

Patricia Ariza

Travel Trespass Return

*When I travel - apart from
treading the earth, as in the
myth of Anteo, to gather
momentum for the flight -
what I see more clearly
from the distance is the starting
point, my home, my group,
my colleagues.
And I always want
to return.*

At this stage in life, on the eve of the New Millennium, I can see the maps drawn by the journeys of my past. I go over them again and again, convinced that on my return, my closest female friends will once more meet up at the train stations, in the freezing cold. Some of them will be weaving and unweaving a character for their next play.

Writing about journeys and transgressions is like checking the compass and the telescope. The needle seems to move in all directions. There isn't a propitious place of arrival. The North was only a place inhabited by trees and smiles. The place of the paradigm sought so fervently in years past did not exist; it was a mental space, an atmosphere, a dream ... A non-place, a source where the metaphors that prevent us from falling are built.

Now in my country there is a war that seems without memory or rest. Every day dozens of men and women die in ambushes, including those who may have wanted to travel to the next millennium.

The lost dreams of the dead fog up the telescope with tears.

Nevertheless, as Brecht would say, I eat, drink and get drunk. I pack my suitcase and I see how time flies amongst projects and trees. I arrive at theatre festivals, I go on tour, and sometimes I rest a little, walking through the cities where it is still possible to walk at night.

When I travel - apart from treading the earth, as in the myth of Anteo, to gather momentum for the flight - what I see more clearly from the distance is the starting point, my home, my group, my colleagues. And I always want to return.

The places visited - all of them - seem already known; the streets, the rush, the blank stares, the clicking heels on the sidewalks. The only mystery and surprise is still found in small theatres, in conversations with theatre artists and in the words of the poets.

For the year 2000, perhaps what is old, what no longer fits in the world's suitcase, are the insatiable drives for

THE
OPEN
PAGE

power, the irrepressible masculine will to rule, the desire to feature in all that is legible.

The act of trespass could reside in recovering the view of misunderstood poets, in listening to the forgotten melodies of the carillon once more, or better, in deciphering the images of theatre groups.

Being a woman is like being part of an atmosphere and the act of trespass could reside in recovering the capacity to transmit secrets.

That is why, this time, I write to my friends of *The Open Page* from the shores of poetry, the only place from which we can hear the silence of others, that which is yet to be spoken. There lies the source of mystery, the unpublished and sacred universe.

Crumbling is not an instant's Act
It is a fundamental pause
(Emily Dickinson)

Translated from Spanish by Adriana Cantor

PATRICIA ARIZA (Colombia) is a founder member of Teatro La Candelaria in Bogota. As an actress, writer and stage director she is one of the most well known women theatre practitioners in Latin America. She has worked directing productions with young people who live on the streets, prostitutes, drug addicts, and with children and adults who live in the violent region of Uraba in Colombia. She also staged a rap opera with Gotas de Rap, a group of young musicians and this has toured extensively outside Colombia.