

What does it mean to be cisgender? I know, and often ask, what it means to be trans*. At least I feel that I know. But to be cisgender is not what I perceive to be the "opposite" of trans*. In fact, any comparison proves challenging when one accepts the natural erasure of binary thought, expression, and perception. How could one identify the meaning of cisgender when the entire binary has been recognized, and in such recognition of fabrication becomes tarnished. To understand transness is not to forget the "cisgender", but to acknowledge the fragility of what we as humans have fabricated. "Cisgender", therefore, is a human abstraction, the development of the binary and binary thought serving as a language of imaginary codes built to separate.

Despite the incongruence between imagined social codes and the surrounding reality, the imaginary begins to take very real effects in societal life. When "cisgender" and binary thought strongly develop in society, the imagined binary code becomes something that can hurt or benefit one another - the imagined becomes reality, with real consequences. The binary only becomes "undeniable" or "reality" when such thought is adopted societally, taking on real effects that are felt by real people. When the world around us accepts make-believe rules, such imagined parameters develop into our surroundings, hurting or helping ourselves and those around us.

In turn, if cisgender becomes the reality associated and accepted in human society (which it has), then the need for further abstraction arises: trans*ness. The need for trans* to become a reality from the imagined is due to the development of the abstract, imaginary, "cis" bodily identity. Therefore, without "cisgender" make-believe, trans* would never be adopted into reality the way it has today in progressive societies. Have we come full circle? In abstracting our own abstractions, have we grown closer to our natural states of expression, unimpeded by higher powers and influences? Trans* is an abstraction of the cisgender, just as the cisgender is an abstraction of reality. Thus, trans* only exists through the basis of cisgender "reality" emerging from the imaginary.

If both cisgender and transgender imaginary realities could be recognized as mere abstractions of one another, then the realities so accepted and adopted through each can be understood as they are: imaginary/abstract/nonreality. This is not to say, however, that abstractions are not beneficial, even necessary to human function and understanding of our expression. If, instead of relying on such abstractions' real effects, humans begin to accept such realities as manifestations of abstract thought in society, the need for such rigid social codes begins to subside. Instead, new avenues of further abstracted, further imagined and nuanced identities developing and even welcomed into society. An understanding of the differences between reality and the imagined reality is becoming increasingly necessary to surpass the rigid walls built up through our own imaginations.