

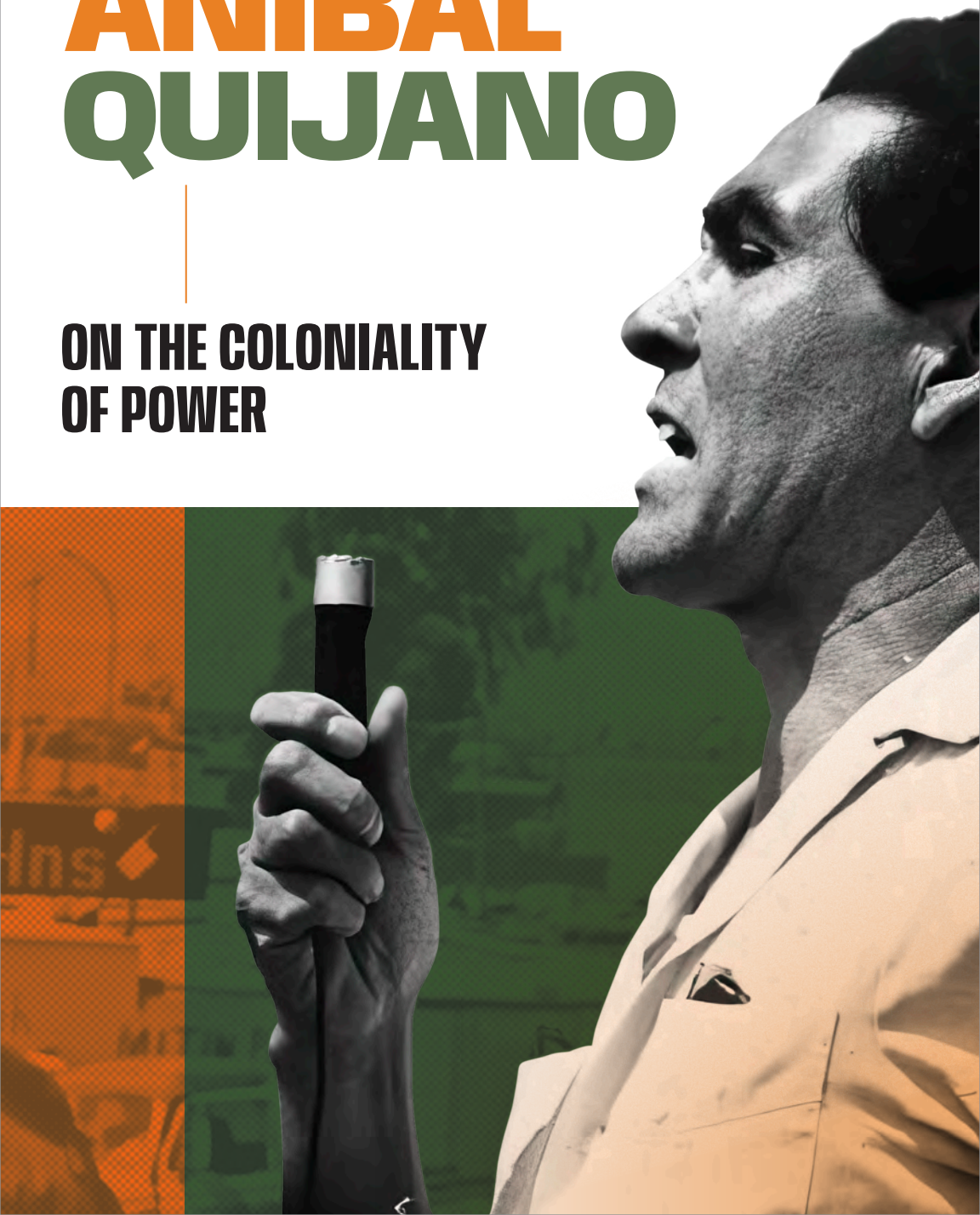
**FOUNDATIONAL ESSAYS**

**EDITED BY**

WALTER D. MIGNOLO,  
RITA SEGATO, AND  
CATHERINE E. WALSH

# **ANÍBAL QUIJANO**

**ON THE COLONIALITY  
OF POWER**



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**DUKE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Catherine E. Walsh, Walter D. Mignolo, and Rita Segato

*Aníbal Quijano: Foundational Essays on the Coloniality of Power* is the first collection in English of selected essays of this influential Latin American thinker.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as we argue here, this volume not only introduces English-language readers to Aníbal Quijano's thought but also provides a fundamentally distinct lens for reading today's modern-colonial world-system from its origins in the so-called periphery, that is, from South America and the Global South.

For some time now, Aníbal Quijano's proposition to see history and society from what he has called the "perspective of the coloniality of power" has crossed the North-South geopolitical border in the opposite direction—from South to North—when this border normally regulates the traffic of theoretical models and other "patents" in only one direction. Some of what Quijano has said, specifically his vocabulary and his approach, have traveled. The terms he used can be heard at conferences and in seminars and classrooms. However, as he himself pointed out in frustration, often these terms have circulated like coins of an academic market or even as clichés of an intellectual fashion. By presenting this collection, we encourage the fuller understanding and broader implementation of Quijano's astute analyses and concepts, developed over the course of his long career as an activist, a militant, and a scholar.

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## I. The World Relevance of Quijano's Work

The fact that Quijano thought in and from Latin America and toward the globe may be motive enough for some to question what this collection of his essays might offer to English-language readers in the Global North and other regions of the world. Here we outline four of Quijano's key interventions crucial for understanding the planetary relevance of his thought and work.

The first intervention is the intimate relation that the coloniality of power constructs among race, global capitalism, and Eurocentered modernity and knowledge. For Quijano, an understanding of today's globally hegemonic matrix of power requires a consideration of its historical foundations and processes. It was in sixteenth-century "America" that this model of power took form and established its global vocation. According to Quijano, in America two historical processes converged. One was the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of "race," a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others. The conquistadors assumed this idea as the constitutive, founding element of the relations of domination that the conquest imposed. On this basis, the population of America and later the world was classified within the new model of power.<sup>2</sup>

The second historical process was "the constitution of a new structure of controlling labor and its resources and products. This new structure was an articulation of all historically known previous structures of controlling labor including slavery, serfdom, small independent commodity production and reciprocity, which wove them together and placed them upon the basis of capital and the world market."<sup>3</sup> As Quijano further explained, "the new historical identities produced on the foundation of the idea of race in the new global structure of the control of labor were associated with social roles and geohistorical places." Both race and the division of labor remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing. In this way, a systematic racial division of labor was imposed in which Western Europe became the central site for the control of the world market, the commodification of the labor force, and the establishment of raced assignments and relations of waged and nonwaged labor.

It is in this context, argued Quijano, that modernity took form and took hold. "Starting with America, a new space/time was constituted materially and subjectively: this is what the concept of modernity names," a concept that localized the hegemonic center of the world—and, relatedly, of

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knowledge—in the north-central zones of Western Europe.<sup>4</sup> Moreover and as Quijano explained, “the intellectual conceptualization of the process of modernity produced a perspective of knowledge and a mode of producing knowledge that gives a very tight account of the character of the global model of power: colonial/modern, capitalist, and Eurocentered.” This perspective of knowledge “was made globally hegemonic, colonizing and overcoming other previous or different conceptual formations and their respective concrete knowledges, as much in Europe as in the rest of the world.”<sup>5</sup>

For Quijano, the necessities and interest of capital alone are not sufficient for explaining the character and trajectory of this perspective of knowledge. Thus, he gave importance to the intimate ties of race, global capitalism, and Eurocentered modernity, which formed the foundation and reason of the coloniality of power. That these ties first took shape in the Americas is important for not only understanding the foundational relation today of “Latin” America in the globe but also comprehending the significance of colonialism and coloniality in the organization, establishment, and continuance of hegemonic global power. This relation and significance are, without a doubt, crucial today for all who struggle against this power and for building an otherwise of knowledge, existence, and life.

The second major intervention Quijano offers is related to the first and is based on the lived weight of coloniality particularly for Native peoples.

In his analysis of the idea of “race” as the basis of social classification, social domination, colonial relations, and new historical social identities in America, Quijano evidences the invention of the term *indio*, meaning “Indian,” as a racialized, homogenous categorization. With the imposition of “Indian” as a new identity, the colonial power aimed to erase millennial cultures, languages, cosmologies, and knowledges as well as forms of collective organization, governance, and existence tied to the land. “Indian” racialized, inferiorized, objectified, negated, grouped, dispossessed, and controlled Native peoples, marking the colonial difference in “Latin” America, in settler-colonial nations such as Canada and the United States, and later in other parts of the world. Christianity, civilization, and modernity were tools to counter a supposedly savage and barbarian precolonial past. While the processes and practices that have maintained the colonial difference vary in different regions of the globe—including with respect to the contexts of invader, settler, and internal colonialisms—the project remains much the same: to sustain the colonial matrix of power and its idea of “inferior races.” As Quijano made clear, this power matrix, which originated

five centuries ago, has been hegemonic worldwide since the eighteenth century, enabled and further consolidated by the nation-state system, “a *private* system of control over collective authority, as an exclusive attribute of the colonizers, and thus of ‘Europeans’ or ‘whites.’”<sup>6</sup> Indigenous peoples continue to make evident today the problem of nonnational and nondemocratic nation-state systems; their demands, as Quijano wrote, are not for more nationalism or increased state power but rather “for an ‘other’ state, that is, to decolonize the state which is the only way to democratize it.”<sup>7</sup>

As Native peoples know all too well, dispossession and genocide, along with capture, cooptation, and individuation (including through inclusion-based policies) continue to characterize the present. “In much of today’s former colonial world, especially the Americas and Oceania, the ‘whites’ and ‘Europeans’ have managed to keep local control of power in all its basic dimensions. In the Americas, therefore, the issues surrounding the debate on ‘the Indigenous’ can only be investigated and discussed in relation to and from the perspective of the coloniality of the power matrix that haunts us, because outside of that perspective, such issues make no sense.”<sup>8</sup>

Despite being up against coloniality’s lived weight, Indigenous peoples have always engaged in collective resistance and affirmative refusal, constructing and maintaining decolonial/decolonizing otherwisely.<sup>9</sup> While coloniality/decoloniality may not be the referenced terms, with colonization/decolonization the more usual ones, the relation is clear: subversions, resurgences, and dignification of existence, knowledge, and life.<sup>10</sup> This is something Quijano understood well. It is present in his analysis of the coloniality of power and the intimate relation it constructs between race, global capitalism, Eurocentered modernity, and knowledge. And it is present in his critique of state hegemony, his notes on decoloniality, his reflections on Indigenous movements, and his thinking with the decolonial Indigenous concept of “life in plentitude,” or *bien vivir*. In all of this, Quijano opens paths of rumination that move from Latin America to elsewhere in the world, encouraging interconnections.

A third major intervention Quijano offers is his argument that the structure of coloniality is an open rather than a closed totality.<sup>11</sup> As he maintained, the coloniality of power is not a homogeneous historic whole. If this were the case, change would imply the complete departure from one historic totality with all its components so that another derived from it could take its place. Change happens in a heterogeneous and discontinuous way, within a historical field of social relations that is open and moves with time and space and whose matrices of power are also discontinuous and heterogeneous.<sup>12</sup> As

such, the coloniality of power does not profess to depict all forms of colonial/modern power and structural domination over existence. Rather, it is an analytical and conceptual framework that invites use, provoking reflections on and expansions of its operation, domains, and configurations.

This, in part, was María Lugones's project in identifying the coloniality of gender. Lugones used and expanded Quijano's lens, recognizing its heteronormative and male-centered perspective and broadening and complicating coloniality's matrix of power. Despite the limitations she saw in Quijano's framework, Lugones also saw its value and possibility. "I mean to begin a conversation and project," said Lugones, "to begin to see in its details the long sense of the process of the colonial/gender system enmeshed in the coloniality of power into the present, to uncover collaboration, and to call each other to reject it in its various guises."<sup>13</sup> In this crucial work—reflected in the growth of decolonial feminisms throughout the globe—Lugones clearly evidences coloniality's open framework and invitational character.

As Quijano argued in his later texts, the matrices of global power today are never static but instead are in constant mutation and configuration, with direct effects on our daily lives, behavior, and social relations.<sup>14</sup> The insurgencies against this power are also in constant flux and creation, as are the decolonial constructions, subversions, and affirmations. By inviting thought, analysis, and reflection on both the colonial matrix of power and decoloniality's lived practice, Quijano calls forth the presence and possibility of radically different worlds.

Hope is the fourth major intervention, that is, Quijano's hopeful and forward-looking vision of the possibility of radically different worlds.

In a 1988 text that critiques neoliberalism in its public (i.e., state) and private capitalist manifestations, both part of the same instrumental rationality according to Quijano, he closes with this line: "The ship of liberating rationality travels today with a new hope."<sup>15</sup> This opinion and conviction, further elaborated in his later texts, was that a liberating and liberation-based rationality was and is in process. The concept and practice of decoloniality embodies this hope.<sup>16</sup>

As two of us have pointed out elsewhere, "decoloniality was born in response to the promises of modernity and the realities of coloniality, in the sense that Quijano introduced it. The conceptualizations and actionings of decoloniality are therefore multiple, contextual, and relational; they are not only the purview of people who have lived the colonial difference but, more broadly, of all of us who struggle from within modernity/coloniality's borders and cracks, to build a radically distinct world."<sup>17</sup>

While the historical relation of coloniality/decoloniality is certainly key in many of Quijano's texts, his frequent reference to the "new" encourages considerations of the multiple ways that the coloniality of power is actually being contested and subverted. In "Latin America: Toward a New Historical Meaning," for instance, he argued that the contemporary acceleration, polarization, and deepening of the control over labor "has produced not only a lot of polarization but also two irreversible limits." Moreover, "new approaches take into consideration the limits relating to the living conditions on the planet . . . and address the limits on relations regarding social existence based on the perverse combination of two mental constructs, race and gender. The thing called race is being subverted. The victims of the coloniality of power are creating true subversion."<sup>18</sup> Even more, these victims are also producing radical critiques of Eurocentrism and with it a subversion of authority, Quijano contends. While subversion has certainly been present since colonial times, Quijano's words offer hope in and for these times, new rationalities of and for the present.

Still, the "new" for Quijano does not pretend to discard the old. "What is going on is that new rationalities are reappearing out of those that were colonized; they are even producing other new ones. What we will probably have in the future," he maintains, "is not so much a rationality shared by all, decreed by some God, but rather several rationalities—that is, several means of producing meaning and explanations—that nevertheless must have common ground so as to be able to communicate. We are speaking of something new where people can communicate, learn from each other, and even choose to leave one identity for another or have many diverse identities."<sup>19</sup>

While Quijano's reflections here are from his native Latin America, they open dialogue on what is occurring in other regions of the world. To use another of Quijano's phrases, a "new alternative horizon of historical sense" is emerging.<sup>20</sup> Herein lies Quijano's hope and forward-looking vision: a proposition and guide for decolonial thinking and doing across the globe today.

## II. Quijano's Conceptual Framework

*. . . another distinctive episteme is emerging. There's an epistemic subversion, and it not only has an important field of activity in Latin America, it also forms part of the ideas that are up for debate around the world at this moment, ideas that originated in*

*Latin America*. The very notion of the coloniality of power and its epistemic foundations, the idea of decoloniality of power, are of Latin America in origin. It is no historical accident, of course; quite the contrary.

This is why the coloniality of power must be called into question, its bases called into question, the very idea of race called into question, the idea of gender and of ethnicity as well. It isn't an idle question. *The answer to it isn't just academic; it is political and vital*. That is, it doesn't refer to official politics via the state but to the politics of daily life.

—"Notes on the Decoloniality of Power" (emphasis added)

The impact of Aníbal Quijano's work has been felt since the 1990s and has grown consistently since then even though he left no major books in either Spanish or English. His talks, workshops, teaching, activism (e.g., the World Social Forum), and articles were all conducted in Spanish. A few of the resulting works have been translated into English through the years and dispersed in unrelated publications.

Quijano was trained as a sociologist, and his life and work were not those of an academic, although he was one.<sup>21</sup> He was mainly an intellectual activist, thinking on his feet and delivering his thinking orally. His intellectual work and activism go back to the late 1960s and the 1970s when the debate on economic and political dependency in Latin America was extensive, involving scholars from Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Argentina. From these years came his friendship and professional relationship with Immanuel Wallerstein as well as the Fernand Braudel Center that Wallerstein founded at Binghamton University in 1976.

There are four theories that originated in Latin American during the 1960s that have had a global impact: the theology of liberation, the pedagogy of the oppressed, dependency theory, and, more recently, the coloniality of power. The latter introduced a discontinuity in the social sciences that must be understood in the context of the change of era unlocked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War.<sup>22</sup> Such observation is helpful to distinguish Quijano's coloniality of power from Wallerstein's modern world-system. Wallerstein devised the modern world-system based on his lived experience and intellectual formation in the North Atlantic. Quijano devised coloniality and the modern/colonial world-system ground on his lived experience in the South American Andes and his intellectual immersion in the debates of his time, mentioned above. While the



relationship between Quijano and Wallerstein was friendly, solidary, and intellectually connected, a closer look reveals their divergent paths.

Quijano added “coloniality” to Wallerstein’s modern world-system. The North Atlantic modern world-system became the modern/colonial world-system, sensed and perceived in and from the South American Andes. The content may be similar, but the lived experience that sustains the content is engrained in the partition and ranking of planetary regions. Because this distinction is overlooked, however, the groundings in which Quijano and Wallerstein enunciate had already been shaped by coloniality of power. Wallerstein sensed and perceived modernity and the First World. For Quijano, it was coloniality that permeated life and memory of the Third World. The fracture, the slash (/), that divides and unites modernity/coloniality had been earlier perceived by Raúl Prebisch’s distinction between center and periphery. Prebisch (1901–1966) was an Argentine liberal economist and executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean who called into question the idea of developing the underdeveloped. Wallerstein added “semiperiphery” to Prebisch’s compound center/periphery, First World/Third World.

Eastern Europe was Wallerstein’s semiperiphery. Two other Wallerstein sources, beyond his debt to Prebisch, were Frantz Fanon’s *Africa* and Fernand Braudel’s *historical capitalism*. The latter overruled the former in Wallerstein analytics. Of the three sources (Prebisch, Fanon, and Braudel), Wallerstein named the research center he created in Binghamton after the latter. The point I am stressing with these tidbits is the geopolitics of knowing, sensing, and believing, upon which conceptual structures are displayed, that relates and at the same time differentiates Quijano from Wallerstein. In a nutshell, while Braudel was an anchor for Wallerstein, the intellectual, activist, and dissident Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930) was the equivalent for Quijano. Consequently, the modern world-system is a North Atlantic (critical) perspective, while the modern/colonial world system and the coloniality of power are a South American (decolonial) perspective.<sup>23</sup>

It was Prebisch also who introduced the concepts “economic dependency” and “unequal development” in the 1950s, which opened up the debate known today as “dependency theory” during the 1960s in which Quijano was involved.<sup>24</sup> A frequently cited Quijano essay is “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.”<sup>25</sup> This essay is revealing of what Prebisch meant to Quijano and to Wallerstein. Quijano perceived and sensed the power differential while dwelling in the periphery like Prebisch,

while Wallerstein sensed and perceived the weight of the center. Decolonially speaking, knowing and understanding are sensorial before being rational. Quijano wrote:

When Raúl Prebisch coined the celebrated image of center and periphery to describe the configuration of global capitalism since the end of World War II, he underscored, with or without being aware of it, *the nucleus of the historical model for the control of labor, resources, and products that shaped the central part of the new global model of power, starting with America as a player in the new world economy. Global capitalism was from then on colonial/modern and Eurocentered. Without a clear understanding of those specific historical characteristics of capitalism, the concept of a “modern world-system,” developed principally by Wallerstein but based on Prebisch and the Marxian concept of world capitalism, cannot be properly understood.*<sup>26</sup>

Quijano did not mention the concept of race in this specific paragraph, although it is explicit in the essay from which this quotation is extracted. Race was for Quijano what class was for Prebisch and Wallerstein. Quijano, following up on Mariátegui instead of Braudel, reformulated center/periphery by following the path of his Peruvian intellectual predecessor, Mariátegui, who was a self-taught intellectual, journalist, and philosopher. Mariátegui and Quijano distinguished themselves for their essayistic writing and wide thinking beyond academic and disciplinary regulations, while Wallerstein respected the formality of the social science's disciplinarity.

Quijano's extensive reflection on Mariátegui could be found in his foreword in the 2007 reprint of *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*.<sup>27</sup> Here, Quijano outlined the political, economic, and subjective transformation of Peruvian society, connected to the mutation of international political economy and the conflicts between the ascending Peruvian bourgeoisie, in connivance with the elite landowners of Peru, pertaining to the disputes between the United States and Britain in Latin America. It was at this juncture that the question of land and the “the problem of the Indian” were made evident, first denounced by Peruvian liberal thinkers (e.g., González Prada), and later followed by Mariátegui from a dissident Marxist perspective: race and racism were outside orthodox Marxism, but it was central for Mariátegui and later on for Quijano.

Mariátegui's own Marxism placed the question of the land, the question of the Indian, and the question of race in the front row. In so doing he was quickly excluded from Eurocentric Marxist orthodoxy. Quijano's



essay on Mariátegui did not miss this point, as Quijano distanced himself from Marxist materialist orthodoxy. Quijano's path paralleled similar reactions in the 1960s among a new generation of Marxist followers of Antonio Gramsci to reject Marxist orthodoxy.<sup>28</sup> However, the concept of race and land were absent in Gramsci and in many of his Latin American followers who held onto the Eurocentered concept of class. For Mariátegui, race and land took over class, and for Quijano, race became the anchor to justify the exploitation of labor and the expropriation of land.

All of these take us to the crucial decolonial shifting from Eurocentric epistemology. This shift appears in Quijano's foundational article on coloniality and modernity/rationality (in this volume). Here Quijano's emphasis on the question of knowledge (rather than the economy) is of note. The radical epistemic shift was to place the control of knowledge over the control of the economy. Quijano certainly understood the role of the economy in the colonial matrix of power. After all, he was deeply familiar with Marxism. But he believed that the economy known today as "capitalism" was not limited to the expropriation of land and the exploitation of labor. In order to make that possible, the control of knowledge and consequently of inter-subjective relations is necessary. There is a deviation, if not a reversal, here from the canonical infrastructure/superstructure. The colonial will to power, mediated by knowledge, becomes the infrastructure, while the economy becomes the instrumental superstructure to implement the colonial will.

Quijano realized that what there is (the ontic dimension of living) and what we do are always regulated by the knowledge and understanding (the ontological) we have about what there is, what we do, and what is done by others. Hence, although he kept employing the word "capitalism" in reference to economic coloniality, the decolonial meaning of the word was distinct from Wallerstein's modern notion of "historical capitalism." In one of Quijano's last essays, "Notes on Decoloniality of Power" (written in 2015 and included in this volume), he argues that "there is a bigger issue that is in crisis, which is this power structure, whose legitimacy is in crisis, whose foundations no longer have legitimacy." He motioned us to look beyond the surface of capital and capitalism, to focus on the colonial matrix of power.

Quijano confronted not only "the question of knowledge" but mainly the question of the "totality of knowledge" head-on. At this point it is crucial to delink from the canonical Western distinction between epistemology and ontology. They are two related philosophical concepts. The first frames the regulation of scholarly knowledge, while the second refers to what there

is (*onto*) that appears to the discursive (*logos*) gazes according to certain regulations of scholarly knowing. The ontic is meaningless without the ontological. Hence, ontology is a philosophical concept mediated by epistemology. Economy and capitalism are two ontological entities that cannot be changed without chafing the epistemology that supports the concepts of economy and capitalism. For that reason, Quijano proposed in his foundational article “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality” that “decolonization” requires “epistemological reconstitution.” Now, epistemological reconstitution cannot be a universal model but instead must come from the local histories disrupted by the coloniality of power. The “bigger issue that is in crisis” is the colonial matrix of power of which economic coloniality (capitalism for liberals, neoliberals, and Marxists) is one of the four domains outlined by Quijano.<sup>29</sup>

As said earlier, the meaning of “capitalism” differs in Wallerstein’s historical capitalism and Quijano’s colonial matrix of power. Here, the economy is one of the four domains articulated by the modern/colonial structure of knowledge. Thus, decolonization, particularly the decolonization advanced in specific local histories, must be connected to the coloniality of power that requires the task of epistemological decolonization. Without this specification, any invocation of decolonization and decoloniality would be floating invocations lacking the specifics of what is being claimed to be decolonized. For these reasons, decoloniality after Quijano is not an abstract universal but rather the connector among diverse and specific localities that have been disrupted by coloniality, both as will to colonial power and the implementation of the instrument, the colonial matrix of power. In this regard, decoloniality is the general grammar that connects specific local works of decolonization that presuppose gnoseological reconstitution of epistemology, or epistemological reconstitution in Quijano’s own vocabulary.

Through Mariátegui, Quijano focused on the modern/colonial concept of race. Although race accounts for the power differentials and inequalities undergirding the formula center/peripheries, the experience, and debates, treatment of racism acquires its specificities in particular local histories and historical periods. Racism in the United States is not experienced, conceived, debated, or treated as it is in China, South Africa, and the South American Andes. However, the concept of race is the colonial connector among diverse planetary localities disrupted by coloniality. In his celebrated work *7 Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928), Mariátegui framed the racial question in the South American Andes:

La suposición de que el problema indígena es un problema étnico se nutre del más envejecido repertorio de ideas imperialistas. El concepto de las razas inferiores sirvió al Occidente blanco para su obra de expansión y conquista. Esperar la emancipación indígena de un activo cruzamiento de la raza aborígen con inmigrantes blancos es una ingenuidad anti-sociológica, concebible solo en la mente rudimentaria de un importador de carneros merinos. La degradación del indio peruanos es una barata invención de los leguleyos de la mesa feudal.

The belief that the Indian problem is ethnic is sustained by the most out-moded repertory of imperialist ideas. The concept of inferior races was useful to the white man's West for purposes of expansion and conquest. To expect that the Indian will be emancipated through a steady crossing of the aboriginal race with white immigrants is an antisociological naivete that could only occur to the primitive mentality of an importer of merino sheep. The people of Asia, who are in no way superior to the Indians, have not needed any transfusion of European blood in order to assimilate the most dynamic and creative aspects of Western culture. The degeneration of the Peruvian Indian is a cheap invention of sophists who serve feudal interests.<sup>30</sup>

Quijano identified the concept of race as a mental category of modernity and by so doing was able to translate Mariátegui's insight into the larger picture of global coloniality. That is, race/racism was not a specific problem in the Andes. What Mariátegui perceived in Quijano's reading was the local manifestation of the crucial issue of global coloniality and in the constitution of the colonial matrix of power. But that was not all. It was a mental category of knowledge that fulfilled the ideal of the human/humanity modeled on males' experience during the European renaissance. Consequently, the concept of race anchored and implied, outside of the Christian European experience, the sexual aspects in defining and ranking Western concepts of the human/humanity. Furthermore, the concept of race was instrumental in separating the human/humanity from all the living energies on Earth, immobilized and objectified by the Western concept of nature. Nature, or what is not made by humans, was imagined as distinct from culture, which is everything made by humans.<sup>31</sup> As Quijano stated,

The idea of race, in its modern meaning, does not have a known history before the colonization of America. Perhaps it originated in reference to the phenotypic differences between conqueror and conquered. However, what

matters is that soon it was constructed to refer to the supposed differential biological structure of those groups.

Social relations founded on the category of race produce new historical social identities in America—Indians, Blacks and mestizos—and redefined others. Terms such as “Spanish” and “Portuguese” and, much later, “European,” which had until then indicated only geographic origin or country of origin, acquired from then on a racial connotation in reference to the new identities. Insofar as the social relations that were being configured were relations of domination, such identities were considered constitutive of hierarchies, places, and corresponding social roles.<sup>32</sup>

Quijano's argument demonstrates that racialization goes beyond skin color and what was called the “ethnoracial pentagon” in the United States during the 1970s.<sup>33</sup> The ethnoracial pentagon of white, Asian American, African American, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino is the current and local manifestation in the United States of a larger phenomenon: the classification and ranking of people, continents, nations, and regions of the world. Quijano's groundbreaking argumentation brought to light that the colonial differential, that which holds together the modern/colonial world-system, was built and maintained on the concept of race. In that sense, the above quotation elucidates the distinction between Wallerstein's modern world-system and Quijano's colonality of power (or modern/colonial world-system).

Distinctions such as barbarian and civilized, developed and underdeveloped, and First World and Third World are all Western conceptualizations that create two opposing poles. What are seen as oppositions in the rhetoric of modernity are invented entities, which are entangled with the colonial difference. Barbarians are not ontically inferior or anterior to the civilized. The constitution of ideas of the civilized and of civilization needed to invent the idea of the barbarian in space and the primitive in time. They needed these ideas to trace their frontiers. The logic of either/or is the logic of Western modernity enacting colonality. It was a convenient opposition and ranking, since it justified the claims to civilize the barbarians, develop the underdeveloped, democratize the undemocratic, and contain any invented threat to the modern/colonial world's order. Mariátegui was already intuiting the large problem when he said that “the belief that the Indian problem is ethnic is sustained by the most outmoded repertory of imperialist ideas.”

The concept of race fuels and holds together the colonial matrix of power.<sup>34</sup> Projected over people and regions of the planet, race served to

constitute the idea of the civilized human and the lesser human: barbarians, primitives, and underdeveloped.<sup>35</sup> This illuminates our understanding of the past and current international world order as well as the emotional impact on people with the privilege to classify, the people who are being classified, and the people who occupy the gray zone between these groups. The process of colonizing the land called America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, conquering the people of the continent, and capturing and transporting enslaved Africans was the foundation of a pattern of intersubjective relations. These processes entangled the European population with Native peoples and enslaved Africans.<sup>36</sup> No one escaped from the emerging hierarchical relations being established, which were transformed and have persisted until today. The arrogance of power settles in the subjectivity of the conquering (and classifier) population in the same way that the sense of inadequacy and inferiority is implanted in the subjectivity of the classified population.

The established power differential, however, is not static. The dominated, Quijano suggested, “learned, first, to give new sense and meaning to the outsiders’ symbols and images and then to transform and subvert them by including their own in regard to images, rites, or expressive matrices of outsider origin.”<sup>37</sup> It was impossible for the invaded and disrupted Native population to continue living as they did, and it was impossible to dwell in the shoes of a language, memory, culture, and praxis of living that was alien to them. The burden was passed to future generations who would adapt themselves to the imposed foreign culture or reoriginate their own, no longer as it was but enriched with the Native appropriations of the invading culture.

Once the logic of coloniality enters like a virus in the subjectivity of all parties involved, it invades all areas of experience from everyday life to institutional political and economic governance. For the Native population (in the Americas, Asia, and Africa), there is no possibility of returning to the past or belonging to the subjectivity of the settlers or invaders. Adaptation always leaves a residue in the population of the origin country and the population that migrated to the North Atlantic region. For the invading population, a new dimension disrupts their historical continuity until that moment. Once the colonial matrix of power is established, no one is outside of it. The current rise of the “white replacement theory” in words and deeds in the United States and in the European Union bears witness. But now, the directionality of the power differential has paradoxically changed direction: the intruders are Blacks, Muslims, Jews, immigrants, and refugees, while the intruded

upon are white and Western Christians. Although this is obvious, it poses a reversal of fortune from the previous 450 years, when the intruders were Western Christians and secular whites and the intruded upon were everyone else. But it is also a powerful sign of the discredit and disbelief in the reality of classifications and in the reliability of the classifiers.

Recent shootings in the United States, the European Union, and New Zealand are all domestic cases of increasing national racial conflicts. Less discussed but there for everyone to see are the racial conflicts in the global interstate order, also known as international order. The officers of the state, of any state, national or monarchic, are human beings also embedded in the racial matrix. Diplomacy, of course, is there precisely to keep interstate relations as detached as possible from personal emotions, but these emotions have not yet been eliminated. Race/racism connects the emotions (pro and cons) of the public sphere with the state.

Quijano's conceptualization of race as an epistemological issue has enormous consequences. Race is generally not discussed, for instance, in interstate relations. It seems obvious from the history of the colonial matrix of power that the racial component is present in the current international conflicts between the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the European Union on the one hand and China, Russia, and Iran on the other. While the economy and historical-political power differentials exist between the states and regions, something more moves the emotions that can be observed in the discourse of politicians and the anchors of mainstream media. That the Chinese are "yellow" is a European myth invented by the scientific classification of Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) and the ideological rendering of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).<sup>38</sup> The European image of Africans, the people and the state, has been shaped by the long history of the European mentality. Russians are Slavics and Christian Orthodox. The expression "white superiority" obtains at all levels of experience, from the public sphere to interstate relations, but is not restricted to skin color. A large part of the Russian and Iranian population is white-skinned.

"Globalization" was not alien to Quijano. However, he departed from mainstream debates on globalization mainly because he injected race into the equation and revealed that globalization is not just something that happened in history but instead is the outcome of globalism: the five hundred years of Western global designs and racial classifications, since the sixteenth century, managed through the colonial matrix of power. Quijano introduced the decolonial perspective on globalization through the concept of race. In the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the



twenty-first century, he routinely observed, “What is termed ‘globalization’ is the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of America and colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism as a new global power. One of the fundamental axes of this model of power is *the social classification of the world’s population around the idea of race*, a mental construction that expresses the experience of colonial domination *and pervades the more important dimension of global power*, including its specific rationality: Eurocentrism.”<sup>39</sup>

“Notes on the Decoloniality of Power” (2015), presented in this volume, is a short although overwhelming statement of the formation and consequences of coloniality and of the decoloniality of power. There, Quijano explicitly connects race with gender and ethnicity. Together, they form the three energies that govern the coloniality of power and the colonial matrix of power.<sup>40</sup> But what does he understand by power structure, on the one hand, and the colonial matrix of power, on the other? For him “power” is a mesh of relations of three forces: domination, exploitation, and conflict. This model of power could be found in many geohistorical civilizations before 1500. What distinguished the mesh of relations that Quijano called the “matrix of power” from the colonial matrix of power? To understand this distinction means to understand his radical departure from Western political theory and ways of thinking.

As we mentioned before, Quijano posited coloniality as the main feature of the colonial matrix of power. It consists in the classification of the global population anchored on the idea of race.<sup>41</sup> Hence, classification is not a manual operation. Sure, it can be done in images, but arguments would be necessary to make sense of the images. If race/racism is a mental category that shapes people’s sensorium, it is because it is the outcome of thoughts manifested in oral and written expressions. Classifications are neither given nor inscribed on the bodies and the regions classified. Classifications are signs projected onto what is classified. To do so requires actors, institutions in positions of power, and a sign system to materialize the destitution of alien sign systems.

For example, “America” was a name invented and imposed on existing sign systems of the territories theretofore known as Anahuac, Tawantinsuyu, Mapu, Abya Yala, and Turtle Island. Asians did not know they lived in Asia until Christian missionaries landed in Japan and China toward the end of the sixteenth century with the Western world map dividing the planet into four continents. The idea of race restructured ethnic relations. Ethnically speaking, “European” was not only the descriptor of a given ethnicity, coexisting with others such as “Chinese,” “African,” “American,” and

“Asian.” It was also the marker of a superior ethnic rank and the generation of the classification. In its turn, gender relations were also remodeled by the idea of race: Spanish women in the colonies and British women in the plantations were in a dominating position vis-à-vis Indian and African men. The classificatory logic of coloniality remains active today, although it is increasingly contested in the interstate system and within nation-states.

Quijano's demand in the epigraph at the start of section II that “the coloniality of power must be called into question in all its domains” is not an academic but rather an existential call, Quijano insisted. It is a political and vital one. He insisted on bringing back together the tree of life with the tree of knowledge that were separated in Western modernity. How should this call be pursued? In “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality” (1992), Quijano's foundational article on the coloniality of power, he called for “decolonization as epistemic reconstitutions” in the following terms:

The critique of the European paradigm of rationality/modernity is indispensable; even more, it is urgent. But it is doubtful if the criticism consists of a simple negation of all its categories, of the dissolution of reality in discourse, of the pure negation of the idea and the perspective of totality in cognition. *It is necessary to extricate oneself from the linkages between rationality/modernity and coloniality.* . . . It is the instrumentalization of the reasons for power, of colonial power in the first place, that produced distorted paradigms of knowledge and spoiled the liberating promises of modernity.<sup>42</sup>

The urgency of Quijano's call can be understood through Albert Einstein's well-known dictum that problems cannot be solved within the same frame of mind that created the problems. Einstein was alluding to the physical sciences, but his notion could be extended to the colonial matrix of power. One of the failures of decolonization during the Cold War was to leave the colonial matrix of power untouched. The colonial matrix of power was also unseen because it was covered by the rhetoric of modernity. How should it be pursued? First, we must extricate and delink ourselves from the linkages between modernity/rationality and coloniality. Second, we must engage in epistemological and subjective reconstitution. This means delinking in order to relink with something else. For this second step, there cannot be one global or universal model. The entire planet, local histories and selves, have been subjected through the years to the promises and demands of modernity. Therefore, the path of reconstructing epistemology will depend on whoever, communally, needs to engage with it. If there is no one model, it is indispensable to start from someplace else. It must begin



from the exteriorities of what modernity destituted and what is relevant for any decolonial project whose basic premise is epistemological and subjective reconstitutions.<sup>43</sup> How did Quijano do it? He shifted the geography of knowing, and instead of starting from modernity and moving toward coloniality, his experiences, emotions, and reasoning began from coloniality. From there he unveiled the fictional promises of modernity.<sup>44</sup>

The promises of modernity never went without being contested. The reason is simple: there is no promise of modernity without implementing coloniality. And that creates conflicts. Quijano's latest essays explored the growing and creative thinking and doing of the Pueblos Originarios/First Nations in reconstituting their knowledges and paths of knowing (gnoseology), reducing Western knowledges and paths of knowing (epistemology) to their own limited dimensions. One of these essays was titled "‘Bien Vivir’: Between ‘Development’ and the De/Coloniality of Power" (in this volume). The quotation marks around "Bien Vivir" and "Development" indicate that the political horizon of *bien vivir* cannot be achieved by developmental projects. Development promises and provides better life (*vivir mejor*) for a minority and worse living conditions (*vivir peor*) for the vast majority. Here you have in a nutshell why there cannot be modernity without coloniality.

Raúl Prebisch earlier realized the trap in the rhetoric of development and modernization announced in 1949 by US president Harry Truman (1884–1972).<sup>45</sup> Given the power relations between industrial centers and peripheries, which have provided raw materials and labor to the benefit of the industrial center, development was a dead-end road. The horizon of *bien vivir* originated someplace else: in the praxis of the living and thinking of Pueblos Originarios/First Nations. The horizon has been stamped in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador. Doing and thinking in the horizon of *bien vivir* has different meanings for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The horizon is the same, but the roads leading toward it are parallel and cannot be fused or absorbed. Hence, delinking from Western universality brings to the fore decolonial pluriversality that emerges, precisely, from people working and following the common path of their destituted local histories and praxis of living and thinking.

Quijano sensed the global momentum of the double processes of delinking/relinking and constitution/reconstitution (learning to unlearn). He perceived the momentum not as a universal model but instead as the plurality of decolonial epistemological and subjective reconstitutions of what has been destituted:

There's a process of decoloniality of power, an indigenized population around the world that's starting to emerge. Therefore, *another distinctive episteme is emerging. There's an epistemic subversion, and it not only has an important field of activity in Latin America, it also forms part of the ideas that are up for debate around the world at this moment, ideas that originated in Latin America.* The very notion of the coloniality of power and its epistemic foundations and the idea of decoloniality of power are of Latin America in origin. This is no historical accident, of course; quite the contrary.<sup>46</sup>

What is emerging is not a new universal within the universal frame of Western epistemology. In "Notes on the Decoloniality of Power," Quijano argues that while coloniality of power remains active, the idea of race lost much of the legitimacy that it had up to World War II, although it remains active in everyday life and on people/our subjectivities. And he adds, *"This is why the coloniality of power must be called into question, its bases called into question, the very idea of race called into question, the idea of gender and of ethnicity.* It isn't an idle question. The answer to it isn't just academic; it is political and vital. *That is, it doesn't refer to official politics via the state but instead to the politics of daily life."*<sup>47</sup>

### **III. The Need of Quijano's Coloniality of Power in English**

As mentioned above, Aníbal Quijano's proposition to see history and society from what he has called the "perspective of the coloniality of power" has crossed the North-South geopolitical border in the opposite direction—from South to North—when this border normally regulates the traffic of theoretical models and other "patents" in only one direction. Quijano's vocabulary and his approach have traveled. The terms he used can be heard at conferences and in seminars and classrooms. However, as he often pointed out with righteous anger, more often than not they have circulated like coins of an academic market or even as clichés of an intellectual fashion. Quijano became upset with this for two reasons: his vocabulary had been used in a superficial manner, and he knew that such use would inevitably lead to obsolescence.

One might assert that the reason for this triviality is related to the disrespect for the "parenthood" that gave rise to it. After all, the role of people who work in the humanities and the social sciences is to donate names that will turn evident in a reflexive way what had remained until the moment of nomination as a blind spot in the visual field of an era. Those names that

emerge and transform the consciousness of an era do not have owners, but they do certainly claim some parentage. Authors, in the most radical sense of the word, are name givers. And the names they donate to the world do not belong to them as possessions or property. Nevertheless, they do have with them a filial relationship. This filial relationship is important because it allows for the coordinated use of a composed universe of ideas whereby every category at stake needs to be understood in context and relation to the group to which it belongs. Unfortunately, this has not been the case for Quijano's ideas, despite the extensive circulation of his vocabulary.

Quijano's words instead have been circulating scattered, orphaned, and therefore unconnected. That is what makes this English-language anthology so important. His words have migrated to the epistemic North separated from the original matrix that gave cohesion to their meaning and have lost the deep interconnections they had at their birth. We can recount some examples of this problem. On countless occasions, authors have placed faith in the possibility that changes in state policy could solve the problems pointed to by decolonial critique. Others have mistaken decolonial perspective with postcolonial theory. Quijano rebuffed them, saying "it is impossible, since, as far as I am concerned, the postcolonial does not exist."<sup>48</sup> Finally, thinkers have pretended to use the decolonial perspective by applying the category "subalterns" to describe the inhabitants of the colonized world, a category that Quijano never used. These recurring examples show how the perspective of the colonality of power is often detached from its original meaning precisely because an adequate representation of Quijano's works has not been available in English.

Anglophone readers will find it useful to hear the way Quijano himself talked about his body of work and ideas. He never referred to his repertoire of categories as a "theory" but instead described it as a "perspective," a way of looking at the world. A theory would be a closed and finished model. Instead, a perspective is given by a set of donated terms, which create a vision that organizes the world differently, reshaping it and making this reorganization of its entities a constant and open work without limits or constraints. The density and imbrication of elements within the perspective of the colonality of power is conveyed by the image of a labyrinth. In his last years, Quijano described himself as "lost in his labyrinth" of interwoven ideas and lost in a continuous two-way flow of interconnection and constant expansion.

Quijano's theoretical universe should be considered as "organic" rather than "systemic," as it is not a closed and complete system of ideas but in-

stead is a living and constantly moving organism. It heads toward an open “horizon” rather than a preconceived and previously designed “utopia.” Quijano’s vocabulary stands out for its surgical precision at naming the elements of his perspective. Many authors have elaborated the critique of colonial history and racism and its impacts up to the present, but the tool kit provided by Quijano’s vocabulary impresses his crystal clear accuracy for the approach of those topics. Some of these terms and their idiosyncratic definitions, which can be traced back in the texts included in this anthology, are mentioned below.

Quijano’s formulation of the perspective of the colonality of power was gradually developed from the second half of the 1980s onward and followed the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The end of this era caused a break in the compulsory ideological loyalties of the bipolar world of capitalism or socialism. It then became possible to imagine and speak of a new critical perspective. While keeping some precepts from Marxism, that perspective took flight in a broader and more inventive way, featuring a worldview based on the Latin American experience. Yet as Quijano emphasized, that view affects and modifies the interpretation and understanding of all reality on a global scale.<sup>49</sup>

The collapse of this bipartite world, with its compulsory adhesions, is the emergence of what Quijano describes as an equally Eurocentric project on both sides of the global political spectrum. The author’s courage is striking when, revealing his Mariáteguian lineage, he fearlessly declares that when viewed from the perspective of the peoples, both sides are guilty of the same Eurocentrism because of the technocratic character of their projects and their adherence to the *raison d’état*.

Another break of Quijano’s perspective with the orthodox Left lies in the fact that the core of the colonality of power dwells on the invention of race, which is considered strictly colonial since conquest and colonization have been ideologically based on the racialization of the bodies, products, and knowledge of the “defeated” peoples. This is how Eurocentrism emerges as the ideological basis of the “coloniality of knowledge.” Therefore, despite being a critical and antisystemic perspective, it focuses not on class struggle but rather on denouncing the racialization of bodies, landscapes, knowledge, and products resulting from conquest and colonization.

Quijano’s enunciation of the permanence of a colonality of power, that is, of a colonial structure that continues to shape the world order and also human subjectivity despite the end of the historical stage governed by a colonial and slave-owning legal order, produces an epistemic subversion; that

is, it inflects the view of the world and gives it a twist, a shift in perspective, a decolonial turn.

This shift in perspective reveals that the colonial event reoriginated the world by creating categories that did not exist before. “Indian,” “Black,” and “white” now classify human beings in a new way that serves as a basis for the exploitation of the modern world-system. National independences never dissolved that classification. Therefore, coloniality has remained, and it proliferates as a pattern for work exploitation, social hierarchies, political administration, and even subjectivity itself. Before the Iberian ships had arrived on the shores of the Caribbean and Abya Yala, there was no Europe, no Spain or Portugal, not even America. Let us not forget the revealing year in which the unification of the Iberian Peninsula took place upon the conquest of the Emirate of Granada: 1492. The “Indian,” “Black,” and “white” categories for the classification of peoples did not exist either, and once created, they brought together very diverse civilizations: those of large populations with a centralized organization and technological development and those of nonstate populations with rudimentary technology.

The first scene of this epistemic turn was, according to Quijano, later accompanied in his proposal by Immanuel Wallerstein (1992), the reordering of history, since it inverts the order of precedence established in the Western historiographical imagination to state that America precedes and invents Europe. This is so because the “New World” emerges as a new space; the American novelty displaces the European tradition and establishes the spirit of modernity as an orientation to the future. Upon the emergence of “America,” the golden age runs from the past to the future. The source of legitimation moves from the past—the “sacred history” that, being interpreted by priests, validated and admitted (or not) scientific breakthroughs and technological inventions—to the future as the source of value. Since then, novelty turns out to be good, and what defines the spirit of modernity appears on the horizon: the act of discovering is discovered as a historical project. That is why in Quijano’s discourse “colonial” comes before “modernity.” The expression “colonial/modernity” indicates that the colonial process was the indispensable condition and kickoff for modernity. This is so just as conquest and colonization were the precondition for capitalism, since only the minerals of the New World would allow the primitive accumulation of the initial phase of capital: without Potosí, there would be no capitalism.

The emergence of America, its foundation as a continent and a category, reconfigures the world and originates the only vocabulary we have today to narrate such a story. The entire narrative of this process, then, needs a new

lexicon to describe its events, consequently giving rise to a new era with a new repertoire of categories and a new epistemic framework to grasp the world. America becomes the New World in the strictest sense, as it reestablishes or—in Quijano's words—reoriginates the world. America is the epiphany of a new time, and therefore Quijano accepts the position not of “subalternity” but rather that of protagonism.

History is “reoriginated” (a category essential in Quijano's thinking) and will welcome “the return of the future” by freeing itself from its right- and left-wing enclosures and heading to the ancestral paths of the peoples and their own historical, communal, and cosmology-centered projects. To understand the possibility of this process, it is necessary to perceive the historical/structural heterogeneity of America's social existence. Such heterogeneity is irreducible and permanent. It represents what Quijano called the “Arguedian knot,” evoking the novel *Todas las sangres* (All the Bloodlines) by José María Arguedas. In other words, it is an articulation or an interweaving of multiple stories and projects that will have to combine themselves in the production of a new time. For Quijano, capital takes over the heterogeneous forms of work and exploitation. Along with salaries, servile and slave labor relations have not disappeared and are expanding today because of the structural exclusion and permanent marginality resulting from the labor market. At the same time, productive forms based on communal solidarity and reciprocity have not only persisted in Indigenous, rural, traditional, and Black communities but have also been reinvented in forms of popular and solidarity economies. Latin America is heterogeneous not only because it embraces diverse production relations but also because diverse temporalities, histories, and cosmologies coexist there. It is heterogeneous because of the diverse peoples who inhabit it.<sup>50</sup>

The ideological and immediate material efficacy of this perspective is made up of what Quijano calls “the movement of society.” Whereas social movements are subject to capture by vanguards that inevitably distance themselves from the people because of their power and control projects, Quijano argued that the movement of society has two fronts that emerge from contemporary politics. The first one involves popular economy with a communal structure, which especially comes up in times of economic catastrophe on a local or national scale and typically arises from unemployed groups or those who were expelled from their territories. The second includes the movements of Indigenous people, Indigenous-peasant organizations, and Black communities. Quijano calls this flow of great political force that bursts onto the present “the return of the future.”



To properly understand the perspective of the coloniality of power, it is essential to consider three representations of time in Quijano's work: "re-origination," "open horizon as destiny," and "the return of the future." The last one is an original and sophisticated concept with Andean roots, which Quijano uses to introduce another form of temporality that affects political conception.

The historiographical perspective and the construction of temporality that Quijano proposes firmly differ from dogmatic historicism in order to support the idea of a time that remains behind a series of "historical events" that are typical of linear time. Coloniality is nothing more than a time that remains. It is a line of force that is in the background and remains there despite particular events. This is a broader perspective that defies the linearity of historical exceptionalism and dogmatic historicism and considers the existence of long periods. And it does so by identifying foundational events, which bring about enduring structures and mentalities that cross over the historical time of such events. Ideas such as the coloniality of power exactly highlight the permanence and long duration of subjectivities. In contrast, historicism severs the necessary connection between events by focusing on unconnected historical episodes. The option for partial unrepeatable events not only blocks the perception and understanding of continuities but also presupposes an empty and free time that is not affected by often hidden and unnamed lines of force that cross it.<sup>51</sup>

In this perspective, the reorigination or epistemic shift is essential because it indicates the mutation of subjectivity since the event of conquest and colonization. The decolonial shift takes place when we realize that it is impossible to narrate the process of conquest and colonization without using a vocabulary following the event. When we narrate this process, we are already located in a reoriginated world, a new world in which we can only speak the categories that did not exist before. For example, we say that "Spain discovered America," but this is an untenable statement, since "Spain" did not exist before "America." If we analyze the chronology of events, we will be shocked to see that the Kingdom of Castile reaches the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula to finish the conquest and begins the unification of what will become the Spanish nation precisely in 1492. This means that the process of annexation reaches the southern coast of the Iberian Peninsula and goes on overseas without breaking its continuity. It is therefore the same historical process: the conquest and colonization on both coasts are part of a continuous, uninterrupted process. However, the reorigination of the world based on a new lexical or categorical framework, through which we see and

classify the entities of our planet and narrate past events, prevents us from envisaging the ongoing conformation of Spain. Similarly, we often and inevitably repeat the word “discovery,” even though we know very well that the continent was already inhabited. This slip reveals that we are naming something else: the novelty of discovering as a value.

The second concept is that of the open horizon as destiny. Quijano had written about utopia in different essays, but more recently he took on the image of “horizon”: a horizon of destiny, that is, an open path led by some ideas and aspirations but neither predefined nor fenced in by preconception. The idea of horizon is that of life and history in motion, not governed by the ideal of a compulsory future, of an imperative future, a motion that is not seized by its end. It is like the winds of history passing through the scene in an always uncertain way. Uncertainty is utopia itself, as with the instability of tectonic plates. History is motion. Life is motion: true and mere “historical faith” about an always uncertain future that cannot be imprisoned. This is the notion of horizon that Quijano sets out and that little by little modifies and replaces the usual notion of utopia as a must-be of the future. We only know about the present, and we can act in the present. The future is open.

The third central idea in this perspective is the “return of the future,” meaning a horizon that reopens to the path of peoples’ history after the defeat by the capitalist liberal state and the bureaucratic despotism of “real socialism” as well. The hegemony of Eurocentrism has governed both projects. The collapse of the strict loyalties, either to the Left or to the Right, prevented us from thinking freely. It has permitted the reemergence of peoples holding communal structures—such as Indigenous peoples, Indigenous-peasant groups, and Black communities—in politics, that is, in another kind of politics. In the post–Cold War period, encouraged by the apparent benevolence of the multicultural era, diverse peoples who were thought to be extinct reappeared on the scene, showing themselves still alive. The contemporary reemergence of an Indigenous historical subject or the acknowledgment in Latin America that some peasant communities were in fact Indigenous peoples as well as the deconstruction of *mestizaje* indicate that the matrix (*patrón*) of coloniality is coming apart. There is an ongoing reidentification of peasants as Indigenous peoples, of mestizos as Indigenous and Black people, and more people are retracing their nonwhite ancestry.<sup>52</sup>

That is why the category of the return of the future is so important. In the Quechua and Aymara understanding of time, the past is in the future, and Quijano’s essay title “The Return of the Future” is a clear reference to this Andean construction of time.<sup>53</sup> We could say, then, from the point of view of



the critique of coloniality that only in the future will we be able to find the path and flux of a lost, interdicted past. It is thus clear that the continuity of community solutions for everyday life, which has been interrupted and blocked, is making its own way in the present after the crisis of the political paradigms of the 1970s. This makes possible a connection between archaic forms of life and current historical projects that find their roots in the former. Yet, we are speaking of not a restoration or of nostalgia but rather the liberation of diverse peoples' historical projects that had been interfered with and withheld by the matrix of coloniality. The return of the future becomes possible, a future that could not have been possible but now is. We are not speaking of the nostalgia for a static golden age that is stuck in a remote past or of a loss, much less the confinement of traditions. It is not about the "noble savage" of a pristine origin or about culturalism (a variant of fundamentalism) but instead is about a reclaimed historical path that now has the floodgates open to smooth its continuity in the present. It is the recovery of a historical flow that has been blocked by conquest, colonization, and coloniality and is now reinstalled as the historical project of peoples' continuity. That is why Aníbal Quijano rarely speaks in terms of "decolonizing" in order to avoid an idea of recoverable origin. Time was always in motion for all peoples. All peoples are in history all the time. This is the point in which the perspective of the coloniality of power approximates poststructuralism, since it designs a struggle for a horizon Other by tearing apart the fabrics of discourse and, through its ruptures, making way for the histories withheld by the warlike and ideological intervention of conquest and colonization.

## Notes

Each of the three sections of this introduction was written by one of us, respecting the personal relation and intellectual debts that we individually and collectively owe to Aníbal Quijano.

- 1 Aníbal Quijano was born in Yanama, Peru, in 1928. At a young age he became involved in Marxist-socialist revolutionary politics. He was incarcerated several times for his political thought, and on numerous occasions his writings were confiscated. Quijano was an active part in the 1960s and 1970s of the conceptualization of dependence theory—introducing his concept of structural heterogeneity—and of the shaping of Latin American critical thought. His intellectual militancy of these years is documented in the well-known Latin American journal

*Sociedad y política*. Trained as a sociologist and being an invited professor in many universities in the Americas and throughout the globe, Quijano refused the identification of full-time academic. His intellectual interest, energy, and contribution were, until his passing in 2018, always militant in scope: a perspective for analyzing and rereading the world from Latin America, from the complex weave of race and capital that is the coloniality of power, the focus of this book.

- 2 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533, in this volume.
- 3 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," 534.
- 4 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," 548.
- 5 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," 550.
- 6 Quijano, "The 'Indigenous Movement' and Unresolved Questions in Latin America," in this volume.
- 7 Quijano, "Estado-Nación y 'movimientos indígenas' en la región andina: Cuestiones abiertas," *Observatorio Social de América Latina* (Buenos Aires) 7, no. 19 (2006): 3. See also Catherine E. Walsh, "Undoing Nation-State," in *Rising Up, Living On: Re-existences, Sowings, and Decolonial Cracks*, 180–229 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023).
- 8 Quijano, "The 'Indigenous Movement.'"
- 9 For a discussion of affirmative refusal, see Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017). Recalled as well are the practices of marronage among Black ancestral communities.
- 10 One example is the reframing of indigeneity as a historical and trans-hemispheric category and collective Indigenous proposal that originates from the experiences that unite Native peoples and that "interpellate a collectivity of Indigenous nations, as well as non-Indigenous allies that struggle to transcend the conditions of internal/external colonialisms and their logics of elimination." See Emil Keme, "For Abiayala to Live, the Americas Must Die: Toward a Transhemispheric Indigeneity," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 46.
- 11 See Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Social Classification," in this volume.
- 12 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Social Classification."
- 13 María Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender," *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2 (Spring 2008): 4, [https://globalstudies.trinity.duke.edu/sites/globalstudies.trinity.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/v2d2\\_Lugones.pdf](https://globalstudies.trinity.duke.edu/sites/globalstudies.trinity.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/v2d2_Lugones.pdf).
- 14 See, for example, in this volume, "Coloniality of Power and De/Coloniality of Power," "Notes on the Decoloniality of Power," and "Latin America: Toward a New Historical Meaning."

- 15 Aníbal Quijano, “Lo público y lo privado: Un enfoque latinoamericano,” in *Por la Imaginación Política: De la socialización a la descolonialidad del poder*, comp. Danilo Assis Clímaco (Lima: Red de Descolonialidad y Autogobierno Social/Programa Democracia y Transformación Social, 2000), 236. Translation by Catherine Walsh. Both public and private neoliberalism were, in Quijano’s mind, part of the same instrumental rationality.
- 16 Here it seems relevant to note that “decoloniality” was not a central component of Quijano’s early work on the colonality of power. This only began to emerge after the first half of 2000, largely the result of collective discussions and reflections of what has been referred to as the modernity/(de)coloniality group, organized around Quijano’s thought and in which he played a central part.
- 17 Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 4–5.
- 18 See Quijano, “Latin America: Toward a New Historical Meaning,” in this volume.
- 19 See Quijano, “Latin America.”
- 20 See Aníbal Quijano, “Otro horizonte de sentido,” *América Latina en Movimiento*, 441 (July 2, 2014): 2–5.
- 21 Quijano was a faculty member of the Universidad de San Marcos in Lima; a visiting professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton; a scholar of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations; and an invited professor and speaker at various universities throughout the Latin American region and Europe.
- 22 Rita Segato, *The Critique of Coloniality: Eight Essays* (London: Routledge, 2022).
- 23 For more details, see Walter D. Mignolo, “Colonialidad Global, Capitalismo y Hegemonía Epistémica,” in *Indisciplinar las Ciencias Sociales: Geopolíticas del conocimiento y colonialidad del poder; Perspectivas desde lo Andino*, ed. Catherine Walsh, Freya Schiwy, and Santiago Castro-Gomez, 215–44 (Quito: Abya Yala, 2002).
- 24 Vincent Ferraro, “Dependency Theory: An Introduction,” in *The Development Economics Reader*, ed. Giorgio Secondi, 58–64 (London: Routledge, 2008).
- 25 Quijano’s original text was published with the title “Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina” in *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales: Perspectivas latinoamericanas*, ed. Edgardo Lander (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2000), and reprinted as “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America” in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel,

- and Carlos A. Jáuregui (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), included in this volume.
- 26 Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” in this volume (emphasis added). See also his distinction between “capital” and “capitalism” in “Notes on the Decoloniality of Power,” in this volume.
- 27 See Quijano, “Prólogo: José Carlos Mariátegui.”
- 28 Aníbal Quijano, “José Carlos Mariátegui: Encuentros y debates,” in José Carlos Mariátegui, *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1928) (Caracas, Venezuela: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), ix–xc. The year before, the Argentina intellectual José María Aricó, one of the leaders of the Gramscian Left in Argentina and Brazil in the 1960s, published the booklet *Mariategui y los orígenes del Marxismo Latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 1978). The two texts, read side by side, illustrate the two readings of Mariátegui’s work: the foundation of decolonial thinking, in Quijano, and the origin of Latin American Marxism. See, in addition, Walter D. Mignolo, “Mariategui and Gramsci in ‘Latin’ America,” *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*, 387–420 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); and Catherine E. Walsh, “Thinking Andean Abya Yala with and against Gramsci: Notes on State, Nature, and *Buen Vivir*,” in *Gramsci in the World*, ed. Roberto M. Dainotto and Fredric Jameson, 190–203 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).
- 29 Lugones, “The Coloniality of Gender.”
- 30 Translated by Marjori Urquidí. Jose Carlos Mariategui, “The Problem of the Indian,” in *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariateg/works/7-interpretive-essays/essay02.htm>.
- 31 An annual workshop was held at Binghamton in the late 1990s and was organized by the Puerto Rican sociologist Kelvin A. Santiago, with the presence of Aníbal Quijano. In one of those meetings, Sylvia Wynter was a special participant. She later published an extensive essay connecting her own Caribbean and Fanonian perspective with Quijano’s coloniality of power. See Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom.”
- 32 Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” 182. See also in this line of thought Walter D. Mignolo, “Racism as We Sense It Today,” in *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*, 85–99.
- 33 Historian David A. Hollinger has been credited for coining the felicitous term “ethnoracial pentagon.” See Jill Goetz, “UC–Berkeley Historian David Hollinger to Discuss Racial, Ethnic Classifications and Their Relation to Culture in Cornell Lecture April 28,” Cornell University, April 21, 1997, <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/1997>

/04/uc-berkeley-historian-david-hollinger-discuss-racial-ethnic-classifications-and.

- 34 María Lugones and Rita Segato have made substantial contributions to the intersections of sex/gender/race, grounding their argument in Quijano's coloniality of power. See, for example, Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender"; and Rita Segato, "A Manifesto in Four Themes," *Critical Times. Interventions in Global Theory* 1, no. 1 (2018): 198–211, <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article/1/1/198/139314/A-Manifesto-in-Four-Themes>. The spread of Quijano's conceptual framework should be noticed in that while Lugones's work operates in the context of US "women of color," Segato's work is grounded in the history and culture of Latin America.
- 35 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom."
- 36 The vocabulary to name actors and social roles was Spanish, from neither Pueblos Originarios' own languages nor the diversity of African languages spoken by the enslaved population. Coloniality of knowing and sensing is a semiotic phenomenon; it operates through the sign system spectrum (orality and literacy, images, sounds, and tastes in foods and cultural expressions).
- 37 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Subjectivity in Latin America," in this volume.
- 38 Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, 103–40 (London: Blackwell, 1997).
- 39 Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America," in this volume (emphasis added).
- 40 On the word "patron" in Spanish and its English translation into "matrix," see Quijano, "The 'Indigenous Movement' and Unresolved Questions in Latin America," in this volume.
- 41 "Estado-Nación, ciudadanía y democracia" [1997], in Aníbal Quijano, *Cuestiones y horizontes: De la dependencia histórico-estructural a la colonialidad/descolonialidad del poder*, ed. Danilo Assis Clímaco (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2014), 611.
- 42 Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," in this volume (emphasis added).
- 43 For an expansion on this idea, see Walter D. Mignolo, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*, 1–84 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).
- 44 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "North Atlantic Universals: Analytical Fictions, 2492–1945," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 839–58. Trouillot's felicitous expression reinforces his shifting and unveiling of the abstract universal of Western modernity.
- 45 "The old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the

- concepts of democratic fair-dealing.” Harry S. Truman’s, “Inaugural Address,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, January 20, 1949, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/public-papers/19/inaugural-address>.
- 46 Quijano, “Notes on the Decoloniality of Power,” in this volume (emphasis added).
- 47 Quijano, “Notes on the Decoloniality of Power” (emphasis added).
- 48 Aníbal Quijano, personal communication to the author.
- 49 See Segato, “Aníbal Quijano and the Coloniality of Power.”
- 50 See Segato, “Aníbal Quijano and the Coloniality of Power.”
- 51 See Mario Rufer, “El perpetuo conjuro: tiempo, soberanía y una mirada poscolonial sobre la escritura de la historia,” *Revista Historia y Memoria*, Dossier Miradas de la Historia, Bogotá, 2020.
- 52 See Rita Segato, “The Deep Rivers of the Latin American Race: A Re-reading of Mestizaje,” in *The Critique of Coloniality: Eight Essays*, 159–84 (London: Routledge, 2022).
- 53 The expression of “the return of the future” as a past in motion is rooted in Aymara thought and language: *qhip nayra uñtasis sarnaqapxañani* means “the past lies ahead, the future lies behind.” In Quechua as well, there is the same relational cyclic structure. Hurtado de Mendoza states that it is “natural for Quechua speakers to state that the past lies ahead and the future lies behind. Also, “*pachakuti* are not a return to previous stages, instances or states just to repeat them, but to reorder, reform or transform them upon new principles, following new paradigms.” William Hurtado de Mendoza Santander, *Pragmática de la cultura y lengua Quecha* (Cusco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos Bartolomé de las Casas, 2001), 77–78 and 73. From a different interpretive model, Martina Faller and Mario Cuéllar explain that in Quechua, “returning from a temporal unit does not mean that we are returning to the same point in time. Instead, we suppose that these units are conceptualized as abstract containers that are filled with different events in every return.” Martina Faller y Mario Cuéllar, “Metáforas del tiempo en el quechua,” University of Manchester, 2003, <https://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/martina.t.faller/documents/Faller-Cuellar.pdf>.