

15 BASIC CONCEPTS SO THAT A WHITE EUROPEAN MIGHT CONSIDER REPARATIONS

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This corpography of the city of Madrid has been produced by the collective Ayllu, in collaboration with Gustavo Adolfo Díaz G., as part of the project *One City, Many Worlds*, which we have renamed *One City, Many Borders* to question the multiplicity of physical, symbolic, institutional and day-to-day borders that make up a city like Madrid for migrant and racialised subjects. This triad of pain, care and fantasy is the result of a series of affective spaces among migrant and racialised people. Furthermore, they bring to this corpography the reflections that came up in interviews realised with four migrants who arrived in the kingdom of Spain between 1965 and 2000.

This is not a map. Cartography, and its Cartesian logic, is a western science that seeks to control territory. Our corpography, however, is a heartfelt representation by and for migrant and racialised inhabitants. This corpography therefore responds to the tension between the idea of a "city for the citizens" (a city of "the common") and a "city for its inhabitants" (a city of "communality"). We ask ourselves: who has the right to the city? Who defines that right? What other non-normative bodies, in terms of race, gender, sex and ability, can occupy and decide the city? How do we abolish the hetero-colonial-civilising project of *whitetrification* and *gaytrificaton*?



Illustration by Gustavo Adolfo Díaz G.

The Columbus Monument:

To commemorate the 4th Centenary of the Genocide, on 12th October 1892 the monument to Columbus was unveiled in Madrid, in the centre of a square that had been renamed *Plaza Colón* for the occasion, when before it had been called *Plaza de Santiago*, the patron saint of the Spanish army. For this inauguration there was a parade, in which actors dressed up as Indians gave thanks to the solemn Catholic Monarchs and to Columbus, and

this is where the popular expression *hacer el indio* (i.e. 'to play the fool') came from.

Today, the sculpture is back in that original place and it can be found next to the Gardens of Discovery, opened in 1970, that surround the National Library building. As part of the 4th Centenary, Madrid competed against cities like Chicago and Genoa to be the host city for the celebrations of the Conquest. The National Library building and the statue of Columbus, both then and now, corroborate the imperial ideology that is fostered by Spain.



Illustration by Gustavo Adolfo Díaz G.

The Museum of America:

An archive of the racial memory of Spanish colonialism in Abya Yala, created in 1941, during the Francoist dictatorship, with over 25,000 pieces – of which less than 10% are on display. A white institution, in charge of the monumentalisation of white supremacy. Here they store, conserve and reinforce the story written by the colonial masters, and a significant amount of what they stole from the colonies.

In the Museum of America, we see coloniality converted into “sculpture”, erasing thus the vital and revered qualities of many of the stolen objects that are on display there – the white institution aims for the aestheticisation of the looting, of the pain, fetishising otherness, this Eurocentric obsession with collection and accumulation. There, our living memory becomes the skin and reaffirmation of the colonial project. The Museum of America is a

place in the city where our colonial wounds are still bleeding in the presence of these objects, pieces and gods that were stolen by the Spanish empire.



Illustration by Gustavo Adolfo Díaz G.

CIE – Centro de Internamiento de Extranjerxs (Migrant Detention Centre):

A prison institution which is part of the migration control system in Europe, and part of the prison industrial complex for migrants in the Kingdom of Spain. Opened in 2005, the CIE in Madrid is located in the Aluche neighbourhood, on part of the old Carabanchel prison site, which was built during the Francoist regime and knocked down in 2008. The CIE is a place for the exerting of systematic and institutionalised violence, against migrants, and it is a centre for torture and death where fellow migrant Samba Martine was murdered in 2011. It is a non-mixed space in terms of race, where white Europeans are not to be detained. The CIE is a concentration camp for racialised people and, at the same time, it is the place where most of the migration paperwork is processed: the renewal of documents to stay in Spain, requests for international protection, authorisations to return, etc. This migration paperwork is processed, first of all, by civil servants from the police force, which shows Spain's keenness to criminalise migrant bodies, and to reinforce the link between the prison population and the migrant population.

Whitenography:

A methodology for analysing power, as used by people who are black, Afro-descendant, indigenous, Indio-descendant, Moorish or Asian; diasporic or racially subalternised bodies. This methodology allows them to describe, narrate and record the racist behaviours and practices exerted by white, colonial-descendant people. As a strategy for exposing and neutralising the oppressive practices of white supremacy, whitenography inverts the usual forms of white, colonial research that describe "the other" as "different". These forms were constructed by Western disciplines such as ethnography and anthropology, and they are used to describe subalternised societies.

In whitenography, the subject of study, i.e. "the other", is whiteness. This is a research practice from day-to-day life, which comes from the critical studies on white supremacy and anticolonial studies. Along with Jess Oliveira, in 2017, Jota Mombaça, Michelle Mattiuzzi and other artists, we diasporic thinkers have started to use this term as a form of resistance.

White fragility / white tears:

White fragility is the impulsive reaction of the white subject to defend their historical privilege, as a host of colonial power, as a body that is by no means racist with regards to its being "white", whether hetero or queer. This involves the forced erasure of history, leaving out white responsibility for the exertion of colonial violence upon historically oppressed bodies.

White fragility is an act of violence, because those bodies that benefit from whiteness do not in turn accept the racism they exert. White fragility is manifested by stating "you've offended me", an expression accompanied by "white tears", and the attempt to place the oppressions experienced by the white person at the centre, overlooking the sociopolitical structures that shelter and protect them.

White institution:

European modernity founded, from the 16th century, a series of global institutions of control. These institutions included the prison and the museum, as well as the hospital and other institutions of the nation state. All of them have tried to foster the construction of body-normality, and the authority to decide which bodies can lead such institutions. These institutions are white inasmuch they embody white European supremacy and, therefore, they have fostered, among other things, medical experimentation on non-white bodies, slavery, and the imprisonment of

non-white bodies. White institutions are directed and operated by white bureaucrats, and non-white bodies only fulfil a quota as objects of experimentation, exhibition and exoticisation. White European institutions have the responsibility to call into question their own racist structures.

Whitesplaining:

Whitesplaining, or rather the chance, always for white people, to explain the world with regards to the bodies and life experiences of migrants and racialised people. The white voice is that which thinks it has all the answers, that its word is legitimate knowledge, and that it must be heard. Via whitesplaining, colonial-descendant people produce truth about our lives. Just as feminism speaks of mansplaining to account for cis men's keenness to explain to women and trans bodies, whitesplaining consists of the chance and the desire to explain to those lives subalternised by whiteness. Furthermore, whitesplaining tries to study, scrutinise and generate truth and knowledge about subaltern bodies that can maintain the status quo of white supremacy. From this point, motivated by the urge for discovery that has been passed down to them, they put together theories and art projects, and they publish books about the bodies and territories of the global south. This concept can also extend to cis-whitesplaining, queer-whitesplaining and other such versions of White European extremeness.

Undesirable desires:

This is the non-desire or non-interest in something or someone because it or they do not match the skinny-white-cis-hetero body as decreed by hegemonic desire. This is based on the daily peddling of the constructed imaginary which gives us the ideal canons of beauty, based on a heterocentric, racist and ableist model of aesthetics. What is considered beautiful? What do they sell to us as beauty? What does this do to a desirable or non-desirable body, according to the market and the hetero-focussed racist social imaginary? Bearing in mind that the market categorises bodies for the consumption thereof, according to where they come from, their gender identity and/or skin colour – each person is thus designated with what they must do, where they do or do not fit in, which bodies can be desired, or not.

So what about a non-white trans body? Is a black or indigenous trans body desirable? Desirable for whom, and in what context? As Nayare Montes says in her poem "*Usted, bailaríá conmigo*" ("Would you dance with me"): Would you marry me?

Transmisogynoir:

The exertion of oppression on black trans people. It is a form of oppression that accounts for the intersection between gender and blackness, transmisogyny-noir.

This practice activates the historical hatred for non-heteronormative bodies, the hatred for femininities, or those bodies assigned female, and the contempt for black or brown bodies, those without white passing.

Transmisogynoir shows the inseparable link between the oppressions lived by a non-white and trans body.

Gaytrification:

During the period of so-called "post-Fordism" – a labour system of cognitive capitalism that has been proposed as a replacement for the old factory-based system – was when so-called gentrification came about. With this, urban theory sought to identify the process via which certain run-down neighbourhoods in cities began to attract people of a higher economic standing than those who used to inhabit these spaces, and the less well-off people would be duly shunted from the neighbourhood. However, this concept does not account for other factors that go beyond this economic exclusivity: *Gay is the new straight. Gay is white.* The culture of pink capitalism has had the effect that many of these gentrifications – always carried out by white people – are produced by white gay men who replicate the lifestyles of the white western bourgeois.

Racial Anxiety:

The feeling of danger experienced by non-white people when interacting with white, colonial-descendant people and the institutional apparatus that supports white supremacy. Racial anxiety is based on the fact that the subjectivity of non-white people is constructed upon the legacy of the fear that was caused by the colonial genocide.

Migrant bodies have inherited the memory of pain, bearing in mind the historical intimidation over their bodies as things to be exploited. This is the trauma of slavery and the project of massacring indigenous peoples, constantly activated by means of the modern colonialist devices that continue to control and exterminate non-white and migrant bodies: immigration laws, prisons for migrants and police checks based on race, among others.

This racial anxiety is also manifested in the everyday interactions with white and Euro-descendant people, in social, work and affective-sexual relationships. There is no such thing as an interaction with white people or white institutions without the exertion of colonial violence and the reproduction of systematic practices of racial disciplining: this is nothing more than a technique of domination and governance – a colonial technique – over non-white and migrant bodies.

Migrantophobia:

The rejection of people who come from the Global South, in particular those who are not white. We, as migrant people, are subjected to imposed colonialist and heterocentric laws that hinder mobilisation and quick regularisation. If we focus on the difference between “migrants” and “foreigners”, it is clear how the latter are considered people who mostly come from within Europe itself, as tourists, to spend their yearly savings. Another way of expressing migrantophobia is to create niches of precarious, unauthorised work for migrant people, as well as the racist police checks on migrants that take place day in, day out as they exit the Madrid Metro.

Racist police checks:

Persecution by the police of non-white people. It is another mechanism of fear in the public space that is exerted based on racialisation, via which the police monitor non-white bodies, while allowing white Europeans the freedom to go wherever they please. It refers to the systematic politics of persecution and criminalisation of migrant and racialised people, even if they are “Spanish” people born in Spain. Ultimately, it is a strategy to racially cleanse the city, so it can be better lived and enjoyed by the white supremacy.

Mass deportations:

Policy for the collective expulsion of bodies that do not belong in Europe. It is the racial identification of bodies that have been deemed illegal or criminal by the Kingdom of Spain. Mass deportations are called, by the Spanish authorities, “Operations of Joint Returning”. They are the process by which large groups of migrant people are forcibly deported. Generally speaking, mass deportations are organised by FRONTEX, the agency that controls the borders of the European Union. The method they use for these flights prevents any resistance from the migrant people, because they are

completely private flights, and the only people onboard are the migrant deportees, police officers, FRONTEX agents and the flight crew.

Life-sustainers:

The tasks of caring and sustaining life, jobs that are generally invisibilised and understood as reproductive and of lesser importance in modern-colonial societies, are generally carried out by migrant or racialised people. All white Europeans, whether they are children, adults or old people, at some point in their lives and in infinite circumstances, will depend on them. These life-sustainers are all over cities like Madrid, making it possible. They include women, and not only women, who leave behind their own children and elderly relatives to go and look after European people's children and elderly relatives. They also include surrogate mothers in the global south who give their children to well-off citizens, as well as sex workers who manage, on a daily basis, the economy of the European libido, and the personal assistants who ensure the independence of others, to name but a few situations. Spain, with its colonial amnesia and its shameless insolence, forgets who changes its nappies.