

E. San Juan's Creative Oppositional Criticism

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces San Juan's keynote lecture, "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness,'" from his two earlier works: "Dialectics of Transcendence" (1984, written in 1967) and *Subversions of Desire* (1988). In doing so, the paper highlights San Juan's reading of Joaquin that follows a dialectic of the critic's own theoretical and intellectual development. It also explains Hegel's historical dialectics and notion of the "Unhappy Consciousness" and how these are applied in San Juan's re/interpretation of Joaquin. This paper highlights what criticism has learned from Hegel: difference and opposition are fundamentally productive. Indeed, in San Juan, in Joaquinian scholarship, and in Philippine literary criticism at large, dialectics is truly at work.

KEYWORDS

E. San Juan, Hegelian dialectics, Nick Joaquin, metacriticism, Philippine literary criticism

Epifanio San Juan, Jr. ends his essay, “Dialectics of Transcendence: An Interpretation of Nick Joaquin’s *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*,” with a postscript that admits a limitation and issues a promise. He notes that, being written in 1967, the essay uses “the well-known problematics of formal criticism, with all its assets and liabilities” (165). San Juan, a literary critic whose initial training in the United States university system focused on New Criticism, is self-reflexively aware of the debates on this theoretical movement, especially regarding the concerns on its myopic consideration of the text to the exclusion of almost everything else. The other half of the postscript is a proclamation that should get the attention of the readers, especially of Joaquin scholars of that time: the possibility and timeliness of subjecting “the entire Joaquin canon to a more rigorous critique [given the developments of poststructuralism as evidenced in the works of Eagleton and Jameson]” (165).¹ The fulfillment of this promise is San Juan’s 1988 book *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin*.²

This paper, a reaction to San Juan’s keynote lecture, “Joaquin’s Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the ‘Unhappy Consciousness,’” has two main objectives. First, the paper traces the current lecture from the two earlier works mentioned above—one published three decades ago and another originally written more than five decades ago. In doing so, the paper highlights San Juan’s reading of Joaquin that follows a dialectic of the critic’s own theoretical and intellectual development. Second, it explains Hegel’s historical dialectics and notion of the Unhappy Consciousness and how these are applied in San Juan’s re/interpretation of Joaquin. Indeed, it is fitting to use Hegel, the philosopher from whom we owe—as Marx owes—the idea of historical dialectics, the continuous convergence of thesis and antithesis into a synthesis that keeps World Consciousness always changing and fluid. This paper highlights what criticism has learned from Hegel: difference and opposition are fundamentally productive. Indeed, in San Juan, in Joaquinian scholarship, and in Philippine literary criticism at large, dialectics is truly at work.

TRACING SAN JUAN'S CRITICISM OF JOAQUIN

I begin *in medias res*. In 1988, as the Philippines is struggling to recover its democratic institutions and practices from the ashes of the Marcos dictatorship and to start over with a new Constitution, San Juan published the only book-length collection of essays by an individual critic about Nick Joaquin's literary works³ with three major theoretical approaches:

[first is] a scientific one based on the principles of historical materialism refracted through Lukács, Gramsci, and poststructuralist semiotics which tries to historicize the problematic of the artist's signifying practice, [second is] a feminist one which insists on an apocalyptic responsibility of negating patriarchal tyranny in feudal and bourgeois cultures, and [third is] a prophetic and eschatological one which affirms Desire and calls for the restoration of difference and contradictions and their ultimate resolution in revolutionary transformation of social practices. (Preface xxix)

We cannot say that the use of these approaches is whimsical or accidental. In the larger context of literary criticism, it is part of an "entire apparatus of contemporary global theorizing" that has questioned human essentialism of the previous centuries and, in the seventies, is just "beginning to be Filipinized" (Preface xxix). As part of San Juan's academic advocacy, the use of these approaches is also what he has been developing when "his energies [are] being consumed by anti-Marcos organizing and the subsequent critique of the institutions of racism in the United States" (Veric 299). San Juan will eventually be known for this critical stance, whether he is writing about Joaquin or Bulosan or any other Filipino/a writer.⁴ The scope of San Juan's theoretical purview is as broad and exciting as Joaquinian scholarship as evidenced by another Forum Kritika on San Juan (*Kritika Kultura* vol. 26). In his introduction to this Forum Kritika, Charlie S. Veric remarks on the significance and extent of San Juan's contribution in the field of American empire critique from a planetary perspective, something that may even be compared to a Rizal which was produced by an earlier colonial era or to a Cabral or to a Fanon of a different colonial experience.⁵

The early iteration of these frameworks (historical materialist, feminist, and prophetic/eschatological), is shown in “Dialectics of Transcendence” (originally written in 1967), an essay about Joaquin’s *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961), a novel which, according to San Juan’s assessment, “[should not be] about Paco and Connie but about the disintegration and collapse of the petty bourgeois world of the Vidals and Monsons” (165). One point that is worth noting, however, is that the dialectics employed here is neither Marxist nor only Hegelian, but goes back to the Manichean influence on Augustine, the eternal struggle between good and evil, and how Joaquin is “caught in the logic of this method” (152). San Juan gives attention to how the novel “unfolds with the relentless logic of an Augustinian vision casting its ambiguous light of what [the writer Joaquin] conceives as the classic Filipino experience” (146). This already shows the breadth of San Juan’s notion of dialectics. The use of Augustinian philosophy/theology in reading Joaquin, even if surprising to those who are only acquainted with the historical materialist San Juan, is not improper given Joaquin’s classical (theological) training under the Dominican Order.⁶ Other critics have focused on the “theological dimension” of Joaquin’s fiction. Even Marxist critic and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera calls Joaquin as the Philippine’s “most stimulating lay theologian” in 1968, a year after “Dialectics” is written (qtd. in Galdon 457). Jesuit critic Joseph Galdon argues that even if Joaquin’s theology is “folk ... rather than dogma, and reflective rather than prescriptive,” its influence in his stories, especially in the obviously theological themes of “Doña Jeronima,” “The Legend of the Dying Woman,” and “The Mass of St. Sylvestre,” cannot be denied. Joaquin’s stories “reflect the theology of the culture [i.e., both pagan and Catholic]” (457-458). Galdon also mentions Leonard Casper’s section on Joaquin in the book, *The Wayward Horizon*, whose title, “Lord! Lord! And the Religious Writer,” is a play of “Not everyone who cries Lord! Lord! will enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 7:21) where Casper has implied his discontent regarding Joaquin’s mixture of the pagan and the Christian (458).⁷ Indeed, before Hegel, Marx, and other thinkers contended with the world’s modern contradictions, Augustine had

to explain the problem of evil in a world that is created by a benevolent God, a central contradiction in medieval ontology.⁸

However, San Juan does not stop interpreting Joaquin through this dichotomy of evil/fall and good/grace, but goes on to demand a connection between Joaquin's themes and Filipino/a reality. The readers of "Dialectics" would eventually realize that San Juan employs Augustine in the essay as a scaffold to introduce Joaquin's "fallacy" which is "thinking that the downfall of [the Filipino petty bourgeois class] signifies the collapse of the whole society" (147) and "malaise of the artisan-minded novelist detached from the practical activity of the masses, the peasants and workers who represent the progressive force and the future of the whole society" (149-150). In other words, in the matter of dialectics, San Juan is just beginning where other critics of Joaquin, such as Galdon and Casper, have already finished. Given Joaquin's mastery of the form, San Juan still laments how "Joaquin fails to tell us anything actually happening before or after the war—the renewed insurgency of the masses, the awakening of the masses resisted by the neo-colonial collaborators of American imperialism, the fascism of the landlords and comprador bureaucrats" (149).⁹ For San Juan, Joaquin should have loosened the binaries based on Augustinian ontology of the work to render the contemporary milieu of his setting more real. Another work that foreshadows *Subversions* provides the similar argument that Joaquin should have further pushed the boundaries. In "For Whom Are We Writing," San Juan points out how Joaquin's project "can be described as an attempt to recover the integrity of the modern psyche, a putative self, extrapolated from a sense of Christian beliefs involving free will, passion and death" (39). However, Joaquin "[only] wrestles with, and criticizes, the symptoms and effects . . . not the systemic or structural source"; therefore, the works limit themselves within the "world-view of obsolete classes" (39, 48).

A similar call is also expressed in the sixth chapter of *Subversions*—the chapter that also deals with *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*—with a slight difference in frame:

Unless we have completely dissolved the question of the subject as fixed by hierarchical forces or permanently dispersed in the social process, constructed in the fabrication and decoding of signs . . . we cannot really leap into the realm of transcendental and forego history, the ultimate ground of any discourse . . . that we can possibly engage in. (173)

Because even modern discourses still have not completely dissolved the question of the subject, interpretation must inevitably return to history. Note that the framing of the point in this chapter is slightly different from its earlier iteration. If “Dialectics” (as well as “For Whom Are We Writing”) presents implicit commentaries on New Criticism (with the questions of point-of-view, theme, and conflict), *Subversions* frames the lack through structuralism and poststructuralism (with the question of the subject). Even these have failed to answer completely the basic questions about the subject, so history remains “the ultimate ground of any discourse” (173). These main insights in the earlier works are echoed in the current keynote lecture: “The chief symptom of Joaquin’s inability to dialectically transcend the past is its exclusion of the peasantry and the whole proletarian world of serfs, women, tribal or indigenous communities (Muslim, Igorot) marginalized by Spanish and U.S. colonial domination” (“Nick Joaquin’s Apocalypse”).

After studying “Dialectics” and *Subversions*, readers are more grounded on San Juan’s diagnosis of the need to save Joaquin’s works from the limitations of a middle-class audience and a bourgeois interpretation. As the Preface of *Subversions of Desire* shows, this is precisely the book’s project. San Juan writes:

What I would like to emphasize . . . is the perspective and method of constructing both critic and author as the subjects-in-process, subjects-in-trial. From a dialectical standpoint, all of Joaquin’s texts may be seen as overdetermined by multiple sociohistoric contradictions which affect all of us, without exception. And so it is the task of a *creative oppositional criticism* to interpellate these texts in order to let them speak an emancipatory message, and to articulate such message in a way diametrically opposed to the hegemonic ethicopolitical commentaries that have exploited Joaquin to maintain and legitimize class rule. “Joaquin” then may be conceived as a sign

of multiple contractions outside/inside the texts. Let Joaquin speak to the masses. (xvii; emphasis added)

Here, San Juan posits that both the critic and the writer (and consequently the relationship between these two) should not be treated as monolithic fixtures in criticism but are fluid, non-categorical figures. These subjects are contingent on multiple contradictions of their position and milieu. In “The Critic as Parasite/Host,” San Juan’s response when *Subversions* was launched in 1988, he debunks once more the mistaken and simplistic understanding of the critic and writer’s relationship. Following J. Hillis Miller, he says that the roles of writer as host and the critic as parasite are interchangeable and therefore undecidable (30). Whether as writer or as critic, one should be reflexive of where one is coming from and be conscious that such a ground is only temporary. It is through this awareness that criticism may be safeguarded from hegemonic readings that have exploited “Joaquin” to maintain and legitimize class rule.

Another noteworthy point is that San Juan puts Joaquin inside quotation marks to refer not to the individual author but to the author-function. San Juan also anchors the last chapter of *Subversions* to Joaquin’s “modernizing sensibility” that presents “the subliminal drive of the discourse to effect an imaginary unity of self” (233).¹⁰ Joaquin, therefore, is not only the multi-awarded writer and journalist, but is also a product of a discourse. In fact, for San Juan, because “[the] writer himself . . . [ultimately] becomes [just] a pretext for opening up the space for more crucial engagements, the terrain for a critique of ideologies,” *Subversions* does not answer whether Joaquin is progressive or reactionary and that this very question is “a somewhat misleading formulation” (“The Critic” 30). From this logic, it can be said that San Juan’s assessment of lack is not really against Joaquin the writer but against the entire discourse of how Joaquin is deployed to the readers. In other words, Joaquin is not the host from which the critics are getting their sustenance (i.e., critics as parasite), rather it is the critics who have created the “Joaquin”—in quotation marks—from which an entire scholarship, with all “the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations,”

is sustained (i.e., critics as host) (Foucault qtd. in San Juan *Subversions* 230). The pronouncement of making Joaquin speak to the masses is a message addressed more to the readers and critics of Joaquin than to Joaquin as a writer.

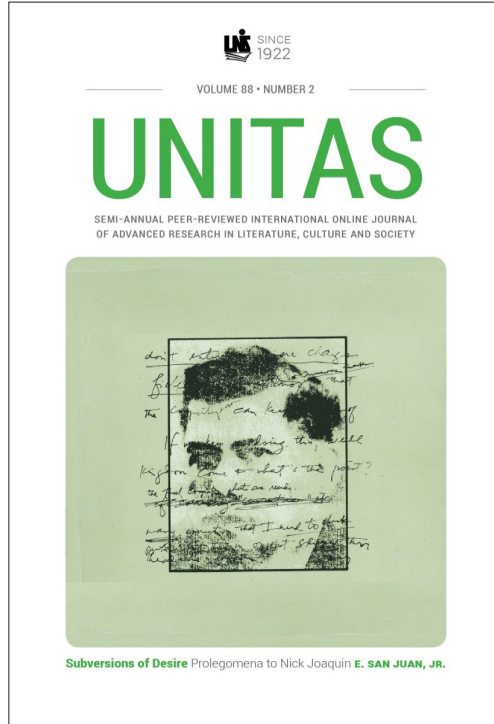


Fig. 1 E. San Juan, Jr.'s *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin* is the only book-length study on Nick Joaquin to this day. It was republished as an UNITAS monograph.

The “Joaquin” author-function should be more evident in the canonization of Joaquin as a Penguin classic author last year, which signals an aura (or halo) of recognition but also commodification (San Juan “Nick Joaquin’s Apocalypse”). What needs to be examined therefore is whether the Filipino’s collective experience of memory and homeland, history and identity, among

others, can be “salvaged” (i.e., saved or resurrected) from the “ruins of modernity”. Especially situated in the shift of the modes of production from feudal to bureaucratic-comprador that continues until today, the Filipino/a subject continues to experience fragmentation. To add to this, to my mind, the commodification that Joaquin’s works faces is also the commodification (and weaponization) of information in general: What “truth” do these works present in a world of post-truth, in a world where disinformation can be manufactured, packaged, and sold? If the Filipino/a subject is an identity-in-difference, whose development has been negated by history, what guarantees the change that has been promised many times over?

What is to be done? The answer to this question, which San Juan mentioned in the Preface of *Subversions* but fully develops in the keynote lecture, “Nick Joaquin’s Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the ‘Unhappy Consciousness,’” is the function of a creative oppositional criticism. Here, San Juan uses Hegel to elaborate this point.

CREATIVE OPPOSITIONAL CRITICISM THROUGH HEGEL

Although *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is not a work of literary criticism, Hegel wove various literary works and elements, such as allusions to *Don Quixote*, themes from *Antigone*, and a verse from *Faust*, in the book’s palimpsest of philosophical discussions. Allen Speight, in fact, sees a “literary turn”—a sudden and sustained “eruption” of the use of literary texts—at a crucial juncture of *Phenomenology*, to such extent that “the book must eventually . . . turn its attention explicitly to the role that literature is playing within it” (18-19, 22). Hegel, therefore, although not a literary critic in a strict sense, understands how literature can illustrate philosophical ideas which are mostly abstract and speculative. Because *Phenomenology* is a work on experience, Hegel needs to yoke concepts such as consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason to the real; and literature is a crucial lever for this connection. Hegel scholar John N. Findlay notes that Hegel views Art in general as “the immediate form of absolute spirit”:

Works of Art, although they are not thoughts and notions, but a development of the Notion out of itself, an alienation towards the sensuous, none the less have the power of thinking Spirit in them, a power not merely of apprehending itself in its peculiar guise of thought, but just as much of recognizing itself in its externalization to sense and sensuous, of grasping itself in its other, inasmuch as it transforms the alienated to thought, and so leads it back itself In this way the Work of Art also, in which thought has externalized itself, belongs to the realm of understanding, thought and Spirit, in so far as it subjects it to scientific treatment [i.e., in aesthetic criticism or theory] merely satisfies the need of its inmost nature. (Hegel qtd. in Findlay 336)

Therefore, art embodies the World Spirit and brings it to the level of perception. Robert Wicks explains that Hegel wrote about Art with religious overtones: perception of beauty in Art offers a revelation of the divine. Art is “the expression of metaphysical knowledge” (349). Hicks furthermore explains the hierarchy of art forms, a progression of “sensation to conception.” Poetry is at the top of this hierarchy because the arbitrary relationship between its medium (language) and subject matter (thought) brings it closer to thought compared to any other art form. Literature, almost in the same way as Philosophy and Religion, transports us directly deep into the World Spirit (355-359). The important insight here is that although art is not the primary object of Hegel’s project, his philosophy dictates that we should be attentive to creative production because it presents the World Spirit. This may be understood in a merely descriptive way; but, when framed through historicism, Hegel’s notion of the relationship between art and World Spirit takes an inevitably prescriptive turn.

History is the cornerstone of Hegel’s philosophy. For Hegel, World Spirit, whether presented in Philosophy or Art, is only possible if it is grounded in the unfolding of history—i.e., its origins, development, and possibilities. In this sense, other thinkers, such as Montesquieu, Ferguson, Herder, Schelling, and Spinoza, have preceded and might have even influenced Hegel (Beiser 271-272). What is distinct about Hegel’s historicism is its self-reflexivity and self-consciousness. Frederick Beiser explains that this is a weapon wielded against the pretenses and illusions of Philosophy, espe-

cially after Descartes and the modern philosophers. Because philosophers have failed to recognize that its own truths is a product of a specific context, Hegel had to historicize philosophy itself (272).¹¹ Beiser explains Hegel's thought process:

Thought is not a fixed state of being, he maintains, but a restless activity, a process of development from the indeterminate to the determinate, from the vague to the clear, from the abstract to the concrete. The fundamental premise behind his historical conception of thought is that it is not possible to separate the object of thought from the activity of thinking about it, for it is only through our thinking about an idea that it becomes clear, determinate, and concrete. Like all activity, though, the activity of thought takes place not in an instant but through time. Hence thought itself must be historical (275-276).

The primary mistake that Descartes committed, that of the a-historical, disembodied *cogito* that eventually becomes the basis of one's entire worldview, has been repeated in the history of literature. The works of San Juan traced earlier in this paper diagnose this very mistake and danger. From New Criticism to Poststructuralism, San Juan brings back assumptions that are neglected to be natural, eternal, and presuppositionless. These are assumptions about the Text, the Subject, and even Joaquin's genius. All of these are products of history, according to Hegel; and San Juan foregrounds history through discussions of social context, genre traditions, education and influence, and all-too-human institutions. Criticism does not allow literature to settle in *a priori* forms nor hide in universal categories. Criticism is not just a literature's optional afterthought. Criticism is literature's self-reflexivity in action.

Criticism also reminds readers that a literary work is a product of experience,¹² which, in turn, is an interface of contradictions. Hegel defines the Unhappy Consciousness as "the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being." He elaborates thus:

This *unhappy, inwardly disrupted consciousness*, since its essentially contradictory nature is for it a *single* consciousness, must for ever have present in the

one consciousness the other also; and thus it is driven out of each in turn in the very moment when it imagines it has successfully attained to a peaceful unity with the other. (*Phenomenology* 126)

The Absolute Spirit, though referred to singularly, should not be mistaken as monolithic and static. Hegel's historicism proclaims the Absolute Spirit's endless creation through opposition and dialectic. If thought is by its very nature historical, it cannot be exempt from disruption and contradiction. However, the crucial Hegelian insight here is the effect of contradiction, which is counter-intuitive to Newtonian physics: opposite forces do not even out each other. Opposition is generative; negation is creative. Peaceful unity only leads to indifference.¹³ Hegel's dialectic presents "contradiction comprehended in its generation and sublation" (Baum 279). The unhappy consciousness, therefore, functions as a prelude to attaining the telos of the World Spirit. One way I understand this is through the etymological connection of the words "meaning" and "moaning". Both words come from the Old English word *moenan*, which means "complaint" or "lament". The Unhappy Consciousness is the same complaint that drives meaning-making and moaning. Creatures moan because of a raw feeling—whether pleasure or pain—that cannot be or can no longer be suppressed. In the same way, meaning is a complaint that a work or a discourse issues forth. To ask what literature means, therefore, is to ask what it is moaning for.

According to San Juan, the Unhappy Consciousness is the rational self-conscious stance of the Subject (which is really a becoming-Subject), the self-determining agent of historical praxis. Because thought is a product of history, particularly its contradictions, but only for the unchanging/unwavering attainment of World Spirit, San Juan is right to ask what experience bedevils Joaquin's consciousness. The specter that haunts Joaquin, to use Benedict Anderson's formulation, is not really spectral in the way Ibarra has imagined Europe while looking at a familiar scene. Ibarra's demon is comparative and speculative. Joaquin's specter, for San Juan, is real and historical: the interruptions in the Philippine experience of modernity, especially the U.S. invasion and bloody pacification at the turn of the twentieth

century and the Second World War that was followed by the destruction of Intramuros. In his keynote lecture, San Juan strikingly notes the Unhappy Consciousness that emanates from a specific Philippine historical and social process:

The dramatic crisis of the “Unhappy Consciousness” rehearses the problem of articulating a split Filipino subject. Torn between the feudal regime of the clan and the necessity of survival in a bourgeois-capitalist milieu, Joaquin’s bifurcated subject dissolves into the mirage of unifying myths, or becomes reconciled to the alienating order by artistic fiat. (“Nick Joaquin’s Apocalypse”)

Writers, like Joaquin, express meaning and moaning through their literary works. But the fragmentation of the Unhappy Consciousness is also what drives critics like San Juan to continue writing. In tracing San Juan’s critical works on Joaquin that spans half a century, and elaborating the role of history to thought via Hegel, the open-ended conclusion-question of this paper is this: What is San Juan’s own Unhappy Consciousness? Because San Juan, of course, like Joaquin, is a product of discourse (Foucault’s author-function) and a product of history (Hegel’s historicism), the question extends to Philippine Literary Criticism. What remains to be done? What remains suspended in opposition that drives our critics to create?

POSTSCRIPT

In a philosophy forum on Truth and Democracy¹⁴ held a week before this paper was presented, one of the speakers said that Filipinos need to be vigilant in spite of, and all the more because of, the crises that plague Philippine society today: the almost impossibility of meaningful public discourse, curtailment of press freedom, the hijacking of charter change, the State-sponsored killings, the compromise of checks-and-balances in the government, and many others. He said that perhaps everything is part of a process that may seem invisible from our position. Everything will unfold and lead to a Hegelian synthesis. If that is the case, I thought, let us all hope that Hegel is correct.

ENDNOTES

1. This essay is chapter six of *Toward a People's Literature: Essays in the Dialectics of Praxis and Contradiction in Philippine Writing*, U of the Philippines P, 1984, pp. 144-165.
2. *Subversions of Desire*, first published by University of Hawaii Press and Ateneo de Manila University Press in 1988, was republished by *UNITAS* (vol. 88, no. 2) in 2018. Pagination in this paper reflects the recent republication.
3. Because of San Juan's progressive views and anti-Marcos activities in the US, he had been blacklisted by the Marcos regime. In his author's response at the book launch of *Subversions*, he decried that even a work of such importance to the development of national culture would have been impossible before 1986 if it threatened the dictatorship and the political status quo. San Juan lamented that even at the time of *Subversions'* publication (1988), two years after the dictator's downfall, cultural production was still not on the agenda of the state. Aside from this historical context, the book also scaffolds from the development of interdisciplinary cultural studies and poststructuralism ("The Critic" 29). In other words, the timeliness of *Subversions'* publication is an intersection of the local political context (i.e., the restoration of democracy in the Philippines) and a global theoretical development (i.e., the use of theoretical frameworks, although originating from the West, to interpret World literatures).
4. Perhaps, in San Juan's oeuvre on Filipino writers, *Subversions of Desire* is only eclipsed by his works on Carlos Bulosan, most notably *Carlos Bulosan and the Imagination of the Class Struggle* (1972). For a reevaluation of this book in the twenty-first century, see Pante and Nery's "Migration, Imagination, and Transformation" which connects the book to the wider scholarly fields of transnationalism and peasant literature. They point out, rightly, how most of Bulosan scholarship since then has largely been collaborating in this book's main arguments (346-347).
5. Veric notes: "An intellectual of prodigious production and vatic insight, San Juan has authored extensive works as a literary critic, poet, fictionist, and public intellectual whose value in grasping the collective pasts and futures of the Filipino people in the homeland and the diaspora. [. . .] Together, his writings represent some of the most sustained reflections on subaltern cultural politics, emphasizing the long tradition of Filipino revolts across the centuries and revealing their relevance to contemporary attempts to make sense of history in the context of decolonization and its critique of capitalist modernity in American image" (294, 301). See also E. San Juan, Jr.'s "Curriculum Vitae." *Kritika Kultura*, no. 26, 2016, pp. 482-522.

6. In republishing *Subversions of Desire*, UNITAS highlights Joaquin’s connection to the University of Santo Tomas and the Dominican Order: “Nick Joaquin entered the St. Albert College in Hong Kong as a Dominican seminarian [and under a scholarship for his 1943 essay on Our Lady of the Rosary, “La Naval de Manila”] after receiving an Associate in Arts degree from UST in the late 1940s. His personal library was donated by the author’s family to the UST Library in 2008 in compliance with his last will. It is now in the open shelves of a special section called “Esquinita de Quijano de Manila,” set up in his memory, which holds about 3,000 books” (x-xi).
7. San Juan has partly employed Augustine’s philosophy and theology also in certain chapters of *Subversions of Desire*; for example, Augustine’s notion of temporal change in the prophetic/deterministic vision of Fr. Melchor on “The Order of Melkizedek” (116-117) and Augustine’s theodicy to introduce the convergences in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (172-173).
8. Theology and ontology are intertwined in the medieval mind. Augustine, one of the Fathers of the Church and among the most influential medieval thinkers, explains the existence of God using contradictions. In Book 1 of Augustine’s *Confessions*, he answers, “What, then, is the God I worship?” through a series of contradictions:

You, my God, are supreme, utmost in goodness, mightiest and all-powerful, most merciful and most just. You are the most hidden from us and yet the most present amongst us, the most beautiful and yet the most strong, ever enduring and yet we cannot comprehend you. You are unchangeable and yet you change all things. You are never new, never old, and yet all things have a new life from you. You are the unseen power that brings decline upon the proud. You are ever active, yet always at rest. You gather all things to yourself, though you suffer no need. You support, you fill, and you protect all things. You create them, nourish them, and bring them to perfection. You seek to make them your own, though you lack for nothing. You love your creatures, but with the gentle love. You treasure them, but without apprehension. You grieve for wrong, but suffer no pain. You can be angry and yet serene. Your works are varied, but your purpose is one and the same. You welcome all who come to you, though you never lost them. You are never in need yet are glad to gain, never covetous yet you exact a return for your gifts. (23)

He ends this chapter with a surrender—both in the Christian and the secular sense—to the futility of the task: “Can any man say enough when he speaks of you? Yet woe betide those who are silent about you! For even those who are most gifted with speech cannot find words to describe you” (23). Explaining God’s existence this way shows much of the medieval world-order, in epistemology, ethics, and politics.

9. San Juan views Nick Joaquin as among the traditional intellectuals. This group, though not among the loyal servants of the Marcoses and their comprador cronies, is also quite different from the organic intellectuals of the working classes (“What Shall We Do” 4).
10. Michel Foucault explains that the author is not an individual but a discursive function of the text that comes from the modern impulse to limit indefinite significations. In this sense, it is the author that is the product of the text, not the other way around. Foucault says that “[the author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses” (118).

According to San Juan, Joaquin shows this modernizing sensibility in Joaquin’s sprawling bionote for himself, written for the *Philippines Free Press*:

I was born in Paco, where I spent an extremely happy childhood . . . I have no hobbies, no degrees, belong to no party, club or association; and I like long walks; any kind of *guinataan*; Dickens and Booth Tarkington; the old Garbo pictures; anything with Fred Astaire . . . the *Opus Dei* according to the Dominican rite . . . Jimmy Durante and Cole Porter tunes . . . Marx brothers; *The Brothers Karamazov*; Carmen Miranda; Paul’s *Epistles* and Mark’s *Gospel*; Piedmont cigarettes . . . my mother’s cooking . . . playing *tres-siete*, praying the Rosary and the *Officium Parvum* . . . I don’t like fish, sports, and having to dress up . . . (qtd. in San Juan *Subversions* 232-233)

11. Beiser enumerates the forms of a-historicity in philosophy, all of which have been the subject of Hegelian criticism in one way or another. These are the following:
 - (a) The belief that certain laws, beliefs, or values are universal, eternal, natural when they are in fact the product of, and only appropriate to, a certain culture.
 - (b) The doctrine that certain ideas or principles are innate, the inherent elements of a pure *a priori* reason, although they are learned from experience, the product of cultural tradition.
 - (c) The claim that certain institutions and forms of activity have a supernatural origin . . . when they in fact originate from all-too-human sources.
 - (d) The reification of certain activities and values, as if they were entities existing independent of human consciousness, when they are in fact the product of its subconscious activity.
 - (e) The belief that certain institutions and feelings are the product of innate genius, although they are the result of education.
 - (f) The attempt to create a presuppositionless philosophy by abstracting from all past philosophy and by relying upon individual reason alone (273).
12. *Phenomenology of the Spirit* has undergone changes in title, organizational structure, and relation to Hegel’s entire philosophical system. The book’s original title is *The Science of the Experience of Consciousness* (Speight 11-12).
13. Hegel explains in *Phenomenology* that the Unhappy Consciousness always tends (i.e., cannot be indifferent) toward the Absolute Spirit: “The attitude [the

Unhappy Consciousness] assigns to both [the Changeable and the Unchangeable] cannot therefore be one of mutual indifference, i.e., it cannot itself be indifferent towards the Unchangeable; rather, it is itself directly both of them . . . it is merely the contradictory movement in which one opposite does not come to rest in *its* opposite, but in it only produces itself afresh as an opposite” (127).

14. “Truth and Politics: Citizenship in a Post-Truth Era,” *The 2018 Ramon C. Reyes Memorial Lectures*, with Randolph S. David and Antonio Gabriel M. La Vina, on 7 Feb. 2018, Ateneo de Manila University.

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