

Ana Woolf

Borders, Constrictions and Limits

*I discovered in that precise
moment what I truly
possessed: the training. In
whatever room or country,
whether I spoke the language
or not, whether
it was hot or cold,
whether I was accompanied
or alone, I possessed
a value, a wealth, as an
actress and human being,
with which I could defend
myself in any kind
of sad or painful
circumstance.*

My name is Ana María Zeigner, Argentine, 37 years old. I am the daughter of Isaac Zeigner (Argentina) and of Beatriz Weinschelbaum (Argentina), both with Russian parents. I am an actress. My name is Ana Woolf. I am Argentine. I am not an Argentinian actress. I don't usually work in my country. I don't generally act in my language. I don't live for more than a month per year in Argentina. I usually live in a theatre space; I live thanks to that theatre space. And when I am not there, inside, I dream of it.

Today I will not go to the theatre. Today I will not train my body or my voice. If I want to continue choosing to enter that theatre space with people I chose to work with, today I have to leave my practice and pass over to the 'other side'. Is this passage also a practice?

Marseille, 07.55 a.m., a sunny autumn morning: to go running would be good for my spirit today. I am holding on to a packet of papers, photocopies, contracts, passport photographs, birth certificates... - and to the voice of a friend who says, "don't worry, it will be alright". My stomach is upside down, but not with the same nervousness as when I am about to go on stage, which I prefer.

In a language that is not my own, I make enquiries at the porthole of a dismal government office, and then at another, and another. Where should I go? To which door? I remember the theatre exercise of the door that I have done so many times: you open the door and enter. And my teacher's voice: "Where are you going? Why did you make those two steps to the left?" The entrance: one of the most difficult exercises for an actor. Never enter without knowing where to go - I also hear myself say to my pupils.

Finally, on a door I see "Asylum". No, that is not me. At another door I see hundreds of people pushing to reach an entrance where it seems we will receive a number that gives us the right to be assisted. I realise that I am the only white among all these people, mostly Arabs and Africans, refugees from stories of wars, dictatorships and deserts I don't know of. I want to cry. I think of my feet and

of the energy centre that I work on every day, of my training in the other space. I breathe. I tell myself, "I have to do it" and I begin to push as well.

I have a paper in my hand. In small black letters under the outlined image of a woman's face - representing Freedom and France I am told - is written:

Liberté – Egalité - Fraternité
Freedom-Equality-Fraternity

République Française
French Republic

Préfecture des Bouches-du-Rhône
Bouches-du-Rhône Police Headquarters

Bienvenue dans le service
ETRANGER

Welcome to the service for
FOREIGNERS

Vous serez appelé(e) sous le numéro: 820
You will be called by the number: 820

Nous sommes le 06/10/2005
Il est 08:46 heures
It is the 6th of October 2005
at 08.46 a.m.

Il y a 203 personnes devant vous
There are 203 people before you

I am sitting on the floor, next to children who cry, others who laugh, old people who can't even walk, pregnant women, and adults who don't know how to read and who gather to listen to a document being read out loud. I have 203 people ahead of me and about 400 behind. I go through ten feelings a minute: impotence, tears, strength, anguish, desolation, optimism, anger, fury, rage, culpability for what I see. I should

make something theatrical here - I think - ten minutes a week at least, for these people who wait for hours and hours in an atmosphere of inanimate papers, of living dead bureaucrats. I also want to run away, to leave everything and go home (home means Buenos Aires for me). No, I won't gain anything; I stay and say to myself the sentence that helps me in moments of desperation: this day will finish at some point.

Compared to what I am seeing, my story is insignificant: I want a work visa for a cultural artistic profession in order to remain in the European Community and make theatre with the people I love, need, those I met and don't want to lose. I only want to do my work, and my work is theatre. There are no borders; no physical, linguistic, social or cultural barriers. I don't need papers to enter a theatre space and train, to pass from one reality to the other. However papers are needed when I leave the space of my daily practice.

There is not much more to say: this is the point I have reached after years of practice. The same as Zamir, the Senegalese with whom I talked in the immigration office, who escaped from his village five years ago, who lost his mother and sister on the way, who crossed part of the desert running and waited for legal entrance to southern Spain for a year and a half. He and I - we meet in the same place, the same day, at the same time; each of us carrying destiny on his or her back, as Lorca says. His destiny is not comparable with mine, but we ask for the same thing: a right to work. What is practice amid all these stories? I realise I am interested in the "why" of a practice and not in the "how".

THE BAR

Nobody - at the theatre school or among my teachers - taught me to fill in papers and

forms in order to request a visa, money, or to have a political strategy in order to develop a project. But without this knowledge I cannot make the theatre I have chosen. Theatre is an obsession for me; if don't practise it, it poisons me and makes me sick. It is a particular kind of artistic life: a physical and vocal training luxuriously practised every day; the creation of performances with people whom I admire and consider my masters; a private and personal production that only imposes the conditions of selling the artistic product to recover the money invested and to be able to survive in expensive Europe; the free choice of themes that I need to speak about. It is a privileged life that I pay for with loneliness.

The process of building my theatre practice was a journey made trying to solve something I wasn't satisfied with (in my body and voice, in my ignorance), that I could not resolve or learn alone. I passed through several schools. The foundation was Stanislavski - the Master - with his books; Julio Baccaro was the first teacher who helped me take my first steps on stage in Buenos Aires.

I remember that during classes Julio insisted on us paying attention to the smallest details and that he searched obsessively for the reason for each action, of each word of a written text. He never spoke to me in theoretical terms, but always made practical and logical observations. I remember his happiness when he discovered why the author had inserted a comma or a sudden and, at first sight, incomprehensible change of feeling. Julio taught me to look beyond the spoken and written words, to search for their deepest meaning, their most hidden image, just as a biologist obstinately seeks beyond what the microscope shows. He taught me to build an image where it seemed that there was nothing, through years of systematic hard work. We began with almost

childish games: I played a lecturer of absurd topics, a doctor, a lawyer, a guerrilla fighter, a spinster, a nun, a thief... We had to believe we were what we were trying to be by convincing our fellow student spectators even of the most absurd things. It was this: to make the absurd so real and strong that reality itself trembled. It was, after all, a question of faith.

We did free improvisation exercises where Julio gave us a theme in pairs and we had twenty minutes to prepare: you arrive home to discover that your husband stole the money you had saved coin by coin to finish paying for the house and used it to gamble on horses; he arrives in five minutes. The exercises got more and more complex until we started working with texts by Argentine playwrights and then Chekov, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Pinter, Strindberg, Williams...

I remember the wonderful and difficult exercise of opening a letter that could bring good or bad news. This was a metaphor for all that would come later as a way of approaching a scene. Julio always spoke to us of the achievements as the steps of a ladder: one has to go up one step at a time, without jumping any of them, to arrive at the top. A million tiny actions were hidden before reaching the final reaction. He would bombard us with questions, trying to understand; he didn't search for realism in the answers, but for the logic in the subtle plot of thoughts embodied in the actions that we had created, for the richness of detail of the character's life. Were you expecting the letter or not? This would obviously change the way of entering the house. Do I enter and look if it has arrived? Or, am I expecting it, but see it only after putting everything down? From where and how do I arrive? Is it raining outside? Was work hard today? And when I see the letter on the floor, do I want to open it or not? Or no, but yes? This was

the best option according to Julio because it generated the famous tension of opposition. And more: do I throw it away without reading it? Do I burn it without leaving a trace? Keep it for later? Do I open it now, slowly or quickly? Do I do everything once and for all? Or slowly trying not to tear the envelope? More and more questions opened up before my eyes a wonderful world of infinite possibilities. The resolution, or rather the reaction, didn't matter but the process of infinite transformations and possible transitions was important. I still play this game.

But the best lessons happened at the bar. After class, we went there until the early hours of the morning and Julio would tell us stories of Argentinean theatre, of old actors, revealing anecdotes that cannot be found in theatre history books, or how he had solved technically a scene in the last play he was directing with very fashionable actors. At the bar, I learned to see the most important part of the body of a human being when wanting to understand his or her story: the back. While talking casually, Julio would stop suddenly and, changing his tone of voice, he would whisper subtly: "Look at that woman's back"; and we would start reading/inventing her story.

I also learned to take care when my colleagues were up at the front: not to lie on the floor, talk or laugh while they worked. Once, while Julio was correcting a scene, he warned me twice not to speak. The third time, he turned around and without raising his voice he asked me to leave, to calm down and come back for the next class. My world and my dignity fell to the floor. I left very offended, promising myself never to return. I spent two days on the telephone with my colleagues who told me to come back and not to be so stupid. In the end I returned. I knew then I had chosen my teacher and that my work with him had a value I would defend.

I also learned to respect the *sine qua non* rule which made many people leave the school: while studying one could not begin to work as an actor. Each time one of the students asked why, Julio said: "If a medicine student has to wait years to face the first patient, why do we want to go on stage after a couple of classes? Because there is no risk of death? There is! Because you don't see the corpse? It will appear anyway."

I learned to think in practical terms: we watched our colleagues' work and, when Julio asked us, we had to express our opinion and be critical. No "I liked it" or "I didn't like it" but "this doesn't work because..." or "this works for me because..." That responsibility developed in me a sense of observation based on constant questions and answers, which allowed me years later to create and elaborate my own material as an actress independent of the presence of a director.

I stayed with Julio for ten years, as his assistant in the classes and then as a teacher in the school we founded together. Every time we meet, we do so at a bar, watching people's backs.

DAILY PRACTICE

My second period of research was physical. I didn't know what I was looking for concretely, only that I had more energy than I could control and didn't know what to do with it. I felt that I didn't manage to direct my body, but rather that I was driven by my emotions, which often resulted in me losing my voice or falling over the stage props. Through what in the 1980s in Buenos Aires was called dance-theatre, I discovered mime, contact improvisation, corporal expression, tango, milonga, contemporary dance, Martha Graham, plastic composition and the marvel of speaking with the body instead of with words.

Later I met Mónica Viñao, the first person to teach me Tadashi Suzuki's tech-

nique, which placed me forever on my feet, giving me the structural, physical control I was looking for and the possibility of working with my whole energy without being afraid of not being able to stop or of breaking something. I learned a technique that protected me from myself and my need for expression in general, that gave me order in my work, a sequence I could repeat each time, and the realisation that my energy varies and has to be rediscovered every day. This technique also gave me the sense of physical resistance on stage and a base for my profession: now, every day, I could enter the empty room and, like a pianist or dancer, I had exercises to do, despite tiredness or lack of motivation. I don't ask myself if I want to or not, it is how it is; this is my daily prayer. This daily practice, gave me the meaning of the word "actress": I work whether I am performing or not, if I go to the theatre or to the immigration office, when I read and search for material for possible performances, when I think of new exercises for my new and old students, when I elaborate projects, when I go to museums, when I sit at a bar watching people's backs.

THE ACTION: SEEDS OF MEMORY

It is 1997, November: my father dies. I leave the theatre group I have been working with for several years. I use my savings to buy an airplane ticket to Denmark. I leave my country for the first time to go to Europe, to Transit, the festival organised by Julia Varley, who by then had already become my teacher. Throughout the festival I felt admiration and fascination, but also *shpilkes in the tujes* as my grandmother said, sitting the whole time while listening to previous generations of women speak of Theatre, Women and Politics, and seeing them perform. I needed to participate actively, to somehow present myself and the political reality of my country.

One afternoon Julia said to me: "Tomorrow at three o'clock, there is time, you have five minutes to do something." I went white. "I don't have anything!" "It doesn't matter, do something!" Julia said imperiously. "But I don't have anything, seriously." "Invent!" And she left, smiling. What emptiness! I knew from my training that the biggest void suddenly produces an unexpected image: I discovered in that precise moment what I truly possessed: the training. In whatever room or country, whether I spoke the language or not, whether it was hot or cold, whether I was accompanied or alone, I possessed a value, a wealth, as an actress and human being, with which I could defend myself in any kind of sad or painful circumstance. I could enter an empty room and not get lost in the chaos of thousands of possibilities. I had the one, two, three, the beginning, middle and end of a specific action that helped me.

I presented an exercise from my training, adding to it an image that expressed my anger at the ignorance of the history of my continent: I wore a white scarf like the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, while stamping the floor with a Suzuki march. This exercise - pure technique - and image - pure emotional memory in movement - became the heart of the performance *Seeds of Memory*, on the topic of the *desaparecidos* in Argentina, directed by Julia Varley. It brought together Theatre, Women and Politics with Theatre, Women and Practice for me.

The work on *Seeds of Memory* was hard and difficult. It contained my passage to what I would call artistic maturity. If there is anything that I remember it is crying, crying and crying. The winter in Denmark, coming from Buenos Aires, was terrible: rain every day, cold and sickening grey, black nights and rain again. I missed my father, impossible to recover, and my mother, who

had remained at home alone. I talked with her on the telephone and her optimism and willpower made me feel even worse. I wanted and needed to make *Seeds of Memory* before my Mother of Plaza de Mayo, who was already eighty-one, died. I trusted Julia, but I had lost my whole base and references. The working space and my training had become my only refuge. The only thing I wanted was to go quickly to the room and there, in solitude, begin to fly, to dive into tiring physical work to escape my situation, submerging myself in imaginary worlds where I could talk to the people I needed to have close to me; without limits or borders.

One of the first things Julia worked on with me was to remove all desire to express, which is to say my tendency to have an exaggerated 'Latin' temperament. I wanted to express and the more I did so the more I exaggerated and became inexpressive. I felt lost without my expressiveness, in my face for example. I thought that one could no longer see what was happening inside - and a lot was going on there. Julia reduced everything to intentions translated into actions. "Don't worry, do" (in Julia's amusing Spanish); it was the same concept I remembered Julio saying in other words: "be occupied, not preoccupied". Julia 'condemned' me practically to a series of physical actions that I had to repeat identically one after the other, again and again. Later she added music to which my actions should adapt. Certain musical phrases were in dialogue with my actions, so I could not waste time expressing an action without being late in accompanying the following musical phrase and then everything would fall apart. This cost weeks and weeks of confinement doing one, two, three; studying each fragment with the body and music. At times it worked, at times not, and I couldn't understand why. The improvisations and I were wobbly: I had never done an improvisa-

tion consciously focusing my attention only on the physical actions, and having to repeat them in the same way as well. Up until that moment I had been a text actress, mostly of classical texts.

Julia asked me to do physical improvisations like "The moon appears among the boats in the port of Buenos Aires". And she asked me to use car tyres. We were in Holstebro: I searched the Odin, but I didn't find any tyres. I only had until the next day to get hold of them and prepare the scene. So I asked other people at the theatre, who in turn were very busy. It was really hard. Rina Skeel, another Argentine in Denmark, gave me the tip: I could borrow them not far from the Odin. I went. They didn't speak much English and at that time neither did I. There, before my eyes, were the tyres! But I don't drive and I had gone by bicycle. Luckily Danish people are generally nice and friendly; and perhaps because he saw my frightened face, or because I promised not to dirty them and that I would return them the next day, or because I said I would pay him, he gave me a wheelbarrow, I put my tyres in it and walked happily, in the rain, back to the Odin. I made the improvisation. When I had finished Julia said: "Do it again". Oh dear! I had not thought about that. I was happy, with my finished improvisation, thinking I had expressed the sad feelings of the moon that had to leave, pushed away by the rising sun, and the tensions between them, the passing from light to the clarity of dawn and a final calmness. My improvisation had finished there. And now I had to repeat it. I tried following my physical memory, my internal images: the port, the moon departing, the sun appearing, the struggle... but although my images didn't change my physical actions did. Now I understand that in fact I could not call what I was doing physical actions. It was a kind of dance of movements, some of which

managed through the force of the images to become actions. Of course Julia stopped me as soon as I had started and said: "You were more bent to the right. The movement was not so big the first time. Try to recover it." My memory boiled. I was coming to terms with a new work process. Even without understanding consciously, my body desperately tried to recover what I had done beyond the control of my will. I had selected the image, my body had concretised it and now we could not agree on how to recover it. My body and mind had to re-establish a dialogue. It was not enough to observe and respect the internal actions minutely, the body needed to do as in the training, but now at the level of creating actor's material. One, two three: I began working in fragments, a step at a time and sometimes not even that. I repeated the beginning of an action again before continuing. I repeated even if I could not understand why I had to do it exactly as I had made it the previous time and as Julia had fixed it. And the life of the actions? The spontaneity? The surprise of the moment? If everything was fixed where were the feelings? Julia didn't worry about answering these questions. She told me not to worry and work: one action at a time, calmly and patiently. Her obsession was to transform all my raw, 'Latin', wild material in a dance of repeatable and recoverable actions which could be moulded according to rhythm, space, time, size, but fundamentally taking care of their heart.

Years later, in a talk after a performance of *Seeds of Memory* in Matanzas, Cuba, Julia said that working with me what she had tried to achieve was that "Ana did not lie; that her actions were true". This was a kind of enlightenment for me: it was not to do with the truth and expression of my feelings, but of my actions. I understood that when I perform pure Suzuki technique the strong physical structure around the text

and the outer image prevented me from falling into the violence of my beloved expressivity. The body is in such difficulty that it cannot be preoccupied by and occupied with expressing feelings; its main and only occupation is to try not to fall, to sustain the position it has been condemned to. Sisyphus and his stone: the mechanism was the same here. Hold onto your actions, they will be your refuge and the best defence against self-centredness; *they* are at the centre, not me.

My inability to repeat was polished during the rehearsals and performances. The use of objects also helped me to move the focus of my attention away from me. *Seeds of Memory* is full of small props that appear and invade the space 'magically' - as Julia wanted - disastrously in the beginning as everything fell from my hands. I had never worked with so many objects and I felt clumsy when manipulating them. The moment before, while still doing the preceding action, I anticipated getting them in my mind. Everything was noisy and the dance was full of breaks: when would the magic appear?

THE BLACK PLASTIC BAG

The scene with the black plastic bag was the metaphor of a nightmare.

There is a garbage bag inside two tyres lying flat on the floor. I am a girl who twirls and plays with a white cloth that becomes a rabbit. I throw the rabbit into the air, and the second time it ought to fall into the round hole of the tyres. I don't always manage this. I have to stop and look for my white rabbit/cloth which has disappeared into the darkness of the unknown. Without interrupting the flow, I take two steps, stop, lift my dress, two more steps, stop, say "Mummy?", another step taking off my shoes, advance on tiptoe looking at the black hole, kneel by the tyres, saying "Mummy, where are you?", lower myself slowly as if looking

for somebody; and put my head in the tyres. My right hand disappears taking hold of the tip of the plastic bag that I had placed there before the performance in such a way as to be able to get hold of it, on the first attempt, when I need to. I pull the plastic bag slowly over my head. My left hand grabs a small pair of shoes from behind a panel, while with my right hand I continue covering myself with the plastic bag. Without being seen, my left hand puts the small shoes in my mouth. My left and right hands cross inside the plastic bag and together they pull it down so that it hides half of my body. My right hand takes the back of the plastic, my left hand removes the small shoes from my mouth in order to be able to speak a text. I walk five steps forward...

Is this scene a torture? Yes! And this is exactly what we are speaking about in the performance. This is what is brilliant: torture is not shown - impossible because theatre is always fiction and reality only exists through an equivalent, through its being transformed in metaphor. The audience feels the "torture effect" through this sequence of actions arduously put together. And feelings? They are there and much more than I could ever foresee. I am truly closed in, I lack air inside the bag, I want to get out but I still cannot, I must stay inside struggling to breathe, and do my job. I sweat, I break the corner of the plastic bag and my free hand feels the fresh temperature outside, the other hand lets go of the small shoes that fall to the ground. I walk on my knees, I implore this to end, and yet there is still one more minute. But when it ends, when I finally tear the bag to pieces using my hands and head, what a liberation! And then all the constriction of the body and of the voice, also forced to follow a fixed musicality, are liberated without structure with the only order that Julia gave me: now let the horses loose.

In order to make this scene Julia

came on stage directly herself for the first time. Julia worked as an actress manoeuvring the plastic bag, finding on her own body the sequence that would not interrupt the flow. I understood then something that I had often seen in my fellow students in class: exaggeration; something that made a noise. Previously I couldn't understand why this did not work even when my colleagues were sincerely expressing their feelings. Theatre is not a world of liberation of energy, of free expression; it is a world of the most rigorous constrictions; of infinite respect for the rules and chosen actions. The magic of the performance, of the actor and director lies hidden in the creation of this world. This is practice: my training has the same rules, bound to music that marks the rhythm of an exercise, maintained on the spot by an immobile figure until the beat of a stick given by the teacher allows me to go back to my first position, never resting.

I am at the premiere of *Seeds of Memory* in Mar del Plata, Argentina. For the first time the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo will be there. It is an old Italian stage theatre. I am standing waiting for the audience, with a half smile on my lips. I can see Julia in the distance at the entrance. I am anxious, unable to control myself. Suddenly I see Julia turning towards me with big frightened eyes. She is letting someone in: one at a time seven elderly women enter, with curved backs, and as they enter one at a time they open their handbags and take out a white handkerchief. One at a time they repeat the gesture I know so well, which I also make several times in *Seeds of Memory*, only here it is for real (oh theatre!): they put their handkerchieves on their head. They all sit in the fifth row and remain there firm and present, during the whole presentation of my story. When I saw them come in my legs began to tremble, I felt my dress shaking. Nothing could help me out of that state of

fear that I cannot define: they and I were there together, they with their lived history, me with a story to give life to. I will always remember this moment, at the beginning of the performance, a time of emptiness, of waiting, when technique is useless.

I am in Copenhagen and, as often, I am very late in preparing my set. Julia cleans the stage where I will perform *Seeds of Memory*; in Buenos Aires she irons my dress and the cloth of my panels, in New Zealand she searches for the bread for the performance...

Did I learn a technique? I learned that authority is built with facts. The facts - their coherence, how they are embodied, looked at, done - move me and stay in my memory; basically, they are whatever I repeat once again.

TEACHING

Somebody told me: "Assimilate all you can until you are thirty, then comes the time of synthesis and sowing, and after forty perhaps the crop." Hunger and the shame of not knowing push me on: I keep on studying and trying to remain close to people I consider valuable to squeeze as much as possible out of them and make it my own. This is how the women of Magdalena opened a new horizon of research for me and became important gender and artistic quality references. This is why I followed Julia Varley to Denmark, why I went to Norway to meet Geddy Aniksdal and her theatre family the Grenland Friteater, to Wales to work with Jill Greenhalgh, and to Marseille where Brigitte Cirila works with her *Voix Polyphoniques*. Thanks to what I carried with me from Julio, the Suzuki technique, Julia, the principles of Theatre Anthropology which I learned mainly in the sessions of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), and from observing the bodies of my students, I was able to create a

system of training that I consider a synthesis of all I have been through.

This is my challenge: to find a synthesis of practices that have improved me as an artist and human being. Once the principle is learned, after years of work the transformation, adaptation and re-elaboration comes and is as important for me as the transmission. Observation while teaching professionals and amateurs has allowed me to see that I didn't always manage to obtain the same reaction in the body of others as in my own. Searching for what was lacking I created a series of exercises combining all the techniques I had learned with Latin American rhythms. When I teach I insist on grounded feet, on the belly full of air working in constant opposition to the breathing that flows calmly in and out, on the spine with wide shoulder blades, open beneath the breastbone, on a peripheral view, on expanding the attention and addressing the energy not to a single point, but in all directions. I see how the bodies and spines change little by little with disciplined and repetitive work.

They often ask me if I train every day. I answer yes, although sometimes I cannot enter the theatre space, but I still think of lowering my breathing to the energy centre below the navel, of opening my eyes a little wider, of making my prayer... After so many years, this is also a way for me to train - for life, not theatre.

When I was younger I suffered if I could not practise every day. Travelling I learned to find or invent rooms in the most unusual places; I have images of myself running in Brazil, Holstebro, Amsterdam, Córdoba, Belgrade, Copenhagen, Buenos Aires, Ayacucho; I see myself in Villa Pamphili, a park in Rome, barefoot, trying to nail my feet to the ground while doing vocal exercises because Julia had said that my voice needed to develop roots and to widen;

I see myself in a parking lot in Cairo before performing, warming up to the sound of my tape-recorder, amid the chaos of the passing cars. Bathrooms of official theatres, apartments, hotel rooms: the training reduces or expands according to the space. I always find a place to establish the necessary dialogue between my daily sleepy me and the other me with whom I would like to live most of the time, an alert and present me; ready to confront the other reality of television, newspapers, massacres, political demonstrations, strikes, war, bombs and immigration offices.

I have had teachers with whom I learned a theatre technique and others who have passed on to me a practice based on a way of looking that transcended the stage, that used theatre as an excuse for analysing, studying, discerning the other world that doesn't finish when the curtain falls. They helped me understand that reality has other facets; they gave me another point of view, which has been fundamental for me to make theatre.

Perhaps this is theatre practice: the act of honouring and of maintaining alive the memory of our teachers through the exercise of our craft, even if we sometimes pass to that other side, to the reality of the immigration office.

Translated from Spanish by Julia Varley

ANA WOOLF (Argentina/France) is a teacher, actress and director. As a teacher she has worked in Buenos Aires for around ten years in a private theatre institute directed by Julio Baccaro. Ana is co-founder of Magdalena 2nd Generation (Latin American Women Network in Contemporary Arts) which organises festivals, meetings and the publication of a newsletter. Ana is also an active member of a network of women related to missing people and working in human rights associations based in Belgium. Ana collaborates with Teatret Om and Odin Teatret in Denmark and with Voix Polyphoniques in France. At the same time as touring *Seeds of Memory*, Ana is currently rehearsing a new performance directed by Julia Varley.