

The description of what the Europeans did is just monstrous. The British and Dutch merchants—actually merchant warriors—moved into Asia and broke into trading areas that had been functioning for long, long periods, with pretty well-established rules. They were more or less free, fairly pacific—sort of like free-trade areas.

The Europeans destroyed what was in their way. That was true over almost the entire world, with very few exceptions. European wars were wars of extermination. If we were to be honest about that history, we would describe it simply as a barbarian invasion.

The natives had never seen anything like it. The only ones who were able to fend it off for a while were Japan and China. China sort of made the rules and had the technology and was powerful, so they were able to fend off Western intervention for a long time. But when their defenses finally broke down in the nineteenth century, China collapsed.

Japan fended it off almost entirely. That's why Japan is the one area of the Third World that developed. That's striking. The one part of the Third World that wasn't colonized is the one part that's part of the industrialized world. That's not by accident.

To strengthen the point, you need only look at the parts of Europe that were colonized. Those parts—like Ireland—are much like the Third World. The patterns are striking. So when people in the Third World blame the history of imperialism for their plight, they have a very strong case to make.