Drifting in America's Interior Sea: Surrealist Resonances in the Valparaíso School's Long 1960s

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In the early 1950s, a group of architecture students and their teachers in Valparaíso provoked a scandal in the field after they abandoned their drafting tables for the streets to engage in casual *errance* (wandering) in the modernizing Chilean city. Beginning in 1952, those teachers, Argentine poet Godofredo Iommi (1917–2001) and Chilean architect Alberto Cruz Covarrubias (1917–2013), transformed the industrial port city of Valparaíso into ludic terrain, launching one of the most idiosyncratic pedagogical experiments in postwar architectural culture. Known as the "Valparaíso School," this group of architects, poets, and artists incorporated improvised poetry readings, urban drifts, performative actions and games into its academic and extracurricular activities. The School's cofounders conceived the social and spatial dimensions of these gestures as a form of ephemeral architecture that subverted the inert geometries of rational functionalism. The Valparaíso School drew upon a range of eclectic sources from the historical avant-garde to inform its project, yet it was surrealist thought that gave the School its distinctive character and shaped its most innovative contributions to experimental architecture, poetry, and pedagogy.

This essay focuses specifically on the Valparaíso School's engagement with Surrealism, charting its various manifestations in both its prehistory and non-architectural activities and through key moments in the 1960s, a decade in which the limits and fissures in the social dimensions of its project became increasingly evident. I argue that despite the group's professed desire for psychic and disciplinary transformation, its specific brand of a ludic Surrealism distinguished it from revolutionary and anticolonial Surrealisms in the 1960s Americas. Whereas some Latin American multidisciplinary vanguards of the 1960s mobilized surrealist tactics to antagonize the political status quo in the region, such El Techo de la Ballena in Venezuela, the Valparaíso School's embrace of surrealist aesthetics was less overtly political. In the mid- to late 1960s, as third world liberationist and leftist student

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movements sounded calls for revolution throughout the Americas, members of the Valparaíso School embarked on an expansive drift into the South American interior that resulted in an anonymously-authored epic poem, *Amereida*, a text replete with rhetoric that, on the surface, appeared to resonate with anticolonial thinking: a demand to remove America's "veiled" consciousness; the need for "Americanist" pedagogy free of imported ideologies; and the possibility of a *finis terrae* subjectivity. Yet considered alongside contemporaneous decolonial discourses and another surrealist-inspired anticolonial epic, Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, the Valparaíso School's project engaged distinct politics that stopped short of the surrealist exhortation to a "total revolution."

El Acto Poético: *Valparaíso, ca. 1952*

Surrealism remained an enduring artistic influence in the activities, writing, and philosophy of the School, even though the association was not overtly pronounced in its better known projects. Iommi in particular largely shaped the School's aesthetic philosophy, consistently citing the proto-surrealist Isidore Ducasse (1846–1870), better known as the Comte de Lautréamont, and André Breton (1896–1966) in his own writing and conceptualization of the *actos poéticos* (poetic acts).[1] Iommi regularly relied on surrealist concepts and strategies to expand the realm of the real and push the boundaries of poetic form. From an early reliance on errance, the incorporation of games, automatic writing, and actions akin to the surrealist exquisite corpse, to the emergence of the actos poéticos, the School adapted surrealist-inspired tactics to reenchant space.

The acto poético was an ephemeral, performative gesture or action that assumed many forms and was often collectively realized by members of the School, as well as uninitiated passersby. It frequently entailed poetry readings *en ronda* (in a round), generally unannounced or without any preparation on the part of participants, and was thus open to elements of chance and improvisation. The origins of the acto poético are not well documented but founding faculty members date its earliest manifestations to the early 1950s. Architect Fabio Cruz Prieto (1927-2007) described the acto poético's transitory, fleeting character as an experience best exemplified by travel and spatial displacement. He illustrated an example of an acto poético that took place on a train: Iommi and other members of the School donned masks and recited poems from memory in the cars before returning to their seats and removing their disguises.[2] Tied as they were to a program of study in a school of architecture, the primary intention of these acts was to suffuse a space with meaning, or to recognize a space's potential for resemanticization. Its pedagogical function was to encourage architects-in-training to see a familiar space with a renewed vision and to unleash the creative process. Even for the non-architecture students involved, the acto poético inaugurated an aesthetic experience that would impel one to create.

What became known as the Valparaíso School was founded in 1952, yet Iommi had already introduced actos poéticos and urban drifts into architectural study years prior, when he began informally collaborating with Alberto Cruz and students at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago, where Cruz was then a professor. This unlikely collaboration between an architect and a poet without any architectural training was controversial at the time, particularly in light of their activities, such as wandering the city. According to sociologist and curator María Berríos, "andar sin rumbo por la calle era algo que solo hacía la gente pobre y de mala reputación," not bourgeois architecture students who were supposed to pass through certain designated social spaces instead of idly drifting through the city.[3] That architecture professors and students engaged in unconventional activity in the conservative cultural milieu of 1950s Chile was not insignificant, and reflected a broader convulsive moment in one of Chile's major schools of architecture in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Cruz had developed a reputation for his eccentric personality and engagement with modernist pedagogical theory in a department that, until the mid-1940s, was still largely based on a Beaux-Arts, classical tradition.[4] Although he was part of the broader faction of professors pushing to modernize the curriculum, Cruz's idiosyncratic methods and attitudes alienated him from his colleagues, and he was eventually dismissed.

Cruz was soon offered a new job to revive the struggling architecture department at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, at the time under the leadership of a recently appointed Jesuit rector. Cruz accepted the position on the condition that his collaborators, including Iommi, a poet without a professional or university degree, could join him. The university accepted and the group soon defected to the coast, where it quickly established a collective approach to living, working, and studying; they also founded the Instituto de Arquitectura, which ensured the group's autonomy from the university proper. Thus, the Valparaíso School developed in an antagonistic relationship to the country's major schools of architecture and professional spheres, setting itself apart to develop its own projects, commissions, and experimental activities.

The move to Valparaíso was also a significant shift in terms of the new urban landscape. Santiago, which contains vestiges of the Spanish colonial grid, is a markedly different urban environment than Valparaíso. The port city's distinctive topography and hillside architecture orient the eye upward, away from the orderly colonial grid at sea level. Above the colonial urban center, the city departs from Law of the Indies' rational order and ascends into an organic formation of labyrinthine streets.[5] Valparaíso's spatial complexities represented an urban countermodel to the implementation of modernist urban planning schemes in other Latin American contexts of the postwar period, such as Brasília and modern university cities. Cruz reflected on this distinction in his personal notebooks, characterizing Santiago as "a city in the plan" and Valparaíso as a "city in the hills."[6] Cruz writes that moving

through space in Valparaíso entailed an incessant rising and descending, at times vertiginous, whereas in Santiago, the flatness of the plan lacked what he terms *duplicidad*, a type of spatial ambiguity or indeterminacy. The "spatial duplicity" he identifies in Valparaíso's hills or in the act of ascending and descending, produces "[una] simultaneidad mágica, el espacio mágico que intuyeron algunos surrealistas. Lo mágico en lo cotidiano: Valparaíso en los cerros con su orden imprevisible."[7]

The morphologies of Valparaíso and its irregular topography consistently preoccupied Cruz and other teachers and artists at the school, which was a setting conducive to experimentation and defamiliarization. Students were instructed to locate a house in the *cerros* (hills) using only a small, hand-sized photograph of a building's facade as a visual aid, an activity that foregrounded wandering and observing urban phenomena (Fig. 1). The city of Valparaíso thus became a laboratory for wandering and observing architecture and urban situations as a form of "auto-pedagogical" discovery;[8] it also became a stage for performative actions and a field for free play akin to the surrealists' urban *Spielraum*.[9] Yet the faculty's reliance on free play in urban space extended beyond its pedagogical function. In her recent

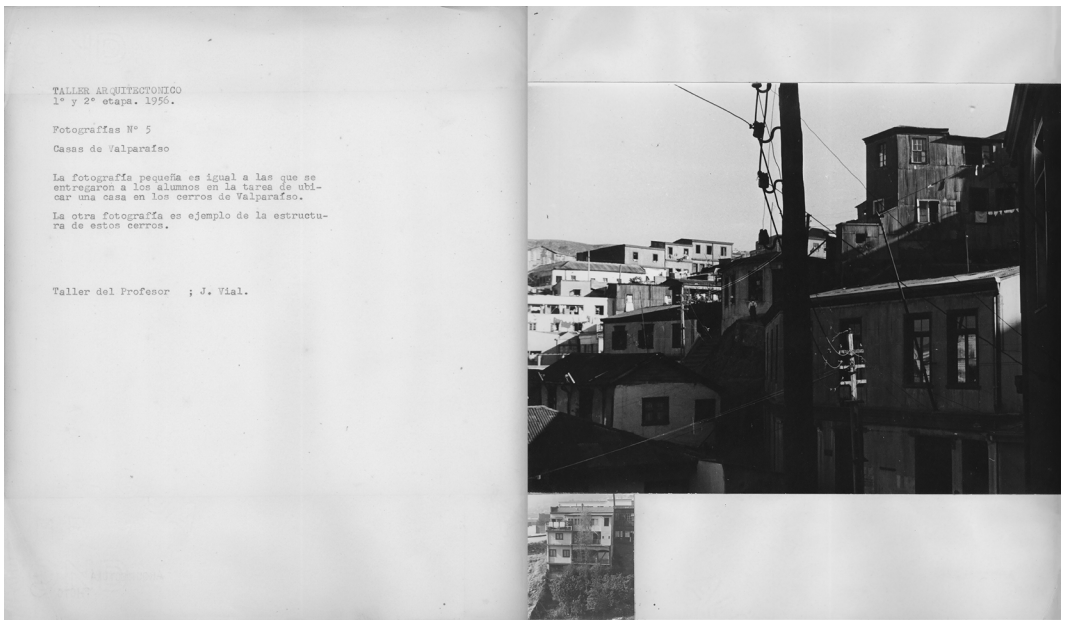


Fig. 1. "Taller Arquitectónico, 1º y 2º etapa. 1956. Fotografías Nº 5 "Casas de Valparaíso." Taller del Profesor: J. Vial" Folder CE esp 42-58. Photograph courtesy of Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

essay on the topic of errance in 1920s Paris, Susan Laxton characterizes the drift "as a means without ends, a ludic structure, it produced nothing. Its value lay instead in the mode of experience it gave shape to, a way of being in city streets developed in resistance to the relentless utilitarianism of the efficient modern subject."[10] Laxton situates surrealist drift in the context of Corbusian urban planning, namely the functionalist *Plan Voisin* of 1925.[11] The Valparaíso School was similarly critical of a ruthless functionalism and evacuation of place. At the same time—working from a region that was adapting, debating, and transforming European modernist ideas—they also heroicized aspects of figures like Le Corbusier (particularly in relation to his later work rather than his austere urban planning schemes of the 1920s) and engaged in critical modernist gestures such as errance.[12] This dynamic reflects the unlikely coexistence of the architect and the poet as well as the contradictions of a developing context in South America, which was distinct from 1920s Paris.

Aside from its reliance on errance in the city, the Valparaíso School's activities in the urban sphere were reminiscent of the procedures and effects of various historical avant-gardes and therefore evidence the eclectic sources that formed the basis of the School's understanding of aesthetic modernity. For example, the act of jolting an unexpected public with an impromptu performative recitation recalls the linguistic experimentation and the appeal to the nonsensical associated with historical avant-garde movements such as Dada and Surrealism. Some of these actions, preserved only by amateur photographic documentation, also entailed the material production of an object, or featured more elaborate sculptural garments and masks that recalled Bauhaus plays or the productions of the Cabaret Voltaire (the School staged its own Spanish-language rendition of Tristan Tzara's play *Le Cœur à gaz*—*El Corazón a gas*—in 1969).

The School's activities also reflected a broader legacy of intertwined literary and artistic avant-gardes in Chile. Architectural historian Alejandro Crispiani likens the actos poéticos to a "collage de sonidos y significados" and considers the School's multifarious avant-garde activities to be an extension of Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro's *Creacionismo*.[13] The acto poético's layering of everyday places and scenarios with rarefied poetic language also brings to mind a more contemporaneous and local manifestation in the Chilean urban public sphere: Nicanor Parra's *antipoesía* (antipoetry), which similarly built upon surrealist concepts and tactics and was likely known to Iommi and other members of the Valparaíso School.

The same year the School was founded, Parra, along with the poet Enrique Lihn (1929–1988) and artist and filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky (b. 1929), collaborated on a poetic provocation that materialized on the surfaces of Santiago's architecture and infrastructure in various sites within the city center. The mythical event known as *El Quebrantahuesos* humorously satirized Chilean society through the public display, in strategic locations downtown, of collages that approximated the size and appearance of a broadsheet. The artists employed a collage aesthetic

to create this *broma periodística*, a spatialized exquisite corpse that juxtaposed text and image fragments from the daily press to produce absurdist headlines.[14] Decontextualized from the newspaper format, the collages were recast into the urban matrix, transforming a conventionally private reading experience into a collective one. In foregrounding the materiality of the newspaper medium, gesturing outward to existing institutions (such as the Supreme Court), and critiquing the logic of mass media, Parra and his collaborators engaged a more satirical and irreverent reading of Surrealism's possibilities, whereas the actos poéticos of the Valparaíso School aspired to create worlds separate from everyday Chilean society.

Despite the various evocations of the avant-garde in these performative actions, Iommi's actos poéticos were notably distinct from the various avant-garde movements they sought to reference. Of all the acto poético's associations with the historical avant-garde, surrealist concepts and practices, such as improvisation and automatic writing, were the most prominent. In several of Iommi's writings and lectures, references abound to the proto-surrealist writer the Comte de Lautréamont and other key surrealist figures such as André Breton, suggesting the privileged role of Surrealism—or, in Crispiani's words, the "epítome de estas vanguardias"—in Iommi's thoughts about modern art.[15] Similarly, architectural historian Ann Pendleton-Jullian maintains that the actos poéticos "and other methodologies engaged in by the members of [the School] derive their structure from the methods of Breton. . . . Not unlike Breton's psychic dictation or the surrealist performance-like 'acts,' they are used, deliberately, to release the imagination from a programmatic and physical reality in order to relate architectural propositions to the poetics of space, context, and making through an intuitive process."[16] Iommi's conception of the acto poético was indeed comparable to the ambitions of the early historical Surrealists. The acto poético operated in an experiential register that remained firmly rooted in quotidian experience—the *aquí y ahora* (here and now)—yet was revealed through the "interruption" of mundane space and time, not unlike Breton's concept of the marvelous.[17] Yet Iommi never writes explicitly about the subconscious or psychoanalysis; he relies heavily on Breton but never cites Freud. Despite the Valparaíso group's interest in the unrestrained creative gesture, dreams were a lesser tapped source of inspiration, at least in the actos poéticos. Furthermore, the actos poéticos typically lacked the provocative and nonsensical aspects of some performative gestures associated with Dada and Surrealism.[18] Iommi's acto poético was more akin to early surrealist wanderings, an interest in the everyday, and, as I discuss later, the game.

Southern Drifts, a Precedent: La Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea, ca. 1939–1940

Iommi was drawn to surrealist-inspired tactics well before founding the Valparaíso School in the early 1950s. In the late 1930s, he co-founded the Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea (Holy Brotherhood of the Orchid; hereafter, the

Brotherhood), a small, bohemian collective of young poets, with the Argentines Efraín Tomás Bo and Juan Raúl Young, and Brazilians Gerardo Mello Mourão, Abdias do Nascimento, and Napoleón López Filho.[19] The Brotherhood adopted an avant-garde posturing based on the archetypal urban dandy and the *flâneur*, making the city and urban culture, particularly those of Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, important protagonists in their collaborations and collective mythos (Fig. 2). Similar to the Surrealists, the Brotherhood collectively engaged in destructive actions, from burning their verses in public to drunken wanderings through the city that recalled the historical Surrealists' "four-man stroll" in 1924, wherein, according to Laxton, "the surrealists' automatist experiments, which had always been collaborative, were

Fig. 2. Four of the members of Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea: from left to right, Godofredo Iommi, Napoleão Lopes Filho, Efraín Tomás Bó, Juan Raúl Young. Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1940. Photography courtesy of IPEAFRO, http://www.abdias.com.br/santa_hermandad/santa_hermandad.htm

made explicitly phenomenological—recast as movement through public space—with a 'four-man stroll' undertaken by Breton, Louis Aragon, Max Morise, and Roger Vitrac."[20] In 1941, however, the Brotherhood extended its sights beyond the modern urban sphere, turning its attention toward the vast interior of the Amazonian region. Although their initial tentative and ambitious itinerary did not include South America, the outbreak of the Second World War thwarted their plans to travel to Europe, the intended final destination. Thus the group turned inward and focused its efforts on America,[21] anticipating Iommi's interest in the construct of "America" in the mid-1960s, which I examine later.[22] The Brotherhood is important to reference here not only because of the group's professed interest in Surrealism, but also because it established a precedent for Iommi's continuing preoccupations inspired by surrealist tactics into the early 1960s: collective action in the urban sphere and an embodied poetics based on the abandonment of the written word.

Several members of the Brotherhood alluded to the importance of Surrealism in their poetic activities. According to artist and poet Abdias do Nascimento, "os rapazes da Hermandad tinham grande admiração pelos poetas surrealistas. Uma sintonia com 'aquela coisa de desprezar a lógica, renegar a ordem social e moral…Nós não queríamos fazer nada, apenas poesia."[23] The appeal of Surrealism and its rejection of logic and rationality must also be considered in relation to the poets' more immediate political and economic contexts in both Argentina and Brazil, where rampant political instability and corruption during the "Infamous Decade" in the former and a fascist dictatorship in the latter—Gétulio Vargas's *Estado Novo*—imposed conservative social and moral order on public life in both countries.[24] Although the Brotherhood was not outwardly political, it implicitly critiqued the rational moral order of the poets' respective countries as well as the idea of nationality itself.

The Brotherhood coalesced in Buenos Aires in 1939.[25] The group's first collective action became known as the "Pacto de la Victoria," named for the bar where the poets, in a spontaneous decision, decided to burn all their existing written work in a public square. Decades later, the poet Mello Mourão recalled the importance of this gesture:

> Todo comenzó una larga noche en un bar de Buenos Aires, teníamos 20 años. Salimos con los brazos entrelazados, encendimos una fogata en medio de la plaza, y quemamos centenares de versos. En el aire quedó la frase de Godo: "no afirmo nada, no niego nada, celebro"… Entonces quemamos todo el poder en la plaza pública, se hizo una hoguera como se queman las naves y Godo salió con la consigna: "o Dante o nada," o escribimos a la altura del Dante, o no hacemos nada. Entonces salimos de ahí y no sé si escribimos alguna cosa.[26]

The Pacto de la Victoria established the group's commitment to a radical poetic life and to the liberation of poetry from the written word. It also set the tone for collaborations imbued with a ritualistic behavior and religious connotations, already evident in the name of the group (Holy Brotherhood). According to Mello Mourão's and Nascimento's recollections, the brothers would recite one another's names every morning upon waking, wherever they were, regardless of whether they were together or not.[27] The Brotherhood's prayer-like, devotional behavior distinguishes its collective activity from the avant-garde movements, like Surrealism, that they were referencing, although its male-dominated communal formation similarly reinforced the patriarchal power relations that characterized surrealist community identity.[28]

The Brotherhood's invisible actions exhibited a paradoxical coexistence of an anarchic sensibility, evident in Iommi's declaration, "no afirmo nada, no niego nada, celebro," and an overt religious or spiritual dimension (and its gendered identity) which would also shape the collective culture of the Valparaíso School.[29] For the Brotherhood, this quasi-religious dimension and interest in accessing the immaterial, spiritual realm through its actions may also account for their lack of commitment to producing published work and material objects, an idea Iommi evidently continued to pursue following his integration into the Valparaíso School. The scant historical documentation related to the Brotherhood further reinforces the myth of the "poet without poems" and the idea of poetry without writing that would surface in an important text written by Iommi during his European era.

The Phalène*: Paris and "Elsewhere," 1958–1963*

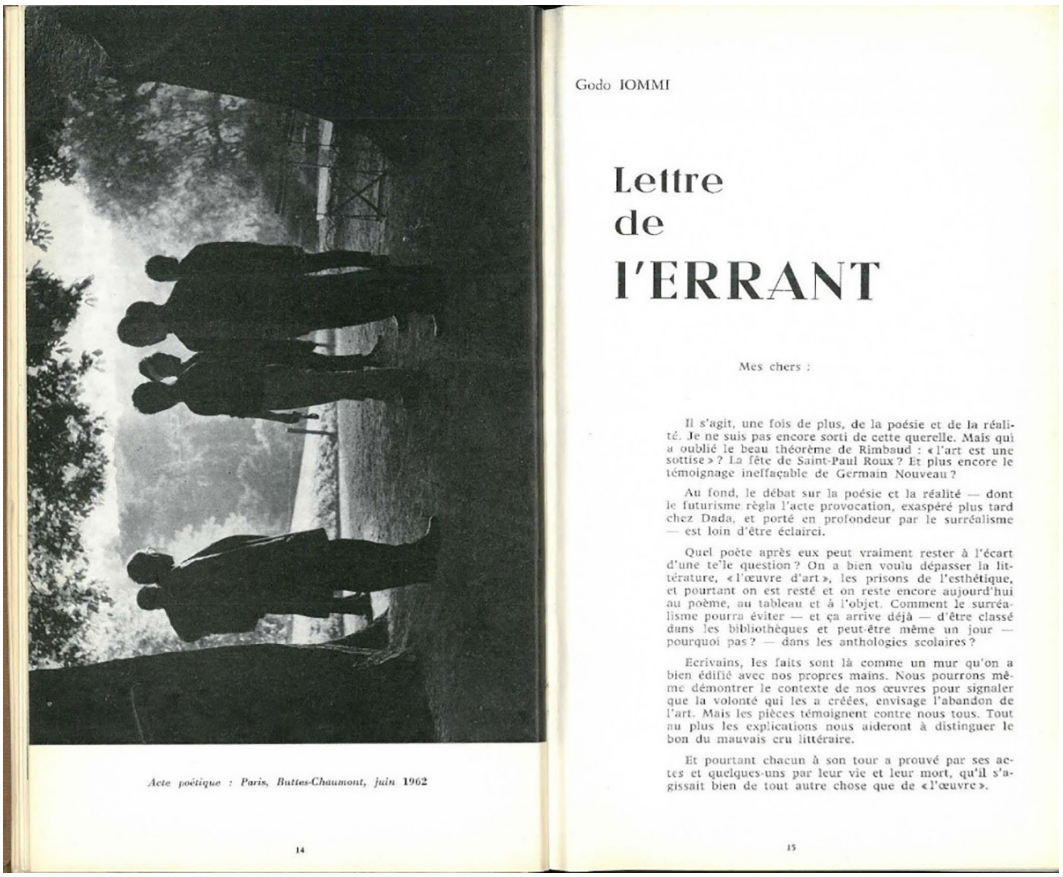
Despite the Valparaíso School's relatively newfound freedom to experiment in a different urban context, its founders continued to feel limited and frustrated by the cultural conservatism of Chile's institutions and sought to re-found the institute in Europe.[30] Paris, the birthplace of the surrealist movement, remained an important destination for Latin American artists into the post-World War Two era, and Iommi would spend a significant period of time there during his European era from 1958 to 1963. Though Iommi and several of his Valparaíso School colleagues did not realize the goal of re-founding the institute abroad, the years they spent in Europe, and especially those spent in Paris, were critical to Iommi's theorization of the acto poético and the evolution of the *phalène*—a specific form of the acto poético, conceived as a finished work of art—along with his burgeoning Americanist consciousness.

Similar to the emergence of the actos poéticos, the origin of the phalène, literally translating from French to "moth" or "butterfly," is unknown and largely apocryphal. According to the painter and Valparaíso faculty member Francisco Méndez, it was the philosopher and Phalène participant François Fédier who suggested the word, likening the rapid motion of a moth's wings in flight to the ephemerality of the poetic event.[31] Compared to the acto poético, the phalène

consisted of more established parameters in terms of place and duration and was less open to improvisation. Phalènes were conceived as finished works rather than as spontaneous interventions into the everyday and were usually more elaborate than an oral recitation of verse. In his recollection of the emergence of the phalène, Fabio Cruz insisted that it differed in its more determined structure and nonreproducibility: "Lo normal de la phalène, es que una vez decidido hacerla, se decide el lugar y el momento. Esto es muy importante, el momento de salida y las condiciones del viaje."[32] The rest of the action would be open to improvisation, but in general the phalène was more akin to a choreographed performance or the non-narrative theatrical nature of a Happening.

During his years in Paris, Iommi frequently collaborated with Uruguayan-born poet and artist Carmelo Arden Quin (1913–2010), one of the leading figures of the Madí Concrete art group. Madí was one faction of Argentinian Concretism that emerged in the mid-1940s in Buenos Aires. Two decades later, Madí artists such as Arden Quin still identified with the goals of the movement and were committed to upholding its legacy in later decades. Arden Quin and other Paris-based Madí artists collaborated in Iommi's Phalène*,* an amorphous group of European and Latin American artists and poets who realized actos poéticos in sites throughout the city and in other small villages in Europe.[33] One of the group's earliest phalènes took place on June 11, 1962, at Père Lachaise Cemetery, where various members gathered at the tomb of the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, whose poem "La Jolie Rousse" was read aloud by a professional actor.[34] Other excursions in France included the Fontainebleau Forest, the Broceliande Woods in Brittany, and caves in the south of France, all destinations associated with medieval mythology and that were of interest to the Surrealists. Thus, the phalène was not a strictly urban phenomenon. Travel and spatial displacement were central to the experience, which would take the group to a variety of sites in cities and small towns, prefiguring the School's *travesías* (journeys) throughout the South American continent following Iommi's return to Chile.

In 1963, Arden Quin invited Iommi to publish in his new literary and culture magazine, *Ailleurs*.[35] The title of the publication, translating to "elsewhere," suggests the place-related preoccupations of the group and further underscores the phalène's close association with travel and the transitory as a state of being.[36] Iommi's quasimanifesto, "Carta del Errante" was originally published in French as "Lettre de l'Errant" in the first issue of *Ailleurs* in summer 1963 (Fig. 3).[37] In this text, Iommi articulates the ideas central to the evolution of the phalène, many of which Arden Quin would contest in other pages of the same magazine, particularly in regard to the role of improvisation in their collaborations. In its lack of antagonistic language and tone, Iommi's "letter" hardly reads like a typical vanguard artist's manifesto. It is instead written in a type of familiar, informal address to his poet-collaborators (he opens with *queridos* [dear ones]). Iommi does not describe the genesis of the phalène nor does he even attempt to fully define it. In fact, he does not even mention



Acte poétique : Paris, Buttes-Chaumont, juin 1962

14

Godo IOMMI

Lettre de l'ERRANT

Mes chers :

Il s'agit, une fois de plus, de la poésie et de la réalité. Je ne suis pas encore sorti de cette querelle. Mais qui a oublié le beau théorème de Rimbaud : « l'art est une sottise » ? La fête de Saint-Paul Roux ? Et plus encore le témoignage ineffaçable de Germain Nouveau ?

Au fond, le débat sur la poésie et la réalité — dont le futurisme règla l'acte provocation, exaspéré plus tard chez Dada, et porté en profondeur par le surréalisme — est loin d'être éclairci.

Quel poète après eux peut vraiment rester à l'écart d'une telle question ? On a bien voulu dépasser la littérature, « l'œuvre d'art », les prisons de l'esthétique, et pourtant on est resté et on reste encore aujourd'hui au poème, au tableau et à l'objet. Comment le surréalisme pourra éviter — et ça arrive déjà — d'être classé dans les bibliothèques et peut-être même un jour — pourquoi pas ? — dans les anthologies scolaires ?

Ecrivains, les faits sont là comme un mur qu'on a bien édifié avec nos propres mains. Nous pourrons même démontrer le contexte de nos œuvres pour signaler que la volonté qui les a créées, envisage l'abandon de l'art. Mais les pièces témoignent contre nous tous. Tout au plus les explications nous aideront à distinguer le bon du mauvais cru littéraire.

Et pourtant chacun à son tour a prouvé par ses actes et quelques-uns par leur vie et leur mort, qu'il s'agissait bien de tout autre chose que de « l'œuvre ».

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Fig. 3. Cover of *Ailleurs* no. 1, Paris (summer 1963) and Godofredo Iommi, "Lettre de l'errant," pp. 14–15, including image of an "acte poétique." Photograph courtesy of Biblioteca Constel, Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

the term in the text; rather, he articulates his views on the role of the poet, the relationship between art and politics, between poetry and reality, and the possibility of creating poetry without the written word.

In addressing his fellow poets, Iommi opens the letter lamenting how avant-garde poetry became instrumentalized by official politics and dogma. He also rehearses some of the lessons learned from the European historical avant-garde from Futurism to Surrealism: "Así Marinetti terminó en el facismo, y Aragon en el comunismo oficial."[38] According to Iommi, the avant-garde's search for justice and social transformation was "sincero y generosa" but had been coopted by the politics

of the state.[39] He argues, "En un cierto nivel se ha confundido la poesía y su ley con la Política y sus leyes. Los efectos del compromiso político son conocidos—miserias de la poesía—y el célebre 'mientras tanto' no es una respuesta, ni el refugio en el 'poema' una solución."[40] In other words, political poetry is not the answer for Iommi, but neither is refuge inside "el marco del poema."[41] For Iommi, the poet should not bend to the exigencies of political compromise; rather, the poet must break out of conventional poetic form by "abandoning writing" and moving physically into the spaces of *realidad* (reality) to transform it:

> La poesía en acto surge y se inserta verdaderamente en la realidad. Desvela la posibilidad que funda toda existencia efectiva y al mismo tiempo se hace acto en el mundo. He visto entonces al poeta salir de la literatura, sobrepasar el poema, y aún, abandonar la escritura.[42]

However, Iommi's belief that the poet should refrain from engaging in politics did not imply that the poet should not have a social role. Throughout his essay Iommi cites generously from the Comte de Lautréamont—and would continue to do so in later texts as well as in his courses at the Valparaíso School—particularly from the poet's well-known dictum: "La poésie doit être faite par tous. Non par un."[43] Iommi continues his citation of Lautréamont elsewhere in the text, including the quote: "Un poeta debe ser más útil que ningún otro ciudadano de su tribu. Su obra es el código de los diplomáticos, de los legisladores, de los instructores de la juventud."[44] For Iommi, poetry itself was sufficiently *liberadora* (liberating) and ***útil*** (useful), capable of forging new subjectivities and communal relations even if it should not aspire to change the world. Beyond social utility, Iommi also saw the poet as the "portador de fiesta…portador de probabilidades porque, con su presencia desencadena relaciones imprevistas y provoca la participación activa en los Juegos a fin de dar cumplimiento a lo que nos fue dicho."[45]

Toward the conclusion of "Carta del Errante" Iommi alludes to the primary forms of the phalène: *la fiesta* (the party) and *el juego* (the game). These forms are inherently social events that "interrupt" everyday experience and structured productive time.[46] Like the festive phalènes that took take place in Chile after Iommi's return (Fig. 4), the celebration forges a temporary community of disparate social groups. Conceiving of *la fiesta* as a form, Valparaíso School faculty member and architect Miguel Eyquem explained, "Una fiesta es un momento especial, el quehacer mundano se detiene, se detiene el tiempo. Y en una fiesta se debe quedar lanzado en una situación de euforia. Las personas están como un pueblo primitivo, fuera de si, donde pueden decir libremente las cosas."[47] According to Iommi, these forms of action were potentially liberatory—they liberate poetry from the written word and offer the potential to reawaken the world. Here, Iommi cites Breton, claiming that it is the poet's mission to incite passion in everyday life: "Tal es la

Fig. 4. Phalène Reñaca y Phalène Puente Casino, 1972. Photograph courtesy of Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

misión del poeta porque el mundo debe ser siempre reapasionado."[48] Therefore, the celebration and game in the phalène eliminate the necessity of written poetry or the production of an *obra* (work) or physical object. It is instead a fleeting, embodied action:

> He visto al poeta que no escribe sino que hace su poesía provocando la fiesta *con su voz, su cuerpo y su presencia en un chorro espontáneo* [emphasis mine]. Pero, entonces, ¿su acto no deja huella en el tiempo? No, no deja una 'obra'; pero él se inserta en una vía más profunda y escondida que el libro: en la leyenda . . . Muchas cosas que no están escritas nos llegan por la leyenda. Expresiones, gestos, lenguas y sabidurías que vienen en el aire y quedan en el aire cuando nosotros desaparecemos. Ellas persisten en las tradiciones que forman un pueblo. Para poesía, la escritura, aunque posible, no es necesario.[49]

For Iommi, building explicitly on the legacy of Surrealism in "Carta del Errante," poetry dissolves into the everyday and no longer requires literature or conventional form. Writing on Surrealism decades later, Octavio Paz echoed Iommi's views on the poetic work in the Brotherhood, the Phaléne, and the Valparaíso School: "socialization…leads to the disappearance of poetic works, dissolved into life. Surrealism does not propose the creation of poems as much as the transformation of men into living poems."[50] Iommi acknowledges the centrality of Bretonian Surrealism to his aesthetic vision, writing, "El surrealismo, sobre todo, ha reabierto el sueño y la aspiración a una unidad que tiende a extender la vigilia más allá de la conciencia…la promesa que palpita, enteramente viva aún, en su mejor poema, el *Manifiesto Surrealista*, es mucho más grande."[51] However, he simultaneously claims that his predecessors never fully abandoned the work of art, leaving open the potential for the dissolution of literature: "Se debe al surrealismo de Breton la esperanza de otra cosa que la literatura. Digo bien la esperanza, porque, en los hechos, a pesar de todo, se ha permanecido en la expresión del procedimiento, en el esquema y en las 'obras de arte.'"[52] Despite Iommi's aspiration to exceed what he perceived as the limitations of the historical Surrealists, his concepts of fiesta and juego are aligned with early surrealist notions of play and the game and their corresponding generative and constructive impulses. In other words, Iommi's non-written forms are more like a recuperation than a departure from the early ambitions of the surrealist ludic.

Other such contradictions appear in "Carta del Errante," particularly in regard to the social role of the poet. Although Iommi emphasizes the importance of working in a collective formation, the image of the ideal poet in "Carta del Errante" is largely singular, based on the nineteenth-century, French Symbolist *poète maudit* (such as Arthur Rimbaud or the Comte de Lautréamont), a bohemian figure who lives outside of society and "no posee ningún poder ni ejerce tampoco ninguna rebeldía."[53] Iommi's ideal (decidedly male) poet was also informed by Martin Heidegger's lecture on the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, which described the metaphysical potential of the poet to uncover or reveal the world to others, a central idea in the development of the phalène (the influence of Heideggerian philosophy filtered through French aesthetic theory became, in general, increasingly pronounced in Iommi's writing during and after his years in Europe).[54] In the phalène, the poet acts as a type of medium, introducing the possibility of making art for others.[55]

Another tradition that informed Iommi's ideal poet was that of the medieval troubadour, a traveling poet-performer whose oral recitations of verse reached a broad public.[56] Thus, the appearance of the word *errante* in the title of Iommi's text has a double meaning: not only must the poet be itinerant—as Iommi writes, "El poeta debe ser itinerante de la poesía"—he must also err.[57] During his period in Europe, the idea of a "predestined failure" became an important concept for Iommi because of its potential to reveal *lo desconocido* (the unknown) and *lo impensado* (the unthinkable).[58] In Europe, the phalène extended beyond Paris to other cities and

towns. The phalène's travel component prefigured the *travesía*, an extended journey through the "neglected" interior spaces of the South American continent that would begin in the latter half of the 1960s, and which I will discuss in the next section.

Iommi's interest in historical figures like the medieval troubadour not only distinguished his project from technophilic neo-avant-garde collectives working in public space (e.g., Groupe de Researche d'Art Visuel [GRAV]) and politically radical groups like the Situationists, who similarly built on surrealist errance in the *dérive* and psychogeography; his ideas eventually clashed with those of his Paris-based collaborator, Arden Quin. In his early days in the Argentine avant-garde Quin's Marxism led him to espouse a materialist conception of the artwork. Iommi's phalènes lacked the political and ideological commitments of his peers, including those of his own collaborator. The Madí artist objected in particular to Iommi's emphasis on improvisation and conception of the act itself as a generative work of art ("como la forma madre para un nuevo arte"), rather than as a method or tool.[59] In the second issue of *Ailleurs,* published shortly after Iommi's "Carta del Errante," Arden Quin wrote about the increasing aesthetic rift between himself and Iommi in an article that charted the group's collaboration over the course of one year:

> Il [Iommi] voudrait encore improviser…il se dit prêt à abandonner toute littérature écrite; que pour lui le mot d'ordre est obéir et le nôtre combattre. Il tient à cœur l'improvisation. Je lui fais voir la contradiction que cela comporte: on critique l'écriture automatique du surréalisme (d'ailleurs depuis longtemps abandonée) et voilà que maintenant on se met à improviser, ce qui équivaut à un automatisme oral.[60]

Arden Quin's critique of Iommi recalls the 1940s Argentine *arte concreto* (Concrete art) avant-garde's complex relationship with Surrealism and its rhetorical privileging of an emphatic engagement with the artwork's objectness and materiality, in line with the group's dialectical materialism.[61] Both Arden Quin and Iommi would develop ludic sensibilities in their diverging approaches to spatializing poetry and transforming the act of solitary reading into collective participation. For his part, Iommi would continue to explore the possibilities of travel, orality, and the embodied affects of the poet—a type of a modern-day troubadour—whereas Arden Quin remained committed to the material possibilities of poetry. Shortly after their split in 1963, Iommi returned to Valparaíso, where he became more determined to carry out his most ambitious project yet: an epic phalène for the expansive proportions of the (South) American continent.

Drifting Back South, 1964–1967: Amereida

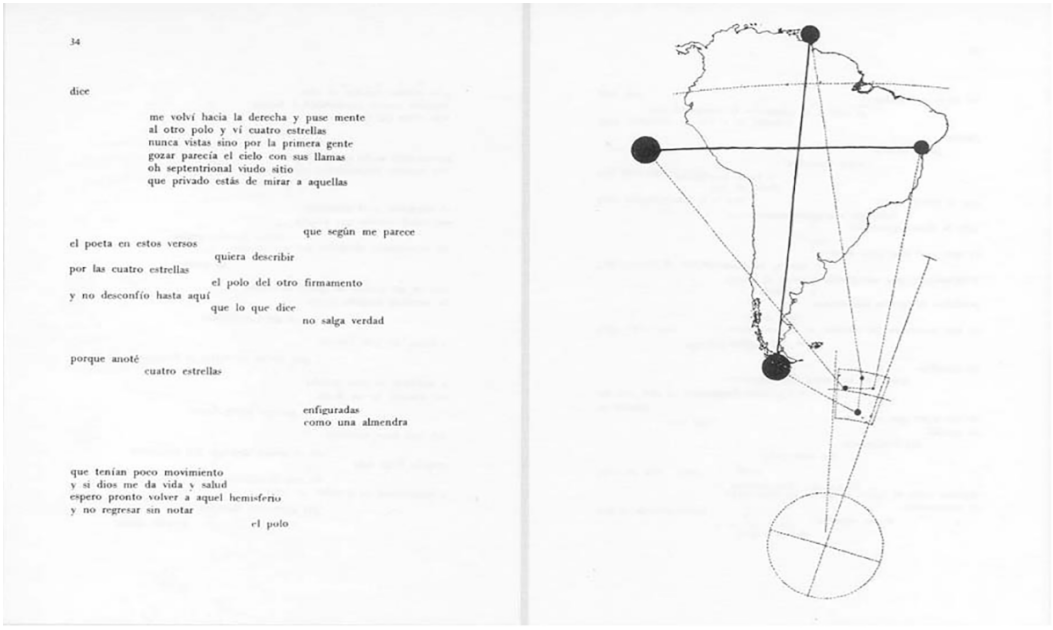
The question of Latin America's relationship to Europe has long preoccupied Latin American avant-garde artists and has been manifested in complex

and oftentimes contradictory ways. "America" and the construct of the interior were consistent if not always explicit themes in Iommi's work. His participation in an Amazonian voyage with the Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea in 1940 established a precedent for the Valparaíso School's long-distance journeys in the American landscape. This experience was also significant for introducing the creative potential of failure, which became an important trope for the Phalène in Europe and for the Valparaíso School in South America. Iommi and Arden Quin declared their collaborative experiment a failure, but Iommi's European era informed what would become the poet's magnum opus, *Amereida*, upon his return to Chile in 1964. A tripartite project, *Amereida* originated in a collective geopoetic drift through the South American continent, beginning in 1965, that culminated in a book-length epic poem—completed in 1967—for the South that aspired to articulate a subjectivity and poetics of the *finis terrae*. It was also an emergent philosophy that would soon become institutionalized as part of the School's mission and identity.

On July 30, 1965, an international group of ten unlikely expeditioners—poets, architects, visual artists, and philosophers on the faculty of the Valparaíso School and several of their unaffiliated colleagues—departed from the furthest southern reaches of the American continent in Punta Arenas for Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, a destination they considered to be the poetic capital of America.[62] Known as the *Amereida travesía*, the journey incorporated poetry, ephemeral constructions and performances that led to encounters with inhabitants of local villages and towns. The 1965 travesía was followed by an eponymous publication, a 189-page poem that featured ten experimental cartographic illustrations of a South American continent lacking national borders (Fig. 5). A neologism combining the words *America* and the Spanish translation of Virgil's Roman epic, *Eneida*, *Amereida* aspired to be nothing less than a foundational epic myth for the American continent in which its participants set out to interrogate its ontological conditions.

It would be misleading to characterize *Amereida* as a surrealist work, but the 1965 travesía participants engaged tactics similar to the Valparaíso School's actos poéticos, such as improvisation and wandering (although the route, moving from south to north—thereby inverting colonial dynamics—was essentially structured), which were extensions of the School's embrace of indeterminacy as an aesthetic and pedagogical principle. The work's concept of the *mar interior* (interior sea) refers to the traveler's route through the interior landmass of the continent, intentionally avoiding the coasts that the colonizers had settled. This "interior sea" can also be considered a metaphor for a subjectivity of the "south." The poem alludes to a veiled consciousness that characterizes colonized subjectivity. However, like the actos poéticos and surrealist-style acts performed at the School, the kind of interiority expressed in *Amereida* avoids fully engaging the unconscious or any references to the psychoanalytical realm.

Amereida was in part influenced by Mexican historian and philosopher


34

dice

me volví hacia la derecha y puse mente
al otro polo y ví cuatro estrellas
nunca vistas sino por la primera gente
gozar parecía el cielo con sus llamas
oh septentrional viudo sitio
que privado estás de mirar a aquellas

que según me parece
el poeta en estos versos
quiera describir
por las cuatro estrellas
el polo del otro firmamento
y no desconfío hasta aquí
que lo que dice
no salga verdad

porque anoté
cuatro estrellas

enfiguradas
como una almendra

que tenían poco movimiento
y si dios me da vida y salud
espero pronto volver a aquel hemisferio
y no regresar sin notar
el polo

Fig. 5. Various authors, *Amereida volumen primero* (Santiago: Ediciones Cooperativa Lambda, 1967), 34–35. Photograph courtesy of Biblioteca Constel, Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

Edmundo O'Gorman's proto-postcolonial text *La invención de América* (1958), which critiques the historiography of "America," which, since the sixteenth century, had been predicated on the notion of discovery, and instead frames the emergence of America as a historical invention.[63] Neither a straightforward narrative of the 1965 journey nor a documentation of the actos poéticos performed along the trip (which are preserved orally and in hundreds of archival photographs), *Amereida* is a collective, multivocal and hybrid text. Its collage aesthetic synthesizes freestyle and prose poetry with direct quotations from various genres of Latin American literature, including the chronicles of the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers and O'Gorman's *Invención*, as well as ancient and early modern European epic poems by Virgil and Dante. Like Virgil's wandering protagonist Aeneas, the *Amereida* group meanders across the South American continent, an action that is thematically reinforced in the structure of the poem—the reader, in a sense, wanders through the text. The layering of different texts suggests there is no singular or correct narrative of America's origins. As such, the poem's layering of distinct sources and the spatial play between text and void function as a *lectura azarosa* (random reading) and is

analogous to the physical occupation of space in the American landscape during the travesía.[64]

Given the explicit references to Dante, Virgil, and other European (and Euro-descendant, Latin American) literary sources in the poem, it is undeniable that *Amereida* emphasizes its Latin(ate) origins in its construction. Various references to "latinidad" appear throughout the text and in other writings in the *Amereida* canon, suggesting that the group privileged this particular aspect of a South American identity. While much of this "heritage" is signaled through literary references, it is also framed by questions about language:

> ¿no irrumpió américa
> en lenguas portuguesa y española?
> lenguas de misma fe y latinas
> lenguas que vienen abiertas
> en aventura
> e imperio?[65]

Although structuring such ideas as questions rather than as declarative statements suggests a level of ambiguity about the relationship between language and identity, a similar question appearing later in the text assumes a more affirmative tone:

> ¿y no nos hacen latinos
> sus lenguajes?
> ¿no heredamos con ellos una voz?
> la voz que se guarda en sus lenguas
> como la luz detrás de sus faros
> la que da temple a las palabras
> o tradición poética desde donde
> que se abren eras
> para que sigan historias
> en lenguas donde apareció
> ¿no despierta américa
> la voz latina?[66]

Such verses foreground America's Latin inheritance, while at the same time assert its independence and originality that stems from occupying the void of the "unknown," America's interior sea:

> Los actuales soñamos en un largo idioma luso-castellano en países
> que no alcanzan a ser naciones en razas múltiples aún tanteándose
> y nos decimos americanos la presencia y el nombre—esta nuestra

> presencia y nuestro nombre—se desprenden de europa la antigua
> robada sepamos que las historias registran las mediciones constatan
> los artificios operan más que la poesía tras toda luz es signo que vela
> y desvela el sentido jamás tendencia productora y producto yacen
> en la oscuridad paterna que nos sorprende su canto es cifra instinto
> y cálculo nunca sentimiento ella es el mismo modo de aparición y
> apariciones que ya no simulacros y fantasmas - realidad transparente
> en su vértigo.[67]

For the *Amereida* collective authorship, America's latinidad is a construct capable of encompassing the region's multiracial societies, but instead it collapses difference. As semiotician and theorist of (de)coloniality Walter D. Mignolo has argued:

> Latinidad contributed to disguise the internal colonial difference under a historical and cultural identity that apparently included all while, in reality, producing an effect of totality that silenced the excluded. "Latinidad" produced a new type of invisibility for Indians and for people of African descent in "Latin" America.[68]

Reconfiguring latinidad as essentially "open" or not constituted by racial difference casts a critical understanding of the construction of identity in *Amereida* and on constructions such as the void and the unknown. The abstract territory is not merely a symbolic, generative space. It also represents an erasure of indigenous peoples who populated it and continue to inhabit it, and of the land itself. This redefinition of *latinidad* obscures the history of primarily white, *criollo* (creole) elites who performed and benefited from this construction.[69] In Mary Louise Pratt's foundational study of the travel literature genre, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, she writes that "Spanish American writers in the early nineteenth century selected and adapted European discourses on America to their own task of creating autonomous decolonized cultures while retaining European values and white supremacy."[70] Given the overwhelming presence of nineteenth-century, post-independence literatures in *Amereida*, it is evident that the authors are the inheritors of this discourse and are extending the history of the "dynamics of creole self-fashioning."[71]

The *Amereida* authors engaged with historiographies and constructs of America rather than contemporaneous decolonial discourses. Mignolo acknowledges the paradigm-shifting implications of O'Gorman's invention thesis but argues that its logic is still "located within the Creole decolonial genealogy of thought."[72] Similarly, the *Amereida* authors express the urgency of "removing the veil" of a colonized subjectivity, and of the need to "acquire consciousness," yet they still adhere to

a Eurocentric framework of latinidad while also suggesting that *America* is open for redefinition.[73] What is rarely discussed in existing analyses of *Amereida* is the historical context in which it emerged, against the background of decolonization movements and newly independent nations in the global south.[74] In the 1950s and 1960s, anticolonial and decolonial discourses and literatures "grounded in… the genealogies of thoughts and experience of Indians and Afro descendants" challenged Eurocentric narratives still overwhelmingly present in *Amereida*.[75]

Iommi's return narrative recalls another critical homecoming that was foundational to the history of surrealist poetry and resistance: Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939). Although originally published decades earlier when the Brotherhood set out on its travels to the interior of the continent, *Cahier* continued to be translated and expanded in subsequent decades, suggesting that it remained a forceful and current anticolonial, anti-poetic epic into the convulsive 1960s, when the *Amereida* authors embarked on their own epic literary quest.[76] Césaire continued to discuss the relevance of Surrealism to the Negritude movement and his own work at the 1967 Cultural Congress of Havana, in an interview with Haitian poet René Depestre: "I was ready to accept Surrealism because I already advanced on my own, using as my starting points the same authors that had influenced the surrealist poets…It was a weapon that exploded the French language. It shook up absolutely everything…Surrealism interested me to the extent that it was a liberating factor."[77] Although neither *Cahier* nor *Amereida* can be characterized as prototypical surrealist works, they both engaged surrealist aesthetics to interrogate and challenge colonial (rational) logic.[78] In the case of *Cahier*, its subversion of the French language, turning the colonial tongue against itself, is exemplary of surrealist negation and its "aesthetics of revolt," but which, in Césaire's epic, is resolutely aligned with Black liberation.

Allusions and references to the classical literary tradition in each text are particularly revealing of the two epics' distinct politics. Whereas Dante and Virgil remain central figures rather than antagonists in *Amereida*, "in *Cahier*, the poet's brow is bedecked not with laurels associated with the comforting image of a classical tradition but with the wild leaves of the poisonous plant [daturas]."[79] Furthermore, *Cahier* is narrated from the first-person perspective of a poet-protagonist in the homeland, where the imagery and poetry flow from his awakening consciousness. In *Amereida*, the collective voice appears relatively detached from an identifiable subject and place, emphasizing instead an abstract construction of the idea of America. As previously stated, Iommi relied on a selective (and idiosyncratic) reading of Bretonian Surrealism, particularly the "Manifeste du surréalisme," and its appeals to the imagination and the marvelous, yet he stops short of calling for the total revolt, sabotage, or collective action elaborated elsewhere in Breton's writings. Césaire, who was closely linked to the surrealist movement, however, not only assumed the call for total revolt, but as some decolonial scholars argue, took the movement's

revolutionary potential even further, articulating a lived anti-colonial politics and Black Third World subjectivity. Iommi's *Amereida*, by contrast, continued to inhabit a colonial imaginary (i.e., the "colonial matrix of power"[80]) and wielded surrealist tactics to aesthetic and existential, rather than revolutionary, anticolonial ends.

The collective authors of *Amereida* and the Martinican poet obviously reflect distinct subject positions within colonial empire, but the Valparaíso School was at the time removed from internationalist anticolonial and decolonial discourses, and increasingly at odds with emergent leftist student movements and artists collectives by the mid- to late 1960s. The historical tensions of the moment are conspicuously absent in *Amereida*. The so-called failures the *Amereida* group encountered during its travels through the continent, though purportedly welcome in its own eyes, reveal how the underlying utopian dimension of the venture frequently clashed with contemporary political realities. The *Amereida* imaginary dissolves borders and nation states in its conceptual cartographies without acknowledging the material, political consequences of borders. A specific incident described in detail in the *Amereida* log, not in the poem itself, illustrates this disconnect.[81] When the group attempted to reach Santa Cruz, Bolivia, it was forced to pursue a different route. Unbeknownst to the travelers, their route was rigidly controlled by the Bolivian military and the CIA, who were monitoring the presence of Che Guevara's guerilla in the region.[82] Despite their best efforts to poetically immerse themselves in their journey, the travesía participants unknowingly entered a heightened geopolitical scenario where the external world was seeping into the collective's "interior sea."

Coda: "Hay que ser absolutamente moderno"

In the late 1960s, the Valparaíso School's public presence became more pronounced through direct actions and entanglements with diverse political actors. The School would go on to play an active and decisive role in the national university reform movement beginning in 1967, while it launched a counterproposal and campaign for a major public works project.[83] Alberto Cruz attempted to disseminate the *Amereida* philosophy through a travesía along the pacific coast, the so-called *Viaje a Vancouver*, on which he would encounter radical pedagogues such as Ivan Illich at the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico (the CIDOC even devoted a dossier to the UCV reform movement and the School's role within it).[84] The Valparaíso School would thus seem to be at the vanguard of radical leftist pedagogy in the Americas, and its reanimation of surrealist tactics to be a tool for social transformation. However, its demands were of a distinct character and tenor.[85] Its reform rhetoric was influenced by *Amereida*, evident in the emphasis on a regional "American" consciousness and approach to teaching and learning, rather than leftist consciousness-raising.[86] Its unapologetic embrace of figures like Rimbaud was publicly denounced by figures in the architectural establishment at the School's "20 years" retrospective exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in 1972.[87]

Since its founding, the Valparaíso School had been viewed suspiciously from various political and architectural factions, due on the one hand to its ambiguous political orientation and, on the other, owing to the perception that its contributions to the built environment were lacking.

As the 1960s progressed, particularly leading up to 1968, the School fell further out of step with politically engaged architecture schools in Chile and elsewhere in Latin America.[88] At the aforementioned retrospective exhibition, the School community was pressed about Rimbaud's questionable morality, while another young architect challenged the group for its lack of social commitment.[89] Faculty member José Vial responded that the Valparaíso School took as an example not Rimbaud's morality but rather the "incuestionable modernidad de su obra," echoing Iommi's quotation of the verse, "Il faut être absolument moderne."[90]

Following a series of setbacks within the reform movement, including its failed urban planning proposal, the Valparaíso School would soon isolate itself from the urban public sphere. In the early 1970s the group relocated, yet again, roughly 50 km north to the coastal dunes of Ritoque in order to undertake its own experiments, including organized *torneos* (tournaments) that built upon the School's reliance on informal games and play, but in more circumscribed settings, as well as improvised structures built in response to the environmental conditions of the site.[91] The specific and continued references to Surrealism and its forebears—in Iommi's citation of Breton, the Comte de Lautréamont, and Rimbaud—and the group's ongoing engagement with the surrealist ludic, remained relatively confined to the realm of perceptual and disciplinary transformation, summed up by Iommi's assertion in "Carta del Errante" that one must "cambiar *de* vida para cambiar *la* vida."[92]

This distinction, though seemingly subtle, is suggestive of a politics at odds with a revolutionary, anticolonial positionality—the emphasis here being on the need to change one's own life in order to change life itself, rather than attempt to transform the social totality. The Valparaíso School's project lacked the transgressive "aesthetics of revolt" of other surrealist-inspired artists in the Americas and the Caribbean, like Césaire, who deployed and sharpened Surrealism's tools in order to realize a lived political revolutionary and emancipatory reality. The Valparaíso School instead willfully clung to the word as world, even while the "real" one around it would continue to be irrevocably altered.

1 Godofredo Iommi, "Lettre de l'errant," *Ailleurs* 1 (Summer 1963): 15–24, https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/Lettre_de_l%27Errant.
2 Alejandro Crispiani, Rafael Moya Castro, and Horacio Torrent Schneider, eds., "Interview with Fabio Cruz," in *La Escuela de Valparaíso y sus Inicios: una mirada a través de testimonios orales* (Santiago: DIPUC, 2002), 58. Masks are a recurring tool and symbol in the actos poéticos. In various writings, Valparaíso faculty cite Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical reflections on masks. See, for example *Amereida volumen segundo: bitácora* (Viña del Mar: Taller de Investigaciones Gráficas, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, UCV, 1986), 52n41: "La irrupción del acto poético en medio de la vida cotidiana ya desde el año 1952 obligó a considerar el aspecto, el modo de aparecer precisamente para avanzar sobre todos los equívocos que produce la poesía. Es más que problema de indumentaria o de máscara. No hay forma y fondo. Es el modo mismo de aparecer. El rostro, decía Nietzsche, es la máscara. Pero para la poesía ha de conformarse la figura propia que le dé cauce."
3 María Berríos, "Arquitectura, juego y desaparición," *Materia Arquitectura* 8 (December 2013): 38.
4 Ignacio González Galán, "Pedagogical Experiences, Poetic Occupations, and Historical Frictions," in *Building Cultures Valparaíso*, eds. Sony Devabhaktuni, Patricia Guaita and Cornelia Tapparelli (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2015), 46–47. See also Alberto Cruz and Alberto Piwonka, "Composición Pre-Arquitectónica," *Plinto* 1 (1947): 10–11; and Alberto Cruz and Alberto Piwonka, "Curso de Composición Pura," *Arquitectura y Construcción* 16 (September 1949): 20.
5 See "The Law of the Indies," in *Cruelty and Utopia: Cites and Landscapes of Latin America*, Jean-François Lejeune, ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 18–29; and Lejeune, "Dreams of Order: Utopia, Cruelty and Modernity," 39. Lejeune identifies a "common practice in the Indies: the open checkerboard plan generated from the *plaza mayor* as political and social center." It is important to note that variation existed between American and Filipino cities and the extent to which they conformed to the Indies plan, which although rigidly codified, was not strictly enforced through legislation. Santiago, for example, was not in exact accordance with the plan even though it was organized around the primary rules, such as the checkerboard plan.
6 Alberto Cruz, "Iglesia de San Francisco," 10.76, August 1964, Serie Correspondencia y otros, Subserie Escritos Alberto Cruz, Fundación Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, Santiago, Chile, n.p.
7 Cruz, "Iglesia de San Francisco." Cruz's observations resonate with other artistic representations of Valparaíso in the early to mid-1960s: Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens's (with Chris Marker and Patricio Gúzman) documentary film essay …*A Valparaíso* (1963) and Sérgio Larraín's photographs of the city, which he began to take in the 1950s but that mostly date to 1963, when he photographed the city in the company of poet Pablo Neruda.
8 María Berríos, "Tácticas de invisiblidad: Arquitectura, juego y desaparición," *Revista Marcelina* No. 6 (2011): 54.
9 Susan Laxton, *Surrealism at Play* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019). Laxton relies on Walter Benjamin's concept of *Spielraum* to inform her definition of ludic surrealism.
10 Laxton, 85.
11 Ibid., 98–101.
12 For more on the Corbusian connection, see Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "The Life of Architecture: the Valparaíso School and the Studio of Juan Borchers," in *Drifts and Derivations: Experiences, Journeys and Morphologies*, eds. María Berríos and Lisette Lagnado (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010), 143–57; and Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, "Ortodossia/eterodossia: Architettura moderna in Cile," *Casabella* 650 (November 1997): 8–16.
13 Alejandro Crispiani, *Objetos para transformar el mundo: trayectorias del arte concreto- invención, Argentina y Chile, 1940-1970: la Escuela de Arquitectura de Valparaíso y las teorías del diseño para la periferia* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones ARQ, 2011), 242. See Chapter Five "El acto poético," especially pp. 239–257.
14 Nicanor Parra, Enrique Lihn, and Alejandro Jodorowsky, "El quebrantahuesos," *Manuscritos* 1 (1975): 2–23.

15 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 250.
16 Ann Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 46.
17 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 250.
18 Ibid., 241.
19 There is little published material on the Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea. For a brief discussion of the group, see María Berríos, "Invisible Architecture and the Poetry of Action," in *Drifts and Deritions*, 73–81. See also the documentary *Godo* (2012); and Sandra Almada, "Santa Hermandad Orquídea e as viagens na direçao dos sonhos," in *Abdias Nascimento* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2009). Many thanks to Abigail Lapin for sharing this source with me. The artist Abdias do Nascimento's website also features a brief overview and photos of the Santa Hermandad, http://www.abdias.com.br/santa_hermandad/santa_hermandad.htm.
20 Laxton, 93.
21 *America*, in the School's lexicon refers not the United States, but to the South American continent.
22 Berríos, "Invisible Architecture," 77.
23 Almada, "Santa Hermandad Orquídea," 62. During the group's geopoetic voyage through the Amazon, Nascimento speaks of a "consciousness raising moment" in Peru, where he saw an actor performing in black face in a local theater production. This incident propelled him to found the Teatro Experimental do Negro upon his return to Brazil and commit to a consciousness-raising cultural praxis focused on uplifting and promoting civil rights for Afro-Brazilians.
24 For context on the *Estado Novo* under Gétulio Vargas, see Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); and for the political context in Argentina, see Argentina Jill Hedges, "The Infamous Decade, 1930–1943," in *Argentina: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 46–60.
25 There is no known archive related to the Santa Hermandad de la Orquídea, although most of the members went on to pursue individual artistic careers and occasionally published their own works. See, for example, Gerardo Mello Mourão, *O Valete de espadas* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Guanabara, 1986). Most of the early histories of the group are known primarily through oral testimonies. See also Gerardo Mello Mourão, "Homenaje a Godofredo Iommi," 2001, https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/Homenaje_a_Godofredo_Iommi_-_CAA_hom_01; documents in the Archivo Histórico Jose Vial Armstrong; and oral testimonies of the artist Tunga, Mello Mourão's son and of Abidas Nascimento in the documentary *Godo.*
26 Mello Mourão, "Homenaje a Godofredo Iommi."
27 Ibid.
28 Raymond Spiteri, "Community at Play," in *Surrealism: Key Concepts*, eds. Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 114.
29 Cruz and Iommi (and the majority of the School community) were ardent Catholics and members of Acción Católica movement, which Cruz had joined prior to the founding of the Valparaíso School while still teaching at PUC. For more on the history of the cofounders' association with Acción Católica, see interviews with Jaime Márquez Rojas and León Rodríguez Valdés in *La Escuela de Valparaíso y sus inicios.* The School's adherence to Acción Católica translated into the specific social and cultural values, such as voluntary poverty, communal living, and charity. The School also rebuilt churches in the south of the country following a catastrophic earthquake in 1960.
30 Alberto Cruz noted that during these years there was practically a second headquarters for the Institute in Paris ("en la práctica una doble sede del Instituto: una en Valparaíso y otra en Paris."). María Berríos, "El cuerpo del arquitecto no es el de un solo hombre," in *Alberto Cruz: El cuerpo del arquitecto no es el de un solo hombre* (Santiago: Fundación Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, 2017), 19.
31 Maria Berríos, "Invisible Architecture," 81, n.21. See also, Shelley Goodman, *Carmelo Arden Quín: When Art Jumped Out of its Cage* (Dallas: MADÍ, 2004), 253.

32 "Interview with Fabio Cruz," 55.
33 Participants in the group included members of the Valparaíso School (EAV Institute), Miguel Eyquem and Francisco Méndez, the painter Jorge Pérez Román, designer Henry Tronquoy, poets Enrique Zañartu, Edison Simmons, Jonathan Boulting, Julien Blaine, Josée Lapeyrere, and Michel Deguy, and, briefly, Alberto Cruz.
34 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 246.
35 Goodman, *Carmelo Arden Quin*, 255.
36 Ibid., 255–57.
37 Iommi, "Lettre de l'errant." The essay was translated into Spanish and published by the EAV in 1976, accompanied by a poetic act. The latter is also digitized in the Biblioteca Constel of the Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong. I cite and translate the Spanish version here and the corresponding EAV (Escuela de Arquitectura de Valparaíso) publication pagination: Godofredo Iommi, *Carta del Errante* (Valparaíso: Edición Talleres de Investigaciones Gráficas, Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad de Valparaíso, 1967), https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/Archivo:POE_1963_Carta_Errante.pdf.
38 Iommi, "Carta del errante," 2.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 2.
41 Ibid.,3.
42 Ibid.,9.
43 Ibid., 9. "La poesía debe ser hecho por todos. Y no por uno," originally published in Isidore Ducasse, *Poésies II, 1870,* reprinted in Isidore Ducasse, *Les Chants de Maldoror et autres textes* (Paris: Le livre de Poche, 2001), 379, 391.
44 Iommi, "Carta del Errante," 5n5. Iommi cites and translates into Spanish "Un poeta debe ser más útil que ningún otro ciudadano de su tribu," in the text and the rest of the quote in a footnote.
45 Ibid., 9.
46 Godofredo Iommi, "Teoría de la Interrupción," in *Diez separatas del libro no escrito: sobre las crónicas de las proclamaciones de la Travesía 'Mar Dulce' o desembocadura urbana en la hidrografía de América Latina*, Claudio Girola, Godofredo Iommi, Alberto Cruz, Francisco Méndez, eds. (Valparaíso: Escuela de Arquitectura UCV, 1985), n.p.
47 Crispiani, Moya Castro, and Torrent Schneider, eds., "Interview with Miguel Eyquem," in *La Escuela de Valparaíso y sus inicios*, 69.
48 Iommi, "Carta del Errante," 7.
49 Ibid., 10.
50 Octavio Paz, *The Bow and Lyre*, cited in Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That is Not a Road*, 45.
51 Iommi, "Carta del Errante," 2. "Pero la promesa que palpita, enteramente viva aún, en su mejor poema, el *Manifiesto Surrealista*, es mucho más grande. La realidad concreta abre ahí su pozo y desborda toda creación poética. No se podía prever que después del Primer Manifiesto se llegaría a cantar *Elsa* y *Nadja*, poemas que son en el fondo y, de una manera muy distinta el uno del otro, verdaderas 'obras de arte.'"
52 Iommi, "Carta del Errante," 3.
53 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 246.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Iommi, "Carta del Errante," 3.
57 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 256.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Carmelo Arden Quin, "Dès le seiul," *Ailleurs* 2 (June 1964): 9.
61 *Arturo: revista de artes abstractas* 1 (Summer 1944). María Amalia García complicates earlier scholar-

ship on the *Arturo* group's perception of Surrealism: "The publication's texts show that, rather than writing off surrealism wholesale, the magazine salvaged and reworked some of its ideas in order to develop its own position." María Amalia García, *Abstract Crossings: Cultural Exchange between Argentina and Brazil* (Oakland: University of California, Press, 2019), 33.

62 Claudio Girola, *Amereida: Bitácora de la Travesía* (Viña del Mar: Taller de Investigaciones Gráficas, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, UCV, 1986), 38, https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/images/b/ba/AME_1986_Amereida_2_bit.pdf. "Santa Cruz de la Sierra, fundada por Ñuflo de Chávez, la proclamamos capital poética de América. En ella cesa la pampa y en ella se inicia la selva hasta el caribe, la unión de los dos ritmos del mar interior americano."

63 Like Iommi, O'Gorman was part of a wave of Latin American intellectuals who began reading Martin Heidegger's work in the 1950s. According to Walter D. Mignolo, "The critique of what today is grouped under the label of 'colonial discourse' has a long tradition in Latin America, which can be traced back to the 1950s when the writings of German philosopher Martin Heidegger began to gain currency among Latin American intellectuals. The most spectacular example to my mind is that of Mexican historian and philosopher Edmundo O'Gorman. His *La idea del descubrimiento de America* (1952) and *La invención de América* (1958; English translation 1961) represent the early dismantling of European colonial discourse. O'Gorman wrote much before the poststructuralist wave, although he had a similar foundation and perspective." Walter D. Mignolo, "Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse: Culture Critique or Academic Colonialism?" *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 122.

64 Crispiani, *Objetos*, 42.

65 *Amereida: Volumen primero* (Santiago: Ediciones Cooperativa Lambda, 1967), 23.

66 *Amereida*, 47.

67 Ibid., 4. I have attempted to preserve a sense of the original spacing in this passage.

68 Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 89.

69 Mignolo, xvi. Mignolo writes that Creole elites were ultimately "self-colonizing by taking on a French idea of themselves as 'Latin,' which opposed them to the Anglo, who represented civilization, and located them more on the side of 'nature.'"

70 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

71 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 5.

72 Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 34.

73 *Amereida*, 98.

74 See Doris Bravo, "Adventures on Paper and in Travesía: The School of Valparaíso Visualizes America, 1965-1984" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2015); Crispiani, *Objetos*, 258–89; Patricio del Real, "Architecture's Poetic Service: *Amereida* and Building a Space for Poetry," *Interfaces: Image Texte Langue* 24 (2004): 201–16; Rafael Gómez-Moriana, "The Valparaíso School and the Construct(ion) of Regional Identity," in *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America*, eds. Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana (New York: Routledge, 2001), 382–431; and Jens Anderman, *Tierras en trance. Arte y naturaleza después del paisaje* (Santiago: Ediciones metales pesados, 2018), 277–303.

75 Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 34.

76 F. Abiola Irele, "Editor's Preface," in Aimé Césaire, *Journal of a Homecoming, Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, trans. N. Gregson Davis (Duke University Press, 2017), x. The 1956 Présence Africaine is considered the definitive edition in the original French.

77 "An Interview with Aimé Césaire," in Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 83, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfkrm.5.

78 Abiola Irele, "Introduction," in Césaire, *Journal of a Homecoming*, 62. According to Abiola Irele, *Journal of a Homecoming* "does not exhibit features of surrealist writing [found] in Césaire's later work, but the gestures it assumes and the outlook it reveals are sufficiently an application of these principles to qualify it as a surrealist poem."

79 Abiola Irele, "Introduction," 60.
80 Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80. Walter Mignolo cites Quijano's analysis of the "colonial matrix of power" in Walter D. Mignolo, "Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-Colonial Thinking," *Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (2007): 155–67.
81 *Amereida volumen segundo* (Viña del Mar: Pontificia Taller de Investigaciones Gráficas, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, UCV, 1986), http://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/Amereida_II. The log "bitácora" is published separately in the School's digital archive: http://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/Amereida:_Bitácora_de_la_Traves%C3%ADa. Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong.
82 *Amereida volumen segundo: Bitácora de la travesía* (Viña del Mar: Pontificia Taller de Investigaciones Gráficas, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, UCV, 1986), 40. Girola notes the appearance of a "Jungle expert" (identified by the English insignia on his sleeve) and hints at US interventionism in the region.
83 For an excellent analysis of the School's proposed public project, "Avenida del mar," in the context of the university reform movement see Nicolás Verdejo Bravo, "La segunda vía: La controversia pública por la irrupción de la Escuela de Arquitectura de la UCV ante el proyecto de la Vía Elevada de 1969," *ARQ* 99 (August 2018): 96–109.
84 Alberto Cruz and Edison Simons, "Crónica del viaje realizado por Alberto Cruz y Edison Simons para proclamar Amereida," *Amereida / Revue de Poesie* 1 (1969): n.p., https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/images/6/6f/AME_1969_Viaje_Vancouver.pdf. See also José M. Bulnes and Vittorio di Girolamo, "Valparaíso: crisis de la Universidad Católica, junio-agosto, 1967; documentos oficiales y reacciones de prensa," *Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC)* 8 (1968). Cited in Maria Berríos, *Alberto Cruz: El cuerpo del arquitecto no es el de un solo hombre* (Santiago: Fundación Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, 2017), 21, n. 47.
85 Jaime Rosenblitt B., "La reforma universitaria en Chile: 1967–1973," Memoria Chilena, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, accessed November 20, 2018, http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-71880.html. The Pontifica Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (UCV) was more moderate in its demands and in its organization. The faculty played a larger role than the students. According to some sources, the *toma* (sit-in) organized by the architecture school in Valparaíso inspired actions at other universities nation-wide. Most of its grievances were internally focused on administrative issues, such as leadership roles, budget, increased autonomy from the Catholic Church, and concerns regarding the bureaucratization of the university. The UCV shared, however, the nation-wide calls to democratize through two key reforms: *una universidad para todos* (increased access to a broader segment of the population) and *cogobierno* (the ability of students and faculty to have a greater say in the election of authorities). See also Verdejo Bravo, "Cambiar de vida: Incidencias en la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso respecto al escenario social y político de Chile 1967 y 1973," *Anales de Arquitectura: Ediciones ARQ y Escuela de Arquitectura PUC* (2017–2018): 272–83; and Nicolás Verdejo Bravo *Cambiar de vida: La escuela de arquitectura de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso y la política chilena entre 1967 y 1973* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2022).
86 Godofredo Iommi, "Manifiesto del 15 de Junio de 1967," in *Fundamentos de la Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso* (Santiago: Escuela de Arquitectura UCV, 1971). Accessed digital version via Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong, https://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/Manifiesto_del_15_de_Junio_1967. In the original version of the letter addressed to the rector, Iommi is not identified as the sole author; the letter is also signed by Alberto Cruz and Fabio Cruz. See http://archivohistorico.ucv.cl/files/historia/19670615_ManifiestoArquitectura.pdf. The reform manifesto was also published in the local newspaper *El Mercurio*, May 15, 1969.
87 At a retrospective exhibition, "20 Years," of the School's activities at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in 1972, architect Sergio Larraín García-Moreno, the dean of the architecture school at Pontificia Universidad Católica allegedly dismissed the Valparaíso School for its naïve attachment to "frases absurdas de poetas adolscentes que escribían sobre barcos ebrios," an apparent reference to Rimbaud.

Since its founding, the Valparaíso School had been viewed suspiciously from various political and architectural factions. See Berríos, "Invisible Architecture," 81, n. 11.
88 Jaime Márquez Rojas interview, *La Escuela de Valparaíso y sus inicios*, 90.
89 Manuel Casanueva interview, *La Escuela de Valparaíso y sus inicios,* 104.
90 "Il faut être absolument moderne" is a line from Rimbaud's poem, "A Season in Hell" (1873). Iommi, "Hay que ser absolutamente moderno," in *Cuatro Talleres de América en 1979* (Valparaíso: Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 1982), 69–85, http://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/Hay_que_ser_Absolutamente_Moderno.
91 For more on the politics of Ciudad abierta in the context of the dictatorship see Ana María León, "Prisoners of Ritoque: The Open City and the Ritoque Concentration Camp," *Journal of Architectural Education* 66, no. 1 (2012): 84–97. León also touches upon the surrealist influences that continued to manifest in the group's activities at Ciudad abierta.
92 Iommi cites Arthur Rimbaud's "cambiar la vida" and Karl Marx's "cambiar el mundo" in "Carta del Errante," 2.