
- 8 Hans-Thies Lehmann refers to Marisa Fabbri in Euripides' *Bacchae* (directed by her mentor Luca Ronconi from 1976 to 1979) (Lehmann, 2006, p. 125).
- 9 A posthumous book, *Incidents*, was published in English in 1987. It was comprised of fragments from his journals: his *Soirées de Paris* (a 1979 extract from his erotic diary of life in Paris); an earlier diary he kept (his erotic encounters with boys in Morocco); and *Light of the Sud Ouest* (his childhood memories of rural French life).
- 10 The suffix -able assumes a certain spontaneity, a possibility of significance, instead of an unambiguous and assumed factuality (Deleuze, 1985, p. 44).
- 11 The system of representation fixes the subject's various faculties (imagination, reason, understanding, sensibility, memory, et cetera) in a logo-centric unit, unable to conceive of difference in itself. The model of recognition depends upon a harmonious accord among the faculties, determined by the dominant faculty of reason, founder of the supposedly knowing Subject. But, according to Deleuze, the subject in question is in fact not logo-centric because the faculties operate within a multitude and their composition is constantly changing. It is only in unambiguous representation – for example in narratives that seek a collective 'acting out' and 'working

through' of a collective trauma – that the different faculties become streamlined and attuned. In reality, the ebb-and-flow nature of the observing subject does not correspond to classical dramatic aesthetics, which is grounded in the unity of the thinking Subject.

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