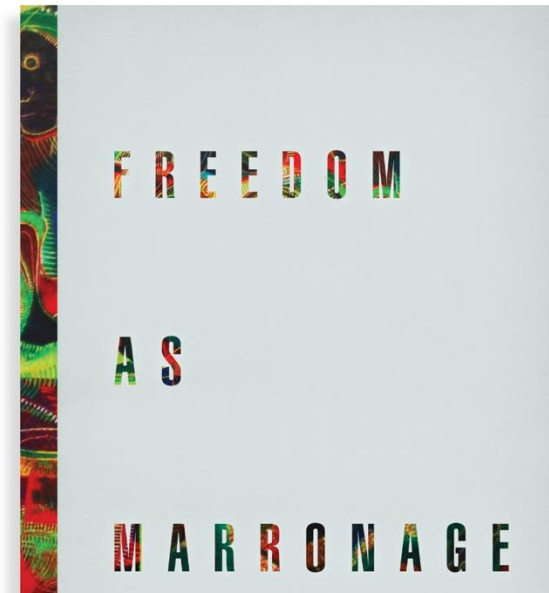


Once upon a time ....

# History, Power, Technology and Narrative

Switch class I : Impossible Project

# Passphrase: **Neil Roberts**



## Neil Roberts



Associate Dean of the Faculty, John B. McCoy  
and John T. McCoy Professor of Africana  
Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Political Science  
and Religion

## Freedom as Marronage

[Neil Roberts](#)

What is the opposite of freedom? In *Freedom as Marronage*, Neil Roberts answers this question with definitive force: slavery, and from there he unveils powerful new insights on the human condition as it has been understood between these poles. Crucial to his investigation is the concept of marronage—a form of slave escape that was an important aspect of Caribbean and Latin American slave systems. Examining this overlooked phenomenon—one of action from slavery and toward freedom—he deepens our understanding of freedom itself and the origin of our political ideals.

[READ MORE +](#)

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264 pages | 1 halftone, 1 table | 6 x 9 | © 2015

[BLACK STUDIES](#)

Philosophy: [AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY](#), [GENERAL PHILOSOPHY](#)

Political Science: [POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY](#)

# The Plan

Welcome and openings 10

Group activity 10

Lecture 30-40

Discussion 20

# IMPOSSIBLE

THINKING AT THE LIMITS  
OF THE POSSIBLE,  
TOGETHER.

*project*

WELCOME

# Activity in groups 10 min

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Describe the problem of  
Global Inequality.



**LECTURE 30-40 min**

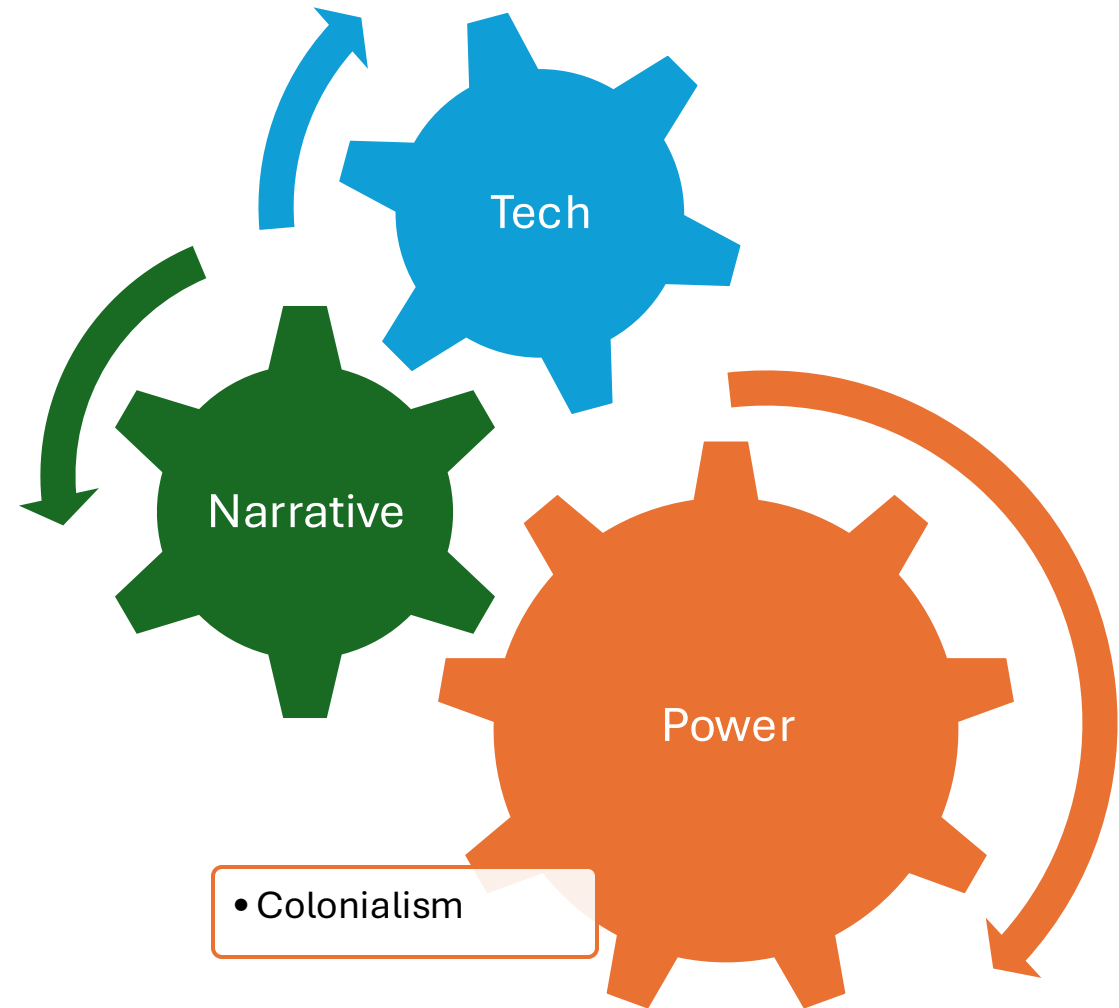
Definitions

Beginnings

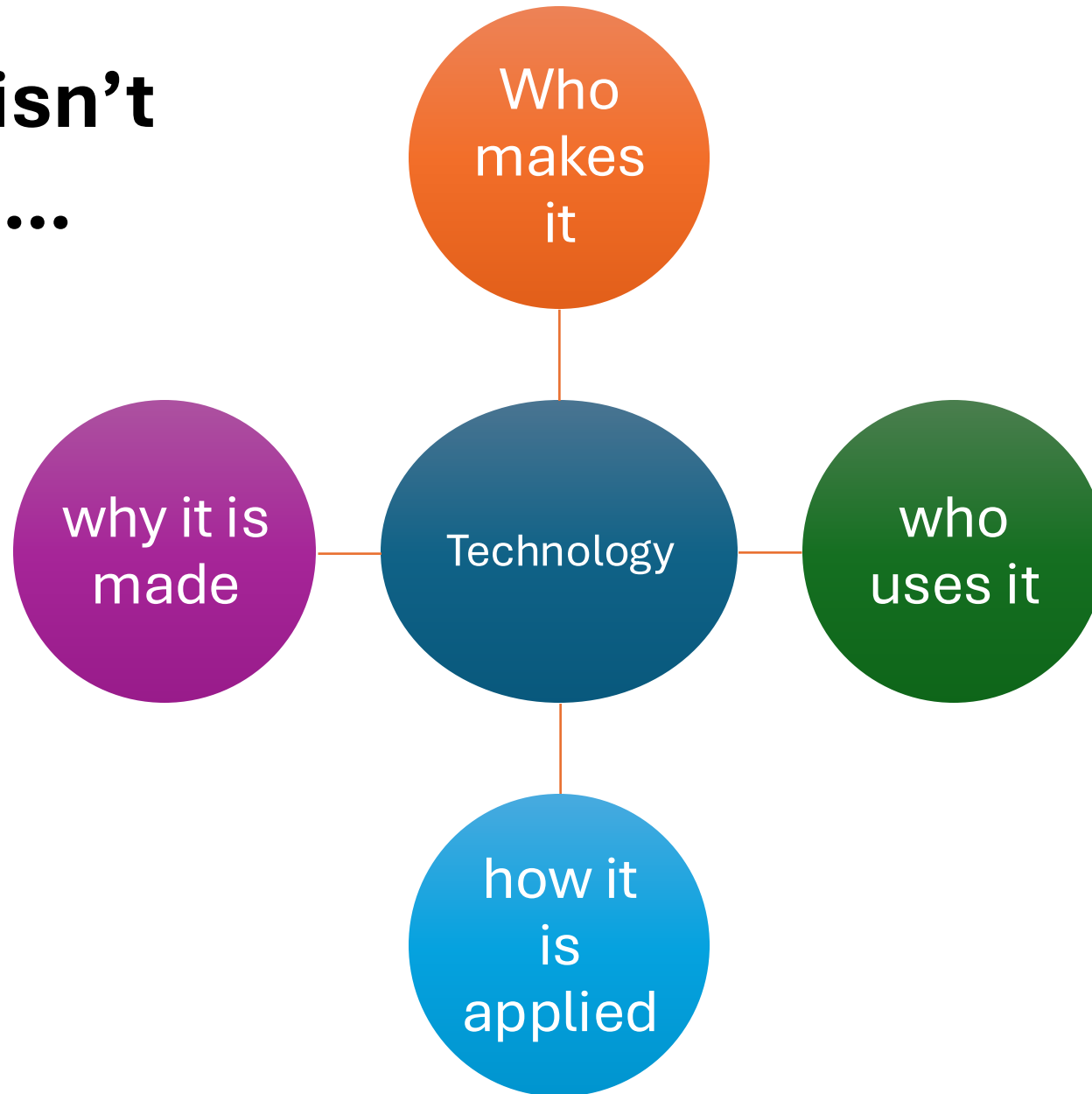
Technologies

# Necessary Definitions

- Power
  - Colonialism
- Narrative
- Technology

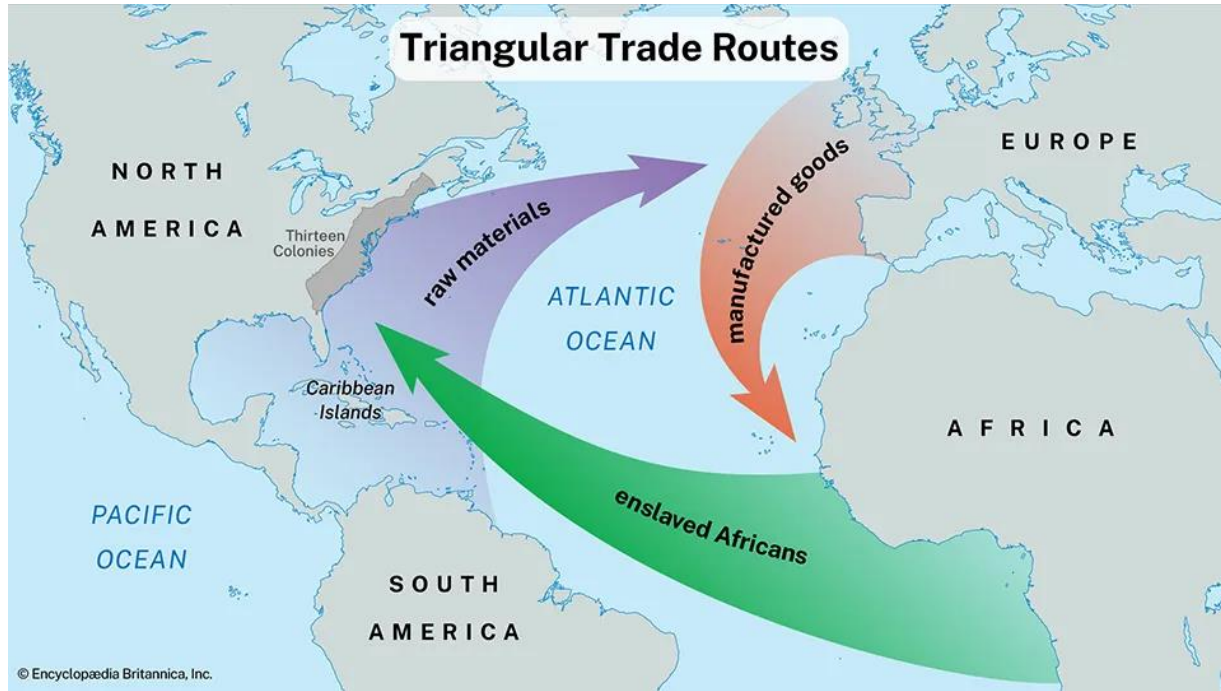


**Technology isn't  
a thing...it is...**





# Where and when did our world begin?



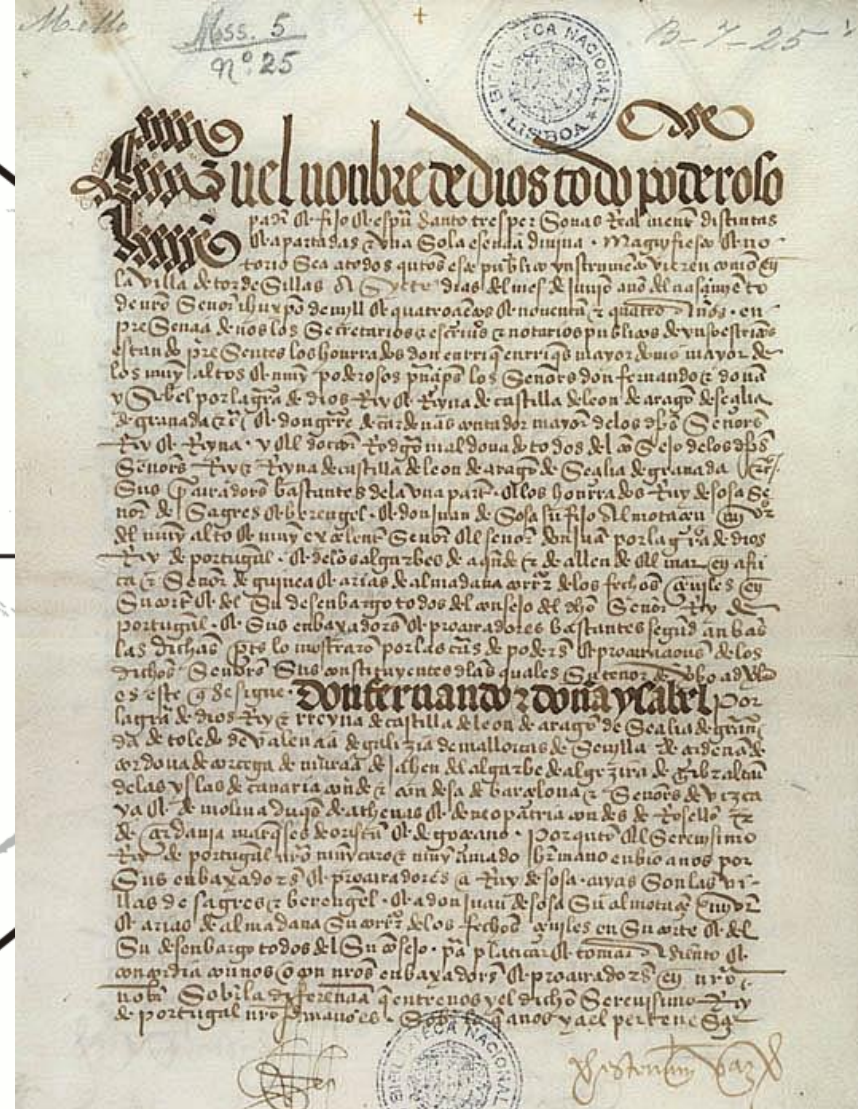
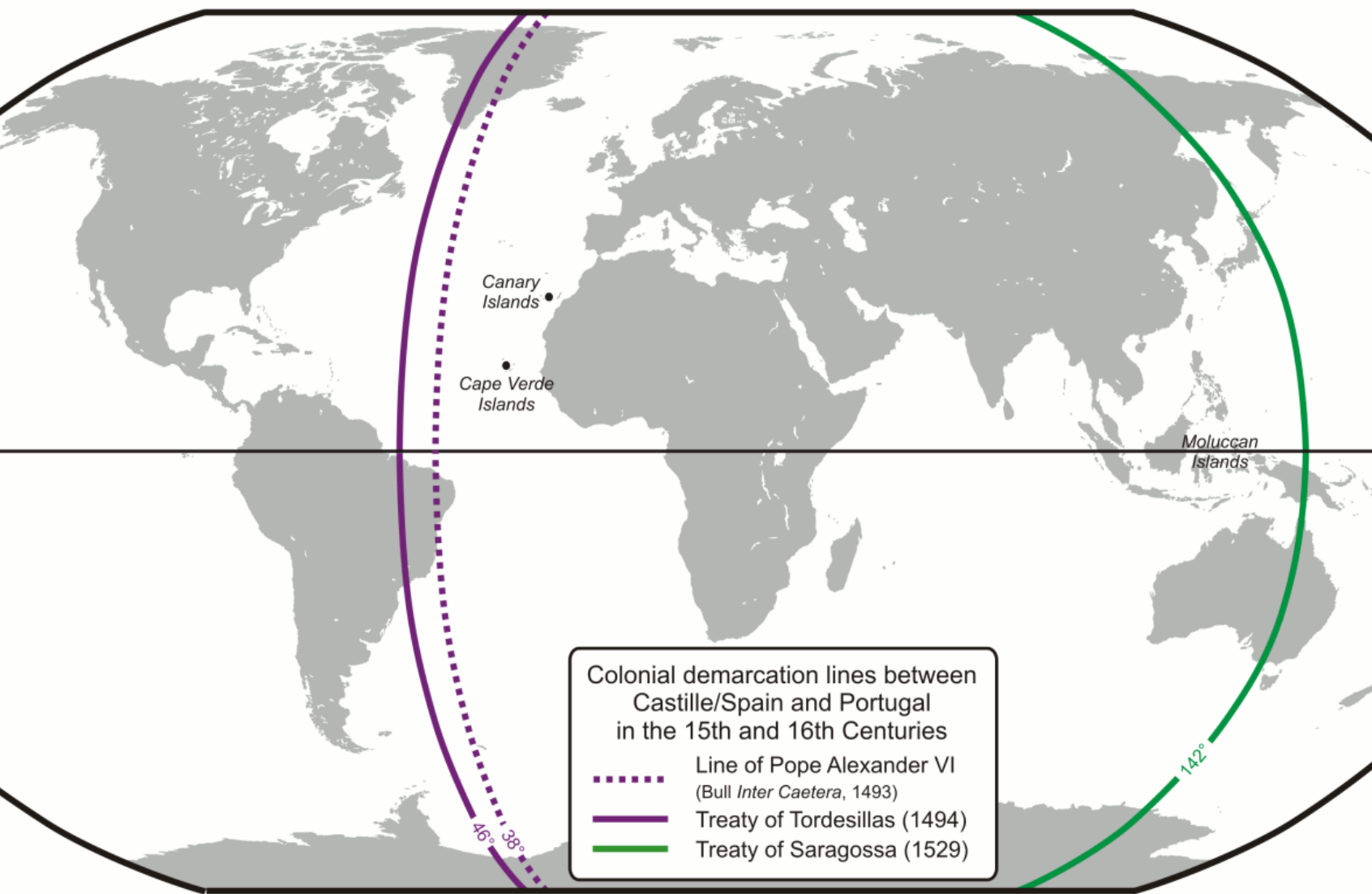
**Why Columbus?**

# Technology of power: Writing

- The “Requirement”[example 1]
  - A written document that served as a land deed for undiscovered land.
    - Authorized by the Pope and King and Queen.
  - Authorized Europeans to remove people from their ancestral lands.
  - Not written or spoken in an understood language.
  - A reality of European making, an idea, a story that justified violence.







Treaty of Tordesillas 1494 [also writing]

Divided the world between Spain and Portugal



**Americas  
before the  
Europeans**

**America After  
the Europeans.**



# Tenochtitlan [Aztec Capital]

- Quote from a European observer...
- A technologically advanced city.
  - Acqueducts/irrigation
  - Hyrdoponics
  - Architecture
  - Defense
- Europeans destroyed everything....
  - Including their writing, their perspective.





La segunda par

TE DELA HISTO  
ria general delas Indias.

que contiene

La conquista de Mexico,  
y dela nueva España.



En Anuers por Martin Nucio.

Con priuilegio Imperial.

M. D. LIII.

# Writing example 2: Conquistador accounts

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- Conquistador Chronicles [example 2]
- Essential for ...
  - securing funding
  - authorization for subsequent expeditions.
  - What kind of “true relation” did they tell?

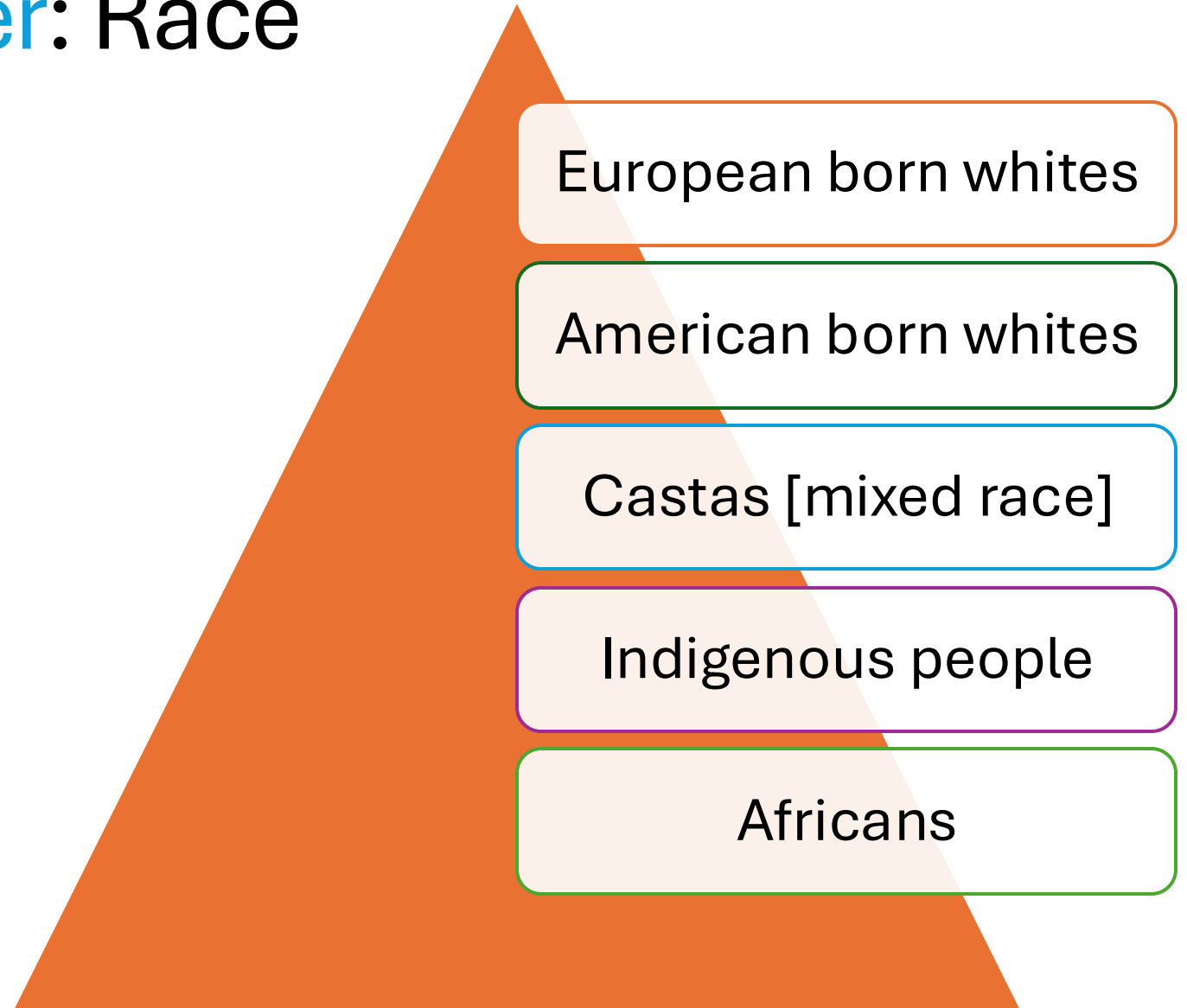


Today most land in the Americas is still held by Europeans or their descendants. Most people of African and indigenous descent remain dispossessed and/or disproportionately impoverished.



# Technology of power: Race

- New societies founded on racial hierarchy.
- Debates over humanity of indigenous people and their enslavement. 1500s.
  - Abolition 1542 [writing]
- African slavery secured African descendants a place at the bottom of the hierarchy.



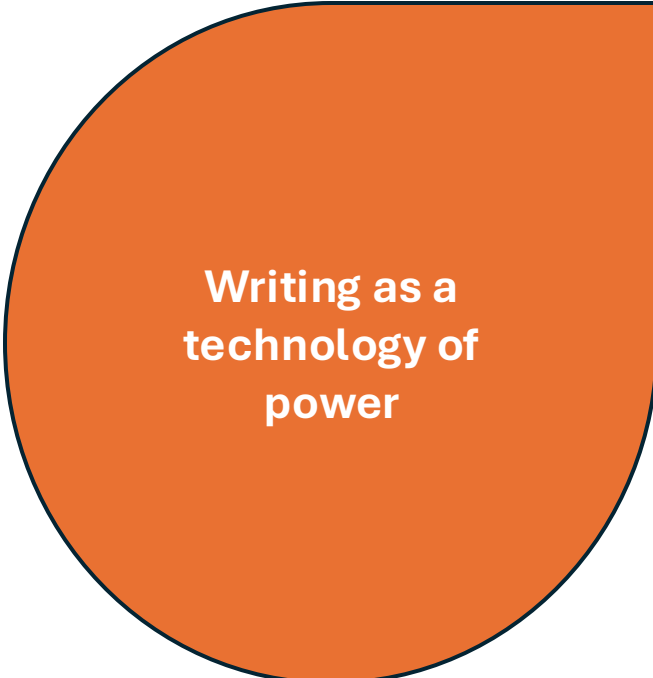
# Race example 1: Caste system

- **Caste laws** [also writing]
  - Laws attaching racial labels as well as certain rights and restrictions based on race. [first body of racial law in the Americas]
    - Organized according to proportion of Spanish blood.
  - Purpose: to keep people in a hierarchy and to ensure that they aspired to racial betterment. To enact surveillance.
- Paintings like this one made to demonstrate colonial control.



Today race continues to exist as a divider in societies across the globe with a strong preference for lighter skin and European appearance. Black and brown people continue to be disproportionately discriminated against.

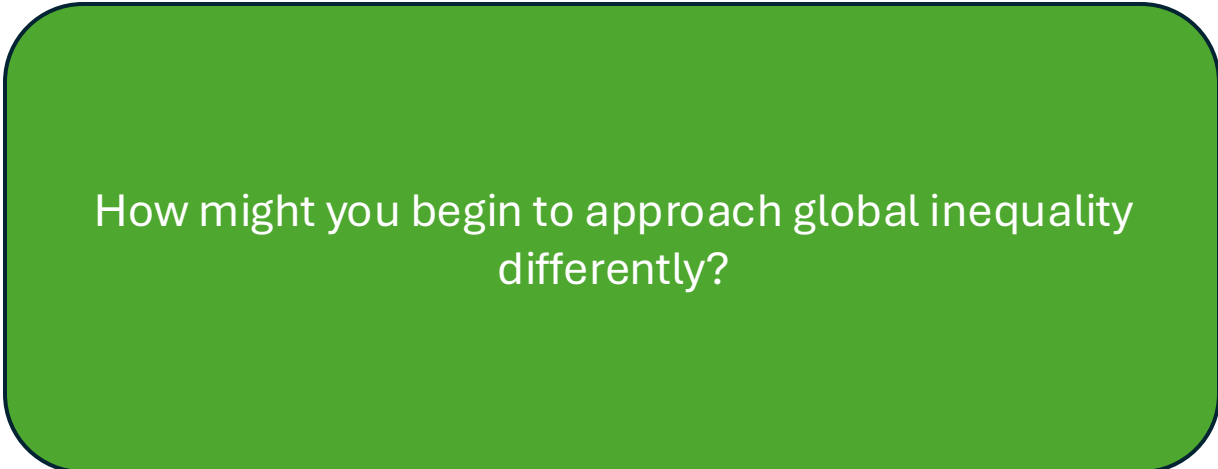
# Discussion



Writing as a  
technology of  
power



Race as a  
technology of  
power



How might you begin to approach global inequality differently?