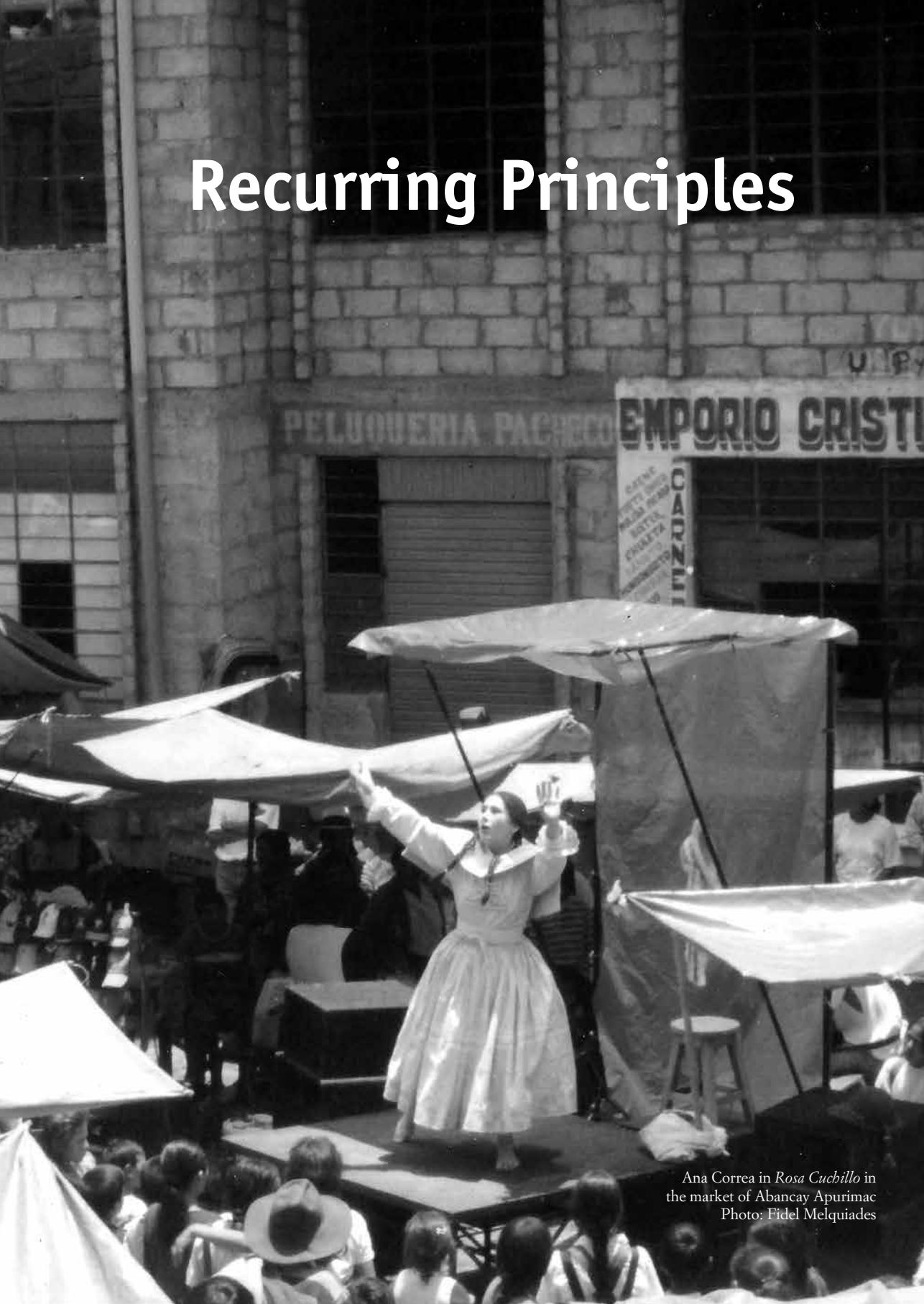


Recurring Principles



Ana Correa in *Rosa Cuchillo* in
the market of Abancay Apurímac
Photo: Fidel Melquiades

Eugenio Barba

The Two Lungs of the Actor

Introduction to Ana Correa's work demonstration

Abstract: *Eugenio Barba introduces Ana Correa's creative process for the performance Rosa Cuchillo. El desmontaje de Rosa Cuchillo was created by the actress and director Ana Correa, member of the Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, founded in 1971. Reflecting on Correa's creative process, Barba stresses the importance of the "two lungs" of the actor: on one side body/mind knowledge, which comes from training and the objective demands of the craft, and on the other, the actor's personal mythology, her political and cultural beliefs as well as her commitment to the community s/he belongs to.*

Keywords: *Ana Correa, Yuyachkani, Peru, Principles*

As an actress I had to translate words into actions. I had to find the equivalence in my body to incarnate the worlds that the novel *Rosa Cuchillo* had revealed to me. And that is why I convoke all the arts and cultures that I have accumulated in my work from my physical and vocal training.

Ana Correa

The expressive range of an embodied technique seems infinite. Impulses and changes in tension seem to be traversed by the speed of thought, and the muscles of the body extending and flexing in a variety of shades reveal the rhythm of the muscles of the imagination.

The variations in the pressure of a guitarist's fingers, the finger beats of an Indian tabla player (one hand pressing on the drum changing the skin tension, and the other hitting the taut leather and making it sing in a wealth of vibrations) become *thought-action* that acts on the nervous system, mind and memory of those who see and hear.

The dancing feet of a soccer player, and the fantasy of *sats* - of impulses - of a handball player who, hovering in the air, manages to surprise opponents who jump in front of him/her in an attempt to create a barrier to the shot that will become a goal; a carpenter's way of planing, the hammer blows of the blacksmith who forges a glowing piece of iron, the rhythmic accuracy of the mason marrying one brick to another with a quantity of cement weighed by his hand, the powerful behaviour of an actor/dancer who intensifies the life of the stage reality: all this is technique learned through a long apprenticeship. It is know-how guided by experience and principles, operational dictates and practical precepts. They are *methods*, ways of proceeding that lead towards the effectiveness of an intention.



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The path to embodied knowledge is a meandering that begins as a contradiction. The first steps of children in classical ballet take place in stillness, statues that learn five different ways of standing, apparently static, but discovering new dynamisms thanks to *principles* that intensify their presence. In India, children learning kathakali and other dance/theatre forms are crouched on the ground as they engage their torso, arms and fingers in a subtle dynamic web of twisting and tension. The master-mason builds the cathedral that will soar towards the sky, but he begins by digging the foundations deep into the earth.

But every incorporated know-how and every way of thinking with the entirety of the body/mind are mute without an inner vision that belongs to the individual (*in-divisus*, not divided). This vision can be called professional ethics, personal mythology or metaphysics, a dimension beyond the physical. It is an inner world of values, fantasies, wounds, longings and ambitions that are often ridiculous or incomprehensible to common sense: a vast mental and spiritual macrocosm rooted in a vision of the world and of history, of the past and of actuality, reaching out towards a purpose that words formulate sometimes in a naive and meaningless way for the listener. Once, a young actor whose tenacity and results I admired confessed to me: I try to act so that horses too can understand me.

The words of the Peruvian actress Ana Correa about her creation process clearly witness the integration of the two lungs necessary for this process: a knowledge that the body/mind has acquired through laborious discipline, and the source that nourishes this knowledge: the 'truth' of the actress, her mythology or metaphysics, the Andean cosmology and culture, her political commitment, her integrity as an artist.

It is worth noting, in Ana's work process, her cold blood and patient consistency in her procedure, the reverent caution towards the smallest detail, the respect in sensing and re-creating the space, the loving attention to the objects she uses, the aesthetic awareness that yearns to extract beauty from every movement and posture.

All this transpires from the crystalline and concrete language of the actress when she explains how she literally *breathed life* into the character of Rosa Cuchillo, a mother in search of her disappeared son. If magic is an operative science that acts on another person through gestures and formulas, then the white image of Ana Correa/Rosa Cuchillo appears as the archetype of the powers of the archaic technology of the human being at the time of artificial intelligence, drones and upcoming human clones.■

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