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Cissexual/Cisgender

decentralizing the dominant group

Forum: [WMST-L](#)

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Since several people emailed me to inquire about the words "cissexual" and "cissexism," I thought I'd make a public clarification.

"cis-" is a prefix for "on this side of" rooted in Latin. Common words that use this prefix include:

cislunar (situated between the earth and the moon)
 cisatlantic (situated on this side of the Atlantic Ocean)
 cismontane (situated on this side of the mountains)

There are also many scientific words that use the prefix "cis-" in its second definition, which is "having a pair of identical atoms or groups on the same side of a plane that passes through two carbon atoms linked by a double bond." (all definitions are taken from American Heritage Dictionary on my computer).

According to Donna Lynn Matthews, the term "cisgender" was first coined by Carl Buijs, a transsexual man, in 1995 (source: http://cydathria.com/ms_donna/tg_def.html). "Cissexual" probably came from that, in reference to "transgender" vs. "transsexual." You might want to search for the terms "cissexual" and "cisgender" on the web to find their actual usage.

I learned the words "cissexual," "cissexist," and "cisgender," from trans activists who wanted to turn the table and define the words that describe non-transsexuals and non-transgenders rather than always being defined and described by them. By using the term "cissexual" and "cisgender," they de-centralize the dominant group, exposing it as merely one possible alternative rather than the "norm" against which trans people are defined. I don't expect the word to come into common usage anytime soon, but I felt it was an interesting concept - a feminist one, in fact - which is why I am using it.

In Cisterhood (borrowing from J.N.),

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