

GENTRIFICATION

WHEN DID YOU BECOME GAY?

APPROPRIATION VS. APPRECIATION

WELFARE

WHITE PRIDE

WHAT ARE YOU?

MODEL MINORITY

RACE CARD

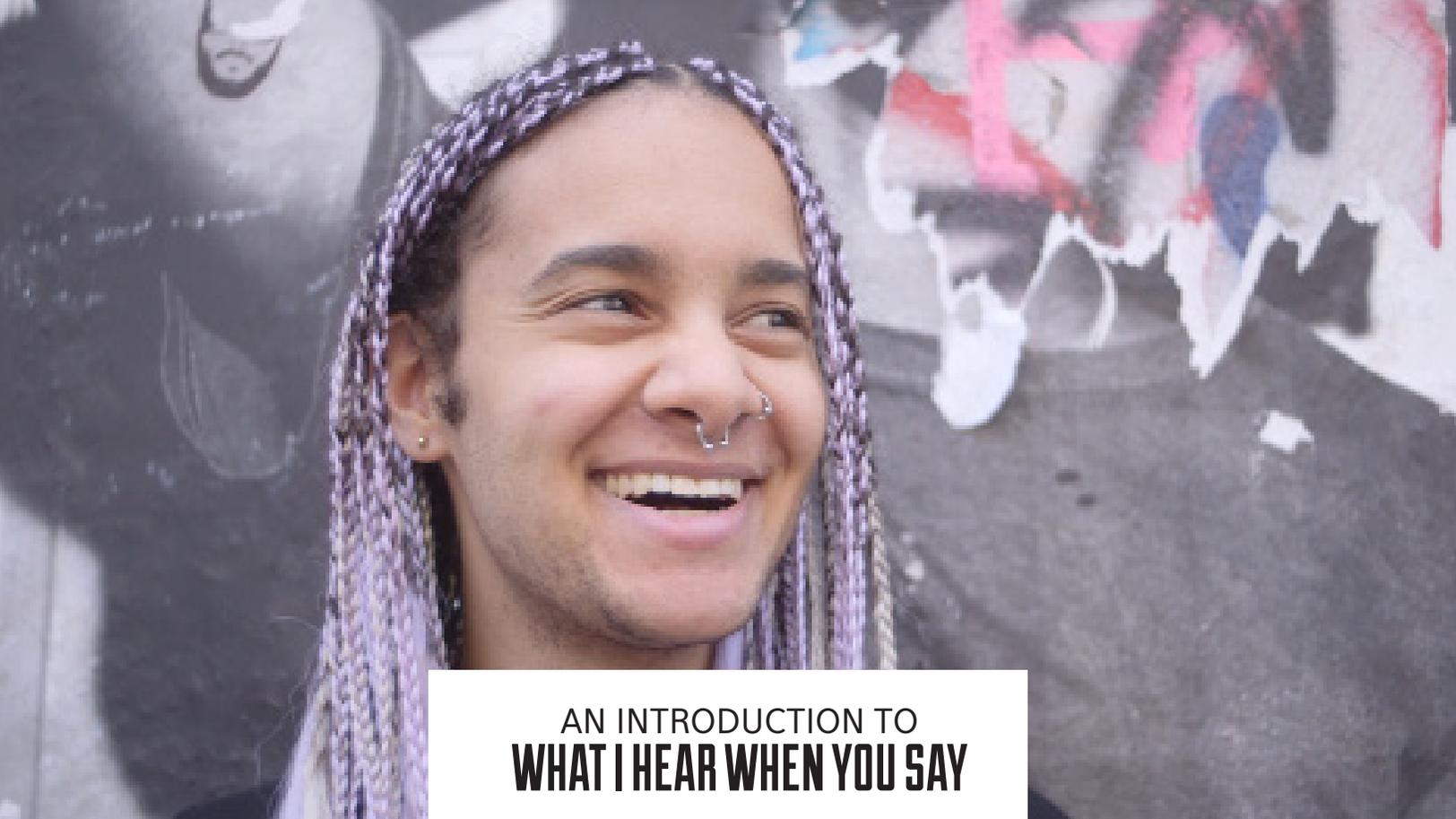
CODE WORDS

FEMINISM

**WHAT I HEAR
WHEN YOU SAY**

VIEWING GUIDE

WHEN DID YOU BECOME GAY?



AN INTRODUCTION TO **WHAT I HEAR WHEN YOU SAY**

Deeply ingrained in human nature is a tendency to organize, classify, and categorize our complex world. Often, this is a good thing. This ability helps us make sense of our environment and navigate unfamiliar landscapes while keeping us from being overwhelmed by the constant stream of new information and experiences.

When we apply this same impulse to social interactions, however, it can be, at best, reductive and, at worst, dangerous. Seeing each other through the lens of labels and stereotypes prevents us from making authentic connections and understanding each other's experiences.

Through the initiative, What I Hear When You Say (WIHWYS), we explore how words can both divide and unite us and learn more about the complex and everchanging ways that language shapes our expectations, opportunities, and social privilege. WIHWYS 's interactive multimedia resources challenge what we think we know about race, class, gender, and identity, and provide a dynamic digital space where we can raise difficult questions, discuss new ideas, and share fresh perspectives.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME GAY?

“ if you don't have an answer it doesn't make you any less gay, it doesn't make you any less queer or less trans because we're all evolving and we all change, and we don't have this one day on our calendar where we suddenly understood everything.

Kristin Russo, Activist / YouTube



def·i·ni·tion
GAY [gey]
adjective

of, relating to, or exhibiting sexual desire or behavior directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex.

Join PBS as we explore sexuality, gender fluidity and the language used to describe LGBTQIA+ communities from unique and differing perspectives.

Take a closer look at the words used to describe LGBTQIA+ communities through storytelling, analysis and humor with Writer, Speaker, and Educator, Kristin Russo; Scholar, Writer, and Activist, Moya Bailey; Speaker and Writer, Tyler Ford.



View the full episode exploring the question, “When did you become gay?”

<http://pbs.org/what-i-hear/web-series/gay/>

A QUICK LOOK AT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES

- In 2016, 63% of Americans said that homosexuality should be accepted by society, compared with 51% in 2006.¹

- In a 2013 Pew Research Center survey, about 92% adults identifying as LGBTQ said that society had become more accepting of them in the previous decade.²
- Young adults, ages 18 to 36, more likely to openly identify as LGBTQ (7.3%) than adults age 37 to 71+ identify openly as LGBTQ (less than 3%).³
- A study by UCLA's Williams Institute in 2011 found that bisexuals make up the largest share of LGBTQIA+ Americans. 1.8% of the total U.S. adult population identified as bisexual, 1.7% were gay or lesbian, and 0.6% of U.S. adults (1.4 million people) identify as transgender.⁴
- In the 2012 court case, *Macy v. Department of Justice*, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ruled that discrimination based on transgender status is sex discrimination in violation of Title VII.⁵
- The 2015 case, *Lusardi v. Department of the Army*, held that transgender employees have the right to use restrooms that correlate to their gender identity and that intentional misuse of a transgender employee's new name and pronoun can constitute sex-based discrimination.⁶

DIG DEEPER | MOVING BEYOND BINARY GENDER

“ You're assuming that straightness is the default and queerness is deviant...Binary just leaves so many people out.

- Tyler Ford, Writer and Designer

In the early hours of June 1969, plainclothes detectives raided the Stonewall Inn, an unlicensed gay bar in Greenwich Village of New York.⁷

Raids were commonplace at The Stonewall Inn. Because the bar was caught-up in the web of police and mafia corruption, raids were usually preceded by a tip and ended with both a payoff and the token arrest of "men dressed as women".⁸ Although there were sodomy

laws on the books at the time, police raids often focussed on enforcing laws banning “cross-dressing” or wearing clothes that were breaking gender norms.⁹ It was usually easier for police to arrest and intimidate transgender women and men, drag queens, butch lesbians, and gender non-conforming people of color, because they were marginalized within the gay community.

This raid, however, was different. There was no warning tip, and when the arrests began, the transgender patrons began to fight back. The ensuing Stonewall Uprising, which included protests and riots that escalated and spread across Greenwich Village over several days, sparked the gay liberation movement and was spearheaded by trans-women and men of color.^{10 11}

The Stonewall Uprisings almost 50 years ago and Caitlin Jenner’s recent transition have both been cited as catalysts for our modern debates about gender identity and the rights of people who live outside gender norms. The fact is that, a broad range of gender expressions have been documented across cultures for millennia, and today, science is confirming that sex, gender, and identity are far more complex than merely “male” or “female”.

THE SCIENCE OF GENDER

In American media culture, the common depiction of gender is two sexes--male and female—and for the most part, romantic relationships in the media feature male and female characters. This binary view of gender was often reinforced in high school science classes where we learned that sexual identity is determined at conception; fertilized eggs with XX chromosomes develop into girl babies and eggs with XY chromosomes develop into boy babies.

We now know that gender is not that simple. In recent decades, research on the science of biological sex and gender identity has shown that each individual’s gender falls somewhere on a complex spectrum.¹² It’s possible to be XY and mostly female in physical and psychological terms and to be XX and mostly male.¹³

In the instance of “complete androgen insensitivity syndrome” (CAIS) for example, an XY embryo’s cells will develop internal testes but the child has the external traits of a female, and in most cases will grow-up as a girl.¹⁴ A recent study at the University Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy in Vienna also found evidence that, despite having the same biological sex, transgender women have significantly different brain activity than men whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned at birth (also known as “cisgender” men). In addition, the brain activity of transgender men and transgender women were different from each other, suggesting that brain chemistry and activity are also on a broad spectrum.¹⁵

As scientists continue to unravel the biological foundations of gender, it’s becoming more clear that the human race is about more than just men and women. Dr. Arthur Arnold from the University of California explains: “[There are] cases that push the limits and ask us to figure out exactly where the dividing line is between males and females... And that’s often a very difficult problem, because sex can be defined a number of ways.”¹⁶

THE LONG HISTORY OF GENDER DIVERSITY

Complex perceptions of gender can be found in cultures around the world where three or more genders have been recognized for centuries if not millennia.¹⁷

North America: Two-Spirit

In the 1990’s, Two-Spirit was coined to recognize the long and complex history of sexual and gender diversity among First Nation cultures.¹⁸ Prior to the colonization of North America, Two-Spirit people were revered in their communities as spiritual leaders, healers, and counsellors, but gender diversity was violently suppressed after European colonists arrived. Two-Spirit peoples were killed or driven into hiding. The impact of colonization lingers today despite efforts to reclaim the cultural legacy of complex gender identities. Two-Spirit indigenous peoples in North America continue to be stigmatized and

discriminated against within and beyond their communities. ^{19 20}

South Asia: Hwaaja Sira (also known as Hijras)

The Hwaaja Sira, more commonly known as Hijras, have been documented as part of South Asian cultural history for more than a thousand years. The word Hijras refers to a collection of individuals whose identity falls outside of female/male, including transgender and intersex people, and is among the oldest examples of culturally recognized gender variance.²¹ Hijras have always played an important role in religion and culture and are believed to be associated with sacred powers. During the colonial period, as the British government imposed Western laws and values in the region, Hijra were criminalized. That social stigma has followed the Hijra community through to the 21st century. Despite recent landmark policies in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that legally recognize Hijras as a third gender, most are still shunned and live in poverty, resorting to sex work and begging to survive. ^{22 23}

Indonesia: Warias

Indonesia's Waria community came to global attention in 2012 when it was reported that President Barack Obama was cared for by a Waria woman named Evie when he was a child in Jakarta. ²⁴ In Indonesia, Warias are a surprisingly visible community in the conservative Muslim country. Warias believe they are men born with the souls of women, and the word, Waria, is a blending of wanita, which means "woman," and pria, which means "man".²⁵ Warias include a range of gender expressions including transsexuals, drag queens, and effeminate gay men, but for religious reasons, few seek sex-reassignment surgeries. Most Warias are practicing Muslims and believe they must return their body to God as it was given to them.²⁶

Sulawesi, Indonesia: The Five Genders of the Buginese People

Although also located in the majority Muslim country, Indonesia, the Buginese people (or Bugis) of Sulawesi continue to practice their island's pre-colonial religion and culture. An inherent aspect of their culture is the recognition of four genders and a fifth "transcendent"

gender, Bissu, that is central to Sulawesi creation stories.^{27 28} Members of this fifth gender are neither “male” nor “female”, and they play specific roles in society as spiritual leaders and shamans.

GENDER TODAY

Although cultures around the world have recognized diverse gender identities for centuries, the fight for legal recognition and protections began in earnest over past 50 years. Since 2000, multiple South Asian countries have passed laws recognizing non-binary genders, and Australia ruled that Alex MacFarlane had the legal right to identify as “indeterminate sex”.²⁹

In the United States, Jamie Shupe, won the right to legally change their gender to “non-binary” in June 2016, a milestone that the Transgender Law Center called “the first ruling of its kind in the U.S.” Three months later, in September 2016, intersex California resident Sara Kelly Keenan became the second person in the U.S. to be legally recognized as non-binary.^{30 31}

There continue to be debates about the rights and protections non-binary people should have in areas such as health care, immigration, adoption, military service, and bathroom access. As of 2016, only 21 states and the District of Columbia have legislation that prohibits discrimination based on gender identity in either employment, housing, and/or public accommodations and only 17 states have hate crimes legislation that includes gender identity or expression as a protected group.^{32 33 34}

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Despite the persistence of the male/female model of gender in the United States, a more fluid and complex understanding of gender, supported by science and cultural history, is slowly gaining acceptance. These ongoing discussions about gender and identity are also helping to challenge social expectations associated with both masculinity and femininity, and in the process expanding and reinforcing the rights of Americans of every gender.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- What conversations have you had with your friends and family about sexual and gender identity? Why are these topics uncomfortable for some people to discuss?
- What challenges does the English language pose for non-binary individuals? Why are pronouns so significant when we talk about gender and identity? What other languages face this challenge? How are they addressing it? E.g. Spanish, Chinese, Hindi?
- The series points out that, unlike the question, “When did you become gay?” we never hear anyone ask, “When did you become straight?” Why not?
- Writer, Speaker, Educator Kristin Russo suggests that, before asking, “When did you become gay?” people should consider why they are asking this question. If you were curious to learn more about someone, how could you reframe or replace the question?



Hear different perspectives on the Topic “When did you become gay?”

<http://pbs.org/what-i-hear/topics/gay/>

LEARN MORE

GROWING UP TRANS

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/>

In **Growing Up Trans**, FRONTLINE takes viewers on a journey inside the struggles and choices facing transgender kids and their families.

MEMORIES OF A PENITENT HEART

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/penitentheart/>

Filmmaker Cecilia Aldarondo excavates a buried family secret about her uncle Miguel, who died at a time when homosexuals were pariahs and AIDS was a death sentence. A copresentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB).

OUT IN THE NIGHT

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/out-in-the-night/>

In 2006, a group of African American lesbians were harassed and assaulted by a man on the street, and when the group defended themselves, they were charged with gang assault and attempted murder. **Out in the Night** follows that case and shows how the justice system can have a devastating effect on those who are already marginalized for their race, gender and sexuality.

VOICES FROM THE EPISODE | WHEN DID YOU BECOME GAY?



Kristin Russo

Writer, Speaker, Educator
& Consultant

CEO and Editor in Chief of LGBTQ organizations Everyone Is Gay and My Kid Is Gay

Author of *This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids*

Host and producer of *First Person*, a video series on gender and sexuality from PBS Digital and WNET



Moya Bailey

Scholar, Writer
& Activist

Lecturer at Northwestern University

Founder of Quirky Black Girls

Works with Octavia E. Butler at Legacy Network



Tyler Ford

Speaker & Writer

Listed in *Dazed*'s 100 visionary talents shaping youth culture in 2016

Designs "My Friend Tyler" clothing line

Works with Miley Cyrus' Happy Hippie Foundation

Contributor to MTV and *Rookie Magazine*

Visit pbs.org/whatihear for a detailed Viewing Guide on every topic.

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