

The project aims to study the cultural impact of Amereida, a phenomenon counted among the most important cultural developments in Latin America's recent history. It increasingly attracts the attention of European scholars and artist (cf. Amereida at the Documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel). Today it is commonly associated with avant-garde architecture of the The Valparaíso School and the utopian space of the Open City (*Ciudad Abierta*), an experimentation field of the professors and students of the Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño de la Pontificia Universidad Católica in Valparaíso.

In my research, I want to focus on the key role that a poetic journey embarked on in 1965 played in these developments. Referred to as the *Travesía*, the journey was undertaken by ten people: architects, poets and philosophers from Chile, Argentina, France and England. They set off from Tierra del Fuego and headed to "a new poetic capital" of the continent, i.e. to Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia), a location demarcated by reversing the map of America and interpolating the Crux on it. The journey had no pre-planned trajectory; what mattered was moving away from the coast of America and discovering its "Inland Sea." The travellers claimed that as America had not been discovered but conquered, a new "foundational act of America" had to be performed. This could be effected only by poetic acts (*phalânes*) which resulted in artistic interventions that produced traces on their way (objects, photographs, place-names). Two years later, the group published a poem titled *Amereida* (combining "America" and "Eneida" – *The Aeneid*), which was followed by the journey's visual and poetic log. The belief in the foundational power of the poetic journey was soon corroborated when in 1970 the group obtained 286 hectares of dunes in the vicinity of Valparaíso to found a place where they could combine life, work and education. Confirming the journey's relevance, since 1984 participation in a *travesía* is compulsory for the Valparaíso students as part of the architecture and design curriculum.

My research aims to define the cultural agency of the 1965 journey. I argue that the *Travesía* can be viewed as a literary route, i.e. as a journey in which values are performed by means of the word and, thereby, change is made in cultural reality (new ways of life, identities, landscapes, places, myths, symbols, images and artefacts are generated). I want to see whether the radical communitarian investment differentiates the South-American experience of literary wandering from the European one and to determine what kind of community it is (a poetic social utopia/a mobile artistic colony?). I want to discuss the ethnic and national designation of a community and whether cultural heterogeneity in discovering America's „Inland Sea" (through reliance on *The Aeneid*, F. Hölderlin's poetry, Spanish colonial chronicles) is necessary in decolonisation processes.

I will explore the cultural history of Amereida as viewed through the *travesía*: how have the expeditions evolved since 1965? While the first students' trips repeated the decolonising foundational acts, later the operational factor was privileged (generating the creative process through a poetic act) and attention was then paid to impermanence and nomadic nature of architectural objects. Do *phalânes* and images related to them (photograph, reversed maps) still shape the representation of America today? Where can evidence of such agency be found? What is Amereida's persistence attributable to: to its inscription within the university structures, to creative powers of poetry, to the strength of the community or, perhaps, to *travesías*? Studying the decolonising role of Amereida, one should crucially reflect on the oxymoronic nature of the combination of agency and a poetic journey. My discussion of it will be augmented by studying other ostensibly ineffective wanderings that have proven formative in the cultural history of various communities (e.g. Xenophon's *The March of Ten Thousand*). My project is informed by the idea that the word has given and can still give an access to the cultural reality of South America (South America as the space of "the word's power").

In my research I will use an array of techniques, including critical analysis of source texts, their typography, maps and drawings; analysis of the post-1984 *travesías* documentation; interviews with the participants of the 1965 expedition; interviews with professors involved in organisation of the post-1984 *travesías*; and student surveys. Because a key role in the emergence of architectonic objects is ascribed to the very process of working in a community, my research will importantly involve participant observation (participation in a *travesía* and in *Taller de Amereida*). As many notions used by the Amereida founders are intrinsically metaphorical (*phalânes*, *travesía*, *Ha lugar* "open reality," "hospitality," "circular voyage,"), part of my project will be devoted to compiling a dictionary in which they will be interpreted in terms of cultural sciences categories.

Identifying the meanings and significance of *travesías*, my innovative, cultural studies book on Amereida will contribute to developing knowledge on agency of literature for culture. It will foster the humanistic thought on "other modernities" and alternative epistemologies (of the South). It will also promote research on cultural change effected from peripheral positions and by means of "weak" – literary and artistic – tools. It will define the role and status of community in such ventures. It will also further the current thinking on architecture as a modern way of life.