

MARLEY THE FROG TELLS YOU ABOUT GENDER; HOLLY TOAD!

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Hey you! I'm Marley! I'm 7 years old, the wisest age for phosphorescent frogs! It's a bit like being a hundred years old for a human (ribbit!). Marley, which means "from the Land of the Lake," is where I'm from. It's a very colorful place where frogs shine bright in the night. Our genders are pretty queer! By the way, have you noticed? My name is an epicene. **Epi...what?** Let me ribbit this: **EPicene!** It means that any human or frog of any gender can have my name, unlike John or Jane for instance. See what I mean?

Like all frogs everywhere on the Land of the Lakes, I speak in a gender-neutral language. **Ribbit that again?!** Gender-neutral languages are fun because they allow us to speak about everyone: girls, boys, and those who don't identify as either. In English, it works quite well, but this isn't the case for all languages, though. In French for instance — my native frog tongue! — when one pluralizes words, the plural is masculine. Why? Because French society prioritizes the masculine over the feminine. **What an odd idea!**

As you can see, gender is not so simple. So Bob, my best friend and forever assistant, Cyril, Jessica, Noa, Max, and I wanted to tell you about gender (you know, the kind of stuff that causes trouble).

Gender and sex are not the the same, **holy ferocious Polliwog!**

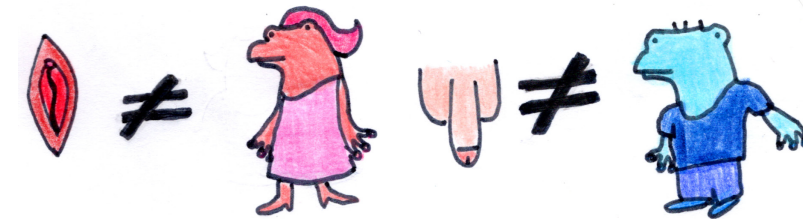
When a human being lands on Earth, doctors, parents, and society in general literally and metaphorically look between that human's legs — **<outraged> RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT!** — and decide for this human whether it's a girl or a boy! That's what we mean when we say gender is assigned at birth. To sum up, it looks like this:
inside wee-wee: girl
outside wee-wee: boy

And if there's any doubt, like for intersex people, doctors and parents choose for the new person and off they go!



As for the human who just landed on Earth, does anyone ask their opinion? Well, no... and that's odd right? I mean you, do you always feel like a girl, always like a boy? Did you ever wonder which gender you feel like? Did you ever dare imagining that you might be of another gender than the one that the world assigned to you?

Among us frogs, things happen differently! It's very joyful and colorful! No one assigns a gender to baby frogs. We let them grow up and eventually, each of them chooses their way of being. To each frog and each pond, infinite possibilities. **Can you beliiieeeve it?!**



My wee-wee isn't anyone's concern except mine! And it's not related to my gender. Whatever wee-wee I have, I might feel like a girl, a boy, or even a unicorn! Let me tell you something **<lowers voice, in case any adults are listening since adults can sometimes be very sensitive>**: I can be a girl with an outside wee-wee, a boy with an inside wee-wee, or identify as neither with whatever kind of wee-wee.

Adults think they're clarifying things by assigning gender at birth but actually, they might be making life more difficult for a lot of people who don't fit neatly into any one gender box. Some people need new gender terms and spaces to be themselves. I'll give you a few examples.

A few definitions:

- You are trans(gender) if you don't feel comfortable with the gender you were assigned at birth.
- You are cis(gender) if you feel comfortable with the gender you were assigned at birth.
- You are inter(sex) if your sex and/or your body doesn't neatly fit into either the female or male category.
- You are non-binary, fluid, agendered, if you feel that neither male or female category suits you, or that both suit you! And you might change your mind, going between these categories like a small frog moving into different ponds.



Among the human beings in the country of France, society does not have many colors **<sad ribbit ribbit ribbit>**. Pink is for girls, blue is for boys. The gendering of these colors also comes with a longer chain of gendered associations: pink = girl = doll = nice, obedient, careful, focused, calm, listening, mothering, dependent, emotional, etc.
blue = boy = firetruck = troublemaker, strong, disobedient, determined, restless, sportsman, independent, unshakeable, etc.

Why? Why are colors gendered? Well, these colors are given to new humans to teach them how to behave "properly" according to the gender they were assigned. Blue boys are taught to be active and strong so they can grow up to be men who feel entitled to occupy spaces of power and pink girls are taught to be soft, nurturing, and passive so they will grow up to be women who feel their role in society is less powerful. **What a scam!**

To say that there are more than two genders is to challenge the way our entire society works. This scares many people of both genders! It's one form of feminism. Whether you're a girl, a boy, or any other form of human being, you can fight for a more enriching and more colorful world!

Marley, a feminist? You bet, little frog!



Look at the rainbow above the pond. All these colors! It's an entire spectrum of possibilities. Genders also exist in a wide spectrum of possibilities, all of which are possible for frogs!

Charlie, my human friend has drawn all my friends on the rainbow so you can understand better. What about you? If you were to climb on it, where would you be on the gender rainbow spectrum today?



translation ///
YOU
Stick your
picture here!

Meet Marley's friends!



Hi! My name is Jessica. I'm a trans girl who likes girls and make up. So don't you dare tell me that I'm a boy or I'll wrestle you with my flowy pink outfit!



Hello! I'm Max. I'm agender and I don't care much about love. I prefer music and jump in the pond with Bob and Marley.



Yo! It's me, Noa. I love surprises. I'm a trans boy who likes nail polish, drawing, cooking, and short-hair girls. Oh yeah!



Hey! I'm Cyril. I'm passionate about football. I'm a macho dude, can't you see? I'm cis. I never cry, and I like boys. (I have a crush on Bob, but don't repeat it!)

On public bathroom doors, you might have noticed that there are two signs: one for girls, one for boys. It's not a lot... among us frogs, we decided that everyone was going to pee in the pond and the pond welcomes everyone. **It's just easier this way!**

Trans, inter



Masculin



neutre

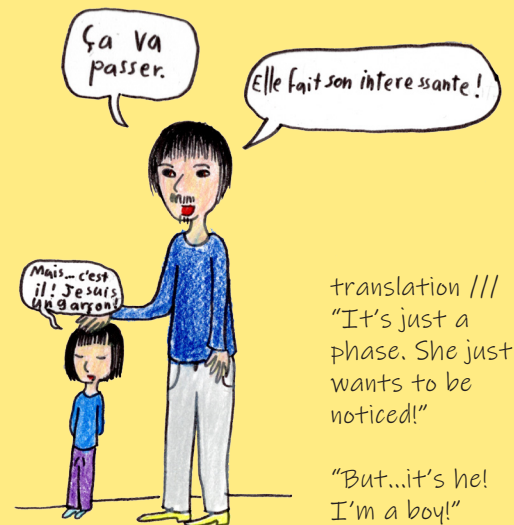


Feminin



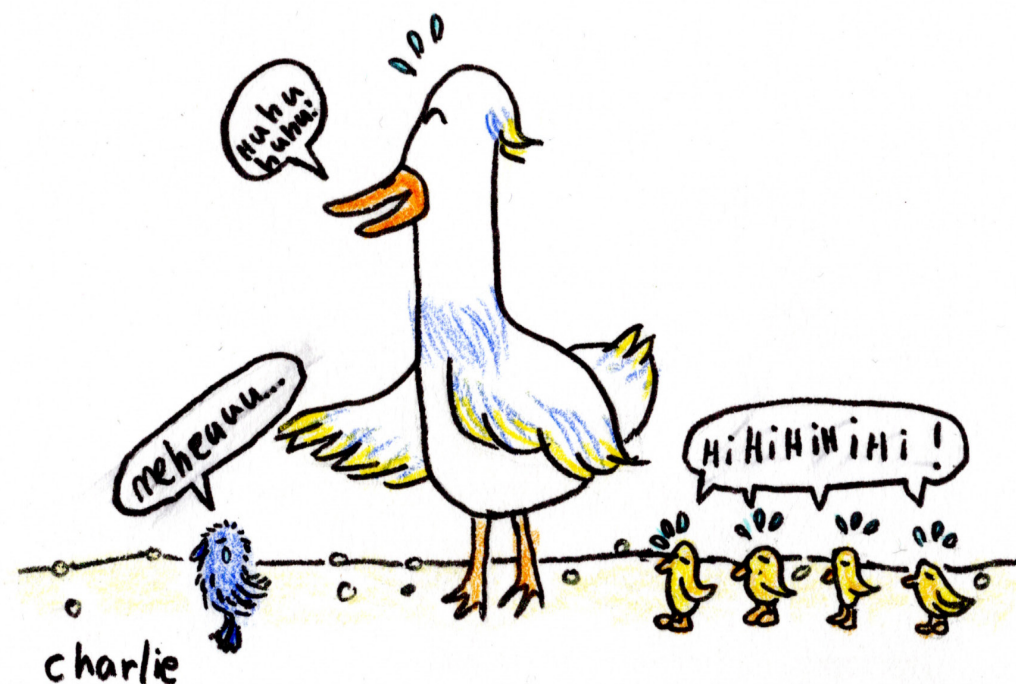
To be a trans, inter and/or non-binary kid
Very early on in life, human beings become aware of their gender. If you feel that you belong to a different gender than the one assigned to you, it can sometimes be difficult to talk about with others, especially adults. Not all adults understand that there are more than two genders and they control so much of our society. The trick is to find one or more allies who will know how to listen to you, to support you, and to walk the path with you. It can be a parent, a relative, a teacher, or a friend.

The earlier you find the strength and opportunity to talk about it, the freer and lighter you will feel.



translation ///
"It's just a phase. She just wants to be noticed!"

"But...it's he!
I'm a boy!"



Norm or majority? **More bad words!!!**

Of course it's not always easy <grumpy ribbit, ribbit>. The majority of people in our society think of themselves as cisgender. To be a transgender person is to belong to a minority group of people. And here's the tough part, the majority often view minorities abnormal. This is silly but it's only because those in the majority often don't have to think about what it's like to be in the minority so they don't understand anything about being a minority!

The same is true for those who are in the minority in terms of ability, skin color, age, and so on.

That's why for humans who aren't cis-gender, life can be a bit tough. They need to deal with people's assumptions, fears, questions, defensiveness, and unfairness. Such a lot of work just to be the magnificent people they are!



Help!

Transitioning means to decide at some point in someone's life to go from one gender to another. It's a great rite of passage, a strong moment of life which can be full of joys and difficulties. One does not need to transition to call themselves a trans person.

It is done in various ways: by changing their clothes, by calling themselves a new name, by redefining themselves in some way. But it can also be by taking medicine to transform the body — in particular, the shape of the body, the sound of the voice, hair (something we frogs don't have!), or even by having surgery to transform one's chest, torso, and/or genitals. For this, there are people and associations who can help you, and even some doctors who are known to be allies. **How nice!**

It's sometimes a very long path, but like every other long path, we can learn a lot from it, meet new people, and discover extraordinary things!

Having a "Maddy"

My friend Charlie is a cisgender girl who's almost 11 years old and, as you can see, she loves drawing. She has a transgender maddy whose name is Adel — he's the one who interviewed me for this article. Here's what Charlie says about her maddy: "Sometimes, when people see my maddy, they think: **What the heck?** Children ask me why I don't have a daddy and a mommy like everyone else. Sometimes I feel embarrassed to introduce my maddy to other children. But I also feel that having a maddy is an advantage. If we continue to speak openly about genders like we do in this article, more people will understand that genders are a spectrum and then we won't have so much to be embarrassed about."

Feel free to experiment and invent!

This might surprise you, but gender is not a natural thing. It's something we create, invent, and perform. **So go for it my little frog!** Explore, experiment and see what feels good. No one else but you can decide what's good for you. And don't forget that everything can change any day, any moment. Just because you feel one way on one day that you have to feel that same way another day! You grow and change every day. Each day is a new opportunity to re-invent yourself to feel more and more like **YOU!**
<clap clap clap mic drop>

