

# THEMES FROM THE HISTORY OF CAPITALISM TO THE RISE OF THE US EMPIRE IN THE PACIFIC,

With Annotations from Selected Works of E. San Juan, Jr.

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## Abstract

This work reconstructs the history of capitalism through the era of European colonialism and the rise of the United States empire in the Pacific. The reconstruction is done by drawing from the works of E. San Juan, Jr., considered arguably one of the great contemporary cultural and literary critics of our time. In this author's view, San Juan's lifetime of works offers living documentation of, among others, the history and thought of the modern world highlighted by the rise of capitalism, laying the basis for contemporary neoliberal globalization, and shepherded to its hegemonic status by the preeminent empire, the United States. In underscoring the history of capitalism, the present work also revisits the colonial project that was carried out in its wake, and the violence and subjugation inflicted on its victims. Here, neoliberal globalization, taught in mainstream economics classes as a benign subject, is seen as providing the ideological and legal rationale for the commodification and the ultimate grab of the global commons for private profit. These have been identified as themes which also serve as subtopics. In annotating the narrative, San Juan's own words are used to interject, clarify, rebut, or otherwise offer critical new insight. This is not to say that San Juan has one giant convenient opus between two covers that treat the history of capitalism; instead, San Juan's history as the one attempted here is collected or drawn from disparate writings by him, composed over time. It is done so not only to honor someone who has offered so much of an example to others, but also to demonstrate the essential unity between theory and practice as an academic endeavor, and to show the possibilities of rendering into action one's personal beliefs and principles as a matter of personal conviction.

## Keywords

capitalism, colonialism, commons, cultural studies, enlightenment, imperialism, liberalism, historical materialism, neoliberalism, post-colonialism

### About the Author

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Any society is founded on the interaction between humans and the natural world in order to transform it according to human needs. The conceptual tools developed in the Marxist tradition enable us to analyze this interaction, to engage in a conceptual mapping of the ensemble of interconnections and the laws of motion that render social phenomena intelligible and open to alteration. Materialist critique adopts a self-reflexive account of the varied interconnections, avoiding any tendency to reify the separations and contacts between different elements of the whole. In this process, the analyst or knower is also examined as part of the critique of the conflict of class ideologies. What this critique foregrounds is the totality of the dynamic contradictions animating class society, not only the major contradictions between the productive forces and social relations, etc., but also the tension between the system of needs of any social formation and the objective circumstances subtending it that underlie class conflict and its myriad sublimations.

*E. San Juan, Jr. (U.S. Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines 143)*

Arguably one of the great contemporary cultural and literary critics of our time—E. San Juan, Jr.—presents humanity, through his lifetime of works, a living documentation of the history and thought of the modern world highlighted by the rise of capitalism through the contemporary era of neoliberal globalization, and shepherded to its hegemonic status by what stands today as the preeminent empire of the United States (US). That San Juan is of Philippine heritage should matter little if not for the fact that his compatriots share the pride and honor of being represented by one who has emerged from among them under similar set of experiences, one who has risen to the ranks of great minds, and one who has not shirked away from the contentious arena of academic and ideological battles of his day, and one who was born into, grew up with, and embraced this set of historical circumstances as an organic part in the Gramscian sense and as exemplified by Rizal and Bonifacio in an earlier generation. He may have been as comfortable in engaging Socrates and Thrasymachus in their spirited dialogue on justice and the Good Life, or sparring with the Sophists over the value of deception and propaganda, or, listening to Herodotus on his view of history; or, conversing with the founding theologians of the Christian Church, Spinoza, and Renaissance man, Machiavelli, over the role of religion and the possible justness of war; or, in a conversation with early modern thinkers as varied as the likes of Locke, Newton, and Nietzsche about the impact of science, religion, and the modern state; or, correspo with late modern revolutionary innovators like Marx and Engels, and,

for that matter, Weber and Freud, also about religion but including the topics of cognition, secularization, bureaucratization, and commodification of things; and, among early twentieth century contributors to revolutionary thought, he may have been in serious conversations with Lenin, Bakunin, Bakhtin, Luxemburg, Gramsci, Lukacs, Kafka, Brecht, Benjamin, Spengler, Toynbee, Hemingway, Pound, Polanyi, DuBois, Douglass, Peirce, and Dewey about overcoming the shackles of conventions, and the conditions for pragmatism, theory, and practice; and the nature of violence, and the limits of rationality; or, under a tree, in a trench, or in a hut somewhere in the peripheries of metropolitan Europe and North America, in endless spirited sessions with Fanon, Cesaire, Ho Chi Minh, Guevara, Freire, Taruc, C.L.R. James, and Cabral on how to dislodge the parasitic colonial interlopers from their midst. Or, sipping tea or soothing homemade wine around a campfire in a remote base away from the prying eyes of informers or state security agents, again, somewhere in the edges of empire while listening to each other's poetry with Neruda, Tagore, Dario, G. Abdullah, T. Rivera, Marti, Heaney, and Soyinka on how each envisions the road to redemption and emancipation. And, in the belly of the empire, in a series of teach-ins with Baldwin, Marcuse, Ollman, Baran, Malcolm X, Marable, Wallerstein, Zinn, Chomsky, and likely also with Rorty albeit in respectful disagreement over the meaning of democracy, socialism, multiculturalism, and color revolutions; not to mention running exchanges with contemporary fellow Marxists, postmodernists, and postcolonialists, among whom could only be mentioned here the examples of Said, Dirlík, Hall, Williams, Spivak, Bhabha, Appadurai, Zizek, Harvey, and Omi and Winant as well as countless aspiring young students eager to learn and willing to join the fray, too many that could not be justly enumerated here, over whether racism or colonialism is over or is merely disguised insidiously under a new name, whether ideology has really ended, and what it means to be at the "end of history."

Insofar as the present task is concerned, it may be said that hardly any philosophical issue or political problem of significance that had anything to do with the birth, growth, and development of capitalism has been left unexplored. Many of these have been identified as themes wherein San Juan's own words are used, at appropriate moments, to interject, clarify, rebut, or otherwise offer critical new insight into the narrative. That this insight results from San Juan's deployment of the historical materialist approach is neither unexpected nor unique. What sets San Juan's critique of capitalism as gleaned from the totality of his works is his faithful reinterpretation of the Marxist critique in the particular tradition of Gramsci that allows him to apprehend, integrate and synthesize, rather than reject as many so-called Marxists with orientalist, orthodox, or superficial Marxist mindset have done, an analysis that recognizes the centrality of capitalist accumulation to understanding individualist-oriented culture, ideology, violence, and foreign security and economic policy in the service of the capitalist monopoly of the US empire, including the maintenance of its hegemony over market-driven

contemporary neoliberal institutions. Equally significant in this insight is the centrality of all that are counterpoised to these, including its recognition of the essence of militant liberatory resistance organic to the struggles of peasants, workers, intellectuals of all disciplines, and the grassroots citizenry at large, particularly in rejecting monopoly capitalism and the concomitant accompanying imperial violence and hegemonic culture imposed on them both in the peripheries of the empire as well as within industrialized societies of Europe and North America, emphasizing the primacy of the social democratic orientation over the individualist ethos inherent in capitalism.

This is not to say that San Juan has one giant convenient *opus* that treats the history of capitalism and from which the annotations are drawn. There is none. Instead, San Juan's history as the one attempted here, with history being conceived as "the passage of time through events from one mode of social relations to another, the past undergoing transformation to produce the next stage of social development, the future," is collected or culled from disparate writings by him, composed over time, and in response to specific issues or subjects, and wherein he offers his own interpretation or assessment. There is no assurance that that approach could satisfy the expectation of each reader but perhaps, at another time, this could be followed up by a sequel focusing on such nuanced topics as San Juan's definition of a problem and his methodology in the context of a paradigmatic approach in the fashion of philosopher of science, Thomas S. Kuhn.

This paradigmatic approach, particularly as outlined by Kuhn, in his study of the growth of knowledge, suggests that knowledge is revolutionary rather than cumulative; that knowledge is shared by practitioners characterized by shared beliefs and presuppositions — or paradigm of explanation — about the nature of the social reality they live in, the definition of a problem, the methodological assumptions, and the particular tools with which to resolve this problem. Particularly for young scholars looking for a topic but mindful of the material roots of knowledge, San Juan's works lend themselves to this approach insofar as these are concerned with the identification, critique, and elaboration of the assumptions of various schools of thought or, in a sense, paradigms, that San Juan more often than not, brings up for illustrative purposes. Operating from the historical materialist perspective, for example, San Juan has, on numerous occasions, intervened to point out flaws in logic, inadequacy in evidence, falsity in argumentation, and/or otherwise the hubris on the part of practitioners of one paradigm or another, e.g., postcolonialism in cultural studies, and structural-functionalism in the social sciences, or that is prevalent in mainstream academic bodies such as Asian-American studies, simply because political power is on their side or that they do not wish to offend this power, the default validation of which often becomes part of their "normal" intellectual enterprise.

What is hoped for after this reconstruction of history, and after the reader has finally read the final sentence, is the reader getting a better sense of what San Juan means by history and its trajectory commencing with the present, linked with its past, described as follows: “Humanity is still separated by all kinds of cleavages, ruptures, discontinuities inherited from the past and reproduced daily by the unequal division of international labor and distribution of resources” (1995). San Juan agrees with Edward Said that much of these cleavages, ruptures, and discontinuities have, in the last four hundred years or so, emanated as a result of European colonial intervention. San Juan writes: “In *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said has cogently shown how the Western epistemological construction of Other in the various disciplines serves the goal of asserting its own supremacy. The modalities of the West’s representation of other peoples do not furnish objective knowledge; instead they fulfill the historical agenda of confirming the ascendant identity of the British, the French, the European in general, over against non-Western/non-Christian peoples” (125).

Put in another way, the Western idea of history is premised on the Enlightenment concept of progress associated with Cartesian rationality, with science playing an important role in the production of knowledge, in the art of administration and governance, in the mastery over nature. The logical culmination of this is the subordination of the individual to the state, and that of the Other to the Self, that Said described. To San Juan, history has a teleological orientation; it connotes a dialectical struggle wherein the individual gains liberation from Western colonial and imperial domination. San Juan writes: “‘National liberation’ is the phrase I used earlier to counterpoint transnational postmodernism.... ‘[N]ation’ and ‘nationalism’ have acquired dangerous, pejorative implications in the West... [b]ecause [these suture] the fragments of colonized lives in popular-democratic mobilization and so [create] the historic agency for change<sup>1</sup> (210).

To any observer, regardless of level of sophistication, San Juan’s works, either in totality or in isolation from each other, are unapologetically political in the genuine sense of the term; consistent with his rejection of the still-pervasive Cartesian binary between empiricism and philosophy, or facts and values, San Juan himself does not compartmentalize between his role as a cultural and literary critic, on one hand, and as a critic of political life as he finds it, on the other. His whole being is political, along with his entire body of work! He acknowledged as much in a 2012 essay when he wrote: “An empty ritualized gesture of Cartesian doubt... cannot be easily sidetracked...,” this in response to the rhetorical question: “After 9/11, ineluctable Guantanamo torture chambers, the Chernobyl-like Fukushima disaster, and total surveillance of everyday life by the Homeland Security agencies, is literary study still worth pursuing?” With his affirmative response, San Juan cautions, “but not in the old way, if we want to connect the classroom and the fabled boudoir

with the outside world, assuming that the binary opposition of inside/outside has not already been rendered useless by the intellectual ferment of the last three or four decades.” This is a clear retort especially to scholars who profess apparent objectivity in their research, or disinterest in politics as something to be shunned but who, in reality, affirm and validate – and never question -- the assumed legitimacy of the prevailing socio-political, as in neoliberal, order within which they operate. This insight is particularly apropos when explaining to subaltern amateur the nature and origin of the field of cultural studies. He writes: “Cultural Studies as new field of interdisciplinary, crosscultural inquiry has burgeoned as an attempt to expand and refine the tools for interpretation and evaluation of texts, the principal focus or target of analysis being ‘culture’ itself. Indeed, contexts—social, political, economic, historical, etc.—determine the cultural object or text being examined and comprehended” (“Revisiting Imperial Cultural Studies and Ethnic Writing” 4). Having, thus, recognized and explained the inevitable and necessary link between cultural studies emanating from the humanities, on one hand, and the study of political and social life as traditionally understood in mainstream social science, on the other, this writer cannot but feel a sense of dismay regarding the failure of mainstream social science to appreciate insights from the humanities, in particular from the vast critical archive accomplished in cultural studies, either owing to lingering compartmentalization of the social science disciplines, or to a sense of hubris about the presumed primacy on the part of any of these disciplines.

One may then, with a deep sense of awe, respect, and admiration, consider the totality of the written works of San Juan as constituting an attempt at a comprehensive, integrated effort at making sense of social reality and history. San Juan’s unique style of making sense of these, in his capacity as a cultural and literary critic *par excellence*, compares with social science attempts at explaining the same phenomena—or aspects thereof—ever since the formal birth of sociology in Europe late in the first quarter of the 1800s. Much like their predecessors of the classical times, practitioners of the Enlightenment-oriented social and political thinkers were confronted with the problem of searching for, and validating, a social order, along with the policies and actions associated with it, with which they could identify, all the while claiming to be disinterested. On the other hand, San Juan recognizes the current global order putative to colonialism and imperialism as unjust and oppressive, and does not deny, as a scholar and as a human being, that an emancipatory alternative is due. All these should be clearer throughout the remainder of this essay in elucidating the interconnections between capitalism, colonialism, and the rise of the US empire through his annotations commencing with the section that follows.

## II.

## II. BIRTH OF CAPITALISM

Marxism begins with a grasp of the social totality in its historical development. The key concept is the mode of production consisting of productive forces and of relations of production.

*E. San Juan, Jr. ("Marxism and the Race/Class Problematic")*

In exploring the subject of this chapter, salute is given to earlier, more comprehensive efforts to understanding the origins and expansion of capitalism over the four hundred years prior to and up to the rise of the United States (US) empire in the Pacific. The monumental, critically-received two-volume work of French historian Fernand Braudel, entitled *Civilization & Capitalism 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century*, deserves special mention. While shying away from a historical materialist approach, Braudel nonetheless offers rich information which he has unearthed using his pioneering social historical approach. He influenced later scholars who proceeded to further investigate the nature of international political economy engendered by capitalism's wake. One of these was Immanuel Wallerstein who, in 1974, published the first in a series of books, headlined *The Modern World-System*, exploring the global capitalist-oriented economic system and expounding on what has come to be known as world systems theory. Wallerstein's gratitude to Braudel was evidenced by his founding in 1976 of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations, based at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

A less sweeping but no less influential to this author is Michel Beaud's *A History of Capitalism 1500–2000*. Here, Beaud offers a synthesis of capitalism's five-hundred-year career wherein he also brings together, using his expressly historical materialist approach, the various social, cultural, religious, and economic influences that have made possible the growth and persistence of capitalism up until the post-Cold War era.

No pretense is given in this present work that the above-mentioned works are being imitated, for that would be foolhardy. Instead, they are offered as essential references to any student eager to pursue further the subject matter touched upon in this essay, particularly the themes herein selected for discussion. San Juan discusses these in his disparate works herein collected to help form a coherent narrative about the history of capitalism and empire but, more significantly, to highlight critical events that punctuate this history, e.g., the theft of the commons, the enclosure movement, the transformation of the Westphalian state as class



instrument, the social construction of slavery and the subjection of women, and the conquest of the non-European world, including the Philippines. All of these highlights are intended to show that, for San Juan, history's trajectory could not be anything but emancipation and recognition of the subjected peoples' own agency for their liberation from the alienating and exploitative conditions that this system, borne out of the accumulation of wealth by the few, has imposed on them.

### *Conversion of the Commons*

As alluded to above, the modern period ushered in a mode of thinking that cultivated the individualist ethos and with a secular frame of mind that spelled the end of the scholastic medieval cosmology. Much of this happened in the seventeenth century including the publication of Galileo's monumental *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems* (1632), and Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687). Three short years following the publication of Newton's epic work, a political philosopher rises to give vent to his liberal inclinations and, in effect, to complement his counterparts in the physical and mathematical sciences. This philosopher was John Locke, known mainly as a political philosopher but who also had important economic thoughts to contribute. In fact, his theory on property has inspired much of what has come to be known as "colonial capitalism." Scholar Onu Ulas Ince, in a recent essay, "John Locke and Colonial Capitalism: Money, Possession, and Dispossession," makes an important argument that Locke formulated a double-edged theory of appropriation and expropriation used "to justify the dispossession of Native Americans by English colonial expansion" (4–15). In his 1690 essay, *Second Treatise on Government*, in its Chapter V dealing with property, Locke quite literally and figuratively unlocked the mystery of how to turn the commons, which he acknowledged as God's gift to all of humanity, into private property. He writes, in Section 26: "God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life, and convenience."

Thus begins his assault on the commons, encouraged by the Enlightenment emphasis on rationality and order, by emphasizing the attribute of reason which, by implication, the Englishman and, by further extension, the Europeans, possessed and which the non-Europeans—who would later be colonized—did not. Locke buttressed this in Section 27 of the same work by an additional attribute: labor. Locke writes:

Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person.... The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his.

An important feature of capitalism which Locke reinforced was the use of money. On this matter, Ince explains that Locke believed that “money’s capacity to store value unleashes the productive powers of labor in a drive to ‘increase the common stock of mankind’ and thereby secures a moral high ground for capitalist appropriation by associating it with universal benefits” (Ince 2). These benefits, however, were not to be enjoyed by the indigenous population. According to Ince, Locke’s conceptualization of money was “at the point of intersection between the possessive and the dispossessive” which coalesce into what Locke would visualize as “possessive universalism.” Ince explains that this vision is what justified “the English territorial occupation of the New World by sanctioning a private productive and accumulative mode appropriation as the superior and morally exalted basis of property” (2). The native Americans were simply not meant to be served by this conception of appropriation, for the necessary twin brother of this is the dispossession of the native peoples. As shown in the succeeding section, Locke’s economic thought on possessive universalism which had a devastating effect on the black slaves from Africa as well as on the indigenous population in the New World. It also had a tremendously exploitative effect on his fellow Englishmen but who happened to be poor and largely agrarian in their background as they fell victim to the incipient enclosure movement which his ideas helped unleash and which was led by the landed gentry and elements of the rising middle class of which he was a part.

### *The Enclosure Movement and the Rise of the Slave-Plantation Complex*

The growth and development of capitalism have been due largely to the demand by the mercantile class for greater freedom in the economic realm and the expansion of their claims over the commons by virtue of their industry. One of the infamous methods by which this was accomplished was through the process of enclosures, an emanation from Locke’s philosophical writings that became common in England during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Although in practice the enclosure movement had its origins in northern Europe, it became a practice, sanctioned by Parliament through the passage of the General Enclosure Act of 1801, by which the English aristocracy and the rising merchant class began taking control and ownership of land, village by village, that had previously been owned in common by its inhabitants.

The pervasiveness of the enclosure movement was evidently made possible with legislative justification and the Crown’s explicit support. Containing rudimentary features of what is known today as privatization, the enclosure movement was bound to be controversial and was, in fact, bitterly resisted among those who were displaced or were about to be dispossessed. Social conflict, thus, was attendant

to the rise and expansion of the wealth of those whom Marx would later call the bourgeoisie, advocates of a presumably self-regulating, incipient economic system which Adam Smith called capitalism.<sup>2</sup> The class conflict generated by the enclosure movement was described by Karl Polanyi, in his book, *The Great Transformation*, in the following words:

Enclosures have appropriately been called a revolution of the rich against the poor. The lords and nobles were upsetting the social order, breaking down ancient law and custom, sometimes by means of violence, often by pressure and intimidation. They were literally robbing the poor of their share in the common, tearing down the houses which... the poor had long regarded as theirs.... (35)

The confluence of interests between the advocates of the emergent capitalist system, on one hand, and those that wielded the levers of political power, on the other, became a matter of practical necessity. Those sectors of society that had wealth needed political power, and the law, on their side to protect and extend their interests, belying their argument that the economic system was “self-regulating” enough without the aid of the state. As Polanyi explains:

The government of the Crown gave place to government by a class – the class which led in industrial and commercial progress. *The great principle of constitutionalism became wedded to the political revolution that dispossessed the Crown....* (Emphasis added; 38)

While the major writings of Locke helped to provide the rationale for the assault on the commons and the growth and development of the enclosure movement, Locke also god-fathered the rise of the slave-plantation complex characterized by the dispossession of land from the native Americans and the free use of labor by slaves forcibly taken from Africa. By the end of the eighteenth-century, as Ince explains, “the critical importance of the plantations in the total scheme of English trade prompted the English state to become actively involved in the Atlantic slave trade” (4–5). As Ince further clarifies:

those at the helm of the state knew that there would be no English Empire without the Caribbean and its sugar, slaves, and demand for mainland staples and English manufactures. Guided by the English ‘commercial reason of state,’ the plantation economy was actively expanded and harnessed to the metropole, demographically via colonial migration, and institutionally through colonial charters and the promulgation of the Navigation Acts. (5)

*Class Formation, and the Social Construction of Gender and Race*

The sharpening of class lines in England at this time provides a perfect illustration of the process Karl Marx had explained as one among varied conditions for the formation of class.<sup>3</sup> The accumulation of capital on the part of the rising bourgeoisie was complemented by corresponding claim to political power, either directly or indirectly, with laws and political decisions designed to preserve and protect bourgeois assets and privileges. This is an important point indeed to understand in order to appreciate the nature of capitalist growth.

At the same time, we see the beginnings of a sense of alienation on the part of workers, with exploitative remuneration for their labor, worsening work conditions, and increasing squalor in towns and villages. Even highly skilled and educated workers, e.g., doctors, lawyers, and professors, could not escape the capitalist exploitation of their skills, talents, and experience as their respective professions are commodified and, hence, seen more and more as potential sources of profits rather than as providing services that society needs. Marx and Engels had predicted as much in their pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto* wherein they wrote: “The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers” (15). Marx and Engels could not be more prescient in their analysis in foretelling today’s trends, e.g., the corporatization of educational institutions, and the privatization of what used to be vital public functions in such areas as healthcare, the postal service, transportation, including the public airwaves and the environment.

Meanwhile, inequality in relations between sexes was becoming more manifest as women were objectified and subjected to exploitation and abuse. Insight on the impact of capitalism on gender relations is offered by San Juan in the following passage:

In the now classic treatise, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Friedrich Engels formulated the cardinal insight that the inequality of the sexes coincided with the rise of class society: “The overthrow of mother right was the world-historical defeat of the female sex”... Within the patriarchal monogamous family based on private property..., Engels added, “the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children”... Women were relegated to the private sphere of the kitchen and boudoir under male authority. Historically, the form of patriarchal supremacy is a result of the class

contradictions prevailing at a particular stage of social development, from savagery to slave, feudal, and capitalist stages.... Structural coercion based on the male's inalienable right to property defined women's differential access to resources and their unequal life-chances. ("Sisa's Vengeance" 1)

Even the great liberal utilitarian thinker, John Stuart Mill, took note of the subjection of women by writing an essay (1869) which he titled just that. By way of criticizing the bourgeoisie, Karl Marx actually gave a small compliment to Mill when he wrote, in Chapter 16 of *Capital*, the following: "On the level plain, simple mounds [referring metaphorically to the likes of J.S. Mill] look like hills; and the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects." In this essay, Mill notes that the subjection of women, as a social construction, was a universal phenomenon that women never agreed to their own subjection, but that this condition was a product of what men assumed to be their prerogative which they (the men) then legitimated through laws. In Mill's own words, the subjection of women was owed to "the value attached to her by men.... Laws and systems of polity always begin by recognising the relations they find already existing between individuals" (127).

As the European powers expanded beyond Europe and embarked on their respective colonial projects, they brought with them their habits, mercantile systems, laws and institutions and imposed them on their subjects. San Juan takes the case of Spanish colonialism and its impact on women in the Philippines in particular, in the following passage:<sup>4</sup>

Spanish colonialism destroyed that egalitarian communal setup. It ushered a thoroughgoing gender differentiation with the institutionalization of private property, monogamy, and the patriarchal authority of fathers within the family. The cloistering of women within the male-dominated household limited them mainly to accomplishing religious and household duties.... With the church regulating women's bodies/sexuality and imposing a regime of chastity, women displaced from work and driven to prostitution or vagrancy were confined to convents and public jails, or deported to Palawan. ("Sisa's Vengeance" 3)

It may be said that observation about the twin developments of the sharpening class lines and heightening gender inequality as discussed above illustrates the verity of the Marxian formulation of accumulation as inherent to what has been referred to as "historical-geographical capitalism." This formulation is significant in that while the bulk of proponents of the Enlightenment values in Europe subscribed to the liberal ethos, not everyone joined the bandwagon. This was illustrated by the emergence of the historical materialist critique propounded most persuasively by

Marx and Engels who challenged the appropriation of the Enlightenment legacy by the liberal establishment with which it became inevitably intertwined.<sup>5</sup>

Just as this formulation was accurately descriptive of the conditions Marx and Engels had observed in Europe in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it became prescient in providing a basis for anticipating not only the nationalization of the state essential in understanding European expansion and colonization.<sup>6</sup> That explains to a significant degree the subsequent shaping of colonial policies and of Europe's relationship with the rest of the world. Despite the fact that Europe's expansion was conditioned by morally loaded but racialized and gendered justifications, e.g., the British sense of the "White Man's Burden" and the French conception of "*Mission civilisatrice*"—a sense of determinism about the superiority of European civilization over any other—and reinforced by Charles Darwin's biological theory on natural selection, and encouraged, further, by religiously inspired work ethic, the European colonial venture was anything but civilizing and ennobling.<sup>7</sup>

The racialized assumptions lurking behind the European and, later, North American, civilizing mission was manifested beyond merely considering "the darker races of mankind" (to borrow a phrase from W.E. B. Du Bois) as inferior. Indeed, the social construction of these races went so far as to have them treated as property. As Mill alluded to in a quoted passage above, laws and statutes had, in fact, been passed legislatively defining slaves as property, securing the rights of owners, and facilitating the trade in slaves. As a case in point, by 1678, Britain had allowed the trading of its colonial subjects as slaves. In 1713, with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht ending the War of the Spanish Succession, England was committed to supply Spain's colonies with as much as four thousand slaves annually. Also, for its part, the US Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scot case in 1857 affirmed the right of owners to retrieve fleeing slaves as property and, despite Lincoln's emancipation proclamation and subsequent reconstruction following the Civil War, the former slaves and their descendants fared not much better, with the insult added to injury by the High Court's Plessy decision of 1896.

Indeed, the passage and enforcement of these laws and decisions sanctioning slavery and the slave trade, both in England and in the US particularly prior to the US Civil War was an important marker in the growth and development of capitalism. The laws and the role of religion made sense to the extent that they were part of the legitimating superstructure that allowed the forces of capital to flourish and grow. From the historical-materialist perspective, racism and its manifestation through slavery were integral to the economic structure at the time. This was recognized as much by Du Bois in his 1891 essay, entitled "The Enforcement of Slave Trade Laws" wherein, as San Juan explains, "Du Bois analyzed the interface between ideology,

politics, and economic structure. 'If slave labor was economic god, then the slave trade was its strong right arm; and with Southern planters recognizing this, and Northern capital unfettered by a conscience, it was almost like legislating against economic laws to attempt to abolish the slave trade by statutes....' Legal ideology and economic practice were so intricately meshed that one cannot privilege one category over the other" ("African Americans in the Philippine Revolution" 1).

The experience with the dialectical relationship between race and class in the US, with its Civil War, and in Britain contending with Irish resistance, as observed by Marx, has led Marx to modify his unilinear view of historical development. This is explained by San Juan who, referencing a recent study done by economic historian Kevin Anderson on Marx and the Third World, writes:

By 1853, and especially in his studies of Russia and non-western formations., Marx formulated a multilinear and non-reductionist theory of social change.... Anderson concludes that Marx's mature social theory "revolved around a concept of totality that not only offered considerable scope for particularity and difference but also on occasion made those particulars – race, ethnicity, or nationality – determinants for the totality"... In 1862, before the Emancipation Proclamation, Marx had already conceptualized the... revolutionary agency of "free Negroes" as a crucial element in the victory of the Union forces. ("African American Internationalism")

### III. COLONIALISM, OLD AND NEW

...This racial genealogy of the empire followed the logic of capital accumulation by expanding the market for industrial goods and securing sources of raw materials and, in particular, the prime commodity for exchange and maximizing of surplus value: cheap labor power. This confirms the enduring relevance of Oliver Cromwell Cox's proposition that '[R]acial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict' (1948, 485).

*E. San Juan, Jr. (In the Wake of Terror 4)*

#### *Justifications and Rationalizations*

The modern state system was ushered in by the Treaty of Westphalia signed in October 1648, ending the Thirty Years War. More significantly, it signaled the decline of universal ecclesiastical authority and necessary foundation for the rise and persistence of the secular, modern state. This modern state claimed such attributes

as sovereignty, territoriality, and juridical authority. Further, this state, claiming monopoly on the use of force, is represented by a government whose purpose is to make laws, enforce the same, extract compliance from among the citizens, and organize a military force. But more importantly, the Treaty of Westphalia signified “the reorganization of political space in the interest of capital accumulation” and, further, signaled, writes San Juan, “the birth, not just of the modern inter-state system but also of capitalism as a world-system” (*In The Wake of Terror* 108).

No truer illustration could be had than the inter-state competition among the mercantile states of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Motivated by wealth accumulation, they raced across the globe and tried to control as much of the world’s resources, including labor and market, as possible. The slave trade was an essential component. San Juan quotes Marx as having described this trade as ushering in capitalism’s “rosy dawn”<sup>8</sup> (Vol. I: 823). Further, in their bid to attain these goals, it was not unusual for the European powers to fight among each other as illustrated by the cases of the British-French wars over Canada, between the 1680s until the 1760s with each side using and manipulating indigenous Indians as allies; the Opium Wars, fought in various stages during the late 1830s through the early 1860s, mainly by Britain against China but also involving France as a secondary player;<sup>9</sup> and the Boer Wars fought mainly between the British, on one side, and the Afrikaners, of Dutch descent, over South Africa during much of the 1890s up until the early 1900s. Even with attempts to diplomatically resolve issues, as in the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 to partition Africa, wars and skirmishes along colonial borders were nevertheless commonplace. While, in the late 1890s, among the European powers, the Permanent Court of Arbitration was set up with the goal of “seeking the most objective means of ensuring to all peoples the benefits of a real and lasting peace,” this did not prevent the onset of World War One as legal frameworks like this simply proved inadequate or useless in curbing the appetites for capitalist-driven expansion and profit through war.

### *The Claim to Exceptionalism of US Imperialism*

On the part of the US, it was not so much the territorial aggrandizement of the European powers that led the Americans to see themselves as morally superior to the Europeans; it was, rather, their (i.e., the Europeans’) apparent violence and brutality towards their respective subject peoples. Specific illustrations of these were the Belgian practice of chopping off of the hands of captured escaped slaves in the so-called Congo Free State commencing in the 1880s; the British practice of beheadings of captured slave rebels, with their heads impaled in poles planted alongside roads in Jamaica during the 1820s and 1830s; the French violence toward the Tuaregs and other indigenous inhabitants of Algerian Sahara during the so-called



*pénétration pacifique* (“peaceful conquest”) of North Africa during the second half of the 1800s; the viciousness of the Portuguese in creating “a management culture of violent domination and abuse” over its colonial possessions particularly of Brazil, Guinea, and Cape Verde; and the violent Dutch “civilizing” expeditions in West Papua during the 1880s, again involving beheadings, all throughout the colonial period.

Inter-European wars and brutal pacification campaigns of their native subjects during much of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, including the practice of *reconcentrado* deployed by the Spaniards against native Cubans prior to the US intervention in 1898, later to be popularly known as strategic hamleting replicated by the US military during the Philippine pacification campaign, were recounted in Gillo Pontecorvo’s classic 1969 film, *Burn*, set in the section of the Caribbean region known as Lesser Antilles in a fictional Portuguese island of Quemada during the 1840s.<sup>10</sup> In that film, we also see recounted the British manipulation of domestic politics in Quemada, maneuvering the second generation Portuguese elites (or creoles) to declare their independence from Portugal. A prominent character that enabled and facilitated much of these events to happen was that by Sir William Walker (played by Marlon Brando) who was not so much an agent of the British Crown but, rather, by the British West Indies Company, chartered by the Crown, that sought to establish sugar monopoly. Walker’s role is a variant of the economic jackal, an important feature of contemporary neoliberal globalization described in John Perkins, book, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*.

Upon the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, under terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, the shift in US colonial administration from military to civilian rule was put into motion. Beginning January 1899, the colony was ruled through a succession of so-called Philippine Commissions headed by a Commissioner appointed by the US President. The First Commission, headed by Jacob Schurman, issued a report expressing the view that “Should our power by any fatality be withdrawn, the commission believed that the government of the Philippines would speedily lapse into anarchy...” Thus, in March 1900, McKinley appointed the Second Philippine Commission headed by William Howard Taft. This body practically served as the colony’s virtual government headed by a Governor-General, later to be subsumed under the Philippine Organic Act of 1902. The Second Philippine Commission was granted limited executive, legislative, and judicial powers enabling it to issue laws, draw up a penal code, and establish a judicial system, including a supreme court. It was also under Taft’s governorship that a highly centralized public school system was established in 1901. With English as its medium of instruction, the Taft Commission authorized the recruitment of teachers from the US.<sup>11</sup> Under this program, some five hundred teachers boarded the US transport vessel *Thomas* in what would later be described aptly by award-winning professor of literature

and creative writing, Dinah Roma-Sianturi, as a “pedagogic invasion” (“Pedagogic Invasion”), and by San Juan as “scholastic pacification” (U.S. Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines xxi).

A notable personality that was to shape the work of both Commissions was Dean C. Worcester, a professional zoologist by training and appointed by McKinley to serve in both the Schurman and the Taft Commissions, the only person holding such a distinction, and after whom, ironically, a women’s dormitory was named at colonial-era Silliman Institute, now Silliman University (more below), ironic because, as a top-level official in the colonial bureaucracy, he helped to fashion and normalize policies based on the assumptions that the Filipinos were “uncivilized” and “savages” which he sought to demonstrate, under the guise of science, through his so-called ethnographic studies involving what would be regarded today as sexual exploitation. Asian American literature and cultural studies scholar Nerissa Balce describes this in her series of studies, and writes: “Worcester even manipulated or coerced his young female subjects to disrobe their traditional clothes, and pose suggestively for his ‘ethnographic’ portraits. And these thousands of photographs were... widely advertized in America than anything else connected to the Islands” (“The American Vampire” 1–2).

After just under two decades of US colonial rule in the Philippines, Charles Burke Elliott, a former member of the Second Philippine Commission, expressed a gendered and racialized representation of the US empire, in his 1917 report. Recalling Admiral George Dewey’s victory over the Spanish armada at the Battle of Manila Bay in May 1898, and using the affectionate and femininized term “Columbia” to refer to the US, Elliott wrote that Columbia “was then full grown,” and Dewey’s battle in Manila Bay was a sort of national “coming out party.” In another breadth, Elliott justified expansionism because “virile nations are and have always been colonizing nations,” as quoted in Opisso.

The claim to the exceptional nature of US imperialism, based among others on patently less-than-truthful description of Filipino resistance to US rule, is reinforced uncritically by mainstream scholarship particularly imbued with the functionalist framework. San Juan cites, for example, the 1982 work of historian David Joel Steinberg, entitled *The Philippines: A Singular and a Plural Place*. In this book, San Juan observes that Steinberg gives credit to Filipinos for having presumably undergone a growth and maturation process as in an organism, and for behaving in such a manner as to positively influence US colonial policy to be a “self-liquidating” one, a feat hardly matched by any European colonial counterpart (“The Philippines” 73).

Another US-based writer on whom San Juan trains his critical eye is Stanley Karnow, author of *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*. San Juan describes this book as “probably the most effective tool of persuasion for what I would call the apologetic mode of Filipinology sustained by the insidious epistemological paradigm of structural-functionalism of the Cold War era” (“The Filipino-American War”). Apologists like Karnow essentially exculpate the US from any responsibility for the conduct of the military conquest and the brutal pacification campaign throughout the Philippines, ignoring material factors altogether. Further, Karnow and his fellow self-appointed Filipinologists, including Steinberg, ignore the conscious and deliberate design of the architects of colonial rule to utilize the collaborationist local elites or native aristocracy, facilitated by the teaching and the imposition of the English language, and the *pensionado* program, commencing in 1903, which enticed eager and ambitious Filipinos to travel to and study in the US, and learn about the American culture and inculcate in them individualistic values. As San Juan writes: “While the U.S. imperial power preserved the tributary order via the institutionalization of patronage..., the use of English by apprentice writers fostered individualism through the modality of aesthetic vanguardism. Personal liberation displaced the dream of national sovereignty” (*After Postcolonialism* 104–105).

*1898 and the Nexus of Global Events: The Spanish-American War and the Expansion of the US Empire*

Global events in 1898 seemed to offer the US a fortuitous opportunity to demonstrate its exceptionalism from the Europeans. In February 1898, the US battleship, *USS Maine*, on a visit to Havana, Cuba, then a Spanish colony, exploded, killing over two hundred and fifty naval personnel. By that time, the Cuban revolutionaries had issued an appeal to the US government for military assistance, consisting of small arms with which to fight, and US naval blockade of the island to prevent Spanish vessels both from entering and leaving the island nation. They never asked to be taken over. The US did indeed intervene militarily but, as history bears, for its own purposes, as glimpsed subsequently from the notorious Platt Amendment of 1903. In April 1898, the US Congress declared war on Spain.

It is well to note that simultaneous to the Cuban revolution against Spain was also the Philippine revolution. By this time, Spain had been the longest reigning European power in Asia and, for the hundred years or so prior, other European powers, including the US, had been gradually overtaking Spain technologically, economically, and militarily. Spain had become moribund. Motivated by their

own desires for geographic expansion and appetite for economic gain, these other powers were eager to challenge Spain's hegemony. In this context, it would be naïve to assume that the US was motivated by altruism towards the Cuban people. The Monroe Doctrine had been in place since 1823 intended to establish US hegemony over the region, and to keep European powers out of hemispheric affairs, while all along the US had been gradually consolidating its military strength.

As for the Pacific region, the US military presence had been officially legitimated by a counterpart doctrine to the Monroe Doctrine called the Tyler Doctrine, named after US President John Tyler who promulgated it on December 30, 1842, initially for the so-called protection of the Hawaiian Islands from anticipated predations by European rivals. Again, for one to assume that the US was motivated by its desire to protect the inhabitants of the Hawaiian archipelago would be naïve at best. The US Navy had for some time coveted the deep water port which came to be known as Pearl Harbor. When a private coup plot against the indigenous Hawaiian monarchy was successfully carried out in January 1893 by descendants of godly American missionaries and their allies with such last names as Thurston, Dole, Castle, and Cooke, and organizing themselves into the Committee of Safety, with the tacit support of the US Navy and the conspiracy of US diplomat John L. Stevens, it was a matter of time that the Hawaiian Kingdom would be absorbed into the burgeoning US empire, as in fact it did when it was annexed as an appurtenant territory in July 1898, and eventually as the fiftieth state of the Union in 1959. At the time that the coup plotters were lobbying the US Congress for annexation, they found an ardent advocate by the name of Theodore Roosevelt. In 1897, reports historian Thomas Dyer, "Roosevelt cast the proposed annexation of Hawaii in a sharply racial light. If Hawaii were not taken, he told Alfred T. Mahan, 'it will show that we either have lost, or else wholly lack, the masterful instinct which alone can make a race great'... possessing vigorous expansionist tendencies" (*Theodore Roosevelt* 141). It is not unfair to say that, under these circumstances, the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown in an illegal coup, and the Hawaiian Islands and the resources therein were, in plain language, stolen, a historic wrong and a shameful deed which the US government, despite US President Bill Clinton's signing of Public Law 103-150, referred to in the media as the "Apology Resolution," in November 1993, still has to translate any apology into deed.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that during much of the second half of the 1800s leading up to the Spanish-American War of 1898, there has been cantankerous agitation for the westward expansion of the so-called American frontier. Among these agitators was Jane McManus Storm Cazneau (also known as "Cora Montgomery") who is acknowledged to be the first to use the phrase "Manifest Destiny" particularly in regard to her 1845 advocacy of the annexation of Texas from Mexico through her newspaper columns and journal articles. Imperialism in the Pacific later gained more support particularly from among those with a platform in which to broadcast their views. Among these was

Alfred Thayer Mahan, a Captain in the US Navy and President of the US Naval War College. In 1890, Mahan published his highly influential and widely read book, entitled *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783*, in which he urged the adoption of a series of forward-looking, and “vigorous foreign policy” on the part of the US by building and procuring a merchant fleet, a “battleship navy,” and a network of naval ports across the western Pacific.

On the religious front, thanks to the work of one preacher, Josiah Strong, also a good friend to Roosevelt, and who, through his preachings, pamphlets, and his polemical books, including one entitled *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, argued for imperialism unabashedly on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon race based on religion subsumed under what he called the doctrine of world mission. Strong justifies his racism by claiming: “The Anglo-Saxon is the representative of two great ideas, which are closely related. One of them is that of civil liberty. Nearly all of the civil liberty of the world is enjoyed by Anglo-Saxons: the English, the British colonists, and the people of the United States....The other great idea of which the Anglo-Saxon is the exponent is that of a pure spiritual Christianity” (159–169).

William H. Berge, a scholar on the subject and the period, assesses some of the implications of Strong’s views in a 1973 academic article as follows, in part:

Strong said that God was everywhere at war with greed and selfishness. Christian people should combat selfishness in nations as well as in individuals, and force should be used if necessary. The motive behind the use of force was the criterion with which to judge the action. There was little doubt in the minds of the pro-war clergymen; the war against “Spanish tyranny” was a judicious use of force. The religious sanction for the war with Spain, which came from the Protestant clergy, was in part the result of intense anti-Catholic feeling. (“Voices for Imperialism” 2)

Berge also explains that while Strong was not an advocate for imperialism for commercial reasons, he recognized the conjunction because, as Strong is quoted, “Whether or not the constitution follows the flag, opportunity does” (*Our Country* 28).

The likes of Strong from various church organizations, mainly Protestant evangelical denominations, shared similar views. In fact, as one illustration, Horace B. Silliman, a New York-based entrepreneur, was reported to have unexpectedly showed up at the Office of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission, one day in 1899, within months of the news of Dewey’s supposed victory in Manila Bay, bearing a gift of ten thousand US dollars. Accordingly, Silliman possessed a “strong resolve to help shape Philippine education,” albeit with a religious orientation, and that

the Filipinos needed “a new kind of education” in any case. The Board of Foreign Mission itself had been considering establishing a “mission in the Philippine Islands.” The Mission accepted the fund, and used it as Silliman had wished it to be used—the founding of a vocational school, originally named Silliman Institute, situated in the island of Negros dominated by traditional sugar barons and their vigilantes, which later became base to an extensive network of religious and cultural agents, among whom were Protestant missionaries associated with and favored by the Kuomintang regime in China fleeing that country’s civil war. This institution evolved to become an internationally renowned, church-based institution of higher learning known as Silliman University, today a bastion of reaction, a base for intelligence and counterinsurgency training program, an outpost of unquestioning fealty to neoliberal Christian-based education, uniting its constituents that have fanned across the globe with a touch of nostalgia through that emotional glue referred to as “Silliman Spirit” which, otherwise, serves as a sedative to numb criticism of empire or otherwise blunt any meaningful, critical teaching of history and society to challenge the conventional, system-affirming, and coy discipline. (“History of Silliman”)

#### IV. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

*It has taken almost a century for us to appreciate the visionary force of what our compatriot Jose Rizal prophesied in “The Philippines A Century Hence”: the people’s struggle for national liberation, though suppressed many times, will overcome in the end. Amid the triumphalism of a hierarchical “New World Order,” one harks back to the enduring truth of Marx’s statement in 1870 with reference to the British colonial subjugation of Ireland: “The people that oppresses another people forge their own chains.”*

.....

*In the triumphalist celebration of neoliberal, technocratic modernization through racial, gender and class divisions amid widespread ecological disasters, it is important to note that the current ascendancy of the capitalist market together with the legitimacy of the bureaucratic welfare-state is only a moment in a world-historical process that began with the genocidal exploitation of the Indians in the Americas and the triangular slave trade. US imperial hegemony is thus built on the cadavers and skulls of its victims.*

San Juan, Jr. (*Culture and Revolution*)

In this study, we have traced the story of capitalism commencing with its growth and development at a crucial stage in its history up to the rise of the US empire in the Pacific. With an extraordinary amount of assistance from the vast works of cultural and literary theorist, E. San Juan, Jr., much of the historical themes that were taken up here would otherwise either remain vague and unclear,

subject to the hegemonic discourse of mainstream scholars, even as apologists, in their version of history to justify capitalist expansion and accumulation; the rise and dominance of a racialized US empire; and the suppression and subversion of sovereign peoples, a pattern which continues to this day. It is precisely why a work such as this compendium, highlighting the critical scholarship of San Juan, attains a momentous significance if only to provide an example worth emulating by current and future students of history, historiographers, including those in the popular media as they aim to develop a habit of criticism or seek an antidote to hegemonic discourse that would otherwise whitewash the sordid history of empire, or relegate to the dark recesses of memory the brave struggle of its victims to resist and survive.

There is much more to be explored than what has been attempted here. At the philosophical level, one could contribute to the building and elaboration of a counter-argument in defense of the commons to the proposition advanced by philosophers like Locke who sought to justify the taking for private gain. A critical philosophical work that digs into this conceptual origin of capitalism will find resonance in today's struggle against neoliberalism by peoples around the globe seeking to preserve their sovereignty over land, water, food, health, and the environment, among others.

On the other hand, one could also deliver a critique of empire, parse its discourse, and break into component parts its racialized and gendered nature, and examine critically the dynamic process that accompanied its rise, and identify its promoters as well as its victims. San Juan has illustrated this amply in various ways including, for instance, the rationalization offered by US President William McKinley for his decision to annex the Philippines. McKinley asserted to a delegation of Methodist ministers in 1899, that the natives were "unfit for self-government," and that "... there was nothing left for [the United States] to do but to take them all, ... and uplift and civilize and Christianize them" ("African-Americans in the Philippine Revolution" 4).

A critical student of history, of course, could not simply take McKinley's words at face value about this decision, bearing in mind that every text has a context. Thus, this decision may be analyzed from various angles, depending on the presuppositions one brings. For instance, as one may already realize, many Americans were not persuaded by expressions of benevolence by McKinley, particularly on his assurances that the Americans were not coming to the Philippines as "invaders" or as "conquerors" but, rather, as "friends." Mark Twain, for example, expressing the sentiment of the Anti-Imperialist League of which he was an ardent supporter, wrote, in a letter to the New York Herald, in October 1900, that "I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have

gone to conquer, not to redeem....” In 1901, Twain followed this sentiment up with the publication of a satirical essay, entitled “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” in which he asks, quite rhetorically: “Shall we? That is, shall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest?” (“To the Person Sitting in Darkness” 4)

One finds many examples like this all throughout San Juan’s works wherein one is engaged not merely in literary criticism but, perhaps more importantly, in cultural criticism. San Juan has articulated the significance of cultural studies, along with allied fields in ethnic and American studies, not only as a field of study but as a discipline with an insurgent potential that provides its own tools of research, including its own concepts and language with which to redefine parameters of research and articulate a counter-hegemonic discourse that would challenge mainstream scholarship in defining what it regards as conventional wisdom. San Juan’s personal success and his overall contribution to cultural studies and, indeed, to related disciplines in the humanities as well as in the social sciences may not be fully appreciated during his lifetime at least in mainstream institutions. This is understandable as these institutions and the practitioners that man them dig their heels and fortify themselves from the intellectual landmines that San Juan has laid in their path. Minds change, and so does consciousness as new generations of critical, subversive thinkers pick up San Juan’s banner and lead the charge in pointing to the anomalies, inconsistencies, and contradictions that could not be sustained for long by the current system of accumulation that serves only a few. Reasons and rationalizations vary among those who shun a head-on confrontation with San Juan including easy resort to mindless Cold War-era red-baiting and stereotyping, or to petty criticisms about his esoteric language which mask only their impatience but never the intelligence and insight behind San Juan’s labor.

Thus, as a field of study, cultural studies could not be isolated both from its critical roots and, further, it could not be compartmentalized from other fields of study, such as mine in political science. In an interview given to a young talented scholar-activist Jeffrey A. Cabusao, San Juan along with another feminist scholar Delia Aguilar expressed as much when they encouraged young scholars of Philippine heritage to “to create alternative narratives that can enable them to understand the social forces that shape their lives” (“The Responsibility of Filipino Intellectuals”). Thus, it is not enough to be adept at mastering theory in any field. One has to examine one’s values and determine critically where one stands on any given issue in whichever field one may happen to belong. This is typified by San Juan’s stance towards postcolonialism which he explains as having become an apologist for the *status quo* rather than a radical or revolutionary field that it masquerades to be for having failed one simple test: “the test of whether they really question the existing domination of many formerly colonized, and still, to some extent, neocolonized



countries by the transnational corporate powers. So that's the bottom line about postcolonial theory" ("The Responsibility of Filipino Intellectuals").

The story narrated in this essay commenced with the growth and expansion of capitalism as a system of accumulation and dispossession. It also showed the growth and expansion of the US up until the dawn of the twentieth century when it intersected with the liberation struggles of the peoples of Cuba and the Philippines and, accordingly, snuffed out the aspirations of the peoples in these struggles for freedom and self-determination. So much has happened since then that could not be told here, especially as the US developed and perfected its capacity for domestic control, violence, and surveillance of society, and its domination and hegemony over the globe's resources under the guise of neoliberal globalization. The ground for story-telling in an alternative sort of way is, therefore, abundantly fertile for other—especially young—scholars to cultivate and to disseminate, in the way George Orwell's character Old Major in his fable *Animal Farm* did, the seeds of, first of all, doubt and skepticism towards the so-called natural order of things justifying greed and inequality for it is man-made, after all, and not god-made; secondly, to upturn and emancipate society from this existing system of exploitation and inequality; and, thirdly, to create a new dispensation wherein society grows according to its ability and resources and is, in turn, nurtured and served according to its needs and requirements. But it has to be done with steadfast care, commitment, determination, and vigilance always, for the enemy has historically proven itself to be guile, wily, ruthless, and unscrupulous.

## Notes

1. San Juan elaborates further on this in his latest book, *Between Empire and Insurgency: The Philippines in the New Millennium*. Taking the opportunity to clarify that the task of national liberation does not solely rest on those who actively take up arms against the established neocolonial order, the responsibility should be shared by intellectuals and, in particular, the discipline of cultural studies. In the following passage, San Juan summons and challenges practitioners in cultural studies in the Philippines to care more as follows: “Should one hundred million Filipinos care about the plight of CS [cultural studies]? If we want CS to be meaningful to the majority, not just the educated sector, it needs to address the urgent realities of Philippine society and contribute to the democratic and egalitarian ideals of its revolutionary history. In the Philippines and other subordinated formations, CS can be regenerated by renewing its anticolonial, popular, and democratic inspiration and reengaging in a radical, transformative critique of oligopolistic corporate power, the legitimizing ideology of global finance capital and its commodified/commodifying culture. It can endeavor to challenge US imperialism and its accomplices in its current modality of warring against ‘terrorism’ or extremism (code words for anti-imperialists) by returning to, first, the primacy of social labor; second, the complex historical articulations of the mode of production and social relations; and, third, the importance of the materialist critique of norms, assumption, and premises underlying existing inequalities, injustices, and oppressions” (271).
2. The early assault on the commons represented by the enclosure movement could not be detached from what San Juan describes as the shift from “the cosmic totality to the individual,” a process which has been in play since at least during the Renaissance period and the rise of the European bourgeoisie. San Juan explains: “The individualist metaphysic acquired logical form in Descartes’ abolition of doubt by the ego-centered consciousness. The solitary individual, Robinson Crusoe as master-narrative hero, occupied center-stage in mapping the heterogeneous process of worldwide social development. Its culmination in Locke’s empiricism and Hegel’s idealism reinforced the triumph of the property-owner, the profit-obsessed slave-trader and manufacturer, and eventually the broker-financier of empire. All events and changes in society were ascribed to individual thoughts and private decisions, marginalizing its larger context in the changes in social relations locally and globally, triggered by profound alterations in the mode of production and reproduction in material life” (“Jose Rizal: Re-discovering the Revolutionary Filipino Hero in the Age of Terrorism” 3).
3. Here, San Juan, Jr. qualifies that, contrary to what is commonly understood, based on the binary description available in the *Communist Manifesto* of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, Marx acknowledged that while “the interests of one class coincide with the development of the productive forces toward new social structures, and how other classes defend the established system for their own benefit,” classes are, in fact, specific to their historical origins and

circumstances. San Juan explains: “They are neither rigid nor immutable. They arise from the complex dynamics of historical development. There are not just two homogeneous classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, as the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed, but many dependent on the multiple ramifications of the division of labor and the overdetermined specificity of the modes of production as well as the historical conjunctures through which the modes go through” (*In the Wake of Terror* 29).

Drawing from *The German Ideology*, San Juan further elaborates on the nature of emergent classes as follows: “In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels write: ‘The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class, otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors. On the other hand, the class in its turn achieves independent existence over against the individuals’ (as quoted in Schmitt 1987, 128). Classes, groups locked in battle are, thus, not unchangeable monolithic formations; they are forever changing, developing, differentiating themselves.... Classes undergo a constant process of inner movement and transformation dependent on the vicissitudes of the class struggle locally and internationally, given the permanent crisis of capital accumulation in the sharpening rivalry among competing powers....” (*In the Wake of Terror* 30).

And, finally, from Marx’s *Poverty of Philosophy*, San Juan describes class formation in the context of the labor process, as follows: “Viewed from the materialist framework of intelligibility, social class denotes groups of social agents defined principally but not exclusively by their place in the labor process. This process plays a crucial and necessary role in determining class, but not a sufficient one. For the political and ideological conditions provide decisive criteria in ascertaining how the economic will exert its pressure on the behavior of the class in concrete situations of struggle. Marx suggested this in *Poverty of Philosophy* (Chapter 2, Section 5): ‘Economic conditions had in the first place transformed the mass of the people into workers. The domination of capital created the common situation and common interests of this class. Thus this mass is already a class in relation to capital [class in itself], but not yet a class for itself. In the struggle, . . . this mass unites and forms itself into a class for itself. The interests which it defends become class interests’” (*In the Wake of Terror* 31).

Here, San Juan makes an all-important clarification about Marx and the concept of class. In an important 2003 essay, “Marxism and the Race/Class Problematic: A Re-Articulation,” San Juan writes: “As everyone knows, Marx died before completing the chapter on ‘class’ in Volume III of *Capital*. Marx did not invent the theory of class and of class struggle as the motive force in the development of world history. What Marx as a theoretician of socialist revolution did was to analyze the origin and characteristics of classes in bourgeois society, with emphasis on how the interests of one class coincide with the development of the productive forces toward new social structures, and how other classes defend the established system for their own benefit. Class is a conceptual category designating a relationship of exploitation. It is indissociable from class conflict, from the specific historical struggle of social groups divided by unequal property relations.

Marx's singular accomplishment is to show how the liberation of the proletariat implies the abolition of classes and class society, together with the exploitation of commodified labor." San Juan's clarification is a relevant intervention at a time when the term is being trivialized as a mere designation of "status" or "lifestyle," divorced from "the totality of social relations of production," to reiterate San Juan's point ("Marxism and the Race/Class Problematic").

4. San Juan elaborates on this theme by citing the works of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, the Philippines' foremost hero, namely, his two novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, which catalogued and documented the subjection of women in the Philippines that the church sanctioned. San Juan writes: the fate of Maria Clara encapsulates the loss of status of women of the emerging principalia, and of the more intense pacification of her lesser sisters in the symbolic-ideological template of a racialized patriarchal society. Nonetheless, those who refused marriage or violated/resisted the despotic family—Ibarra, Elias, Salome, Basilio, Tasio, Cablesang Tales, and others—presaged a salvific and reconciling utopian future for all since the social contract depended on unchallenged male ascendancy" ("Sisa's Vengeance" 3).

Giving credit and recognition to Rizal's forward-looking deconstruction of the subjection of women, maintained through the ideologizing role of religion, in the Philippines under Spanish colonial rule, San Juan writes: "Already equipped with an astute comprehension of the social relations of production, the political economy of the Spanish colony, Rizal this time focused his critique on the efficacy of the ideological apparatus in sustaining the unrelieved subjugation of the natives, in particular the disciplinary subalternization of women.... In re-visiting Rizal's militant advocacy of a historical-materialist critique of society through his novels and various discourses..., we can appreciate his singular contribution to humankind's libertarian archive, whatever his other limitations given the circumstances and contingencies of his personal situation and the state of the world in the latter part of the nineteenth century" ("Sisa's Vengeance" 26).

5. In what may be the definitive treatment on the subject, referring to San Juan's essay, entitled "Toward a Materialist Cultural Politics," San Juan brings out more of Engels' contribution to the consolidation of the approach through, among others, elucidation of Engels' 1875 work, *Dialectics of Nature*, wherein Engels explains his theory of motion, in response to liberal philosophers' explanation of the same, including Thomas Hobbes' politics of motion, as an essential starting point for understanding phenomena associated with change. San Juan explains the context, then the approach more fully, as follows. "References to motion, diachronic shifts, and metamorphosis," San Juan writes, "predominate in Engels' thought. In Ludwig Feuerbach and the *End of German Philosophy* (1888), Engels staged the overturning of Hegelian idealism by rejecting Hegel's reduction of reality to images of the absolute concept. Engels reconceptualized dialectics as 'the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought—two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, in the form of external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents' (Marx/Engels

1968, 619).” San Juan adds: “In dialectics of nature..., Engels valorized motion as ‘the mode of existence, the inherent attribute of matter,’ which ‘comprehends all changes and processes occurring in the universe, from mere change of place right to thinking’ (1940, 35).”

6. Here, San Juan elucidates on this important juncture of European history wherein the bourgeois class emerged from among “heterogeneous classes” and, from that position, proceeded to “resolve internal contradictions,” and to “restructure the state,” in a “national form.” This nationalized state then intervened “in the very reproduction of the economy and particularly in the formation of individuals whereby individuals of all classes were subordinated ‘to their status as citizens of the nation-state, to the fact of their being ‘nationals’.. The key term in this narrative of nationalization is ‘hegemony,’ in this instance capitalist hegemony (domination by consent) based on the formal nationalization of citizenship” (*In the Wake of Terror* 113).
7. At this juncture, it is significant to note that San Juan makes at least two critically important interventions: first, over suggestions that Marx, in his *Capital*, had intended for his mature capitalism in the European setting as rigid requisite for the creation of a proletarian class that would carry out revolution and that, therefore, this is a model worth emulating everywhere; and, second, over suggestions that Marx and Engels would have endorsed British imperialism particularly in India for its presumably progressive role in transforming the maligned “Asiatic mode of production,” e.g., construction of a railway system throughout India, introduction of civil service, promotion of a free-wheeling media, and replacement of (or attempts to replace) ascriptive inequality, e.g., caste, with ethos of hard work and personal achievements. In “Postcolonialism and the Problem of Uneven Development,” San Juan explains that Marx, in a letter to a Russian journalist in 1878, clarified his thoughts on precisely this issue. Part of the letter reads: “[My critic] absolutely insists on transforming my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of the general course fatally imposed on all peoples, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed, in order to arrive ultimately at this economic formation that ensures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labor, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. (It does me both too much honor and too much discredit.) [Here follows the instance of the Roman plebeians.] Thus events that are strikingly analogous, but taking place in different historical milieu, lead to totally disparate results. By studying each of these developments separately, and then comparing them, one can easily discover the key to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there with the master key of a historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists in being suprahistorical” (“Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations; Postcolonialism, Uneven Development and Imperialism” 6).

On the second point, regarding Marx and Engels’ alleged endorsement of British imperialism in India, San Juan quotes from a letter written by Marx himself to the *New York Tribune*, published on June 25, 1853, in which Marx intimated: “England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only

by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is: Can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. (1959: 480–81)” Thus, in shifting the question over to whether or not British imperialism is really the suitable instrument in bringing about a “fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia,” Marx’s answer is clearly in the negative, which is hardly an endorsement of it!

Three other significant points need to be made here. First, San Juan attributes to Cabral, as signified by this article in tribute, to illustrate precisely that a Marxist-inspired revolution could occur—as indeed it has—in peasant and agrarian, non-capitalist, societies; second, to show disciples of postcolonialism, whose discipline thrives on, or in celebration of, the idea of “post-marxism,” that Marxism is alive and well in the peripheries of the empire; and, three, Marxism, as an idea, transcends both spatial and temporal limitations imposed by its critics on the discredited assumption that it is eurocentric and that it has been defeated at the end of the Cold War. The fact that these revolutionary movements are greeted with fascistic state violence and propaganda attest to their potency in raising issues that only they have the courage to raise, e.g., “mode of production,” “accumulation by dispossession,” “surplus value,” among others (“Postcolonialism and the Problem of Uneven Development”).

8. San Juan offers further assessment of the implications of the Europe-based mercantile trading, including the trafficking of slaves, the colonization of much of the rest of the world, and the crushing of resistance to this colonization, and the phenomenon of diaspora, in the following passage: “After about four centuries of the worldwide circulation of commodities—including the hugely profitable trade in slaves from Africa that inaugurated, for Marx, the ‘rosy dawn’ of capitalism—the stage was set for more intense capital accumulation based no longer on commercial exchange and the regional discrepancies in the price of goods but on the process of production itself. ‘Place’ gave way to space; lived time divided into necessary, surplus, and ‘free’ segments. Linked by relations of exchange governed by the logic of accumulation centered in Europe and later in North America, the trajectories of peoples of color; the ‘people without history’ in Eric Wolf’s reckoning, entered the global labor market with the expansion of industrial capitalism, the commercialization of agriculture, urbanization, and the concomitant dislocation and displacement of populations from their traditional homelands” (*After Postcolonialism* 17).
9. Here, San Juan interjects a point that during much of the 1700s and the 1800s at least up until the Opium Wars, movement of labor, referring to the so-called “free” workers, has been taking place, and that this diaspora of workers, bearers of labor power, had been an essential component in the building of the industrial and commercial bases of modern capitalism. San Juan describes the process as follows: “[T]he movement of the bearers of labor power, ‘free workers,’ at first involved mainly peasants pushed toward the industrial centers of the European

peninsula; later, 50 million people left Europe between 1800 and 1924, 32 million of them bound for the factories and mines of the industrializing United States” (*After Postcolonialism* 18).

Following the British humiliation of China at the conclusion of the Opium Wars, giving Britain possession of Hong Kong as trophy, the US became a beneficiary. San Juan explains how the migration of labor during this period has made a contribution to the consolidation of the US industrial and commercial base, essential to turning the US as the preeminent capitalist bastion in the succeeding century: “Meanwhile, the victory of imperialism in China with the Opium War of 1839–1842 allowed foreign entrepreneurs... to establish the apparatus for the ‘coolie’ trade that eventually facilitated the transport of 200,000 Chinese to the United States between 1852 and 1875... In the 1860s, about 14,000 Chinese laborers were hired to build the transcontinental Central Pacific Railroad. Unlike the Chinese ‘pariah capitalism’ in other regions..., the Chinese exodus to North America could only mediate between an exploitative host society and a moribund tributary formation already subjugated by Western powers” (*After Postcolonialism* 18).

10. The period in which this movie was set was one in which European powers were squabbling over influence and territory not only in the Caribbean region but also throughout the New World. The US partook in the slave trade, and benefited in its growth and development from the unpaid labor of slaves, a fact that it still has to reconcile itself with today. But at that period, the issue of slavery was resolved in two ways, according to San Juan. He writes: “The apparent incongruity of the ‘unfree’ (slave) inhabiting the terrain of the ‘free’ (laissez-faire market) disappears if we apply two analytic concepts: social formation and mode of production. While the U.S. then may be defined as chiefly an emergent capitalist social formation from the time of its independence to the Civil War, one can discern in it two discordant modes of production: the slave mode in the South and the mercantile-industrial one in the North. The triumph of the juridical framework of capitalism (based on Lockean principles of alienable labor, etc.) and its state machinery led to the legal abolition of slavery in 1865.... What is clear... is that the elite in the U.S. South was mainly parasitic on coerced labor for its wealth and reproduction (Finley 1983). Reconstruction eliminated the practice of coercion, the aristocratic habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), only to replace it with that of the market legitimized by Constitutional amendments, and (after 1877) by wholesale fraud, Jim Crow laws, and vigilante violence” (*In the Wake of Terror* 45).
11. In 2001, San Juan received the prestigious Gustavus Myers Center for Human Rights Outstanding Book Award for Human Rights for his book, *After Postcolonialism; Remapping Philippines-United States Confrontations*. In this book, San Juan comments on the “ideological maneuvers” employed by the US in carrying out its self-appointed role as tutor to the ignorant Filipinos as part of its “civilizing mission.” He writes: “In 1898, the Philippines then became U.S. territory open for the ‘tutelage’ of its civilizing mission. Among other ideological maneuvers, the English language and American literary texts, as well as the pedagogical agencies for propagating...them, were mobilized to constitute the natives of the Philippine archipelago as subjects of the U.S. nation-state. In sum, then, American English

was used by the colonial authorities when the U.S. military suppressed the Filipino revolutionary forces and its Republic while waging war against the moribund Spanish Empire. Language became an adjunct of the imperial machinery of conquest and subjugation....” (*After Postcolonialism* 104).

12. Both in collective memory and in popular literature today, the history of Hawaii narrated here is remarkably blank. In pretty much the entire contemporary media and standard texts, Hawaii is presented as an exotic paradise, a vacation destination, with expensive urban living standards, and a source of high-value tropical fruits and other agricultural products. Not surprisingly, attempts on the part of native Hawaiians to remind visitors about this portion of Hawaii’s history, about the overthrow of Hawaii’s constitutional monarchy in 1893, and about the current movement for the restoration of Hawaii’s sovereignty, are invariably discouraged, banned, or outrightly declared illegal by state and US federal authorities. Such is the case, for example, with the State of the Nation of Hawaii whose members, invoking the United Nations Charter as well as the US Public Law 103–150 condemning the US for illegally overthrowing the sovereign government of Hawaii, have engaged in acts of resistance, including non-payment of taxes, land occupation, and the establishment of its own militia.

Taking the reviews and commentaries of Kiana Davenport’s novel *Shark Dialogues* as a jumping-off point for the reason that, in this case, “[t]he seductiveness of a hegemonic reading and interpretive approach persists in the institution of book reviewing,” San Juan in a remarkable essay, entitled “Cultural Studies Amongst the Sharks: The Struggle Over Hawaii,” comments on the virtual whitewashing of Hawaii’s past. San Juan writes: “By force of inertia, the sporadic reviews of *Shark Dialogues* veer toward a formalist aestheticism that politically occludes, if not totally expunges, what Edward Said would call the worldliness or circumstantial resonance of the work. The pretext of recuperating or reinstating pleasure that subtends the putative return to aesthetics affords an ingenuous justification for reaffirming the way things are: for Hawaiians, the unconscionable colonial domination of their homelands and continued cultural genocide. From this neo-conservative optic, art (for the formalists) helps us to transcend the reality of degradation and colonial occupation” (“Cultural Studies Among the Sharks” 72).

San Juan takes the opportunity, in this case of Hawaii as a perfect historical specimen and the misreading of it as evidenced by the reviews of Davenport’s novel, to clarify the nature and purpose of cultural studies as a sub-discipline. San Juan advances many thoughtful arguments, but the following passage is particularly significant: “Cultural Studies is an attempt to situate these formalist approaches to literary texts—the search for verisimilitude, for commonsensical truth—in the sociohistorical context of hegemonic culture. Its concern is to demonstrate how social divisions pivoting around the categories of class, gender, race, nationality, location, etc. are invested with meaning and legitimized. Culture (including literary and critical practice) becomes the site in which social/political inequalities are represented and naturalized. Thus Cultural Studies rejects the empiricist fallacy that events and personalities by themselves embody singular meanings as though they were natural phenomena, givens that transcend



experience and consciousness. Culture is conceived not as equivalent to the realm of aesthetics replete with transcendent moral values, but as a terrain of struggle for hegemony, a historical and discursive terrain where dominant and subordinate forces interact” (74) And, San Juan adds: “The Cultural Studies project thus engages directly with the dialectic of social agencies and structures” (“Cultural Studies Amongst the Sharks” 74).

With this conception of cultural studies, San Juan believes that the field could reclaim its “original revolutionary impetus,” and it can do so “by center-staging the radical project of diverse indigenous forms of life. It can help preserve these singular forms as long as this field continues to expose and critique the complicity of disciplinary practices with hegemonic political power” (78). “With the tide of globalised capitalism sweeping over national boundaries,” San Juan writes, “partisans of revolutionary hope need to lend support to the indigenous peoples of Hawaii and elsewhere in their struggle for sovereignty. Reason dictates the priority of self-determined locations for unique aboriginal cultures to flourish. Their singular forms of life remain the touchstones for realizing visions of popular, egalitarian democracy sustainable for constructing a global ecumene. They also provide viable weapons to resist commodification and global business’s crusade of ‘civilizing’ rogue nations and subjugating terrorist Others—IMF/WB (International Monetary Fund/World Bank) deterritorialisation by transnational violence” (“Cultural Studies Amongst the Sharks” 78).

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