

[GLOSSARY]

A

→ **Accessibility:** The state of being open to meaningful participation by all people, in particular people whose participation (in this activity or in society at general) is usually limited by oppression of some kind. Accessibility in general means being free of barriers into [which can be placed by the group inadvertently or advertently (e.g. lack of childcare or a members-only policy) and/or can be placed by society (e.g. housing must be paid for rather than being a right, etc.)] ... AND free of limits to participation once present. Sometimes the term “accessibility” is used with specific reference to the needs of people with disabilities. A space cannot be deemed “accessible” in this sense if the atmosphere is ableist, even if measures are in place (e.g. wheelchair-accessible entrance/facilities that are safe and dignified, Braille/large-print/audio-tape resources, TTY and sign language interpretation). ⁽⁵⁾

→ **Affirmative action:** Refers to such specific measures that are aimed at preventing or compensating disadvantages that are linked to grounds such as ethnicity, gender and age. ⁽³⁾
Agender: a person who does not identify with any gender, or who does not experience a gender identity. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Ally:** A person who is not a member of a particular minority or marginalized group, but who works to challenge the discrimination that group faces. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Androgynous:** Gender expression or presentation that combines feminine and masculine elements and/or which blurs the lines between masculine and feminine. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Appropriation:** To borrow or take something that someone else has created and to use it for one's own purposes. In activist circles, the term more specifically refers to instances where a dominant/majority group appropriates aspects of a marginalized/minority community's identities, expressions, creations, and/or culture. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Asexual:** A term for people who do not experience sexual attraction to other individuals. Asexuality is distinct from experiencing sexual arousal and/or a capacity for romantic relationships with other people. ⁽¹⁾

B

→ **Binarism, Binarist:** Actions, attitudes, or assumptions that adhere to, or uphold, some binary ideology (usually the gender binary in discussions of transgender issues). See also binary. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Binary:** Generally refers to the human tendency to describe people or phenomena in terms of two mutually-exclusive categories that supposedly exist in opposition to one another. Within transgender communities, the focus is typically on the gender binary. However, there are countless other binaries in our culture, and they often play a foundational role in marginalization. Binaries tend to have a built-in hierarchy, one that is often discussed in terms of center versus margin or unmarked versus marked ⁽¹⁾

→ **Bisexual:** An umbrella term for people who experience sexual attraction to members of more than one gender or sex. Some people of bisexual experience prefer alternate labels, including pansexual, polysexual, multisexual, omnisexual, queer, or no label at all ⁽¹⁾

C

→ **Canon/Canonization:** List of generally recognized important works in a field, or the process of making such a list. In feminist terms, as long as learning disciplines were controlled exclusively by white males, very few women or ethnically diverse authors were included in this list. ⁽²⁾

→ **Cis Privilege:** societal advantages experienced by people solely as a result of not being trans. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Cisnormativity, Cis Assumption:** related concepts that enable trans erasure and invisibility. “Cisnormativity” describes a societal mindset wherein cis/cisgender/cissexual are presumed to be the norm, while trans/transgender/transsexual people and experiences are deemed “abnormal” by comparison (if they are even considered at all). ⁽¹⁾

→ **Colonization:** Colonization can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result

result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized. Ongoing and legacy Colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonizing and colonizer nations).⁽⁴⁾

→ Critical human geography: Critical human geography can be seen as a diverse set of ideas and practices linked by a shared commitment to a broadly conceived emancipatory politics, progressive social change, and the use of a range of critical sociogeographic theories. Critical human geographers draw on theoretical approaches such as anarchism, anticolonialism, critical race theory, environmentalism, feminism, Marxism, nonrepresentational theory, post-Marxism, post-colonialism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, queer theory, situationism, and socialism.⁽⁷⁾

→ Cultural Appropriation: Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit — including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. — often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. white) culture's right to take other cultural elements.⁽⁵⁾

D

→ Discrimination: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference, based on "race", colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose of or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination ICERD 1965)⁽³⁾

→ Deconstruction: „strategy of critical analysis . . . directed towards exposing unquestioned metaphysical assumptions and internal contradictions in philosophical and literary language" (OED). Deconstructive analysis shows the text's failure to fulfill its "project" by exposing overly simplistic binary assumptions, gaps (aporia) in the message and by showing the absence of those clearly present.⁽²⁾

→ Drag: Sometimes used generically as a synonym for crossdressing, particularly when an individual is described as being "in drag" Alternatively, "drag" refers to a genre of performance art or entertainment that is intended to play with, or challenge, commonly held assumptions about gender. The most familiar forms of drag performance involve male-bodied/identified individuals presenting as women (often called drag queens) or female-bodied/identified individuals presenting as men (often called drag kings), but numerous other variations exist.⁽¹⁾

E

→ Ethnicity: A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).⁽¹³⁾

→ Essentialism, Essentialist: The belief that all members of a particular category (especially those categories that are presumed to be natural in origin) must share a particular set of characteristics, qualities, or "essence" with one another. One relevant example would be the notion that all women are genetically XX, or are attracted to men. While essentialism fails to account for the naturally occurring complexity and heterogeneity exhibited by humans (and other organisms), people routinely rely on, or resort to, essentialist explanations of how the world works. People often mistakenly conflate essentialism with biology.⁽¹⁾

F

→ Feminism: a diverse array of activist movements which all share the common goal of challenging traditional sexism (i.e., the assumption that femaleness/femininity is inferior to, or less legitimate than, maleness/masculinity). Some strands of feminism focus solely on traditional sexism and envision themselves as a "women's liberation" or "women's rights" movement. Other strands of feminism are more broadly focused on challenging multiple (or all) forms of sexism, and thus are concerned with women as well as gender and sexual minorities. Still other strands recognize intersectionality, and thus argue that feminism should be concerned with

with challenging all forms of marginalization rather than just sexism. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Femme:** The French/Français word for woman; in English it generally refers to feminine gender expression or a feminine identity. The word also refers to an activist and cultural movement that challenges masculine-centrism and femmephobia in society. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Femmephobia:** A term often used to describe dismissive or delegitimizing views of people who express femininity. ⁽¹⁾

G

→ **Gender:** As a noun, it can refer to identities or social classes that are generally organized around some or all of the following facets: a person's assigned gender/sex or legal sex; their physical sex or sex embodiment; the gender/sex they identify with (i.e., gender identity) or live as (i.e., lived sex); their gender expression and/or gender role. Some people define gender more narrowly (e.g., as synonymous with gender identity, or as merely a product of socialization). ⁽¹⁾

→ **Gender Binary:** A concept forwarded by transgender activists in the 1990s to explain gender-based oppression. The model states that all people in our culture are nonconsensually forced into one of two dichotomous categories (man or woman), and based on that gender assignment, we are all expected live up to the gender norms associated with that group. People who do not fit neatly into either of these classes and/or who fail to adhere to such gender norms (e.g., transgender and intersex people) are typically marginalized in our society. See also binary. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Gender Expression:** Refers to aspects of one's behaviours, mannerisms, interests, and styles of dress that are generally considered to be feminine, masculine, or some combination thereof. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Gender Neutral Pronouns:** Third-person singular pronouns that, unlike she/her/hers and he/him/his, do not make any presumption about a person's gender. Some trans activists have forwarded neologisms such as ze or sie (in place of he/she) and hir (in place of him/her). An alternative approach is to use the third-person plural pronouns they/them/theirs in singular form. These latter pronouns have the advantage of already existing in the English language. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Gender Performativity:** A theory of gender forwarded by Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. ⁽¹⁾

→ **Glass Ceiling:** An intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level position. ⁽⁸⁾

→ **Glass Escalator:** The term „glass escalator“ was introduced by Christine L. Williams in her research „The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the „Female“ Profession“ [1] published in August 1992. The glass escalator refers to the way men, namely heterosexual white men, are put on a fast track to higher up positions when entering women dominated sex-segregated professions. It is most present in lower levels of the profession. This idea is a parallel to the popular idea of the glass ceiling, where women face troubles advancing in the workplace. However, it has been found that not all men experience the financial benefits equally. Only white men have been found to have an advantage in benefits over women, while men of other races do not have them equally. ⁽⁹⁾

H

→ **Hegemony:** One group's multiple levels of dominance over another, including the suppressed group's consent to domination; hegemony is less a domination by force than a means of encouraging participation in one's own oppression. Cultural hegemony, a term used by Antonio Gramsci, is the use of ordinary practices and shared values as a means by which one group can dominate a diverse culture. ⁽²⁾

→ **Heteronormativity:** A societal mindset in which heterosexual people, experiences, and desires are presumed to be the norm, thus invisibilizing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and asexual people and perspectives. Often heteronormativity is used in an even broader way to include binary gender norms people are expected to conform to, and assumptions about how relationships and families should be organized (e.g., monogamous pairings, nuclear families). ⁽¹⁾

→ **Homophobia:** Often literally read as a “fear of” or “aversion to” people who are homosexual (and/or those who experience same-sex attraction or relationships). I typically use the term in a broader manner to describe the belief or assumption that same-sex attraction is inferior to, or less legitimate than, heterosexuality. ⁽¹⁾

→ Homosexual: A term for people who are exclusively attracted to members of their own gender/sex. In the mid-to-late twentieth century, the term was sometimes informally used in a broader manner similar to how the word queer is often used today. It has since fallen out of favor as an identity label or term of self-description, and is instead mostly used as a technical term when distinguishing a person's sexual orientation from those who are heterosexual, bisexual, and asexual. ⁽¹⁾

I

→ Institutional discrimination: The term refers to "inequality which is understood to be partly the result of more subtle, structural institutional forces rather than individual acts of exclusion by identifiable persons." Direct institutionalised discrimination refers to actions initiated by an organisation or community that, by intention, have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate groups. Indirect institutionalised discrimination encompasses practices that have a negative and differential impact on members of subordinate groups even though the norms and regulations themselves are not intended to harm members of these groups: ⁽³⁾

→ Intersectionality: A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, which arose out of the work of feminists of color, and which is concerned with how different forms of marginalization (e.g., racism, classism, sexism, ableism, sizeism, etc.) intersect with and exacerbate one another. Within feminism, intersectionality challenges the notion that sexism occurs unilaterally (i.e., men are oppressors, women the oppressed, end of story). ⁽¹⁾

→ Intersex: An umbrella term for people whose reproductive or sexual anatomy does not appear to fit the standard definitions for female or male. ⁽¹⁾

L

→ Lesbian: A term for women who are exclusively attracted to other women. ⁽¹⁾

→ LGBT (and its variants): Ever-evolving acronyms often used when discussing gender and sexual minorities. These acronyms originated in the 1990s, when bisexual, and subsequently transgender, activists began to petition for inclusion within (what had, up until then, simply been called) "lesbian and gay" organizations. This explains why these acronyms almost always begin with LGBT (where L = lesbian, G = gay, B =

bisexual, and T = transgender). People then began adding one or two Q's (for queer and/or questioning) to make these acronyms even more inclusive. In the years since, numerous other symbols are sometimes added onto the end of these acronyms; examples include: I (for intersex), A (for asexual), an extra T (for transsexual), the number 2 (for two-spirit), G (for genderqueer), one or two P's (for pansexual and/or polyamorous), K (for kinky), H (for HIV-positive), U (for undecided), E (for everyone else), and + (to recognize other additional identities and individuals not explicitly included). ⁽¹⁾

→ Liberal Feminism: Includes most mainstream expressions of feminism, which are typically focused on reforming laws and customs to ensure that women have equal rights in society. People do not usually self-identify as "liberal feminists"; rather, the term is most often used in a pejorative manner by feminists who favor more radical approaches. ⁽¹⁾

M

→ Mansplaining: The term caught fire in the late-'00s feminist blogosphere and describes a particularly irritating form of sexist micro-aggression: namely, a man explaining a topic of conversation to a woman who a) has already demonstrated adequate knowledge of that topic; b) could reasonably be presumed to know about that topic; and/or c) could reasonably be presumed to know much more about that topic than he does, because she is an expert in the field. Mansplaining is part of a set of cultural assumptions that place men's opinions above women's. It occurs when men assume that women don't understand something and need it explained to them, which is more often than not a false assumption. It is usually done in a condescending, overconfident, inaccurate or oversimplified manner. Rebecca Solnit popularized the term in the book *Men Explain Things to Me*, which discusses men explaining women's own academic fields to them. There are also terms such as 'Whitesplain' which refers to white people unnecessarily explaining things to people of colour. ⁽¹⁴⁾

→ Marginalization: When a particular subpopulation is relegated to the margins of a community or society. I personally prefer this word over more common terms (which I sometimes use) such as "discrimination" (which seems to cast the situation in terms of individual expressions of prejudice) or "oppression" (which is fitting when describing one group dominating another group, but feels a bit heavy-handed when di-

scussing more subtle forms of invalidation, or instances of exclusion that occur within oppressed populations). Marginalization also literally cites the center-versus-margin hierarchy that can be found in binary forms of thinking. ⁽¹⁾

→ Masculinity, Masculine Gender Expression: Behaviors, mannerisms, interests, and styles of dress that are commonly associated with (but certainly not exclusive to) men in our culture. ⁽¹⁾

→ Misgender, Misgendering: To refer to a person as, or consider them to be, a gender that they do not identify with. Often, misgendering is unintended (although it can still be invalidating to the person who is subjected to it). People who harbor cissexist beliefs or attitudes will often engage in purposeful acts of misgendering trans people. ⁽¹⁾

N

→ Non-binary: Within trans-related discourses, typically refers to people or identities that fall outside of the gender binary. A few examples mentioned elsewhere in this glossary include people who are agender, bigender, genderqueer, genderfluid, and two-spirit. ⁽¹⁾

P

→ Pansexual: Another term for people who experience sexual attraction to members of more than one gender or sex. ⁽¹⁾

→ Patriarchy: A social structure that is centered on men, and which marginalizes women. ⁽¹⁾

→ Privilege: In activist settings, refers to the benefits or advantages one may experience solely as a result of being a member of a dominant or majority group. It is a different way of framing marginalization than the usual approach of discussing the disadvantages or obstacles experienced by the corresponding marginalized or minority group, and the intention is to make members of the dominant/majority group aware of the fact that they too are impacted by this form of marginalization (albeit positively). ⁽¹⁾

Q

→ Queer: A reclaimed word that has since become a widely accepted umbrella term for gender and sexual minorities/LGBTQ+ people. Despite its current acceptance, some people who fall under this label reject the term because of its past use as a slur, or because it is too closely associated with gay identities. ⁽¹⁾

→ Queer Ecology: The term “queer ecology” refers to a loose, interdisciplinary constellation of practices that aim, in different ways, to disrupt prevailing heterosexist discursive and institutional articulations of sexuality and nature, and also to reimagine evolutionary processes, ecological interactions, and environmental politics in light of queer theory. Drawing from traditions as diverse as evolutionary biology, LGBTTIQQ2SA movements, and queer geography and history, feminist science studies, ecofeminism, and environmental justice, queer ecology currently highlights the complexity of contemporary biopolitics, draws important connections between the material and cultural dimensions of environmental issues, and insists on an articulatory practice in which sex and nature are understood in light of multiple trajectories of power and matter. ⁽⁶⁾

→ Queer Theory: An academic field that became influential in the 1990s, and which set out to challenge essentialist assumptions about gender, sexuality, bodies, and desires. One of its main strategies was to deconstruct the (typically binary) categories that serve to define and restrict these phenomena. ⁽¹⁾

→ Questioning: In queer/gender and sexual minority discourses, refers to someone who is unsure about, or in the process of exploring, some facet of their gender and/or sexuality. The term is often intended to make queer settings more explicitly inclusive of people who are still trying to figure out their gender or sexual identity. ⁽¹⁾

R

→ Racism: Racism is a complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism. (11)

S

→ Sexism: Any double standard based on a person's sex, gender, and/or sexuality. ⁽¹⁾

→ Sexual Minority: An umbrella term for people whose autonomous or consensual sexual practices, interests, and desires fall outside of societal norms, and who often face marginalization as a result. ⁽¹⁾

→ Sexual Orientation: Refers to the sex/gender that a person is primarily attracted to. There are four commonly accepted categories of sexual orientation: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual. While these labels/categories are often useful, they do have potential drawbacks: 1) they center attraction around same-sex versus other-sex, which can invisibilize many transgender and intersex people (and those who are attracted to us), 2) it seems to imply that one's preferred sex/gender category is the most important aspect of sexual desire, when in actuality people's sexualities vary with regards to a multiplicity of traits and facets. ⁽¹⁾

→ Sexuality: A broad term that may refer to a person's sexual orientation, interests, fantasies, desires, acts, expressions, experiences, or some combination thereof. ⁽¹⁾

→ Social Construct, Socially Constructed: Refers to beliefs, meanings, and connotations that we project onto objects (or people) in the world, and which shape the way we see them. For instance, while biological sex is a real thing, many of the expectations and assumptions that we have about social gender (e.g., that it constitutes a strict binary, that blue is for boys & pink is for girls, that men just want sex while women want commitment, etc.) are socially constructed -- these ideas may seem natural and taken for granted for many people in our culture, but other people and cultures may view these matters very differently. ⁽¹⁾

T

→ Toxic Masculinity: The concept of toxic masculinity is used in psychology and media discussions of masculinity to refer to certain cultural norms that are associated with harm to society and to men themselves. Traditional stereotypes of men as socially dominant, along with related traits such as misogyny and homophobia, can be considered „toxic“ due in part to their promotion of violence, including sexual assault and domestic violence. The socialization of boys often norma-

lizes violence, such as in the saying „boys will be boys“ with regard to bullying and aggression. Self-reliance and emotional repression are correlated with increased psychological problems in men such as depression, increased stress, and substance abuse. ⁽¹²⁾

→ Trans Feminism, Transfeminism: A term accredited to Diana Courvant and Emi Koyama, and used to describe transgender perspectives on feminism and/or feminist perspectives on transgender issues. ⁽¹⁾

X

→ Xenofeminism: XF is a gender abolitionist, anti-naturalist, technomaterialist form of posthumanism, initiated by the working group Laboria Cuboniks. It is a world-building project working from the assumption that any society worth constructing would take feminism as a foundational principle. It is a project that aims to infect a wide range of fields, and operates on the assumption that any meaningful change will happen at a range of scales and across a range of disciplines. ⁽¹⁵⁾

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