Coloniality of Power

• Quijano developed the concept of the coloniality of power (*colonialidad del poder*) to distinguish between formal colonial rule and the oppressive practices that emerged during modern colonialism that persist to this day.
Aníbal Quijano

• Quijano was born in 1928 in the Andean city of Yanama in Peru.
• He was a highly interdisciplinary sociologist.
Quijano’s Critique of Capitalism

• In his early years as a sociologist, Quijano developed a critique of the capitalist conditions in Peru in the 20th century.
• He relied on the work of Karl Marx to develop this critique.
The social sciences underwent a crisis in the 70s and 80s.
Marxist sociologists realized their tools of analysis were insufficient to explain the situation in Latin America.
Some abandoned Marxism. Others insisted on it.
How did Quijano respond to this crisis?
Quijano’s Response

• Quijano responded to the impasse of the social sciences by developing what can be described as a critical Marxism.

• Whereas Marx and his western inheritors argued that class and class relations were the main categories of analysis to develop a critique of global capitalism, Quijano turns to the early 20th-century Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui to argue that race, racialization, and racial relations play a central role in the formation and preservation of capitalism.
Quijano’s Relationship to Marxism

**What He Takes from Marxism**
- He accepts the view that capitalism is the main global socio-economic system.
- He believes we need to develop a critique of capitalism.

**What He Rejects**
- The claim that the main category of analysis for the critique of capitalism is “class”.
- The unilinear and unidirectional account of human history Quijano claims Marx and Marxists inherited from the German philosopher Hegel.
With Mariátegui, Quijano argues that race determines the distribution of labor at a global scale.
Race in Coloniality

• For Quijano the modern category of race and racial differentiation determine not only one’s labor but also social status and participation.
“Coloniality is one of the constitutive elements that characterize the global matrix of capitalist power. It is founded on the imposition of the classification of race/ethnicity of the world population as a cornerstone of that matrix of power. It is at play in each and all of the material and subjective planes, spheres, and dimensions of everyday existence at a global scale” (“Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social,” 285, my translation).
What is Power?

• For Quijano, the form of power that emerged with modern colonialism is synonymous with domination, exploitation, and conflict.
• He understands power as having two main dimensions:
  • Repression
  • Seduction
Decoloniality

- Decoloniality is constituted by the social processes and practices that undo the conditions brought about by the hierarchical racialization of the world’s population.