

Aboliphobia: a neologism to name the symbolic violence against the abolitionist thought on adoption. (v1.1)

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Abstract

The term *Aboliphobia*, coined by **Olmo Gómez Aldaz** in 2025, is proposed as a neologism to describe a specific form of symbolic violence directed against those who hold abolitionist positions regarding adoption. This hostility—often denied, ridiculed, or pathologized—is not a simple ideological disagreement but rather a cultural defense mechanism that protects the adoptive system and its moral imagery of “rescue” and “salvation.” *Aboliphobia* manifests itself across institutional, media, and professional discourses that seek to invalidate or silence critical thought about adoption, reproducing patterns of exclusion similar to those observed in other forms of social or political phobia.

Naming this violence makes it possible to recognize its structural dimension and to understand its psychic, social, and epistemic effects on abolitionist individuals and movements. This paper argues that the concept of *Aboliphobia* not only expands the critical analysis of adoption but also opens a new theoretical framework for studying ideological resistance to the processes of decolonizing and denaturalizing adoption as an institution.

Keywords:

aboliphobia, adoption, abolitionism, symbolic violence, trauma, identity, decolonization, critical theory, social resistance, institutional discourse

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1. Introduction

The term *Aboliphobia* arises from the need to name a form of symbolic violence that, until now, has lacked a specific designation within the field of critical studies on adoption. Coined by **Olmo Gómez Aldaz** in 2025, the concept emerges within the framework of contemporary abolitionist thought and responds to the growing hostility faced by those who question the adoptive system from a structural, ethical, and political perspective.

Aboliphobia goes beyond mere disagreement or intellectual debate. It operates as a mechanism of exclusion that works through discrediting, ridiculing, or pathologizing critical voices. This mechanism serves to preserve the symbolic order of adoption—culturally framed as an act of “rescue” or “altruistic love”—against narratives that expose its violent, colonial, and dispossessive nature.

From a sociological standpoint, *Aboliphobia* can be understood as a form of structural violence that ensures the continuity of adoptive ideology by neutralizing any discourse that seeks to dismantle it. Its study is therefore essential to understanding the contemporary dynamics of power that sustain adoption as an institution, and to exposing how abolitionist thought is marginalized or delegitimized in public debate.

This paper develops the concept of *Aboliphobia* in its threefold dimension—psychological, political, and social—by describing its main manifestations and analyzing its effects on individuals and collectives advocating for the abolition of adoption. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the construction of a theoretical framework that recognizes *Aboliphobia* both as a form of ideological violence and as a symptom of the adoptive system’s resistance to its own deconstruction and ethical questioning.

2. Conceptual Framework

Aboliphobia fits within the broader tradition of concepts that describe specific forms of social hostility toward dissenting collectives or ideologies—such as misogyny, homophobia, racism, or ableism—but it is distinguished by its focus on the defensive reaction against structural criticism of adoption. Just as feminism exposed the patriarchal roots of misogyny, the abolitionist critique of adoption reveals the colonial, religious, and eugenic foundations of the modern adoptive system. *Aboliphobia* arises precisely as a backlash to that unveiling.

From a philosophical perspective, it can be understood as a form of *epistemic violence* (Spivak, 1988) that operates upon knowledge and discourse, preventing the articulation of a legitimate abolitionist framework. By denying the rationality of those who question adoption, *Aboliphobia* protects a moral system inherited from the Western imagery of the “saved child” and the “redeeming mother”—both products of a Christian-colonial matrix that justified the appropriation of bodies and identities under the guise of benevolence.

Sociologically, *Aboliphobia* functions as an *ideological apparatus* (Althusser, 1970) that ensures the symbolic reproduction of the adoptive order. It operates through language, institutions, and popular culture by means of narratives of charity, destiny, or gratitude that suppress the emergence of emancipatory discourse. This form of violence does not require conscious intent: it manifests through silence, omission, and normative frameworks that preserve the status quo.

From the standpoint of social psychology, *Aboliphobia* can also be analyzed as an identity-based reaction. Many individuals linked to adoption—whether adoptive parents, professionals, or adopted persons who have internalized the salvific narrative—experience abolitionist critique as a threat to their own moral or emotional coherence. Consequently, *Aboliphobia* does not merely defend an institution; it defends the identities that rely on that institution for stability and self-justification.

This conceptual framework situates *Aboliphobia* within a continuum of contemporary forms of symbolic violence aimed at neutralizing critical dissent. Naming it thus becomes an act of epistemic restitution—a way to restore existence to what the adoptive system must keep invisible in order to endure.

3. Definition of the Term “Aboliphobia”

The term *Aboliphobia* combines the root “**abol-**”, derived from the verb *to abolish* (from Latin *abolere*, meaning to suppress or make disappear), with the suffix “**-phobia**” (from Greek *phobos*, fear or hostility). Its construction follows the pattern of other terms that designate reactions of aversion or hostility toward an identity or ideological current—such as *homophobia*, *transphobia*, or *Islamophobia*—but applies this linguistic logic to the political sphere.

From its formulation, *Aboliphobia* refers to the **set of attitudes, discourses, and practices that seek to deny, delegitimize, or pathologize abolitionist thought in**

relation to adoption. It does not describe literal fear but rather an **ideological and defensive mechanism** that operates in response to the potential dismantling of the moral narrative sustaining the adoptive system.

Aboliphobia presents a **threefold dimension**:

1. **Psychological**, as an affective reaction to the symbolic threat posed by abolitionist discourse for those who identify with, or benefit from, the adoptive system;
2. **Political**, as an institutional strategy of preservation through censorship, neutralization, or the discrediting of critical voices;
3. **Social**, as a cultural process that reproduces myths of gratitude, salvation, and destiny, preventing recognition of the structural harm caused by adoption.

Naming this form of hostility allows it to be distinguished from broader types of discursive violence, clarifying its specific field of operation and its function within the logic of adoptive power. Thus, *Aboliphobia* functions not only as a **symptom of resistance to change**, but also as an **ideological tool that sustains the permanence of the adoptive order**.

4. Manifestations and Dynamics

Aboliphobia manifests itself across multiple discursive and social levels—from the most explicit, such as mockery, direct attack, or censorship, to the more subtle, including silencing, omission, or the neutralization of abolitionist discourse. Its primary dynamic consists in **invalidating the critical subject rather than engaging with their argument**, thereby reproducing the classical pattern of symbolic violence: denying the speaker's legitimacy in order to preserve the authority of the system.

At the **institutional level**, *Aboliphobia* is expressed through the systematic exclusion of abolitionist thought from academic, political, and media spaces. Organizations tied to the adoptive system often monopolize public discourse, defining the boundaries of what is deemed “acceptable” and relegating all radical critique to the realm of “emotional extremism” or “mental instability.” This pathologization not only neutralizes the political power of abolitionism but also reinforces the paternalistic narrative that sustains adoption.

In the **media sphere**, *Aboliphobia* operates through biased representations of adopted persons and critical movements. Sentimental stories centered on gratitude and “happy endings” are promoted, while the structural suffering caused by dispossession and loss of identity is omitted. Mainstream journalism thus reproduces an *aesthetic of repair* that transforms harm into spectacle and injustice into personal destiny.

In its **social and everyday dimension**, *Aboliphobia* manifests through moral discrediting: adopted individuals who denounce the violence of adoption are labeled as “ungrateful,” “bitter,” or “mentally unstable.” This moral discourse seeks to reimpose gratitude and silence as duties, making conformity a condition of belonging. On a collective level, *Aboliphobia* functions as an affective control mechanism that prevents the elaboration of trauma and reinforces emotional dependence on the very system that produced it.

Finally, in the **digital sphere**, *Aboliphobia* takes the form of harassment, misinformation, and rhetorical appropriation: the languages of trauma and human rights are mimicked and emptied of political meaning. This phenomenon—discursive co-optation—represents one of the most sophisticated strategies of contemporary *Aboliphobia*, as it allows empathy to be simulated while perpetuating the same order of violence it pretends to challenge.

5. Impact on Abolitionist Individuals and Movements

The psychological and political effects of *Aboliphobia* on abolitionist individuals are profound and multifaceted. Its most immediate impact is the **reproduction of symbolic dispossession**: the same negation of voice and legitimacy that characterizes the original trauma of adoption is mirrored in the public invalidation of abolitionist thought. This repetition of silencing generates a collective wound—a sense of epistemic exile where one’s experience and analysis are systematically denied.

On a **personal level**, *Aboliphobia* often produces feelings of isolation, helplessness, and moral exhaustion. The constant demand to justify one’s position or to prove one’s sanity within a hostile environment erodes self-trust and emotional stability. For many abolitionists, this hostility revives the earlier experience of being rendered invisible or “spoken for” by others—a dynamic of domination that the abolitionist critique precisely seeks to dismantle.

In the **collective sphere**, *Aboliphobia* operates as a mechanism of fragmentation. By fostering internalized stigma and fear of public exposure, it weakens networks of

solidarity among adopted individuals and critical allies. Movements that seek structural change must therefore invest a large part of their energy in defending their right to exist, leaving fewer resources for building transformative agendas.

From a political perspective, the consequences are equally significant. *Aboliphobia* maintains the hegemony of adoptive ideology by producing epistemic fatigue among its critics and by framing abolitionist positions as extremist or irrational. This delegitimization not only silences potential allies within academia and social institutions but also obstructs the public recognition of adoption as a site of structural violence.

Nevertheless, the experience of *Aboliphobia* also becomes a source of **collective clarity and resistance**. Naming the violence transforms isolation into awareness, and awareness into political action. The act of identifying *Aboliphobia* as a systemic phenomenon reclaims the narrative agency of those who resist it, restoring the capacity to speak, to theorize, and to imagine social models beyond the logic of adoption itself.

6. Conclusion

Aboliphobia constitutes a contemporary form of symbolic violence that functions as both an epistemic and moral barrier to the advancement of abolitionist thought on adoption. Its power lies in its invisibility: in the way it turns silencing into a norm and denial into common sense. By delegitimizing critique, it preserves the image of adoption as an act of love and redemption, preventing its recognition as a practice of dispossession and social control.

Naming *Aboliphobia* does not merely identify a reaction of hostility—it **reveals the ideological structure that produces it**. Like other concepts born from experiences of exclusion—misogyny, homophobia, racism—this neologism opens a field of political and analytical inquiry. Recognizing *Aboliphobia* allows us to trace its discursive, emotional, and institutional expressions, and to understand it as a symptom of the collective fear of dismantling the fictions that sustain the adoptive system.

On a theoretical level, the concept expands the critical tools available for analyzing adoption from a decolonial and abolitionist perspective. On a political level, it provides a language capable of naming a form of violence that has long remained unspoken. And on an ethical level, it invites a rethinking of reparation—not as the restoration of the adoptive

myth, but as the restitution of identity and the right to full existence for those dispossessed by that system.

Ultimately, naming *Aboliphobia* is an act of epistemic and affective resistance. It restores the power to define harm and to rebuild meaning. Where the adoptive system imposes silence, abolitionist language reemerges as memory, as thought, and as the possibility of a future.

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