

# The Category of Asian Studies in Chile: About the Object and Its Rules

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*The episteme is not a slice of history common to all the sciences:  
it is a simultaneous play of specific remanences.*

Michel Foucault

*The evil that modern revolution has put into work is similar to that of metaphysics:  
it is that of the words that no determined idea is linked to.*

Jacques Rancière

## Abstract

This research article consists of a study on the category of Asian Studies in Chile. The work aims to describe, synchronously, three instances that characterize its *contingency*: first, the process of objectivation of “Asia”; second, the rules that enable its enunciability and field within knowledge; and, third, the central discourses that intertwine it. Thus, this work proposes that the category of *Asian Studies* in Chile is composed of at least three rules of enunciation: the notion of *bridging*, *practicality* and *similarity*. Such concepts allow the limitation and organization of the different discursive regions of Asian Studies, the range of things it can say and the ways in which Asia occurs as an object of study.

**Keywords:** Asian Studies, transdisciplinarity, transculturality, philosophy

## Kategorija azijskih študij v Čilu: o predmetu in njegovih pravilih

### Izveček

Pričujoči članek proučuje kategorijo azijskih študij v Čilu, pri čemer sinhrono prikaže tri primere, ki označujejo njeno *nepredvidljivost*: prvič, proces objektivacije »Azije«; drugič, pravila, ki omogočajo polje znotraj znanja in njeno izražanje; tretjič, osrednje razprave, ki jo prepletajo. V članku predlagam, da kategorijo azijskih študij v Čilu sestavljajo vsaj tri pravila artikulacije: pojem premostitve, praktičnosti in podobnosti. Takšni koncepti

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dovoljujejo omejitve in organizacijo različnih diskurzivnih področij azijskih študij, razpon tem, o katerih se lahko izrečemo, in načine, znotraj katerih Azija nastopa kot predmet proučevanja.

**Ključne besede:** azijske študije, transdisciplinarnost, transkulturnost, filozofija

## Introduction: From the Views on Asia to the Question of Asian Studies<sup>1</sup>

Ever since the appearance and impact of the “Asian miracle”, which is the name for the mainly economic phenomenon that occurred in Asia during the second half of the 20th century,<sup>2</sup> an extensive debate on its consequences for global geopolitical reorganization has been ongoing.<sup>3</sup> Without the intention of creating a compendium of such discussions, I want to focus on a broad framework: this regional affair, which enveloped Asia as a zone of strategic and economic influence, also made possible the revaluation of the Pacific Ocean when compared to the Atlantic and, at the same time, helped to break and nuance the hegemony of the widespread view of Europe as the economic and geopolitical centre of the world.

Starting in the 15th century, the Atlantic was the predominant ocean for Latin-America: the signing of the *Tordesillas Treaty* (1494) not only ended the legal process on geographic delimitation,<sup>4</sup> but also marked a starting point for the dis-

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- 1 The following article exposes results from the Postdoctoral FONDECYT ANID/CONICYT, Project N° 3190223, titled: “The Museum as a Clash of Gazes: Construction and Impact of the Concept of “Orientalism” in the Institutionality of the Museum from the Perspective of Asian Pieces Collection of the National Museum of the Fine Arts”, where the author is the Responsible Researcher (RR).
  - 2 Only for the purpose of delimiting vocabulary, without obviating that its reach is part of the core surrounding this research, Asia will be understood not only as a territoriality, but as a complex multidisciplinary phenomenon of study. In light of the work interwoven here, the reader will realize that I emphasize North East Asia above all else. This is a geographical area that involves China, Korean and Japan.
  - 3 I describe the progressive interference of the Asian region in the contemporary globalization processes from a double conductive thread: first, in its integration capacity in spite of the diversity and possible antagonism of its constituent states; and second, of incorporating a participant voice in an international community (Delage 2010).
  - 4 As quoted in the book *Disertación histórica y geográfica* (1749, 21) ..., that discusses the bordering limits of the *Tordesillas Treaty*, the geographic delimitation signed consisted of “370 to be counted from Cape Verde to the west, for all that falls to the west of the same line [it refers to the Demarcation Line of the treaty] belongs forever to the Crown of Castile and of Leon; and what is to the east, belongs to Portugal.” (“370 fe huvieffen de contar defde las Islas de Cabo Verde al Occidente, para que todo lo que cayeffe al Occidente de la mifma Linea pertencieffe para fiempre jamás à la Corona de Caftilla, y de León; y lo que eftuvieffe al Oriente, à la de Portugal.”); in other words, the document partitions in a general level, America as an Atlantic zone and a Pacific zone, from which the influence zones would be set. The Spanish-English translations here and below are mine.

tribution of lands in the so-called New World, which accelerated the processes of colonization and the establishment of zones of influence that lasted until the second half of 20th century.

At the same time, a new paradigm of modernity was being made and spread in the Atlantic, and its effects can still be traced in Latin-American societies. Such a paradigm developed in two aspects: on the one hand, a partitioning, confrontational worldview, in which European ethnocentricity is universalized as centric—an ideology of progress—and, in the other, of a periphery—the non-European world—that is incapable of self-understanding. Dussel reflects on this point in terms of dialectic of power:<sup>5</sup>

- 1) Modern civilization understands itself as more developed, as superior (which means sustaining an ideologically Eurocentric position without any afterthought).
- 2) Superiority forces a “moral responsibility” on the more advanced to develop the more primitive, rude and barbarous.
- 3) The road of this educational process must be monitored by Europe (which is, in fact, a unilinear European-style development, that is supported without any awareness of the “developmental fallacy”). (Dussel 2000, 49)<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the growing regional influence of Asia in the last decades of the 20th century has enabled Chile to transform its geographical situation—namely that of facing the Pacific Ocean—into a favourable one with high growth forecasts. Such an achievement is above all due to international and economic integration that speaks in favour of the elaboration of a new geopolitical and economic state strategy. To a large extent, this has enabled Chile to open up to the outside world.<sup>7</sup> I

5 On the same matter, Jean Ziegler develops what could be defined as a crosscurrent, the phenomenon of “hate towards the West”, from three components of violence: universalization of an economic system, capitalism, that would be defined by the monopoly of right and done (Braudel); the imposition of democracy as the only form of *civilization*; and the unrestricted compliance with the laws that define the European development model (Ziegler 2017).

6 “1) La civilización moderna se autocomprende como más desarrollada, superior (lo que significará sostener sin conciencia una posición ideológicamente eurocéntrica).  
2) La superioridad obliga a desarrollar a los más primitivos, rudos, bárbaros, como exigencia moral.  
3) El camino de dicho proceso educativo de desarrollo debe ser el seguido por Europa (es, de hecho, un desarrollo unilineal y a la europea, lo que determina, nuevamente sin conciencia alguna, la “falacia desarrollista”).”

7 As revealed by Pilar Armanet, the current state view on the Pacific begins at the end of the Chilean military dictatorship, in the wake of “predominant geopolitical rationality in certain zones of the previous government and from the armed forces perception of Chile belonging to the Pacific as the fundament of strategic potential for future projections in the following decades.” (Armanet 1992, 42) (“La racionalidad geopolítica predominante en ciertos sectores del gobierno anterior y de las fuerzas armadas que perciben la pertenencia de Chile al Pacífico como el fundamento de una potencialidad estratégica de grandes proyecciones para las próximas décadas.”)

am referring in particular to the introduction of an active presence in international forums, debates and multilateral organizations<sup>8</sup> since the 1990s, in addition to the diplomatic sphere and contacts in the private sector:

The economic weight of the countries in Asia Pacific will continue to rise, in particular that of China, India, and Indonesia, and this will cause a significant modification in the weight of Western nations in the coming decades. This is expected to manifest itself in a shift in economic activity from the Atlantic to the Pacific. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores 2018, 36)<sup>9</sup>

Such interest in Asia, as Eduardo Rodríguez (2006) noted, has—at least in the diplomatic sphere—intertwined three areas that need to be explored: the state, business, and the academic or cultural sphere. This is a theme that is reaffirmed by Daniel Rojas and José Miguel Terán, who emphasize “the diplomatic missions and bilateral Chambers of Commerce present in various countries in the region, as well as meetings between government agencies, participation in multilateral organizations and forums, and the creation of academic institutes” (Rojas and Terán 2017, 244).<sup>10</sup>

In the academic field, attention to Asia has meant the diffusion—or progressive consolidation—of a specific field of research, a concrete intellectual dominion and a place of convergence of certain topics and statements that, by convention, would be defined as Asian Studies (de la Riva 2005).

However, the description of Asian Studies can be misleading: the researchers and academics dedicated to Asia in Chile are not a large community, although they are growing in number. The reasons behind this growth include the foundation of new university centres, the wider availability of scholarships for studying abroad and, in general, the impact of this geographic zone on Chile’s interests (Miranda 2013; Murakami 2017; Götz 2019). It is also true, however, that the work of such

8 For more details, Chile has a presence in APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) forum, FOCALAE (Forum for the cooperation of Latin America-East Asia), treaties with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the new Asian region integration project, the Pacific Alliance (AP) among other examples. For further information, see Pérez Guíñez 2017.

9 “El peso económico de los países del Asia Pacífico continuará elevándose, en particular, China, India e Indonesia. Esto provocará un claro efecto de modificación del peso de occidente en el mundo en las décadas que vienen. Este escenario se manifestaría en un desplazamiento de la actividad económica del Atlántico al Pacífico.”

10 “Las misiones diplomáticas y las cámaras de comercio bilaterales presentes en diferentes países de la región, así como los encuentros entre autoridades gubernamentales, la participación en organizaciones y foros multilaterales y la creación de institutos académicos.”

scholars (due to the demands and limitations of their disciplinary and professional situation, among other reasons) is often located in other, more consolidated and more productive research areas.

Following this idea, could it be said that a Chilean point of view, with a proper, verifiable, academic authority on its statements on Asian Studies exists? If it does, then what are the rules of formation of both the object and its discourses that would allow the differentiation of Asian Studies from other fields of knowledge? How does one identify an Asian Study? What kind of meaning does “Asia” have as an object of study in Chile?

Even if it is not possible to represent the entire production of knowledge about Asia in Chile, i.e. to package the active disciplines that would ultimately fall into the category of Asian Studies or to define their objectivity unambiguously, with this research I would at least like to outline a number of principles that make the appearance of the object “Asia” possible and examine how they influence the authority of the statements of a particular academic field in Chile. This article proposes examining the extent and purpose of the category of Asian Studies in the country, in terms of the rules that define and specify the centric and peripheral discursive regions that hierarchize this field. It also proposes that the first zones of Asian Studies establish the norms of the formation of the object, and the second take over their expressive possibilities, or are shown in a contiguous or adjacent manner, or in that of another order. As a first survey of the academic category of Asian Studies in Chile, this work is also concerned about thinking of itself not only as a starting point for future inquiries or formulations, but also as a potential horizon of thinking with regard to the place occupied by the discourses and the range of decidability that a researcher dedicated to Asia can have, according to the rules of formation set out in the following sections.

This research is part of a hybrid field, set within transdisciplinarity studies, philosophy and post-orientalism.

## **The Study of Asia in Chile: The Existence of Rules, from the Base of the Object**

The academic approach to Asia is not univocal or homogeneous, but it is not random either. In fact, the delimitation of its object of investigation—Asia, or the foci of attention that develop from this vocabulary—is not *a priori*. Rather, it corresponds to the results of successive instances of what has been said, which formulate and describe the field in their genesis and historical permanence, revealing

the types and persistence of certain statements, their problems and legitimacy, the scope and profile of the object; in summary, this study examines how Asia has become more legible, decipherable, and normalized by the disciplinary experience in Chile.<sup>11</sup>

As such, the first question is: What is the environment of Asia, as an object of thought? What dimensions would the invocation of its name suggest in the context of its investigation? The answer can be neither complete nor satisfactory, since its resistance transmutes the purely geographical, democratic or cultural, and thus also the disciplinary fields that verify its visibility as an object. Asia is not just a regional space, a political or economic image, nor is it the sum of all possible signals: it is more like what is offered in the place where all these encounters take place. Such irreducibility is not a metaphysical way of defining Asia; the opposite is true: it consists in thinking of the *historical provocation* in which “its truth” is courted.

I deploy this scope through Michel Foucault, who when commenting on the subject of madness stated that:

The unity of the discourses on madness would not be founded on the existence of the subject of “madness”, or the constitution of a sole horizon of

11 The legibility that I have mentioned has two bindings that, from the general literature of the studies on Asia, have been dangerously intertwined. The first belongs to a conquest with a theoretical-regional weight (a geopolitical verve), as it is situated from a conception or image of the world distributed binarily between a space where Reason formulates Truth, a certainty about the world, and another that opposes it:

A unique image of the world would not be constituted by equal and pacific elements, but by a hierarchy of places [...] The most well-known representation of this type is the global West-East dichotomy, where the West is completely opposite to the East, and from which it is understood that the West should set an example for the East. (Agnew 2005, 18)

Una imagen única del mundo no estaría constituida por elementos iguales y pacíficos sino por una jerarquía de lugares [...] La representación más conocida de este tipo es la dicotomía global Oriente-Occidente, donde Occidente es totalmente opuesto a Oriente, y desde la cual se entiende que Occidente debería de ser un ejemplo para Oriente.

The second concerns, by consequence, that which has been exposed about the East-West dichotomy: the risk of an ontology by contraposition of the object of study, in respect to the speaker. This is developed in Edward Said’s literature, precisely as a set of discourses that allow representations of Asia: [Orientalism is] the distribution of a certain geopolitical conscience in aesthetic, erudite, economic, sociological terms. Historical and philosophical texts; this is the product of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made of two different halves, East and West) and also [...] a certain will or intention of understanding—and in some cases, controlling, manipulating or incorporating—what is manifestly a different world (alternative or new). (Said 2008, 34)

[Orientalismo es] la distribución de una cierta conciencia geopolítica en unos textos estéticos, eruditos, económicos, sociológicos, históricos y filológicos; es la elaboración de una distinción geográfica básica (el mundo está formado por dos mitades diferentes, Oriente y Occidente) y también [...] una cierta voluntad o intención de comprender—y en algunos casos, de controlar, manipular e incluso incorporar— lo que manifiestamente es un mundo diferente (alternativo o nuevo).

objectivity: it would be the group of statements that make the apparition of objects possible for a determined period of time. (Foucault 2017, 22)<sup>12</sup>

The quote distinguishes the two consecutive moments of the historicity of an object: the process of construction of the object, in other words, the accumulation of all the plot statements that are installed in a problematic crossroads—in the quote’s case, madness—and of another, the rules of formation—principles of admission or exclusion, which mediate on top of the *contingency*<sup>13</sup> of the object. In a partial manner, Foucault characterized the possibilities of the formation and existence of the discourse and the speaker as follows:

In a society like ours, we of course know the proceedings of exclusion. The most obvious, and most familiar is the forbidden. We know that we do not have a right to say everything, that we cannot speak of everything in any circumstance, that nobody, after all, can speak of nothing. Taboo of the object, ritual of the occasion, privileged and exclusive right of the speaking subject. (Foucault 1971)<sup>14</sup>

A speaker not strained by exclusionary or prohibitive practices does not exist: his discourse(s) are subject to the fights for domination and regulation; the same happens to an object, which cannot be outside of the contingency or the event of its speeches:

Thus, Asian Studies, dominated by humanities and the social sciences, have been about the study of the “society” and “societies” in the region, in their

12 “La unidad de los discursos sobre la locura no estaría fundada sobre la existencia del objeto ‘locura’, o la constitución de un horizonte único de objetividad: sería el juego de las reglas que hacen posible durante un período determinado la aparición de objetos.”

13 The contingency of the object is, to time, its event. If the interpretation that every object of study is the successive juxtaposition of approximations is accepted, and of certain rules that—in the background—guide the possibilities of what is written about it, then, the contingency of the object has the qualities of an event described by Slavoj Žižek: first, as “an event [...] that is the effect which appears to exceed its causes” (“un acontecimiento [...] es el efecto que parece exceder las causas”) (Žižek 2019, 17), in other words, the historical, successive and simultaneous articulation that conforms the enunciative dimension about an object; second, in even more complicity with Foucault’s lecture, the event is “a change in the approach through which we perceive the world and relate to it” (“un cambio del planteamiento a través del cual percibimos el mundo y nos relacionamos con él”) (ibid., 23–24).

14 “Dans une société comme la nôtre, on connaît, bien sûr, les procédures d’exclusion. La plus évidente, la plus familière aussi, c’est l’interdit. On sait bien qu’on n’a pas le droit de tout dire, qu’on ne peut pas parler de tout dans n’importe quelle circonstance, que n’importe qui, enfin, ne peut pas parler de n’importe quoi. Tabou de l’objet, rituel de la circonstance, droit privilégié ou exclusif du sujet qui parle.”

various dimensions, in the past and at present. The complex plurality of these “society” and “societies”, or societal forms, that do indeed co-exist, endure and enjoy some functional stability, have made it imperative for researchers to apply an equally diverse set of approaches, some discipline-based (anthropology, sociology, geography, history, political science, etc.) and others thematically-oriented (development studies, gender studies, cultural studies, etc.) in studying Asian society. (Shamsul 2006, 44)

The starting points of this research are as follows: first, the concept of Asian Studies (in Chile) does not fit the description of a homogeneous field, a specific type of knowledge or a distinctive object towards which some academics and researchers aim questions. What is stated as Asian Studies is a common place of crossover, a site where discourses, systems of enunciation that come from fields that have been consolidated by the Chilean academic community according to its conjuncture of demand or desirability, unite and meet. Second, and derived from the above, it will be argued that the object “Asia” can be traced, in a safe manner within the academic field, from the discursive context of the political and economic history of Chile. This can be done, specifically, from the perspective of geopolitics, economics, and international relations (Quezada 2010; Wilhelmy 2016), in whose rules of formation it is possible to discern, for the time being, three principles of normativity: the *bridge*, *practicality*, and *similarity*. Language studies, migration, and diaspora, among others, start appearing in a more peripheral way or as a complement to the main subject(s).

I will develop this thesis in the next sections of this article, highlighting the following warning about the focus and limitations of this work: it is not my intention to register or characterize each of the academic works that refer to Asia individually, regarding a specific function, or to analyse their conceptual structures. Neither is it my aim to elaborate a “history of the uses of the word Asia” in the specialized Chilean literature. The purpose of this work is more limited: it is to describe or outline, in a panoramic way, where Asia and Asian (as an object of study) academic production in Chile comes from, and the relationships from which it emerges. Overall, it is a matter of determining from which rules it is possible to generate an accepted and reproducible authority in speech; in short, my intention is to delineate the general situation in which the category of Asian Studies currently finds itself in Chile.

### **The Chilean Political-Economic Conjuncture: The Idea of the *Bridge***

The ties between Chile and Asia can be traced back to the 19th century. Two periods can be provisionally discerned, according to the national literature on Asia: the first would appear with the signature of the *Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and*



*Navigation* in 1897, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Republic of China in 1915, and with the Republic of Korea in 1962. Here, as part of Chile's projection towards the Pacific, we must point out the incorporation of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) to the national sovereignty in 1888. These four all have a similar emphasis, namely seeing Asia in terms of relational politics and the international consolidation of Chile.<sup>15</sup>

Since the end of the 19th and until the second half of the 20th centuries, Chile's relations with Asia were mostly unrelated to economics, and to the various cultural processes affecting Chilean society (Takeda 2006; Paladini 2016).<sup>16</sup> Only a few instances of tension with Asian countries are reported in this time, in particular with Japan, as a consequence of the politics of Salvador Allende and the strained relations with the United States. Such situations put at risk cooperation cultivated at the economic and diplomatic levels, in whose logic Chile was an exporter of raw materials for Japanese industry, while Japan invested in the country:

The relations between Chile and Japan were characterized by the development of an alternative path that describes the coexistence between the daily continuity of diplomatic activity and an active bilateral policy

15 For a deeper understanding, I suggest three interesting titles: Juan Salazar's *Chile y la comunidad del Pacífico* (1999); *La política exterior de Chile, 1990–2009: del aislamiento a la integración global* (2012) from César Ross and Mario Artaza; and Eduardo Rodríguez's, *Chile, país puente* (2006).

16 In fact, from a cultural point of view, the relations with Asia are much more intense, as they are in the middle of synchronic processes such as Latin-American modernism, orientalism and all of the literary and material production by the Eastern travelers. Among the reasons that explain this interest, Verónica Ramírez mentions religion themes, but:

There were other reasons [...] The spiritual crisis, as part of the effects of the discussion on laicization of the State, starring conservatives and liberals, as well as then anti-positivist environment transmitted from Europe [...] On the other hand, the rise to money of miners and bankers after the War of the Pacific allowed their families to afford luxury goods and travel for long periods of time. But, mainly, the strong "frenchification" of our society during the last decades of the XIX century. (Ramírez 2017, 151)

También hubo otras razones [...] La crisis espiritual, como uno de los efectos de la discusión de la laicización del Estado, protagonizada entre conservadores y liberales, así como el ambiente antipositivista transmitido desde Europa [...] Por otra parte, el enriquecimiento de mineros y banqueros tras la Guerra del Pacífico permitiría a sus familias darse mayores lujos y viajar por periodos prolongados. Pero, sobre todo, el fuerte afrancesamiento de nuestra sociedad durante las últimas décadas del siglo XIX.

Hernán Taboada described this phenomenon as a sort of peripheric orientalism, "in other words, one that borrows its central categories from those spread in Europe" ("es decir, uno que toma prestadas sus categorías centrales de las que habían sido difundidas en Europa") (Taboada 1998, 287). In the Chilean case, Mauricio Baros distinguishes two moments: one, pre-configurator of the Eastern imaginary, brought from Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, and another of settlement with the modernization of the state, between the end of the 19th century and 1919 (Baros 2011).

to reduce insecurity introduced by the economic-social transformations by Allende's government, which polarized Chile's growing contingent reality. (Ross 2014, 281)<sup>17</sup>

Another example happened during the government of the Unidad Popular (Magasich 2013), when they acknowledged the People's Republic of China as the state representative of the Chinese community, instead of Taiwan.

The second period in Chile's relations with Asia starts in the 1980s, in the middle of the country's civic-military dictatorship, with a move to strengthen Chile's geopolitical relations, including with Asia, due to the progressive isolation of the country.<sup>18</sup> This was a project that led to the renewed opening of diplomatic offices in Asia, a new emphasis on ASEAN and the region, and in boosting exports to Asia (Wilhelmy 2010). During the return to democracy, starting with the government of Patricio Aylwin (1990–1994), Chile's attempts to enter various multilateral Asian forums, sign free trade treaties<sup>19</sup> and, at the same time, establish national bodies to link with Asia all aimed at reintegrating Chile into the global system. In this regard, the approval of Chile's membership of APEC in 1994 was a transcendental event.

From these earlier events, and in the context of the foundation of the Pacific Alliance (PA) in 2011, it can be seen that the image of a *bridge*—and the various shades which colour it, such as *integration*, *connection*, *platform* or *exchange*—has resonated with regard to the Chilean position towards Asia. In the founding

17 “Las relaciones entre Chile y Japón se caracterizaron por el desarrollo de un camino lateral, que describe la coexistencia entre la continuidad rutinaria de la actividad diplomática y una activa política bilateral para reducir la incertidumbre, que introducían las transformaciones económico-sociales que impulsaba el Gobierno de Allende y que polarizaban crecientemente la realidad contingente de Chile.”

18 After 1973, because of the *coup d'état*, Chile severed its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, except Romania. The human rights issue was a decisive factor in the suspicious gazes of Western Europe and, at that moment, of the European Economic Community. In contrast, Edmundo Varas reveals, “relations with the majority of Asian countries and those on the Pacific were satisfactory and, in the eighties trade relations even increased by a significant amount” (Varas 2012, 79). (“... las relaciones con la mayoría de los países asiáticos y del Pacífico fueron satisfactorias e incluso, en la década de los años ochenta, las relaciones comerciales se incrementaron de manera significativa.”)

19 On this matter, the OECD highlights this liberalizing strategy as one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Chilean economy, even though underlining its inherent risks in terms of regulations and impacts on smaller enterprises, among other points: Chile's trade intensity is highly dependent on international trade liberalization (Haugh et al. 2016). Its wide-ranging network of preferential trade agreements led to low tariffs and higher trade, GDP per capita and employment (Schmidt-Hebbel, 2017), and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership could allow further gains. (OECD 2018)

declaration of the PA, the objectives of the body include: “to build, in a participatory and consensual manner, a space of deep integration in order to gradually move towards the free movement of goods, services, capital and people” (Acuerdo marco de la Alianza del Pacífico). On this issue, César Ross states:

The hypothesis that Chile had to transform into a bridge between Japan/Asia and the MERCOSUR was an idea pushed by the Chilean side and its business committee that the Japanese counterpart assumed as theirs in the year 1994 (Comité Empresarial Chile-Japón 1994). (Ross 2007, 117)<sup>20</sup>

The weakness of the word bridge is that it is indiscriminately utilitarian, adapted by its use to a kind of effort to bring states and their economies closer together, where Chile, in the manner of a stepping stone, would set a transregional role: “This PA has, from its origins, the mission of constituting itself in a privileged forum for the projection of its members towards the rest of the world, and especially as a bridge to the Asia-Pacific region” (Legler et al. 2018, 158). The importance of the bridge also hovers around the logic of international relations, foreign policy and perhaps the field of economics. This is what can be stated on a practical level about this term.

However, I consider that a *bridge* is also a place of manifestation, of individualization, a point of exposition for the discourses surrounding Asia; the *bridge* is more than a meaning, a *telos*, a hermeneutic: it is the formal dimension in which an inseparable requirement of this specific type of literature appears, it’s an element that makes the different inquiries *become related*—the orders of desire carried by a discourse—cohabited as Asian Studies. The *bridge* is the “shut-off valve” that “truly” places propositions and disciplines and thus controls the discourse, through fixing its limits, with regard to the subject in question. And finally,

Not all discursive regions are equally open and penetrable; some are highly defended (differentiated and differentiable), while others seem open to almost all winds and are made without previous restriction at the disposition of each speaking subject. (Foucault 1971)<sup>21</sup>

Putting the *bridge* into play produces the navigation and gradual discovery of its object: then, a dark zone (Asia) becomes clear, separate from other plots, and (re)

20 “La hipótesis de que Chile debía transformarse en un puente entre Japón/Asia y el MERCOSUR fue una idea impulsada por el capítulo chileno del Comité y que la contraparte japonesa asumió como propia en el año 1994 (Comité Empresarial Chile-Japón 1994).”

21 “Toutes les régions du discours ne sont pas également ouvertes et pénétrables; certaines sont hautement défendues (différenciées et différenciantes) tandis que d’autres paraissent presque ouvertes à tous les vents et mises sans restriction préalable à la disposition de chaque sujet parlant.”

producing a distinctive analytic, there is thus an act of formation of new concepts, which in the case of Asia introduces its *contingency*. Otherwise, following Foucault, “defining in its singular individuality a system of formation [here, through the notion of *bridge*] is, then, characterizing a discourse or a group of statements by the regularity of a practice” (Foucault 2017, 99).<sup>22</sup>

The *bridge* points, in its most original and radical level, to the problem regarding the Chilean state in the question: In what way can the unheard of, the unknown, *be thought of*? How to make the object of that which has yet to acquire a body, frontiers, language, and regularity visible? I glimpse in the *bridge*, even as an image, the properties of linking and projection; therein lies its value as a relationship, as the minimum formative unit of the object of Asian Studies.

The bridge bears an epistemological burden: it locates a minimum threshold or certainty—of “making things real”, as Foucault suggests—of the axis on which the object is cut and temporalized. In this way, Asia is not a kind of noumenon, something non-conceptual, but the place given to an experience, an act of utterance, distributed as a point of contact between two shores, two distances correlated by rules.

And the *bridge* is a projection too, since such a link is mediated by the common space holding it, which is in itself a norm of being. This regimented place represents the appearance of the disciplinary, the world that is conjured with a specific sense, and where a set of statements defined by the truth of that appearance can be formulated and transmitted. The *bridge* is thus not a tangible object, but a rule that allows the individualization of objects and the creation of relationships between things. For example, the bridge is not comparable either with the economic value of its parts or with any way of describing its phenomenon; yet the bridge expresses itself through itself as a place for a possible relationship. This place of possibility therefore adheres to rules and allows the visibility of its object—Asia—in a certain way, in which only certain acceptable statements and discourses find their way in. Through the characteristics of the bridge, the market installs a dimension of enunciation, a context of the existence of concrete speech, in which Asia is justified as a commercial or strategic partner:

Up until not too long ago, the relationship between the countries of the Pacific Rim was focused almost solely on their immediate neighbours or the periphery, without the existence of transpacific communication [...]

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22 “Definir en su individualidad singular un sistema de formación [nota del autor: aquí, a través de la noción de *punte*] es, pues, caracterizar un discurso o un grupo de enunciados por la regularidad de una práctica.”

The Asian-Latin-American link has been strengthened only since *the apex of commercial trade*. (Salazar 1999, 27–28 [emphasis is mine])<sup>23</sup>

As a rule of specification of a manner of speech regarding Asia, the *bridge* does not determine the content or knowledge resultant of the groups of possible statements, but instead installs a “surface” of appropriation and formulation of the object. In Foucauldian terminology, the *bridge* maintains its positive aspect, “a field in which eventually formal identities, thematical continuities, concept translation, controversial games can be deployed. Therefore, positivity plays a role that can be described as *historical a priori*” (Foucault 2017, 167).<sup>24</sup> As such, the *bridge* gives a field of communicability to the speaking agents, allows for the historical reality of the statements—in this case, from the discursive domains of economics and international relations, with respect to the object “Asia”. In the present section, we shall use two more cases as examples.

The first clearly expresses the scope of the concept of *bridge* and its appropriation:

This magnum opus [referring to the Central Trans-Andes train project, or *Tren Trasandino Central* in Spanish] is part of the Bicentennial Project and cannot be in any other way since, without a doubt, it will contribute to the concretion and entrenchment of the idea [...] of Chile as a bridge country between the Asia Pacific and Mercosur [...] This strategy of a country that develops beyond its frontiers is enriched today with the concept of connectivity. (Rodríguez 2006, 73)<sup>25</sup>

The second case is a part of Chancellor José Miguel Insulza’s speech for the inauguration of the Asia-Pacific Council in 1998, where the fields of economics, geopolitics and international relations are asserted:

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- 23 “Hasta hace no mucho tiempo, la relación entre los países ribereños del Pacífico se concentraba más que nada en sus ámbitos vecinales inmediatos o en la periferia, sin existir corrientes de comunicación transpacíficas [...] La vinculación asiático-latinoamericana se ha intensificado sólo a partir del auge del intercambio comercial.”
- 24 “Un campo en el que pueden eventualmente desplegarse identidades formales, continuidades temáticas, traslaciones de conceptos, juegos polémicos. Así, la positividad desempeña el papel de lo que podría llamarse un *a priori histórico*.”
- 25 “Esta magna obra [refiriéndose al proyecto del Tren Trasandino Central] está inserta en el proyecto Bicentenario y no puede ser de otra manera porque, sin duda, contribuirá a la concreción y afianzamiento de la idea [...] de Chile como un país puente entre el Asia Pacífico y el Mercosur [...] Esta estrategia de un país que se desarrolla más allá de sus fronteras se enriquece hoy con el concepto de conectividad.”

We must keep building a web of neighbouring relations and of free trade instruments, with the purpose of projecting Chile as the supplier of services and entrance point to the South American markets [...] It must be said very clearly. The reasons and interests that throughout our history have motivated and keep motivating the actions of Chile in the Asia-Pacific continue to be active [...] as a fundamental variable of Chilean foreign policy. (Salazar 1999, 25)<sup>26</sup>

But a *bridge* is not able to totalize the contingency of the topic “Asia”. Nor does it attempt to answer the question of the possibilities of its knowledge. On the contrary, it suspends them, lets them migrate from the field of language. By instituting only a surface of enunciability, the bridge does not question how Asia is possible as a rule. It merely constitutes the field for the enunciative act. Therefore, Asia is never the sight of the untold (that which has no experience or ability to comprehend), but an object that is given to thought in a certain way, already delimited and articulated.

So far, we have excluded two topics from this conversation: The first is the question of whether the communication that the bridge offers is reciprocal between both sides from the perspective of the student and the subject of study, and *vice versa*. The second is whether the figure of the bridge makes it possible to place certain disciplines equally in the category of Asian Studies, finding within it one their places of resonance and speech.

### Teleology of the Object of Asian Studies: A Practical-Utilitarian Way

The *bridge*, as I have conjectured, is a principle of appearance and connection for the discourses on Asia, that allows us to give a location—a field—to its objectification. That being said, the *bridge* describes the limits of the event and the accumulation of statements that create its identity; it also evidences its temporal circulation and the relativity of its findings. What can be said about Asia is not infinite, but is conditioned by the rules of its emergence, which condense the category of Asian Studies. We must now ask ourselves, however, about how the object “Asia” is conceptualized, with some uncertainty due the modality and accuracy of the possible answers.

26 “Debemos seguir construyendo una trama de relaciones vecinales y de instrumentos de libre comercio, con el fin de proyectar a Chile como un proveedor de servicios y como puerta de entrada hacia los mercados sudamericanos [...] Hay que decirlo claramente. Las razones e intereses que a través de nuestra historia han motivado y motivan la acción de Chile en el Asia-Pacífico continúan plenamente vigentes [...] una variable fundamental de la política exterior chilena.”

It could be argued that the limits and homogeneity of speech on Asia and its repetition in the academic space are defined by the related disciplines themselves: from them and through their practices, the problematic domain of the object and its legibility threshold would be formed. Nevertheless, such a conjecture does not answer the question, as it only provides the facts or acts of a disciplinary authority: Do all axioms conjectured about Asia imply a link with an Asian study? In other words, if Asian Studies are the performativity of an attempt of building a *bridge*, is the object “Asia” equally individualized unitarily for all disciplines?

No. The cohesive force, the irruption of the connection of the *bridge*, is radial. There are central disciplinary spaces in Asian Studies—the disciplinary scope—and intermediary and peripheral spaces all the way to their exclusion. What then sets the adherence range of a discipline to the category of Asian Studies? The answer is a teleological quality.

The *way the object “Asia” is thought of* is due to a condition of coincidence, of interrelation of the statement with its goals. It does not mean that Asia is constrained on top of an empirical formulation of pure objectivity and utility in the sense of what has been said, but instead in respect to a specific connective logic that occurs between two objects that sympathize in synchrony, in association: one on an explicit level, the other by rebound.

Elaborating on this, another rule that crosses the different discourses and enunciative modalities, like Asian Studies, is that the object is thought of teleologically. This is, it is thought of in the function of a tool, a vehicle, a calculated intermediation. The studies of international relations, or economics or geopolitics, tend to decode “Asia” as an object from the possibility of an instrumental fit, by derivation, to an additional object. The object “Asia” is not an isolated one, desirable and examined in itself. It is instead subject to infinite connections, comparisons, effects and overlaps with other similar objects, in a highly porous and interchangeable context—the economic phenomenon, international affairs, diplomacy. The goal of Asian Studies is outside of itself, outside of its reach, in the attention to its *incidence* (Sanhueza and Soto 2009).

The following note, published by the European Science Foundation (ESF), is quite meaningful in this context:

The study of Asian languages, cultures and civilizations contributes pivotal insights into the diverse aspects of humanity. European identities have been and continue to be shaped by centuries of interaction and exchanges with Asia in the traditional scope of the notion. *The study of Asia*

*is therefore essential in the making and preservation of our own European identity.* (Sterckx and Luca 2012, 7 [emphasis is mine])

Asia is not the occasion for strangeness nor confrontation, but a sort of condition to study our own representation. Not in the sense of being the object of a comparison, or the application of a transcultural view (Silius 2020), but from the interests and effects on one's own (economic, political, national) identity. In Said's work this instrumental articulation was also announced, situated from a geopolitical perspective:

The East is not only Europe's next-door neighbour, but also the region where Europe has placed its biggest, richest and oldest colonies, it is the source of its civilizations and tongues, its cultural rival and one of its deepest and most repeated images of the Other. (Said 2008, 19–20)<sup>27</sup>

At the national level, I expose this rule from the presentation of some academic research centres and spaces, and the recognition of its intended meaning. At the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, specifically in its Asian Studies Center, the following is expressed on one of its lines of research:

The axes of research are oriented by the great challenges of the new millennium and the needs of Latin American societies of generating profound knowledge about Asian interlocutors and *of augmenting the competitiveness of Chilean professionals in a global society.* (Centro de Estudios Asiáticos n.d. [emphasis is mine])<sup>28</sup>

At Diego Portales University, the Asia Pacific Center has as its purpose “the generation of networks and applied knowledge in the field of business between Asia and Latin America” (Centro Asia Pacífico n.d.);<sup>29</sup> while inside the International Studies Institute of the University of Chile (Instituto de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad de Chile), the new Chinese Studies programme proposes “promoting a stimulating environment for the development

27 “Oriente no es solo el vecino inmediato de Europa, es también la región en la que Europa ha creado sus colonias más grandes, ricas y antiguas, es la fuente de sus civilizaciones y sus lenguas, su contrincante cultural y una de sus imágenes más profundas y repetidas de lo Otro.”

28 “Los ejes de investigación se orientan por los grandes desafíos del nuevo milenio y por la necesidad de las sociedades latinoamericanas de generar conocimiento profundo sobre interlocutores asiáticos y de *aumentar la competencia de los profesionales chilenos en una sociedad global* [el subrayado es mío].”

29 “la generación de redes y conocimiento aplicado en el ámbito de negocios entre Asia y América Latina.”



of multidisciplinary studies that can analyse the relations between China and Latin America and that, at the same time, facilitate the comprehension between those cultures in a global society” (Instituto de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad de Chile n.d.).<sup>30</sup>

To these rather random samples is added a common validation of Asian Studies: the framework of the object is teleological, in relation to a second object that connects it. The first object is the direct corpus of analysis—the way in which the enunciation of Asia is presented—the second object is presented in a testimonial, depositional manner as the phenomenon of using information given by solidarity, succession or communication from the first object. All research that makes use of the various discourses, readability operations of the Asian event, or that allows for a submission to local or regional contextuality, is described in this logic, either in terms of effects, reciprocities, mixtures or environments. I refer to proposals such as “the effects of the slowdown of the Chinese economy in Chile”, or “the economic and strategic importance of Japan in commemorating the 120 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Chile”, “Chile’s projections or challenges in ASEAN, the Asia-Pacific”, and so on.<sup>31</sup>

The complicity of the *bridge* and the *practical-telos* give rise to a game of inclusion-exclusion, a tension brought forth by its justification of the different discourses that intervene in the construction of the Asian object; and to the same extent, they also shape its confines, the hierarchization of its valuation and incidence in Asian Studies. The following quotation synthesizes all that is teleological-practical, as well as projective, of the thinking on Asia and the outline that surrounds the taxonomy of Asian Studies in Chile:

The economic weight of the countries in the Asia-Pacific zone will continue to rise. In particular, China, India and Indonesia, and this will cause a significant modification in the weight of the Western nations in the

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30 “promover un entorno estimulante para el desarrollo de estudios multidisciplinarios que puedan analizar las relaciones entre China y América Latina y que, al mismo tiempo, puedan facilitar la comprensión de ambas culturas en una sociedad global.”

Additionally, I recommend reviewing Santiago Carranco’s article, “Asia a través de la Academia Occidental: un análisis comparativo” (2017), where the incorporation of Asia—more accurately, Southeast Asia—is examined in detail from the international relations course’s curriculum in Latin America, the Andes region and the northwestern view.

31 A split would have to be made, which rather than clarifying would in fact make the issue of Asian Studies more complicated. Within the formative rule of its end, there would be some things that can be said that complements the place of intersection of the great discourses on Asia in a radial way. This is where language studies, religion studies, contributions of social sciences and history come in. Thus, in terms of a taxonomy of Asian Studies (if one can accept this image), the degree of enunciation on Asia is gradual, guided by a centre and a periphery.

coming decades. This scenario would manifest itself in a shift of economic activity from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

If we accept this hypothesis, it would be necessary to adopt the necessary policies to intensify actions taken towards that region by South America, or Latin America as a whole, and in particular to materialize Chile's vocation to be a platform and a bridge between Latin America and Asia Pacific. (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile 2018, 36)<sup>32</sup>

It is a fact that the inscription within the category of Asian Studies of research on the impact of Chinese companies in Chile, the history of diplomatic relations with Japan, introduction of the Korean language as an undergraduate degree, Asian collecting in Chile or the morphological study of the *haliotis sorenseni* have different levels of compatibility regarding *impact on the field*. This also affects the capacity of and insistence on transversality, transit and registration with regard to the concomitant fields, its ability to be compelling and relevant to the way in which the object of "Asia" has been outlined and, in the end, its ultimate viability of acceptance as belonging to this category of knowledge.

### Analogy as the General Normativity of the Asian Studies

In the following paragraphs we shall explain the last rule that characterizes the decidability of Asian Studies in Chile. We are referring to an analogy which perpetrates a role of synthesizing the other two. In it, two possible meanings are consigned: one that refers to the type of intentionality—which is one of exclusion, characteristic of any space of study—of the field to be studied, in which the analogy operates irrupting as an emphasis, a certain procedure, a mode of making Asia happen by *similarity*. The second meaning refers to the positivity which allows the discovery of the object, the structural form in which the tools for its examination are put on the surface, on what a repetition is inscribed on.

Without a doubt, not all propositions about Asia are verified as Asian Studies, nor is all knowledge on Asian things contained in this category. What defines this

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32 "El peso económico de los países del Asia Pacífico continuará elevándose, en particular, China, India e Indonesia. Esto provocará un claro efecto de modificación del peso de occidente en el mundo en las décadas que vienen. Este escenario se manifestaría en un desplazamiento de la actividad económica del Atlántico al Pacífico.

Si aceptamos esta hipótesis, será necesario adoptar las políticas necesarias para intensificar las acciones hacia esa región por parte de América del Sur, de América Latina en su totalidad, y en particular materializar la vocación de Chile de ser plataforma y puente entre América Latina y Asia Pacífico."

position? Is it the impact of the subject of study? The methodology or framework used for the encounter? The academic formation of the speaker? Foucault sheds some light on the matter:

Knowledge is also the field of coordination and subordination of the statements on which concepts appear, are defined, applied and transformed [...] knowledge is defined by possibilities of utilization and appropriation offered by the discourse (this way, the knowledge of political economics, in the classic era, is not the thesis of sustained theses, but *the set of points of articulation about other discourses or other practices that are not discursive*. (Foucault 2017, 337 [emphasis is mine])<sup>33</sup>

The background of the issue—the minimum threshold of retention of the statement within Asian Studies—is the *will to know* (*la volonté de savoir*) that (*re*) organizes the production of knowledge in a determined context, in whose hypothesis lies framed the problem analysed by Foucault in his 1971 lecture at the Collège de France: “Truth is not what is linked to knowledge: each one of these two terms is linked to the other in a relationship of support and exclusion” (Foucault 2012, 47).<sup>34</sup> In a broader sense: truth and knowledge about Asia are in a state of adaptation, crisis and transformation of the view of the related knowledge, in which the intentionality of the subject—its possibilities of speech—is hardly the starting point for articulations of connection, domination or deformation of the object: it is located in the *media res* of the rules of what can be said. Due to the effect of knowledge—truth—the specificity of knowledge is “characterized by the fact that many differences are violently brought together, violated in order to enforce the analogy of similarity, common benefit or belonging and brand them as equal” (*ibid.*, 233).<sup>35</sup> Asian Studies, in their historical configuration, compose a kinship, an *interdiscursive dependence* (Foucault 2014) within the many forms that its object approaches the process of thought, the diversity of possible networks that permeate it.

33 “Un saber es también el campo de coordinación y de subordinación de los enunciados en que los conceptos aparecen, se definen, se aplican y se transforman [...] un saber se define por posibilidades de utilización y de apropiación ofrecidas por el discurso (así, el saber de la economía política, en la época clásica, no es la tesis de las diferentes tesis sostenidas, sino *el conjunto de sus puntos de articulación sobre otros discursos o sobre otras prácticas que no son discursivas*) [el énfasis es mío].”

34 “La verdad no es lo que está ligado de pleno derecho al conocimiento: cada uno de estos dos términos está con respecto al otro en una relación a la vez de apoyo y de exclusión.”

35 “Se caracteriza por reunir a la fuerza varias diferencias, a las que violentan para imponerles la analogía de una semejanza, una común utilidad o pertenencia, y señalarlas con una misma marca.”

On the one hand, similarity is inoculated from the experience of commentary; however, it is limited in particular to the repetition of a restrictive threshold of object analysis, which is the starting point for repetition in a field of disciplinary knowledge. It also offers a commonality between statements made at a distance (what was said at a distance and what is important in its return in an interlinked form).

As Foucault warned, *similarity* is not a simple copy, or a reiteration:

In a discipline, unlike in commentary, what is supposed in the beginning is not a meaning to be rediscovered, nor an identity that must be repeated; this is what is required for the construction of new expressions. To have discipline, the possibility of formulating, and indefinitely formulating new propositions must exist. (Foucault 1971)<sup>36</sup>

Commentary, for example, is recognized within these limits through quoting strategies, bibliographic repetition, and the observance of certain epistemological figures (West-East, Democracy-Dictatorship, etc). These are nodes where the statement takes its foundation of validity, to the extent that *it is in the truth* of that repeated disciplinary fact, which involves, in other words, being within the principles, the concurrence criteria of certain disciplines:<sup>37</sup> “Discipline is a principle to control the production of discourse. It establishes limits through the play of an identity that takes the shape of a permanent update of the rules” (Foucault 1971).<sup>38</sup>

Another mode of similarity in the dimension of scientific discourses is their exemplary status, the element of comparison, which is transformed into a model or

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36 “Dans une discipline, à la différence du commentaire, ce qui est supposé au départ, ce n’est pas un sens qui doit être redécouvert, ni une identité qui doit être répétée ; c’est ce qui est requis pour la construction de nouveaux énoncés. Pour qu’il y ait discipline, il faut donc qu’il y ait possibilité de formuler, et de formuler indéfiniment, des propositions nouvelles.”

37 As an anchor point, the index of decidability of an object is mediated by the conjunction of knowledge of the discipline that intercepts it. At first glance, it can be understood that knowledge according to Foucault is an internal governance regime (of power) and at the same time, a truth: “It is used, then, the word knowledge, which is given and in a defined dominion” (Foucault 1995, 14). (“Se utiliza, entonces, la palabra saber, que se refiere a todos los procedimientos y a todos los efectos de conocimiento que son aceptables en un momento dado y en un dominio definido.”) On the text *Dit et écrits*, volume III he adds: “truth is linked circularly to the systems of power that produce and support it, and to the effects of power that induces and renew it. Truth regime” (Foucault 1994, 160). (“La vérité est liée circulairement à des systèmes de pouvoir qui la produisent et la soutiennent, et à des effets de pouvoir qu’elle induit et qui la reconduisent. Régime de la vérité.”.)

38 “La discipline est un principe de contrôle de la production du discours. Elle lui fixe des limites par le jeu d’une identité qui a la forme d’une réactualisation permanente des règles.”

paradigm through systematic reference to practice: an individual case becomes the norm, or, the norm generates a series of cases.<sup>39</sup>

A second sense of analogy is co-participative with regard to the previous one, whose orientation is rather phenomenic. The analogy fulfils a principle of method, of the possibility of experience. The production of contemporary knowledge from modernity accentuates—in general—the experience of the world from the emancipation of comparison as heuristics, a dialectic that arises from the abstractions of the object of study (called scientific abstraction in science), from the analysis of its characteristics (Balduzzi 2009), and in which compatibility, kinship, assembly or antagonism are examined in comparison with other, similar cases.

However, due to the crisis of positivism, the object is not conceivable as a mere fact given to thought, but rather as a mediation with language and the rules that establish a regime for the (re)cutting of reality. In the irreducibility of the object's experience, what *has never been seen before*, or the *foreignness* as untranslatable, indecipherable or overflowing would not be possible. By contrast, the experience of the world is given within the original horizon of the subjection of the event with the word, the concept and its meaning.

This fact is fundamental in today's world in order to place the scope of the analogy in Asian Studies as a cognitive phenomenon. I contextualize its immediate effect through the hypothesis developed by Byung-Chul Han:

The times where an “*other*” existed are gone. The other as a mystery, as seduction, as eros, desire, hell, and as pain has disappeared. Today, the negativity of an “*other*” gives way to the positivity of an equal. (Han 2019b, 9)<sup>40</sup>

There is no longer an Asia as a new event that is happening—its appearance is not a *strange* event, but a pure communicability, one that corresponds to the satiety of the analogy between the object and its capacity of being assessed by thought.

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39 Regarding the concept of the paradigm in Foucault, and its possible links with the term used by Thomas Kuhn, Giorgio Agamben examines a double connotation in the case of Foucault; it constitutes a case and defines the intelligibility that constitutes it:

Giving an example is, then, a complex act that supposes that the term acting as paradigm is disabled from its normal use so as to not be moved to another area, but, on the contrary, to show the canon of that use, which is not possible to display in other ways. (Agamben 2010, 22–23)

Dar un ejemplo es, entonces, un acto complejo que supone que el término que oficia de paradigma es desactivado de su uso normal no para ser desplazado a otro ámbito, sino, por el contrario, para mostrar el canon de aquel uso, que no es posible exhibir de otro modo.

40 “Los tiempos en que existía el *otro* se han ido. El otro como misterio, el otro como seducción, el otro como eros, el otro como deseo, el otro como infierno, el otro como dolor va desapareciendo. Hoy, la negatividad del otro deja paso a la positividad de lo igual.”

Asia has transformed into an “extension” of the margins of Western discourses and in that, become a forgotten fragment of the radical quest for its pretended universality:

In the West the foreign was for a long time an object of extreme exclusion or appropriation [...] Now, it is thought that everyone is in some way equal, complacently. This way the foreignness disappears once again from the internal, from what is of one’s own. (Han 2019b, 11)<sup>41</sup>

An example: APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), an economic forum for the Asia-Pacific region, is a vital space for Chilean trade development and its advances in global markets since the 1990s. But APEC does not include the object “Asia” nor is it equivalent. It is another object, a transregional forum that establishes its own rules of articulation between its parts and participants, and the ways to form its enunciation. However, for the discourses of Chilean foreign policy and the economic field (in terms of the rules of *bridge-practicality*), the conceptualization of APEC is analogous to the object Asia. Whether the enunciative vocabulary or the propositional rules of the object “Asia” gave an identity and regularity to the object “APEC”, or if it was the other way around, is something that is relegated to obscurity. The analogy then establishes an *enunciative homogeneity* (Foucault 2017), that is, an act of derivation and definition of both objects that, considering Asian Studies, becomes compatible with enunciating it using the same logic, the same form of rationality:

Chile has inserted itself in a determined and successful manner into the Asia Pacific. The inclusion in APEC in 1994 was a significant event, followed by the signing of free trade agreements with South Korea in 2004, China in 2006 and Japan in 2007. *Our relationship with China, Japan and Korea today does not require further explanation, its weight internationally is undeniable* [emphasis is mine]. It does not require a special boost either, as they are our biggest trading partners in the region and there are strong political and diplomatic ties. (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile 2014, 9)<sup>42</sup>

41 “En Occidente lo extraño fue durante mucho tiempo objeto de violenta exclusión o apropiación. No estaba presente en el interior de lo propio [...] En la actualidad se piensa complacientemente que todos son de algún modo iguales. Así vuelve a desaparecer lo extraño en el interior de lo propio.”

42 “Chile se ha insertado en forma perseverante y exitosa en el Asia Pacífico. La incorporación al APEC en 1994 fue un hito relevante, seguido por la firma de tratados de libre comercio el 2004 con Corea del Sur, el 2006 con China y el 2007 con Japón. *Nuestra relación con China, Japón y Corea hoy no requiere mayor explicación, su peso internacional es innegable* [emphasis is mine]. Tampoco necesita un especial impulso, pues son nuestros mayores socios comerciales en la región y hay sólidos lazos políticos y diplomáticos.”

Communicability—a state of extension and oblivion—establishes, on the one hand, the *legality* of the speech of the subject and the field on the object; on the other, its *translation game* is set. Asian Studies, as a frame where the norms of legibility of an object cross paths, puts into play linking procedures, analogical figures, and the unconditional of transmission of a disciplinary speech, that creates a hermeneutic on the *Asian* object: the affirmative opening of an “economic analysis on China”, “an inquiry on the principles of the Asian miracle”, “the geopolitical status of North Korea”, “Japanese translation”, “the Asian art”, etc. Due to the license with which some disciplinary discourses are invested—be it for its jurisdiction as a *bridge*, or usefulness, like geopolitics, economics or international relations—there would be no problem, no *noise*, in the utilization of Western categories for the purpose of giving a certain *appearance* and for the “instrumental” repetition of Asia. Moreover, the Asian object can be conceived for the same reasons as correlate, simile or *double*.<sup>43</sup> It is a “continuous body” in the immersion of disciplinary speech.

The nullity of the *noise* and the appearance of the *double*, derived from the analogy, could be understood as an interruption of the experience of the Asian object. The interruption of the experience is, finally, the radical problem of the limits of language, knowledge and the confrontation with that which is *unseen*, as:

The experience is, in effect, oriented before anything, to the protection of surprises and that a shock is produced always implies a failure in the experience. Obtaining experience from something dignifies the act of taking its novelty, neutralizing its shock potential. (Agamben 2015, 53)<sup>44</sup>

In conclusion, if the academic vision in Edward Said’s work produced representations of the East (which were rather limited to the European colonial regions and distant territories), both in the form of deformations and in the form of an

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43 The idea of a *double* used here is a reference to Clément Rosset and his work *L’objet singulier* (2007). If what is real is that which stays identical to itself, that which is elusive to any form of apprehension, then there would be restlessness about the representation—the image—being made of the world: What is a double? Or, what does a substitute of what’s real imply? I think its effect is similar to the analogical component in Asian Studies: awakening a sense of reality; which is but that of legitimacy for a pretended *revelation* of what’s real in that double: “The privilege of the double is that of proposing, on the most acute way possible, the question of what is real [...] of being a revelator, more or less in the same way the word development is used in photography” (Rosset 2017, 20). (“El privilegio del doble es el de proponer, de la manera mas aguda posible, la cuestión de lo real [...] de ser un revelador, más o menos en el sentido fotográfico del término.”)

44 “La experiencia en efecto está orientada ante todo a la protección de las sorpresas y que se produzca un shock implica siempre una falla de la experiencia. Obtener experiencia de algo dignifica quitarle su novedad, neutralizar su potencial de shock.”

ontology (of the West), one could argue that—starting with Byung-Chul Han—the phenomenon of Asian otherness was replaced by the acceptance of a necessity/utility of communication, in which thoughts about Asia transcend its ontological stamp to correspond as an ideology.<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusions

There exists a conceptual darkness that this research aimed to enlighten, as an initial exploration of the subject: the links historically established between Chile and Asia would transform Asian Studies—in the academic realm—from a supposed specificity and unity. Apparently, as a nucleus of research and approaches to Asia, a concrete domain would also be expressed using this category, a homogeneous and cultivated meaning of a type of differentiating knowledge and, in general, a *will of knowledge* focused upon its object, Asia. This would mean that the distribution of what is Asian would already be determined and differentiated in each of the academic fields of reflection (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian Studies, etc.), in the models of analysis, the possibilities and forms of questioning the object of investigation, and the accessible fields of expression; in summary, the conditions of arrangement for a defined speech about Asia.

This research, focused on the Chilean case, has attempted to refute that characterization. First: the object of analysis, coded as “Asia”, is not a precedent, nor is it passive or mute with regard to the category of Asian Studies. Likewise, the category of Asian Studies has been constructed through significant discursive

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45 By the use of the word *ideology* I am not establishing any *a priori* definition for the subject of knowledge, as could be read between lines in Michael Foucault’s characterization. Refer to: the fundamental codes of a culture—those that rule its language, its perceptive schemes, its changes, techniques, values, the hierarchy of its practices—preset, for every man, the empirical orders that have something to do with it, and within which will be recognized. (Foucault 2009, 5)

Los códigos fundamentales de una cultura—los que rigen su lenguaje, sus esquemas perceptivos, sus cambios, sus técnicas, sus valores, la jerarquía de sus prácticas—fijan de antemano para cada hombre los órdenes empíricos con los cuales tendrá algo que ver y dentro de los que se reconocerá. I point to ideology from a regime that is symptomatic and devoid of a meaning of reality, closer to Slavoj Žižek’s reflection on the matter:

Ideology is not simply a “fake conscience”, an illusory representation of reality, it is instead this reality which is already conceived as “ideological”—“ideological” is a social reality whose existence implies the lack of knowledge of its participants [...] that individuals “do not know what they are doing”. (Žižek 2019, 46–47)

La ideología no es simplemente una “falsa conciencia”, una representación ilusoria de la realidad, es más bien esta realidad a la que ya se ha de concebir como “ideológica”—“ideológica” es una realidad social cuya existencia implica el no conocimiento de sus participantes [...] que los individuos “no sepan lo que están haciendo”.



systems, disciplinary scopes and rules that have drawn the interest and desire of the Chilean State about Asia: the economic, geopolitical and international relations dimensions.

As a result, Asia does not happen “spontaneously” as an object of research, but rather it is formed from successive inquiries and interrogations, the history and juncture of the interweaving of discourses, its statements, and the possibilities of speech that—at a given moment—refer to it.

Secondly, the existence of a declaration or a set of proposals on Asia is not sufficient to authenticate its identity or its belonging to the category of Asian Studies. Instead, it is necessary that the declaration is linked to certain rules of education (and acceptance), which has been indicated as its contingency. The contingency of Asian Studies in the historical modality in which the object “Asia” finds itself is interwoven with laws of appearance, discourse hierarchies, articulation practices and circumstances of repetition at the disciplinary level.

Therefore, not everything that is within the realm of decidability, that is “speakeable”, defines a study on Asia, even if it corresponds to the analysis of an Asian phenomenon. This distinction of that which is or is not within the *truth* of such studies is a central point of problematization about the consistency and the transformations that this category develops in time. Just to reinforce the point about *truth*, I shall utilize Foucault’s characterization, as it is relevant to this case:

As *truth*, I do not understand, in effect, a kind of general rule, a set of propositions. I understand by *truth* a set of procedures that allow everyone to pronounce statements that are always considered truthful. (Foucault 2012, 77)<sup>46</sup>

Thirdly, studying the *contingency* is—and must be—the starting point for thinking about the taxonomy and discursive rules of Asian Studies in Chile. It has therefore been argued that Asia’s contingency in Chile from the last decade of the 20th century on is structured by the framework, discursive capacity and limits that geopolitics, international relations and economics provide and allow. In order for the contingency implied to be a historical event and not just a virtuality, it has been necessary to install certain communicative regularities and inclinations, defined as formation rules, through Chile’s rapprochement with Asia.

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<sup>46</sup> “Si se quiere por verdad no entiendo, en efecto, una especie de norma general, una serie de proposiciones. Entiendo por verdad el conjunto de los procedimientos que en todo momento permiten a cada uno pronunciar enunciados que se considerarán verdaderos.”

As a result, I have described the existence of three units of *contingency*, or *relations*, in the Asian Studies in Chile, without trying to exhaust its consistency or quantity: the *bridge*, the *practicality* and *similarity*. The importance of these components is not so much in terms of the way propositional criteria are established about the object of study, as it is in the conjugation of the order and structure of the things the field of Asian Studies has a right to say.

Fourth, formation rules have a decisive influence on the visibility and event horizon of Asia as a field of exploration and specific genre of knowledge production at the conjunctural level. However, their scope is wider, as they transform the borders, schemata and possibilities of Asia's singularization into a hierarchical network for the insertion of statements, possibilities of discourse, and possibilities of compartmentalizing what is Asian.

Consequently, Asian Studies are not a homogeneous plane of enunciation, even if what is being said is within the current limits of contingency. The rules of formation of Asian Studies imply a strategic network of relations that are excluding and asymmetric, whose form tends to be radial: the closer a speech is to the central disciplinary fields (economic, geopolitical), the more the enunciation is stabilized in *what is accepted as truth* and the act of repetition. By this, we mean that it is legitimized as a specific rationality—an ideology—deployed over Asia.

Fifthly, at present in Chile, and based on from the acceptance and repetition of the contingency on Asia—the rules of formation of what it can say—a kind of dialogue with these regions and cultures has developed, which is unique through similarity. The similarity does not, in the sense indicated here, indicate a comparison or a common point to get to know each other and is, I am willing to say, symmetrical (Dussel 1995). Rather, the feeling of similarity generally attempts to universalize an ideology—or, as Žižek describes it, a false consciousness—in the form of an attempt at “transversal communicability” with Asia. How is this whole and universal intention of analogous dialogue with Asia expressed and pursued? Basically, in the conviction that the formation rules of the object Asia and the disciplinary fields they cover have a discursive modality that can be suitable for any geographic region, any disciplinary field, and any system of proclamation. Such rules also presuppose an ideal, demonstrable and shared *objectifying* ideal. For Foucault, we would be faced with a *threshold of formalization* (*seuil de formalisation*) (Foucault 2017), i.e. a modality of speech and discourse that is no longer thought in the face of a state of non-scientificity, but which is redefined from within its own rules and utterances.

Geopolitics, economics and international relations possess without a doubt an internal re-elaboration of their discursive practices—what could be called their

theories—on Asia. But they have never been deprived of their legitimacy as a practice and set of relations of what can be said about Asia.

As a final result of this study, it can be said that the term Asian Studies in Chile describes all forms of utterance and discursivity that are placed and reproduced as a possible place and in a radial manner within this predominantly geopolitical and economic contingency, according to their rules of origin, positions within the truth and thresholds of formalization.

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