

This play is structured like a musical composition; it deals with the issue of memory's resistance to oppression of oblivion. The persons not restricting themselves to recall only, they decide not to forget. By this strange option we realize the problem of collective conscience passing through the wall of words to touch upon silence.

Five movements for one silence

First movement

Allegro

Luke, Marc.

The scene is empty, no object. It is difficult to define its style. It represents the musical symbol. A person suddenly enters the scene. He holds a newspaper in the one hand and a chair with the other. He drags the chair rapidly.

Luke

I've never thought that this would be possible... *Silence*

*He sits on the chair and looks at the newspaper in surprise.
Another person arrives also dragging a chair. He sits looking towards the opposite of the other person's direction. Now they are back-to-back.*

Marc

On the contrary, I believe that everything is possible...

Luke turns to Marc.

Luke

Have you read the newspaper?

Marc

No!

Luke

Then how is it possible for you to know what I'm talking about?

Marc

I don't know this.

Luke

You are unbearable!

Marc

It's somehow excessive anyway!

Luke

The issue is serious.

Marc

I agree... *Time*. But, does this change anything?

Luke

It is exactly here where the whole problem rests.

Marc

What is the subject of our conversation today?

Luke

A crime that perhaps has never existed!

Marc

What a subject!

Luke

Yet, it is front page....

He shows the newspaper to him.

Marc

This proves nothing... What is it about?

Luke

About genocide... *Silence*

Marc turns abruptly.

Marc

I thought that you were joking.

Luke

The whole world thinks that it is a joke.

Marc

Are you serious?

Luke

Yes. *Silence*

He shows the newspaper to him. Marc reads the article. His face becomes sad.

Marc

They have no conscience at all. *Time*. How can they joke about such an issue?

Luke

Because nowadays, everything is an issue to joke with.

Marc

But, this is not a war crime only; it is a crime against Humanity.

Luke

It does not matter to them; it is only words.

Marc

But, these words hurt memory!

Luke

People who have survived genocide slowly die and with them their memory.

Marc

So, we must take action!

Luke

But how?

Marc

We must remember instead of them.

Luke

This will not be enough!

Marc

Then, we must not forget. *Silence.*

Luke

Yes, that's it*Time*. Only memory can defeat death.

Marc

This is why they are trying to murder our memory.

Luke

Yet, we are not Armenians, neither Cypriots, nor Assyro- Chaldeans, nor Greeks,
nor Jews, nor Kurds, nor....!

Marc

This is not a reason! On the contrary!

Luke

On the contrary?

Marc

Since our memory did not mark our body it has to mark our spirit.

Luke

Can you conceive the effort that this requires?

Marc

The duty of memory is not an effort.. *Time*. We were not there at the moment of the events, but we will be present from now on.

Luke

We are not responsible for the lives of the past, but for the memory of the future!
Silence. But who will believe us?

Marc

Humans who know how to suffer...

Luke

But they are too few!

Marc

It is the principle of resistance.

Luke

You mean that those resisting are always few?

Marc

Yes, they become more only when they succeed.

Luke

And if they fail?

Marc

Usually, we forget them...

Luke

We will need the others.

Marc

We always need the others.

Luke

Will they come?

Marc

They always come!

Luke

But this time, it's different. .

Marc

Then, they will not leave again.

Luke

I can't believe that they are trying to murder memory..

Marc

Yet, it's true! *Time*. And if we don't resist, they will manage..

Luke

What can we do? *Time*. We are only humans...

Marc

It is exactly because we are humans that we are able to resist.

Luke

And what the cost will be?

Marc

Memory has no cost.

Luke

I am afraid of death...

Marc

Oblivion is what we must be afraid of. Death is natural, oblivion is inhuman!

They exit the scene leaving the chairs.

Andante

Anne, John, Luke, Marc, Mathew

On the scene hardly do we see the figures of two persons tied on the chairs. They seem too tired; their heads leaning in a terrible condition towards cold floor. Silence. Suddenly, cold water is thrown against them. They lift their heads abruptly. At the same time a bright light is shed on them.

Anne

Is this the end?

John

No, it is the beginning!

Anne

So, this is never going to end.

John

They want us alive... *Time*.

Anne

What for?

John

If we die, the others will remember us... *Time*. They want us to forget!

Anne

But how to forget genocide?

John

Some have already done so, and others will also do it.

Anne

It is indecent!

John

Decency is not necessary for them to live.

Anne

My God! *She leans her head.*

John

Straighten up, they are looking at us.

Anne

Our executioners do not intimidate me, it's our bodies that I am scared of.

John

They want nothing but our spirit!

Anne

Consent to oblivion... *Silence*

John

As long as we are here, the others will fight for us.

Anne

We are not alone, then?

John

We are always alone, but the others share the same solitude.

Anne

The humans with the broken wings.

John

They are not entirely broken... *Time*

Anne

As long as one of us remains alive, oblivion will not win.

John

No, as long as one of us will not consent to the death of memory.

Darkness covers them.

Anne

John! John!

John

I' m here, beside you.

Anne

Will they hit us again?

John

Yes, but we will resist. *Time*. Above all do not open your mouth...

Thuds and hollow noises are heard. Then the second movement of the seventh symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven. Allegretto (Marcia funebre).

Absolute darkness.

On the edge of the scene. Lights off. Three persons are talking to each other low-voiced.

Mathew

Two of our own have been arrested... *Silence*. Anne and John.

Marc

We have to do everything to set them free.

Luke

Do you know where they are kept?

Mathew

Not yet...

Marc

We must act quickly.

Luke

They are doing what they can... Don't be harsh on them...

Mathew

Tomorrow we will know where they are.

Marc

We have to find them alive.

Luke

They will be alive.

Marc

What do you mean?

Mathew

Luke is right, they will definitely be alive.

Marc

Then, I don't understand...

Luke

Consent... That's all they want.

Marc

But, consent to what? *Time*. Truth is known to all.

Mathew

Known to all and forgotten by most.

Marc

Brainwash...

Luke

Death of memory is their single aim.

Marc

Genocide was not enough for them.

Mathew

No! *Time*. It had to be forgotten.

Luke

None of us will accept it.

Mathew

Then, we, too, will have to be forgotten.

Marc

So, this is their aim. *Time*. Removing any trace of memory.

Mathew

It is only in this way that they will keep invading...

Luke

As if people listen only to executioners.

Marc

It is in this way that victims are trapped. *Time*. We have to find them as soon as possible.

Mathew

This is what we will try to do.

Luke

Give them some time.

Marc

How much time do Anne and John have?

Mathew

They will endure the strike.

Luke

Yes, I m sure of that...

Marc

How many sacrifices are needed so that memory of the peoples live?

Luke

As long as there are military regimes, we will have to struggle.

Mathew

Struggling in general indifference...

Marc

And in social isolation.

Luke

It's the only way to become humans.

Marc

Memory is a piece of humanity in the man.

Scherzo

Anne, John, Luke, Marc, Mathew.

The whole scene takes place in dim light. The movements are vivid. They transcend words. The persons are running everywhere. They are heading towards those tied on the chairs.

Mathew

Here they are!

Marc

Quick! Quick!

Luke

Anne! John!

A hollow sound is heard.

Mathew

In what a condition they have brought them to!

Marc

Let's untie them!

They bustle around them

Luke

I believe they are alright.

They lift them slowly.

Mathew

Lift them up immediately. *Time*. We must go!

The three of them support the other two and walk in difficulty.

John

Let her!

Anne

John!

Luke

It's us! Don't be afraid of anything.

Mathew

I m here with Luke and Marc.

John

Mathew, is that you?

Mathew

Yes, my friend.

John

Take care of Anne...

Luke and Marc hold her even tighter.

Anne

John! John!

John

It's our own, Anne, don't be afraid of anything anymore.

Anne

Don't leave me alone...

Luke

Anne, everything is alright now. *Time*. You are free!

Anne

Free?

Marc

Yes, free!

Anne

John, don't believe it, it's one more trap.

John

No, no... *Time*. Come into my arms, Anne.

Anne

What else will they do to us?

John

Nothing now. Nothing will happen to us now.

Marc

We must go.

John

But, she can't.

Luke

What?

John

She can't recognize you, the poor girl.

Anne

John?

John

Here I am!

Anne

Stay with me. *Time*. Don't leave me alone.

The scene is shed with light and we are in a house. Anne is surrounded by her friends. Yet, she seems not able to recognize them.

Marc

I don't know what to do...

Luke

She seems to have absolutely lost her memory...

John

They used to hit us with clubs day and night. *Time*. Had you delayed...*Silence*. I would be in the same condition.

Mathew

You have suffered too much...

John

But she didn't confess anything! That's why they brought her into this condition.

Luke

How can they be so villainous!

Marc

They have committed genocide; they are capable of anything.

Mathew

Then how to resist them?

John

The way matters less, what is essential is resisting.

Luke

This is not enough! *Time*. Look at Anne. She has suffered too much. She can't recognize us anymore.

John

We will teach her history again.

Marc

But how?

John

Each one of us will say to her one chapter every day.

Luke

You are not conscious.

John

Then, we will do it at nights.

Mathew

You are completely crazy.

Marc

No, we resist and we will help her by any means possible.

Luke

You are right! *Time*. We will rewrite history for her sake. She will stay with us.

Mathew

Then we will start from today.

Marc

In this way, we will retrieve the tradition of the peoples who have suffered.

Luke

We will have to ascend time.

Marc

Time is with us.

John

As long as we don't forget.

Mathew

So, each one of us will have to write down all that he knows. *Time*. Thus she will have a complete view of our history.

Anne

John, you are here!

John is going near her.

John

Yes, Anne. I will always be here.

Anne

Talk to me...

John nods to the others who get up.

John

I'm accompanying our friends who are leaving.

Anne

Don't leave me.

He holds her hand.

John

So, I'll start first.

He is talking to her low-voiced, while the other persons exit the scene.

Variazione

Anne, John, Luke, Marc, Mathew

We see the same persons again several weeks after the horrific events. They are even more bound by their common struggle. From now on they constitute the fingers of the same hand not ceasing writing history so that the substance is not lost. Each one of them sits in front of a table illuminated by a candle. The space gives the sense of a hidden library. One of the persons lifts his head.

Luke

Before starting rewriting the last century's history, I hadn't realized...

Anne

What was that you hadn't realized?

Luke

The importance of the idea of genocide.

John

It's not your fault! *Time*. Even the French language hadn't discovered this word not earlier than 1944, as if it hadn't existed before.

Mathew

Still, much earlier than 1944, the century was wounded by genocide.

Marc

But, who recalls 1915?

Luke

I also think that there was a notion even worse than the one of genocide...*Silence*

John

How is this possible?

Anne

Oblivion?

Luke

Yes, oblivion, but not only...

Mathew

Recognition...*Time*. Or rather non recognition.

Luke

Yes, that's the idea. Non recognition of genocide is worse than genocide itself!

John

I don't understand the reasoning of yours.

Luke

In the phrase "methodical disaster" characterizing genocide, the word methodical is the worst one.

Mathew

Now I get what Luke means. *Time*. Justice itself makes a distinction between passionate crimes and the premeditated ones.

Luke

These two types are differentiated precisely by the method. And non recognition is the continuation of this method.

John

By negating memory, they murder the dead.

Anne

Having tortured them is not enough for them; they also want them to die in oblivion.

Mathew

Historical facts may explain the appearance of genocide, but it is only immorality which may characterize the non recognition

John

Genocide is a wound for Humanity, whereas the non recognition is the alienation of the human.

Luke

Certain people don't take a position, because they were not present when the events took place; without taking into account, however, that their neutrality does not serve anyone but the executioners.

Mathew

In genocide I see barbarity; while it is in the non recognition where its horror rests.

Anne

In recognition, there are much more beyond the duty of memory. There is the resurrection of a people.

Marc

I agree with these thoughts, but we must turn them into actions.

John

That's why we are writing history.

Luke

However, we also ought to write the history of the future. *Time*. If we want genocides to belong to the past, we must deal with their recognition.

Marc

Our enemies are not the executioners who are dead; but those continuing their work through the non recognition.

Mathew

And how to convince the one who does not know!

Luke

To win with him, we must be born with him.

John

For certain, writing the declaration on human rights has no meaning, even though it is necessary.

Anne

Through genocide, the struggle appeals to Humanity.

Luke

Humanity has also the right to exist.

Marc

As every free man.

Mathew

We must struggle against any country, any system oppressing human rights and does not recognize cases of genocide.

John

We must struggle above all against the countries which have committed genocides and do not recognize them, because they constitute examples of cowardice.

Mathew

Except that we have to be prudent.

Anne

How do you dare talking about prudency when this has to do with genocide?

Mathew

It's not what I meant. I was just thinking of you both, you and John.

Anne

It's not us the ones that you must think of, but the others who couldn't defend themselves, the others who died because they existed, the others who are not alive but in our memory.

John

This is the only that we have to think about.

Marc

I know a lady who has survived genocide and could help us.

Mathew

We have to meet her as soon as possible.

Marc

Then we must go and see her at her home. She can't move anymore. Torture has detained her on her chair.

Anne

We need her. Let's go!

They blow out their candles and leave.

Finale

Anne, John, Luke, Marc, Mathew, The silent figure and Sophia

In a small house, a room is illuminated by a sweet light. There, we see a shadow accompanied by Silence. A sound of a bell is heard.

Sophia

It's them!

The silent figure withdraws and comes back with the group.

Marc

We didn't wish to bother you, but we had to see you.

Sophia

You did well, my children.

Marc

We want you to help us.

Sophia, Showing her chair

It's been long time that I can't help anyone any longer.

The silent figure reaches out the hand touches Sophia on the shoulder and she lets a smile.

Without the support of the silence, I wouldn't exist.

Marc

Don't say that... *Time*. Especially now...

Sophia

Why now?

John

Because we have a struggle to bring to an end.

Sophia

A struggle?

Luke

To create a work... *Silence*

Sophia

My life ends.

Anne

But your work must be saved.

Sophia

I am the survivor of a non-recognized case of genocide. *Time*. My work does not exist.

Mathew

No, it's not true!

Sophia

Yet, I sink in oblivion and general indifference. While the others negotiate on the future of our children with the executioners of the past.

Marc

This is why we are here!

Sophia

You arrived too late, my children.

Marc

Too late?

Sophia

All the rest is dead. *Time*. I am the last of the survivors. After me nobody will be able to accuse them.

Luke

We will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

Sophia

Without documents, they will not be able to...

Mathew

But you are our document! It is in you that memory of genocide lives.

Sophia

It lives, like a note in a requiem.

Anne not being able to hold herself any longer embraces Sophia, while John is going close to her.

John

If only we could come earlier...

Sophia

You must live, my children. Many people did not know of anything but death.

Marc

However, now it's about the invasion of oblivion.

Sophia *Letting a short cry.*

No! Oblivion will not pass!

Marc

Then, I am begging you, help us!

Sophia

What shall I do?

Luke

Narration of every fact.

Sophia

You ask me to experience death again... *Silence.*

The silent figure bows to whisper a word in her ear. The rest are waiting for her reaction.

I will do it under one condition.

Mathew

We will do whatever you want.

Sophia

I want you to continue this struggle after my death. *Silence.* From now on you will be my memory.

Anne

You are our humaneness.

Sophia

When do you want us to start?

John

As soon as possible.

Sophia

Then let's start today.

She nods to the silent figure which is exiting the scene right away.

Silence.

Nobody dares to intervene. They are all waiting for her return.

Silence.

The silent figure returns wrapped in a huge black sheet. Hardly does he drag it. They are all raised. He continues walking calmly without paying attention to them. He finishes by having covered the whole scene with this black sheet.

Sophia

In this sheet all the names of the victims of genocide are written. The only one missing is mine. Time. Take it; from now on it is yours. What I am asking from you is not to forget us, because what we are is this black sheet and only this.

Each in turn lifts the black sheet. The silent figure is walking and exiting the scene. He walks among the audience. The whole group follows him trying hardly to hold their tears. They exit the scene leaving Sophia alone.

My God, now that I've done my duty, take me with you.

She leans her head and closes her eyes. The silent figure accompanied by the group returns and they lay her on the floor, by covering her with the black sheet. They are all on their knees.

Shadow.

Darkness.

Black.

