"Towards an Arab Decoloniality"

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DESCRIPTION

The so-called “decolonial turn” in critical theory that largely emanates from the colonial experience of the Americas refers to a certain contemporary mode of epistemological critique. Inspired by the post-Bandung decolonization era, it is nevertheless distinct from it, and aspires to confront and delink from coloniality. Coloniality refers to modes of global power rooted in the modern, colonial and racialized capitalist system that continue to manifest in the so-called “postcolonial” era. In one important sense, the work of decolonial theory is to bracket the “post” in the postcolonial, and to move beyond the project of the deconstruction of Eurocentrism, which is always a priori, through new ways of confronting coloniality and possibilities of decolonization. To this end, some of the thinking points for decolonial theorists have been the reconsideration of modernity, genealogies of 1492 in relation to the global colonial capitalist world-system, notions of the “red,” “back” and “white” Enlightenment and south-south possibilities of solidarity. This paper thinks through what the Arab world can say to decolonial theory, where - with the exception of the Palestinians’ settler-colonized present - the coloniality of power has most acutely manifested itself in the construction of modern-nation states, the failure of the pan-Arab nationalist liberation project, the disintegration of the post-1967 Arab statist regional order, and most recently, the failure of the Arab uprisings to contribute to the unfinished project of Arab decolonization.