GLORY BI: A CONTEMPORARY ARTICULATION OF ALIENATION AND A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EPIC THEATRE CONVENTIONS OF BERTOLT BRECHT

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GLORY BI: A CONTEMPORARY ARTICULATION OF ALIENTATION AND A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EPIC THEATRE CONVENTIONS OF BERTOLT BRECHT

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Department of Theatre and Dance
In developing the dramatic structure for his epic theatre and its performance techniques, Bertolt Brecht adapted Karl Marx’s theories on alienation and the dialectic. Subsequently, this changed both the way theatre was presented and the manner in which the audience received it. Brecht’s epic theatre promoted social change at the political level in pre World War II Germany. In the following Master’s thesis, I present a contemporary application of alienation and the dialectic that is intended to increase social tolerance and awareness of people who have intersex. I provide a comparative analysis of my adaptation of Brecht’s conventions and argue their ability to alter social belief systems. Moreover I explain alienation’s contemporary efficacy in a discussion of the theoretical development of my play glory bi and its CSUS production. Through an analysis of the contemporary articulation of Brechtian techniques I explain the ability to use empathy and alienation together to create greater tolerance for marginalized populations, specifically, those with intersex.
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Bertolt Brecht wrote the majority of his plays with the specific intention of creating in his audience an analytical mindset, while also serving to educate them and encourage political change. He spent the greater part of his career working on plays that would inspire social commitment to political movements and he developed a new system of writing for, producing and acting on the stage. Two of the main theoretical conventions he incorporated into what became known as epic drama include alienation, the act of making that which is familiar seem strange, and the dialectic, two opposing arguments. Plays like *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan* are frequently considered to be seminal works in epic drama and they provide primary examples of alienation and the dialectic. *The Three Penny Opera* demonstrates the commercial viability of these conventions and also reveals the power of comedy when used to alienate preconceived perceptions. This thesis presents a comparative analysis of Brecht’s theatrical techniques and discusses a new approach in applying them to the stage, which was demonstrated in my fall 2008 production *glory bi*, an original play. In addition, this thesis demonstrates that comedy is a strong structural vehicle for alienation and that it can be used in tandem with empathy to inform audiences and promote tolerance of marginalized populations, specifically those with intersex. The analysis will include (1) discussing Brecht’s use of alienation and the dialectic and
defining their use on the contemporary stage through comparative examples, (2) demonstrating the efficacy of comedy and empathy in the contemporary articulation of alienation, and (3) discussing the use of alienation in the process of writing and directing the play *glory bi* and its importance as a theatrical tool to encourage understanding and tolerance of intersex people.

The Intersexed Society of North America (ISNA), an organization that is dedicated to a systematic reduction in secrecy, shame and the unnecessary and unwanted genital surgeries, defines intersex as “a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male” (“What is Intersex?”). This description provides a basic understanding of the nature of the intersex condition though it does not offer an exact explanation of the term. This is due in large part to a disagreement among medical professionals and other advocates as to what is defined as intersexed. Additionally, the statement implies a variation in what is considered to be strictly male or female anatomy. The ambiguity in explanation makes it difficult to establish the exact percentage of the population that is identified as being intersex. In fact, some people can live their entire lives without ever realizing that they are intersex or being diagnosed as such. Despite the ambiguous nature of the condition it is estimated that approximately 1 in 1500 births will present a child that is “noticeably atypical in terms of genitalia that a specialist in sex differentiation is called in” (ISNA, “Frequently Asked Questions”). The generalized definition smudges the exact boundaries between male and female biology, though it also
brings into question the concept of what constitutes normal genitalia, and the idea of normal genitalia becomes one of the considerations in exploring social tolerance.

The ISNA makes an interesting comparison of gender biology to the color spectrum. Many socially recognized distinction categories, including those observed by government agencies in determining demographic orientations, would use primary colors that are easily describes in terms of red, blue and yellow. This is most commonly recognized when declaring a person’s skin color, race and ethnic orientation. Distinguishing between shades of blue and red or mixtures of colors is much closer to the reality of most people’s skin color as well as racial and ethnic make up, however ISNA makes it clear that the concept also applies to sexual biology. Models of social tolerance advocacy efforts for people from different cultural and racial backgrounds serves as practical examples for creating tolerance of variations in gender and sexual biology.

Clarence Darrow, a famous American trial lawyer most often recognized for the Scopes Monkey Trials, served as the legal defense for Dr. Ossian Sweet in a racially motivated murder trial in Detroit, Michigan in 1925. Part of Darrow’s defense argument was to recognize that the jury was prejudiced and that racial bias was part of their socialized consciousness. He stressed that acknowledging their inherent prejudice was essential to their ability to detach from personal orientations and objectively consider the case (Darrow). The trial and Darrow’s testimony offers a strong example of alienation as applied to social progress as well as considerations of dramatic structure and performance. The Sweet case and its relevance to the theatre and intersex conditions will be discussed further in chapter four.
Nova, an award winning PBS sponsored science television series, produced a documentary program *Sex: Unknown*, (originally broadcast in October of 2001) which explores various aspects of life as an intersex person. The program presents an investigation into the existence of intersex individuals as well as provides details on the controversial aspects of living as such. The program explored the question of nature versus nurture in gender development, which is an essential aspect of considering the reality that many people who are born with ambiguous genitalia and are designated a specific gender by medical professionals frequently discover they relate more to the opposite gender after reaching puberty and/or adolescence. One of the most disturbing case studies in the program focused on the life of Bruce Reimer whose penis had been severely damaged, seemingly beyond repair, during his infant circumcision. His penis was removed and Bruce was surgically altered and reassigned as a female. He was brought up as Brenda and encountered many struggles and identity crisis issues during his adolescence. During his early teenage years Brenda began living as David, a male. Tragically, after years of depression and psychological struggle David committed suicide. Dr. John Money, a widely recognized expert on sexual biology and the biology of gender identity, was the recommending psychologist who oversaw the case. Money drew conflictive attention for his continued classification of the surgery and gender reassignment as successful, though Reimer clearly struggled with it (“Sex:Unknown”). The circumstances of David Reimer fall into the same medical and social issues and situations faced by those who are intersex. In addition, Reimer’s story is a strong example
of the dialectical nature of the social and medical relationships experienced by those who are intersex.

Millions of people watch *Nova* and this program was the first time many of its audience members were introduced to the condition. *Sex: Unknown* applies a comprehensive approach to presenting the condition and the people it directly affects while also offering an understanding of the science of the intersex condition and presenting personal experiences that could be related to. This was one of the strongest mainstream introductions to the condition, and while there have been a few similarly structured programs and films on the subject; it remains largely removed from mainstream consciousness as well as media and artistic representation.

Films like *Hermaphrodites Speak* and *XXXY* are two short documentary styled videos that were produced before *Sex: Unknown*. *Hermaphrodites Speak* (produced by ISNA and directed by Cheryl Chase) is a thirty-minute journey of discovery into the lives of eight individuals and the isolation they faced growing up. The video follows their stories from early childhood development to the point of finally finding individuals like themselves and developing new friendships. It was released and made available on video in 1997. *XXXY* (produced by San Francisco based filmmakers Laleh Soomekh and Porter Gale) received great recognition and critical acclaim in 2000, which was the year it was developed and it circulated the film festivals. This short documentary explores some of the more disturbing surgeries commonly considered to be genital mutilation. This occurs when a female baby is born with a clitoris that appears to be too large, for ‘normal’ standards, and doctors remove a portion of it to fit social expectations. The film presents
a strong argument for self-determination of gender. Both of these films are excellent
demonstrations of medical, social and psychological issues faced by intersex individuals
as well as family members and friends. And while they have made progress in social
awareness and tolerance advocacy, they are primarily accessed by those who are
personally affected by the condition or know someone who is. The problem of bringing
intersex into the mainstream awareness and tolerance continues to be a challenge.

Theatre has been slow in its response to these programs and has a definite lack in
representation of intersex individuals and the life circumstances they endure. The
question of what role the stage could play in encouraging social tolerance and greater
awareness of the intersex condition began forming for me after I saw part of a re-airing of
*Nova’s Sex: Unknown*. Early in my graduate studies I began in-depth research on Brecht
and became convinced that a reconsideration of alienation could produce a contemporary
theatrical structure that would be suited for social progress oriented plays. The lack of
theatrical representation of intersex issues is a good match with experimenting with
applications of alienation and was my inspiration for writing and directing a production
of the play *glory bi*.

*Glory bi*, which is written entirely with small case letters and is an anagram of the
words ‘boy’ and ‘girl’, tells the life story of a twenty something intersex American
named Bi Maximum Nyce. It begins with Bi taking part in her transgender support group,
during which she tells her group members that she is romantically interested in a co-
worker. The play then moves back and forth through time showing her birth and the
recommendation of the doctor for an early gender assignment of male. She is raised as
Max, a male and exists as such until she reaches adulthood and goes to college. While she is home for the Christmas holiday, Bi has a confrontation with her parents, during which she refers to an encounter she had with a college co-ed that led to her discovery of being intersex and the realization that she is a female. The play moves forward again to the point where Bi has dinner with her co-worker, Joe (the object of her crush), who cruelly rejects her when she tells him she is intersexed. Bi seeks guidance from a metaphysical spiritual counselor and decides to have the surgery that will make her appear as a normal biological female. The play ends after Bi’s surgery. The script has a basic comedic structure with specific alienation conventions incorporated into the non-linear plot and social dialectics are incorporated into the characters’ traits and dialogue. The applications of Brechtian conventions are intended to create social tolerance of people who are intersex.

In addition to presenting the social and medical issues that are involved with being intersex, alienation and dialectic relationships are main aspects of the play’s structure. The alienation effect (A-effect) is the idea of making that which is familiar seem strange. In his collection of writings on theatre, *The Development of an Aesthetic*, Brecht states, “The A-effect consists in turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one’s attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected” (143). The intention is to make the audience see a situation from a new and objective perspective. The spectator is encouraged to adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in their approach to the incident that is being portrayed. Brecht offers a simplified example of a wristwatch.
He observes that the watch, though extremely common and appearing to be a simple
time-keeping personal accessory, it is actually an incredible piece of machinery, though
not recognized as such in its use:

A common use of the A-effect is when someone says: Have you ever
really looked carefully at your watch? The questioner knows that I’ve
looked at it often enough, and now his question deprives me of the sight,
which I’ve grown used to and which accordingly has nothing more to say
to me. I used to look at it to see the time, and now when he asks me in this
importunate way I realize that I have given up seeing the watch itself with
an astonished eye, and it is in many ways an astonishing piece of
machinery. (Brecht 144)

This analogy, though the use of a cell phone in a contemporary reading may be more
appropriate, provides the essence of Brecht’s intention behind the alienation effect.
To dismantle the watch and remove the timepiece façade, an observer can witness the
machinery as it functions on the inside and this will completely alter his or her
perception. This metaphoric deconstruction of the watch serves as a similar practical
deconstruction of previous beliefs and social orientations that alienation can produce.
Brecht used this as a microcosm for the greater change he sought to create on a political
basis.

Brecht incorporated alienation conventions into all aspects of the play’s
production. They were there not only to remind the audience they were watching a play
and detach them from an emotionally based response but also to emphasize and display
clearly the dialectical elements. Conventions such as fully exposed lighting elements, placards and signs, minimal set pieces and a white half curtain were common to the scenic aspects of a production and an episodic plot structure was inherent to the script. He instructed the actors to present a character as well as to comment on it in their performance. When it is successful, alienation separates the audience from an illusionary-based response and allows them to view what they are seeing on stage from an analytical and objective mindset. It reminds the audience they are watching a play and that it is not real, and discards the use of the traditional suspension of disbelief. Alienation encourages the audience to comment on the character as it functioned in the social or political circumstances of the play. This is an important tool in detaching socialized perceptions of normalcy and viewing issues from an analytical mindset, which is essential in creating tolerance for stigmatized and socially ostracized populations.

Brecht used alienation to display the dialectical relationships onstage, which emphasized the importance of the dialectic. It was the primary analytical device in epic theatre and the purpose of presenting the opposing arguments was to reach what Hegel would have described as the synthesis. However, the dialectic arguments Brecht used in his work were based on the philosophy of Karl Marx, who applied Hegel’s dialectical theories to economics, most specifically to capitalism. The philosophical concept of the dialectic goes back to ancient Greece and has roots in Socratic and Platonic thought and had the word itself simply meant dialogue. For the purpose of this thesis and in creating the dialectic relationships in *glory bi*, I referred to both Hegelian and Marxist theory. Hegel’s philosophy is somewhat esoteric and is not applied easily to human existence. He
proposed that there is an absolute spirit, or idea, that strives to become more aware of it self, and in that effort it manifests into a material form. However, he stressed that the material reality can never be as perfect as the conceived idea, which is reminiscent of Platonic thought. Because of this, an immediate opposite, antithesis, is created which tries to correct the imperfections of the thesis. The thesis, by coming into existence is actually alienating itself from its perfect source. Hegel’s concept of alienation asserts that the imperfect material creation is alienated from its perfect spiritual source. Marx agreed with this basic structure, though, he considered the actuality of it to be the complete opposite. He placed the greatest importance on material reality, in this case the human laborer, and applied his theory to economics and the structure of capitalism. Marx associated the concept of alienation to humans in an oppositional economic structure. In *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, Marx states, “According to the laws of political economy the alienation of the worker in his object is expressed as follows: the more the worker produces the less he has to consume, the more values he creates the more valueless and worthless he becomes” (79). Here he argues that the bourgeois alienates the proletariat in his ability to achieve self-fulfillment. Marx considered capitalism to be the cause of true alienation because the laborer becomes alienated from his total self-expression by selling his time to the production owner, which binds him economically to the wage labor structure. The oppositional relationships that are inherent to capitalism form the basic dialectical theory that Brecht articulated in his work.
I based the dialectics in *glory bi* on Marx, though I applied the alienated self-expression of the worker to oppressed social relationships and followed Brecht’s example to incorporate them into the structure of the play as well as the dialogue. The relationship between David Reimer, as was presented in *Sex: Unknown* and Dr. Money represents an opposing dialectic relationship between those who are intersex and the psychological system. Similarly, and perhaps more dominantly, the medical system and the intersex population represents a main dialectic. This pre-existing, historic relationship forms one of the primary dialectics used in writing *glory bi*. However, both of these relationship structures are byproducts of the primary relationship, which is between ambiguous genitalia and societal perspectives on gender identity. Judith Butler, a leading expert and author on gender identity theories, describes the collective nature of gender determination in her book *Undoing Gender*, “Choosing one’s own body invariably means navigating among norms that are laid out in advance and prior to one’s choice or are being articulated in concert by other minority agencies” (7). These predetermined norms make it impossible to exist in a state of ambiguous gender because that role is not recognized in society. And while it may not be the desire of those who are intersex to live in ambiguity, it makes the delay in medical treatment and professional gender reassignment more difficult to achieve. The growing trend in medical theory, which is supported and promoted by advocacy agencies, is to wait until the child is an adolescent or otherwise old enough to choose for themselves a gender, and baring a medical emergency postpone any surgical assignments (ISNA, “What Does ISNA Recommend?”).
In order to establish the effectiveness of comedy as a primary tool in alienation, chapter two focuses on Brecht’s treatment of the homeless in *The Threepenny Opera*. This demonstrates the efficacy of comedy as well as the potential to transition from a political to a social progress structure of alienation. In addition the chapter addresses the work of Luis Valdez in the context of the Delano grape strike and the efforts of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union. It addresses the social perspectives and oppressive moral attitudes working against the strike, and Valdez’s incorporation of these elements into his plays. In this chapter I compare the work of Valdez to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories on comedy to illustrate the successful use of comedy in alienation. The chapter also focuses on the work of Tony Kushner and his effective use of alienation and dialectics in his play *Angels in America*. The chapter concludes with the argument that empathy is compatible with alienation. Brecht himself incorporated empathy into his plays, which is demonstrated in *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *The Good Person of Setzuan*.

Chapter three addresses the analytical process of developing a structure for *glory bi*. It presents a discussion of the dialectics incorporated into the script and their articulation through various characters. The play has a non-linear plot structure, which is emphasized in the dialogue. In addition it demonstrates the strategic use of empathy and comedy and how both are used to create alienation in the audience. The concept of morality and its role in the theatre is also a main consideration in this chapter. Chapter four details the transition of the script into performance, including some of the compromises that were made and then presents an analysis the effects this had on the
production. Finally, chapter five presents an analysis of glory bi’s potential for social change based, in part, on audience feedback and recognizes its place on the theatrical representation continuum. The chapter also presents possibilities for continued developments in genres of theatre for social change and discusses glory bi’s relationship to ongoing projects.
Chapter 2

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF ALIENATION, COMEDY AND EMPATHY

Brecht used alienation as an overall dramatic structure with its primary purpose of disallowing an apathetic audience response and emphasizing dialectic relationships. In addition, the majority of his works were based on political ideologies and their relationship to society. A deconstruction of Brecht’s treatment of the homeless condition in *The Threepenny Opera* demonstrates the potential for alienation to work not only as a dramatic structure but to be applied to socialized belief systems. By ‘making strange’ standard associations and stereotypes of homelessness, Brecht offers a model for alienating preconceived beliefs and perspectives on being intersexed. This manifestation of alienation serves as a major convention in promoting social tolerance. This chapter (1) deconstructs Brecht’s alienation model based on his treatment of the homeless in *The Threepenny Opera*, (2) discusses Luis Valdez’s use of comedy and its relationship to social progress, and (3) exemplifies a contemporary use of alienation in conjunction with empathy in the work of Tony Kushner. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of these topics, which forms the basis of my argument for the effectiveness of comedy as a strong alienation structural vehicle and the idea that empathy can be used with alienation to increase social awareness and tolerance of intersex individuals.
Homelessness in *The Threepenny Opera*

*The Threepenny Opera*, written in 1928, is an early example of alienation conventions and the dialectic perspective in Brecht’s work. The musical is an adaptation of John Gay’s ballad opera, *The Beggar’s Opera*, which was written two centuries earlier in 1728. *Threepenny* tells the story of Macheath (Mac), London’s most notorious criminal, highlighting his various schemes and plots within the dynamical world of the Victorian underground. The story begins in Mr. Peachum’s shop where he is instructing Filch, a local transient, on proper homeless attire and begging techniques. When Peachum’s wife Mrs. Peachum arrives they discover that their daughter Polly has run off with Macheath. Meanwhile, Polly and Mac get married in a run down stable and are attended by a collection of Mac’s criminal gang. Sheriff Tiger Brown arrives and instead of arresting Mac, with whom he had served in the war, he offers his congratulations to the couple. The Peachums are furious with the news of the wedding and Mrs. Peachum determines she will work with the prostitutes, who Mac visits regularly, to have him arrested. Mac is jailed and in the process it is discovered he has been physically intimate with Sheriff Brown’s daughter Lucy, who is pregnant by him. Mac escapes prison and Lucy claims her pregnancy gives her a greater right to be Mac’s bride. Mac is recaptured and news of his impending execution is announced. All of the local community, including the homeless, the prostitutes and Mac’s criminal gang, arrive to watch Mac’s hanging. At the last moment an edict from the Queen is presented and Mac is pardoned. Some of the standard alienation conventions are present in the script and include the direction to use signs and placards and the dialectic, as well as a gestic use of song. In
addition, the interaction between Peachum and Filch in the first scene introduce the comedic approach Brecht takes to his treatment of the homeless in the script.

Brecht articulates aspects of Marxist philosophy in the script, which forms a model for developing a contemporary dramatic structure. The play is frequently considered to be a satirical commentary on capitalism and by 1928 Brecht was at least two years into his study of Marxist theory and was experimenting with ways in which political and economic thought could be applied to the stage. Much of his theoretical application was based on Marx’s views on capitalism and through his plays Brecht sought to interpret Marxist theory onstage. In Das Kapital, Marx discusses the function of capital within a capitalist society:

Within the framework of capitalist production, this ability of objectified labour to transform itself into capital, ie to transform the means of production into the means of controlling and exploiting living labour, appears as something utterly appropriate to them. (288, 289)

Marx points out in this passage that the laborers become detached from the product they create and are irrelevant to its existence. This is the essence of Marx’s view of worker alienation. The owner of the product becomes increasingly wealthy while the laborer grows increasingly poor and undervalued. According to Marx, capitalism allowed this unnatural social structure to appear normal and part of a natural order that was simply accepted and unchallengeable. Onstage, Brecht interpreted Marx’s theories as an example of the bourgeois orientation to society, which he satirized in Threepenny, and which he argued the dramatic theatre endorsed. He considered the basic support of bourgeois
society to be an inherent aspect of dramatic theatre and compared it to the structure of capitalism. One of the prime reasons he revolted against realism onstage is his belief that it is a tool of capitalism propaganda. Realistic theatre presents the bourgeois society as something that exists naturally and unquestionably, which is parallel to capitalism’s perspective on economics. And the seamless nature of the illusionary stage prevents the audience from questioning its reality. Brecht created the epic theatre dramatic structure to comment on as well as to rebel against the accepted social structure. His treatment of the homeless in *Threepenny* is a satirical comment on capitalist society and creates an excellent starting point for developing a model for contemporary theatre that will promote tolerance.

I applied Brecht’s connection between theatrical genres and social perspectives as a primary consideration in the development of *glory bi*. My objective was to create a play that rebels against socialized prejudice and cultural taboos, which are associated with intersex, and I incorporated into the script and the production, of an adaptation of his standard conventions. In addition to his experiments in the script with Marxist philosophies, Brecht uses standard alienation conventions, such as the gestus, a series of outward movements and poses that are indicative of social relationships, and historicization, the contextual displacement of contemporary issues in a specific chronological and/or geographic setting. Brecht reasoned that the temporal removal of the ideas and circumstances set forth in the play would make them more assessable for objective, analytical consideration. And making ideas accessible is the same intention behind externalizing the character’s emotional experience with the gestus. Both of these
theatrical conventions are used in *Threepenny* and are relevant to chapter three’s discussion of my script development of *glory bi* and chapter four’s discussion of the production.

Brecht’s takes a decidedly comedic approach to the situation of homelessness in the script, which serves as a model for alienating pre-existing social views on intersex. And while the script places homelessness in an absurdly exaggerated context, the characters in *Threepenny* function similarly in the script to how the homeless population is perceived by mainstream society. The opening scene of the play shows the character Filch, a homeless beggar, trying out various begging poses while Peachum, the owner of an underground homeless supply shop, gives him advice. Peachum sells a variety of beggar costume attire and props (including outfits that portray various victim archetypes such as; the victim of a traffic accident, crime, industrial boom, war, etc.) to the homeless. He helps Finch choose an appropriate outfit and instructs him on the process of becoming licensed by the city to beg and pay rent for the privilege of pandering on the streets. Peachum gives him advice on the proper attitude and mannerisms a beggar should display in order to receive optimum charity from passersby. He instructs:

PEACHUM. These are the five basic types of misery best adapted to touching the human heart. The sight of them induces that unnatural state of mind in which a man is actually willing to give money away. Outfit A: Victim of the Progress of Modern Traffic, The Cheerful Cripple, always good tempered (*he demonstrates it*) always carefree, effect heightened by a mutilated arm. (1.1.9)
Peachum continues to describe appearances and attitudes that inspire the most pity and gain the largest donations. The costumed poses he and Filch present, as described in the script, form gestic images and this serves as a model for gestic snapshots I use in staging *glory bi*. The first scene of *Threepenny* uses satire to establish homelessness as a multifaceted industry – one that involves city licensure, Peachum’s services and the homeless beggar – and immediately calls into question the standard socialized perspective on transients. And the exaggeratedly comedic tone of the scene mitigates the controversial nature of homelessness in Brecht’s contemporary.

Marx’s views on the dialectic and the efficacy of comedy as an alienation vehicle are also established in this first scene. The primary dialectic relationship presented in *Threepenny* is between those who are homeless and the homeowners and renters. Brecht also introduces a third element, which is the socially institutionalized perspective on homelessness and factors it into his discussion. The taboo or shunned nature of the condition is represented by its industrialized status and Peachum’s shop. However, instead of presenting a direct, straightforward argument between the populations, Brecht recognizes the current social climate and its relationship to the topic. He historicizes the situation by placing it in Victorian London, England. He also removes the state of being homeless from its actual context and satirizes common stereotypes on the nature of begging. At the time Brecht wrote the play, Germany was going through a major economic crisis, which had been initiated during World War I and was compounded by the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles. Homelessness was at an epidemic proportion and was an emotionally charged topic. During the war much of Germany’s
food supply had been cut off and hunger and starvation were becoming rampant. After
the war soldiers returned home, disabled and homeless, and thousands of them were left
wandering the streets. Shantytowns with cardboard shelters became a common sight on
the outskirts of cities and the unemployment rate skyrocketed. This caused a
controversial contextual perspective on homelessness, and removing it to the Victorian
underground gave the audience a safe distance from their own circumstances. This
distance, as well as the satirical treatment allowed for greater objective consideration.

In Threepenny, Brecht takes the uncontrolled nature of the current state of
homelessness in Germany and the helplessness that is associated with it and turns it on its
side. Instead of presenting the dire dramatic emotional aspect of the condition, he
suggests, satirically, a beneficial response to it, the organization of it. By
institutionalizing the condition, the homeless individual becomes a laborer in a capitalist
system where begging becomes the labor and the state of homelessness becomes the
capital. The city and the shop owner reap the financial gains from his labor by selling
“professional licenses” and costumes and props, which squeeze the meager charity he
received from the individual. Initially it is implied that the organized system of begging
will benefit and protect the beggar, however, it quickly becomes apparent that the
structure simply exploits the homeless. Capitalism is taken to an absurd extreme, when
the absence of capital (money) becomes the capital (financial gain). The beggar, who has
nothing, becomes capital (product) in his nothingness. This is reinforced in the structure
of the script and emphasized in the dialogue. Peachum demonstrates the dialectics at
work and shows the transition of society into an apathetic state toward the condition:
PEACHUM. Aman who sees another man on the street corner with only a stump for an arm will be so shocked the first time that he'll give him sixpence. But the second time it'll only be a threepenny bit, and if he sees him a third time he'll hand him over cold-bloodedly to the police.

(1.1.5-6)

For the homeless, the difficulty becomes looking needy enough, yet not so needy it becomes too frightening to look at, or too overwhelming to assist. The beggar must find the balance between appeal and destitution. The beggar must make the donator feel good about giving, not drive them away with fear or frustration. This is an interesting perspective on the dialectic. The homeless person must embody the socialized idea of homelessness in order to receive a pittance of monetary award. In the process, by demonstrating the importance of the performance of being homeless, the person him/herself becomes alienated from him/herself. Brecht presents the homeless characters in *Threepenny* in such a way as to detach the audience from their accepted views of the condition and creates a perspective that is strange and unknown. This makes it possible to detach emotionally from one’s fear and sense of helplessness and view the condition in its brutal reality. *Threepenny* demonstrates the strong potential for alienation to be applied to specific populations and to detach preconceived or oppressed socialized views. Brecht’s use of the alienation effect in this context offers the starting point for a consideration of its contemporary use with theatre that promotes social awareness of and tolerance for intersex conditions.
Baktin’s Views of Comedy in Valdez’s Actos

The power of comedy, as is demonstrated in Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera*, is one of the most essential and reliable tools in manifesting alienation. The comedic treatment of the homeless scenes in *Threepenny* demonstrates its power and effectiveness when it is extracted from the overall dramatic structure of the play and applied to specific populations. Russian philosopher and theorist Mikhail Bakhtin analyzed the social potential of comedy in *Rabelais and his World*, his critique of the medieval carnival. Carnival is a traditional seasonal ritual event that is still commonly celebrated throughout the world today. Mardi Gras in New Orleans is an Americanized version of this traditional festival that for a brief period of time releases the public from their moral belief systems and social roles. Traditionally, the carnival has been a time of excess and revelry, occurring throughout the city in street parades and parties. An inherent aspect of the carnival was to turn the perceived world upside down and dismantle the entire social structure. Bakhtin observed that, “Laughter liberates not only from external censorship but first of all from the great interior censor . . . Laughter opened men’s eyes on that which is new, on the future” (Bakhtin 94). Bakhtin’s observation demonstrates the alienation potential of comedy, by reversing pre-conceived beliefs and the existing social structure. This was apparent in *Threepenny*, and it was the liberation from the censors that allowed the audiences to see the homeless situation from a new perspective.

Luis Valdez (an American playwright, widely known for his play *Zoot Suit*, which was originally produced on Broadway in 1981) demonstrates Bakhtin’s implied power of comedy in his plays. In his early works, Valdez, articulates the carnivalesque nature of
comedy. Valdez started El Teatro Campesino, a Chicano farm worker based performance ensemble, and initiated a social political theatre movement that advocated for Chicano rights. He and the burgeoning ensemble were a main element in the success and endurance of the workers during the Delano Grape strike. The strike, organized and led by Cesar Chavez, was one of the major advocacy efforts in the 1960s Chicano rights movement, which led to the first worker’s contract with the landowners and crop management. The primary source of entertainment in the camps was a short improvisational performance that became known as an acto, which also supplied some of the strongest community involvement motivation. The actos drew from strong oral performance traditions and their style was inspired by the carpas, tent shows. Valdez describes the purpose and function of the acto as to “inspire the audience to social action; illuminate specific points about social problems, satirize the opposition, show a hint at a solution, express what people are feeling” (Valdez 12). These short plays depict farm labor contractors, landowners and other people in power as ridiculous and laughable caricatures. In the context of the performance, the surrounding social structure and status hierarchy was often reversed and turned on its head so that the poor farm worker would trade social positions with the wealthy land owner. In her book on the history of Valdez’s company, *El Teatro Campesino: Theatre in the Chicano Movement*, Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez recognizes the power of this role reversal and describes its importance in the acto’s structure. These performances always included, “a plot line frequently offering momentary or permanent reversals or inversions by which the underdog ends up on top or at least temporarily opens up that liberation possibility” (Broyles-Gonzalez 39). This
momentary reversal of social status through comedy demonstrates the theories of Bahktin and emphasizes the power of comedy to create social change.

The underdog to which Broyles-Gonzalez refers, is the hero of the play. He is the hungry, tired farm worker who is in constant search of work, perpetually exposed to the environmental elements, including the pesticides and chemicals, and is exploited by the farm owners. Stock characters were developed from standard social archetypes and were incorporated into the majority of the performances. El Coyote was the standard villain and represented the labor contractor, the middleman between the worker and the landowner. The landowner was also a consistent figure and typically was known as Patron. The stories and plots were taken from real life and much of the action was based on the day’s events. Broyles-Gonzalez quotes Valdez regarding his discussion of the development of a specific performance, “We take a real situation – often something that happens on the picket line – and we improvise around it” (22). The actos were developed through group improvisation and were never written down at the time of their performance. Comedy was incorporated into, and in fact constituted, the primary structural element of the performance, to emphasize the exploitive nature of the social dialects and to inspire a movement of change.

*Quinta Temporada*, an actos that was performed during the strike, was originally developed and performed in 1966 at a strikers’ meeting in Filipino Hall, Delano California. The plot of the play, as is true for the majority of actos, seems to be pretty straightforward, though it is actually full of symbolic as well as literal importance, and it features some of the standard archetypal characters to which the audience had grown
accustomed. The story demonstrates the exploitation of the worker and the potential contractual and wage benefits of maintaining the strike. The action begins with Farmworker alone onstage telling the audience that he needs to find work. El Coyote enters and eyes the Worker lasciviously and then offers him a job. This immediately sets up the coming action and allows the audience to identify with the Farmworker and expect the worst from El Coyote. The scene is set in the summer (which, along with the other seasons, is represented as a character) so there should be plenty of work for the Farmworker:

COYOTE. Entrale, mano! (The Farmworker attacks the Summer and begins to pick as many dollar bills as his hands can grab. These he stuffs into his backpockets. Don Coyote immediately takes his place behind the Farmworker and extracts the money from his backpockets and hands it over to the Patron, who has taken his place behind the contractor. This exchange continues until Summer exits. The Patron then moves to S.R., counting his money. Don Coyote takes the Farmworker to S.L. enthusiastically.) Te aventastes! Didn’t I tell you we’re going to get rich! Didn’t I tell you? (Don Coyote breaks off abruptly and goes over to his Patron’s side.) How’d we do boss?

PATRON: Terrible! We’re going to have to ask for a federal subsidy. (The Farmworker searches his pockets for money and panics when he can’t find a single dollar bill. He spots the Patron with handfuls of
money and his panic turns to anger.)

WORKER. (To: Don Coyote.) Hey! Where’s my money? (31)

This exchange demonstrates the emphasis that is placed on physicalizing the action. In a short amount of time the entire exploitative structure of the farm labor system is exposed and turned comedic. The actos were extremely fast paced and of high energy. The physical comedy advanced the action and maintained the energy and tempo. The scene shows the exploitation of the farm worker at the hands ‘literally here’ of the labor contractor and landowner. The worker is desperate for work and income and the system itself is structured to extract the worker’s earnings from his very pockets. The character is enormously recognizable to the audience and so is the situation, which has been made laughable. And, as Broyles-Gonzalez states below, while the audience identified with the Farmworker, it wasn’t from an emotionally empathetic basis:

Audience identification was not of a sentimental nature, however.

Audiences were in no way naturalistically lulled. Instead they were constantly jolted by the pelado’s grotesquely exaggerated physical antics and appearance. The exaggerated sting and self-conscious quality of Mexican comedy were built-in distancing devices, which constantly dispelled any sentimental illusion. (38,39)

This variation of the tragic hero is reminiscent of film actor Charlie Chaplin’s iconic tramp character. Chaplin’s tramp was enormously popular in mainstream US society and was featured in film classics *The Gold Rush, Modern Times* and *The Kid*. Brecht recognized that Chaplin’s performance style “would in many ways come closer to the
epic than to the dramatic theatre’s requirements” (Brecht 56). Broyles-Gonzalez makes the Brechtian comparison between Chaplin and the traditional Mexican comedian Cantinflas by recognizing that, “many techniques of Mexican comedian Cantinflas, or English comedian Charlie Chaplin show a relationship to Brechtian theatre” (247). And while the audiences for both of these iconic comedic characters loved them, Cantinflas and comedians like him were also extremely important to Chicano culture. The farm worker character had the duty to inspire action as well as to entertain.

As the scene in *Quinta Temporada* progresses, the four seasons take their turn onstage and interact with the characters. The seasons are used to emphasize the social hierarchy structure, which heightens the comedy and symbolic importance of the impending role reversal. They also represent the tangible nature of the yearly seasons in real life and their influence on and interaction with the migrant worker. The following scene depicts the shock and financial destruction experienced by the Patron due to the strike:

PATRON. He’s crazy! We need some more workers! Find me some more workers! Find me some more workers! Summer’s Passing! (To audience.) Five hundred workers! I need five hundred workers! (Meanwhile, Summer continues to cross the stage and finally exits S.R. The Patron is frantic, hysterical. He ends up following Summer off stage. There is a silence. The Patron re-enters in shock and disbelief.) He’s gone. Summer’s gone. My crop! Ahhhhhhhhh! (He leaps and snorts like an animal).
COYOTE. (Fearfully.) Patron! Patron! (The Patron is on the floor, kicking and snorting like a wild horse. Don Coyote leaps on his back and rides him like a bronco until the Patron calms down and settles on all fours, snorting and slobbering incoherently. Coyote pats the side of his head like a horse.) Chihuahua, cada ano se pone mas animal mi patron. It’s okay boss. He can’t last, because he’s getting hungry. (Farmworker doubles over with pangs of hunger.) And anyway, here comes Autumn! (Autumn crosses the stage and the Farmworker approaches him with one hand on his stomach and his other arm outstretched). (37)

The struggles of the worker in his demand for better wages and a standard rights contract are taking their toll, though he marches on. The Farmworker endures and ends up being saved by the coming of a new, fifth season, the season of Social Justice. Social Justice enters the stage and brings the final collapse of El Coyote and Patron as well as better wages and a benefits contract for the worker. The comedy and carnivalesque turning over of social order “offers a rehearsal of freedom, an overturning of established relations through comedic means” that came four years later through continued resistance, endurance and determination of the workers (Broyes-Gonzalez 39, 40). Luis Valdez, used the alienation capacity of comedy to inspire the 1960s migrant workers to create social change. His work is a primary example of the potential of theatre to create change, and I apply the carnivalesque nature of comedy, which is reminiscent of the homeless in Threepenny, to the social dialectics of glory bi. In addition to my attraction to the
effectiveness of these performances, I wanted to access the inherent appeal of this identifiable underdog archetype in creating the character Bi in *glory bi*.

**Alienation and Empathy in Kushner**

Tony Kushner’s play *Angels in America* is a prime contemporary example of alienation and its effective use when applied in tandem with empathy. Kushner, a Pulitzer Prize winning American playwright, acknowledges his Brechtian influence and employs a variety of dramatic styles and genres in this two-part epic drama. The play follows two couples, Louis Ironson and Prior Walter, a homosexual couple, and Joe and Harper Pitt, a seemingly heterosexual couple, through states of crisis and the disintegration of their relationships. A myriad of other essential characters, including historical figures and an angel, weave in and out of their lives as their stories unfold. The script contains a number of standard alienation conventions—such as an episodic plot structure and double casting— that work to emphasize dialectic relationships as well as to detach preexisting associations to social stereotypes. In addition, Kushner’s use of comedy demonstrates its alienation potential as well as its capacity to serve as social commentary. In his New York Times’ review of the 1993 Broadway debut of the play at the Walter Kerr Theatre (directed by George C. Wolf), Frank Rich emphasizes Kushner’s successful manifestation of diverse dramatic genres and social topics. He acknowledges Kushner’s ability to “accommodate everything from precise realism to surrealist hallucination, from black comedy to religious revelation” (Rich). *Angels in America* was the first major
mainstream entertainment vehicle for the discussion of HIV and AIDS and additionally served as the introduction of the disease for many people.

Kushner tackles, in the appropriately subtitled *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, a number of social perspectives and the agencies that endorse them. Politics, social-sexual perspectives, the medical system, religion, and ethnic relations are some of the social institutions that are explored through the characters’ identities. As the characters and their stories come together, sometimes by chance, the social constructs are acted out in their dialectic relationships. Ray Cohn is a lawyer who also suffers from AIDS and while his character may seem to be straightforward, he actually serves some unique and complicated purposes to the script. Rich describes the character as “a villain, a hypocritical closet case and a corrupt paragon of both red-baiting and Reagan era greed” which is supported by most of his dialogue. Cohn suffers from AIDS and also struggles with the medical system (Rich). However, his struggle is much different than Priors (with whom a dialectic relationship exists, despite the two never having a scene together) and for Cohn, the struggle is more about denying the truth of his diagnosis than the actual physical aspects of his treatment. Cohn threatens his doctor with ruining his career if he does not declare that cancer is the cause of his death. His response to the disease contrasts with Prior’s who also interacts with the medical system, though Prior’s struggle is due to his physical and emotional suffering. He suffers sickness from the side effects of his treatment as well as from the ravishes of the disease. Cohn suffers more from the social sickness, of which his character represents. Prior and Cohn demonstrate the dialectic relationship between AIDS patients and mainstream society and as Rich
points out, “they are the larger than life poles between which all of the ‘Angels in America’ swings” (Rich).

Dialectic relationships exist in the play through multiple dynamics and are sometimes as episodic as the structure of the script. The alienation conventions that are part of the script’s structure emphasize the dialectic nature of the relationships. In her article, “Seek for Something New: Mother’s, Change and Creativity in Tony Kushner’s Angles in America, Homebody/Kabul, and Caroline or Change,” Catherine Stevenson comments on the dialectic aspect of the locations, time, and characters. The shifting nature of the script and the changing perspective between characters, “repeatedly reinterpret and restage this central dialectical struggle between past and future, stasis and progress, the emotional and intellectual, the lost and yet-to-be found, the imagined and the as-yet imaginable” (Stevenson 758). The play is rooted in 1980s New York City, though it is not firmly planted in a specific time frame or location. The episodic structure supports the dialectic nature of the characters’ relationships and location settings. In addition, double casting is a strong component of the script and as Stevenson notes, forms the basis of one of its dialectic aspects, “Kushner’s multiple casting of actors across genders unsettles any easy or conventional gender associations connected with the mother figure on stage, while it also introduces a dialectical relationship between the points of view represented by the different characters played by a single actor” (761). While presented in a contemporary dramatic structure Kushner’s use of alienation and the dialectic are suggestive of Brecht’s epic theatre and are relevant to the manner in which these conventions are articulated in glory bi. In Angels, Kushner presents an excellent
model for demonstrating contemporary social dialectics as they relate to specific populations.

In addition to his successful employment of alienation and dialectic relationships, Kushner creates empathetic circumstances and characters. Considering all of the social archetypes that are represented in the numerous characters in the play including; a concerned mother, a rabbi, productive professional citizens, etc, it is Harper the drug addict, and Louis the ‘out’ gay man with AIDS, who are the two most consistently empathetic characters in the play. And in addition to the mental and emotional defensive dismantling nature of comedy, the use of empathy can have a strong impact on belief systems. Dr. Michael Merzenich (of the University of San Francisco) is one of the world’s leading researchers in brain plasticity and was co-founder of Posit Science. Much of his work is focused on the neurological effects of empathy and its correlation to beliefs and behaviors. His findings demonstrate the potential power of empathy on the stage. According to Dr. Merzenich’s research, “emotion proceeds beliefs and the thought process” which implies that using the emotion of empathy in a play’s dramatic structure the theatre can have an effect on societal beliefs (Merzenich). These findings indicate that when empathy is employed in an alienation setting, the emotional process can lead to changes in thought. The effect is heightened by alienation of previous belief perspectives and the dialectic argument. In Angels, there are two people with AIDS and they represent polar opposite positions in society. Cohn’s social status as a powerful straight-seeming lawyer is more appealing to mainstream society than a sickly ‘out’ gay man, Prior’s character is much more sympathetic than Cohn’s. Prior presents himself honestly as he
navigates the drudges of his disease while Cohn denies, rejects and frequently is cruel to those around him. These two opposing identities and their inherent social orientations demonstrate the power of alienation and empathy when the conventions are used together.

The final scene of *Angels in America* presents empathy and alienation in its dramatic climax, which immediately is interrupted through humor and put back into perspective. This scene is a cumulative collection of the various Brechtian elements seen throughout the play, and effectively employs an already established empathetic response relationship from the audience to Prior. The scene shows Prior as he is sick in bed, and there is a sudden shaking and it seems the room will collapse,

PRIOR. OH! PLEASE, OH PLEASE! Something’s coming in here, I’m scared, I don’t like this at all, something’s approaching and I . . . Oh!

(*There is a great blaze of triumphal music, heralding. The light turns an extraordinary harsh, cold, pale blue, then a rich, brilliant warm golden color, then a hot bilious green, and then finally a spectacular royal purple. Then silence.*)

PRIOR. (*An awestruck whisper*) God almighty . . . Very Stephen Spielberg. (1724)

This is also a moment of great alienation, as the audience is expecting Prior to die and depending on their own socialized belief orientation, may be expecting the devil to swoop in and drag Prior to hell. Or at best, the audience has no idea what to expect and simply is struck by the awe and spectacle of the scene and shares in the terror of Prior. However,
the play ends with the spectacular entrance of an Angel who simply floats above Prior in a “shower of unearthly white light” and says to him “Greetings Prophet; The Great Work begins: The Messenger has arrived (Blackout)” (3.7.1724). Who is the messenger in the play; is it the Angel, Prior, the audience? The play doesn’t make it clear, and this is just one of the responsibilities the audience is left with. And just as importantly, what is the message? Prior’s comment about Stephen Spielberg brings us out of our amazement of the sound and furious spectacle and the audience is placed back in a position to listen to the Angel’s final words. The final scene of the play incorporates the powerful dramatic elements Kushner used throughout the plot into an amazing climax, and reminds the audience that they are part of its message. Additionally, it implores the audience to determine for themselves what exactly that message is.

In his play *Angles in America*, Kushner provides an excellent starting point for considerations on contemporary applications of alienation, and serves as a strong example for incorporating comedy and empathy into a play’s dramatic structure. And combined with the model given by *Threepenny* and the example of the power of comedy in Valdez, these writers are excellent sources for developing a contemporary use of alienation. The subject of empathy is discussed further in the following chapter and I refer directly to Brecht and his play *Mother Courage and Her Children* to establish my argument. In addition, chapter four discusses the challenges of adapting Brecht’s alienation conventions to intersex issues and explores the development of the *glory bi* script.
Chapter 3

GLORY BI: THEORY AND SCRIPT

There are a number of considerations to make and challenges to face when adapting Brecht’s alienation techniques to the contemporary stage. In the beginning of such an endeavor it is important to establish the primary intention and basic purpose of experimenting with epic theatre. It is also important to stay true to the function of alienation while making deliberate decisions when deviating from a strict Brechtian application. A number of questions arise in the process of adapting alienation to this contemporary use such as; will alienation be effective when removed as the overall dramatic structure and used in a multiple genre format? Can alienation be used to promote social tolerance? Can new alienation conventions be created? Is alienation effective when applied to socialized belief systems that are intertwined with religion and morals? These are some of the essential questions and considerations I addressed in writing glory bi, and the manner in which I dealt with and answered each of them is articulated through the plot and applied to the production. In addition, by following the example of Tony Kushner, the question of combining alienation with multiple dramatic genres becomes how to apply them successfully to glory bi and the subject of intersex. While answering some of the above questions and creating the script for glory bi, I became convinced that alienation can be used to promote awareness and tolerance, and that Brechtian theories and techniques can be adapted to find new applications and purposes for these conventions.
Intersex and Gender

Approaching this project from the perspective of having no known association with intersex individuals I had multiple questions and challenges. In fact, it was my own lack of knowledge and understanding of the various conditions that are categorized as intersex that inspired my initial interest in the project, and the process began as a personal journey of furthering my own awareness. As I delved through information, which was limited, and watched documentary films about the people and families it affected, I saw various dialectic relationships unfold. These relationships were primarily based on the various dynamics between the dominant cultural gender identities (strictly biologically male or female) and those who are intersexed. In addition, the medical system, which is part of the dominant gender identity perspective, constitutes an extremely unbalanced dialectic. Similarly to how Kushner presents the dialectics in *Angels in America*, the intersex dialectics in *glory bi* frequently intertwine and become incorporated with others.

I continued my research on gender issues and intersex dialectic relationships from a Marxist perspective, while transposing his capitalistic model to socialized beliefs on religion, morals and normalcy. By the time I began writing the script for *glory bi*, my initial interest in intersex conditions turned into activism; and my research on Brecht and interest in experimenting with alienation conventions turned into a strong focus on manifesting the awareness and tolerance attached to this thesis.

I began my approach to representing intersex conditions onstage by breaking down various commonly confused beliefs and associations. For instance, intersex is not an issue of sexual orientation, nor is it the same thing as being transgendered, though
these are two commonly mistaken associations. Curtis E. Hinkle, founder of Organization Intersex International (Oii), acknowledges the association to sexuality as being “homophobic” and claims this is one of the “underlying reasons for pathologizing intersexuality and suggesting treatments which are often barbaric” (Hinkle). The treatments to which Hinkle refers are surgeries on infants to remove ‘overly large’ clitorises or penises ‘that are too small,’ as well as other genital and reproductive system parts. Intersex people have no more likeliness of being gay or straight than non-intersexed individuals, though designating an infant as the wrong gender, which will not be immediately recognized, can contribute to sexual identity development confusion. This is one of the reasons the two subjects are commonly linked, and while they can interact with a person’s identity, the “psychological reasons are not fully understood at this time” and they are distinct and separate developmental topics (Hinkle). These are a few of the commonly misunderstood aspects of intersex conditions and I wanted to make clear the unique subject in the script for glory bi. I also wanted to demonstrate the potential interaction of these issues as well as the reasons that they sometimes intersect.

In order to first define intersex and to separate it from socialized attachments to sexuality and transgender issues, the first scene of the play is set in a gender identity support group. Bi and three group members, Tess, Lottie and Elle, discuss various aspects of their gender identity as well as the life issues they are facing. This first scene is structured to present the group members discussing standard life and relationship issues that are typical to most people:

ELLE. I can’t believe it. I’ve worked on boundaries and detecting red
flags for 7 years, and look where it’s gotten me. I can’t believe he
actually gave me an ultimatum. I’m supposed to be beyond this crap.

LOTTIE. I can’t believe you’re actually considering it.

ELLE. What am I supposed to do?

TESS. We’re never beyond anything. The past is a hungry beast, if you
don’t feed it, it will eat you alive. (1)

The opening lines from the play demonstrate that the group members are dealing with the
same relationship issues that are encountered by the dominant gender culture. We meet
Bi in this scene and learn that she is intersexed and concerned with how to deal with a
 crush on one of her co-workers. The introduction is intended to form a recognizable link
to the audience before delving into the unique challenges these characters face due to
their specific gender and sexual orientation circumstances.

This first scene sets the tempo of the play and is intended, through comedy, to
invite the audience into further interest in Bi. At the end of the first scene Bi steps out and
directly addresses the audience.

BI. (to audience) Hi. I’m Bi. Bi Maximum Nyce. I don’t want to hold
things up. I just thought you should know something before we continue.
I was born intersexed. We’ll get into that more later, but in case you’re
not aware, it means that biologically I’m not exactly a male or female.
More precisely, medically it means I have ambiguous genitalia. That
was my support group you just saw. It’s actually an all-purpose gender
identity support group. It’s not just for us intersexies. There’s so few of
us, it’s hard to find a whole support group just for us. They’re a great bunch, but as you can probably tell, you really have to practice tolerance in a mixed crowd. We call ourselves the Mixed Nuts. Anyway, please don’t mention what you saw to anyone. I’m not supposed to talk about what goes on in there. Confidentiality (4)

Bi’s interruption accomplishes a few goals for the play. She has broken the fourth wall and is directly addressing the audience, which creates a unique confidence between the two parties. She also sets herself apart as a unique character and establishes herself as the play’s narrator. In addition, Bi reminds the audience that she is intersexed, defines the condition for them and distinguishes it from other gender and sexual orientation issues. She hints at the underlying tolerance message of the play and sets the tone to serve as an example. Bi breaks away, sometimes interrupting the action, and speaks directly to the audience throughout the play. She is telling her story and the scenes and other characters in the play present a montage of her personal experiences. Her ongoing soliloquies work as an alienation device and also form a specific connection with the audience, much the way the connection with the Farmworker character was structured in the actos. And while Valdez’s audience for the actos consisted of the Farmworker’s peers, the audience for _glory bi_ is intended to be a mix of peer and dominate gender populations. The diverse audience population creates a challenge in creating an identifiable hero in Bi, particularly when she is part of the non dominate group. The majority of the audience likely will be composed of people who are not familiar with intersex issues and this first scene is intended to initiate a connection between Bi and the audience.
In addition to researching intersex conditions and the various issues and life circumstances that are associated with them, I considered how the concept of gender performance could be articulated in the script. Gender theorist Judith Butler was my primary resource in understanding and interpreting gender performance theories in *glory bi*, and her book *Undoing Gender* served as my theoretical touchstone for Bi’s character and her gender identity issues. Butler recognizes the inherent challenges faced in gender development, and asserts that:

One only determines “one’s own” sense of gender to the extent that social norms exist that support and enable that act of claiming gender for oneself. One is dependent on this “outside” to lay claim to what is one’s own. The self must, in this way, be dispossessed in sociality in order to take possession of itself. (7)

This statement demonstrates the existing status of normal, and further indicates that any alternative circumstance not conforming to these recognized “norms’ is abnormal and/or unacceptable. Recognition of a predetermined natural bi-gender structure, relates back to Marx’s views on capitalism and the dramatic theatre’s presentation of bourgeois culture as being the social norm and naturally occurring. Here, the correlation between sexual biology and gender expression is perceived as naturally occurring. Approaching the subject from a Marxist perspective, the dominant gender culture alienates intersexed people from their true self-expression by prematurely assigning a gender that may or may not be correct.
The correlation to Marxist theory is supported by Butler’s claim regarding the need to conform to preexisting norms and is demonstrated in Bi’s struggle to form a gender identity that conflicts with that which was determined for her. Bi’s early experience as the wrong gender, and also having to cope with an anatomical reality that is not accepted by mainstream society, is the cause of most of her early adulthood struggles and identity development. Bi deals with the same aspects of personal development and relationships that are faced by everyone, however additional levels of fears, struggles and concerns compound her relationship issues because she has an intersex condition. She has the added task of disclosing this “controversial” aspect of herself, which more often than not is the single reason for rejection from others. Bi has that are associated with having intersex and these are part of her specific gender expression and the performance of it. As an infant, Bi is assigned to the male gender and is raised as such. She is never told that she is intersexed and does not question her gender in her early life. Instead of suspecting that she is female, Bi believes she is a male who happens to identify more strongly with her female friends, a habit that she attributes to being homosexual. She doesn’t realize the extent of her identity complications until she has her first sexual experience, an event that propels her into a new world of self-discovery. Bi returns home from college, after her pivotal intimate encounter, and relates her discovery to her parents:

    MOM. We need to know what’s going on with you.

    BI. I just told you. I’m a girl. I’m a girl Mom, that’s all.

    MOM. I don’t think you realize what you’re saying.

    BI. Of course I do. I know better than anyone what I’m saying. Damn, do
you have any idea how much thought I’ve given this? Of course I’ve thought about it! I told you, I almost flunked out of school. This hasn’t been easy.

DAD. Okay, let’s just take a breath and figure out how much damage has been done and determine what we need to do at this point to correct it.

BI. Dad, it’s okay. School is fine, and I’m already registered for next semester. I did get a couple of B’s but I’m not losing my scholarship – fuck – this is not about school. This is not about fixing the fucking damage. (13)

The dialogue between Bi and her parents demonstrates the difficulty she experienced in realizing that she is intersexed, that her gender is female, and the challenges she will face in making the transition. Her parents’ reluctance to understand her foreshadows what she will face in society. During this same visit home Bi confides in her best friend, who previously had believed she was a gay male, that she is actually a heterosexual female:

KALA. Yeah, it just seems a little weird. I mean, you were always a boy.

And you’re gay. Are you still gay?

BI. Kala, I guess I never really was gay.

KALA. I don’t get it. So, you’re like a drag queen or something? Do you do shows? I saw one once with some friends. It was cool, I guess.

BI. I’m not a drag queen, Kala.

KALA. So then, you’re like a transvestite?

BI. I’m a girl. I’m just a girl. It turns out I was born with ambiguous
genitalia.

KALA. Oooh *(takes a step back)*, is that a disease? How did you get it?

BI. I didn’t get it. It’s a biological condition. That means, I told you, I was born this way. (15, 16)

Kala doesn’t directly reject Bi, though it is made clear by the end of the scene that their relationship is being permanently severed. In addition to demonstrating the various dynamics of Bi’s challenges, this scene focuses on the unique circumstances Bi is facing and the personal relationship challenges she endures due to the fact she is intersexed. And these relationships are with her family and childhood best friend. The issues here suggest the prevalence of complications in other relationships in her life.

**The Dialectics in *Glory Bi***

The social dialogue between the dominant gender culture and those who are intersexed is one of the fundamental dialectic relationships in *glory bi*. Together, the medical and psychological institutions form another dialectic relationship. Social dialectics are typically established through standard recognized institutions or conventions such as legal rights, education, religion, and collectively accepted moral norms. I structured the dialectic in *glory bi* in consideration of the aspects of society that were most recognizable through personal relationships and direct encounters. The characters themselves are manifestations of dialectic associations, and just as the dialectic relationships in society can interact, multiple dialectics are sometimes present in a single character. Kushner presented multiple dialectic relationships in *Angels in America* that
worked against each other and sometimes contributed to a larger dialectic matrix. As with Kushner, the dialectic in 
*glory bi* is recognized in the relationship between the alienated population (Bi, who has intersex) and mainstream social views. These relationships are articulated through social institutions associated with work, school, the medical system and access to healthcare.

The characters are structured to present a dialectic continuum on which the various social perspective orientations are demonstrated. Some of the characters are named according to their social position, such as Doctor (the medical doctor), Teacher (Bi’s grade school instructor), Mom and Dad (Bi’s parents). These characters have a direct association to Bi’s development and are also linked to the fundamental dialectics. In addition to the direct exchanges between Doctor, Bi’s parents and herself, the Doctor represents Bi’s medical treatment during her various life stages as well as the history of the medical system in relationship to intersex conditions. Other characters in the script have names of a metaphoric, and sometimes ironically satirical, nature. Mineful (the psychologist) and Reader (the metaphysical counselor and tarot card interpreter) are two examples of these characters. Mineful is a psychologist, though she represents the disconnection between the well-being of intersexed people and the official mental health treatment standards. These issues are evidenced in the discussion of Bruce/David Reimer and Dr. John Money from Chapter 1. In *glory bi*, Mineful is dismissive of Bi’s individual circumstances and indicates a negligence of care:

> MINEFUL. Hello Bi, let’s talk about why you think you want to have this surgery.
BI. Why I want to have this surgery? Hold on a second. My whole life everyone has been telling me to have the surgery.

MINEFUL. Oh, that’s right, you’re the sexually ambiguous one.

BI. Genitally ambiguous. I’m genitally ambiguous. My sexuality isn’t ambiguous at all.

MINEFUL. Right, no need to split hairs. So, let’s talk about how this surgery will affect you. What are you hoping to gain from it? (39)

Dr. Mineful’s lines demonstrate the controversial nature of some of the psychological treatment models for people with intersex. Rather than specifically indict a particular professional or treatment approach it calls into question the overall efficacy of the system. The bulk of the remaining characters in the play are given standard names (ie Joe, Kala, Tess, etc) and represent various personalities from Bi’s social outlets. Two of her primary social circumstances occur through work and her gender support group. These are opposing dialectic entities and they represent the different social extremes of Bi’s world. To emphasize the dialectic relationship, the actors who play the characters in the gender support group are also assigned to the characters from Bi’s work.

Additionally, the dialectic perspectives are set against each other when Bi’s co-workers go with her to a nightclub to watch Bi’s friend perform in a drag show. All of the characters in the play fit somewhere along the dialectic continuum and they represent various perspectives through which Bi must navigate her life.
Comedy and the Dramatic Structure

Luis Valdez and Tony Kushner demonstrate the power of comedy in their work and Valdez presents a prime example of Bakhtin’s alienation potential in certain comedic forms. In determining the overall structure of *glory bi*, I decided that a satirical comedic approach would be the most effective way of introducing the subject of intersex to the audience and advocating for tolerance. In order to disengage the audience from preconceived perceptions I believe it is important to first disarm them. Comedy is one of the most effective tools for opening minds to new ideas and as theorist Walter Benjamin acknowledges, “there is no better trigger for thought than laughter” (Broyles-Gonzalez 27). He goes on to support his claim by adding that, “as a rule, you stand a better chance of reaching the brain through moving the diaphragm rather than the soul” (27). If the audience is put on the defensive they are less likely to be open to the arguments of the play, and by creating an overall comedic structure to the play establishes a relaxed and inviting atmosphere for change. To best achieve the tolerance intention behind *glory bi* and set up the audience to digest the information contained in the script, I structured the play to be both entertaining and fun to watch.

The comedy in *glory bi* is used not only as the overall dramatic structure but also at strategic points to serve as alienation. Bi announces in the first scene that she has a crush on Joe, a coworker. Later in the play she has dinner with Joe, and this scene contains one of the pivotal moments in the script. During the dinner, Joe represents the
collective stereotypical beliefs in society and his character in this scene is filling in for the audience at large:

    BI. Joe *(slight pause)* I’m intersexed.
    JOE. *(pause)* Uh huh.
    BI. Say something.
    JOE. So, *(uncertain)* that’s great. *(tries to joke)* I’m interested in sex too.
    BI. I’m serious.
    JOE. Believe me, so am I. Okay, so maybe –
    BI. Joe listen. I’m intersexed. That means I have ambiguous genitalia.
    JOE. You mean they’re confused?
    BI. No you dork. Ambiguous genitalia means that –
    JOE. I know what ambiguous means. But I don’t know what you’re trying to tell me. Do you think you’re in the wrong body or something? To be honest, my own genitals are starting to feel a little ambiguous.
    BI. It means that I have certain genital aspects of both biological males and females.
    JOE. Gross. *(31, 32)*

The single word “gross” is intended to make the audience laugh, though the act of doing so should also cause an instant sense of awareness. Since Joe has been representing the dominant gender culture up to this point (and their possible inherent perspective orientations) his sudden and crude response should represent the inner thoughts and feelings of the audience. And the jolt that is felt at laughing at Joe’s response should
alienate the audience from their own response. At this point in the scene Joe denies Bi, and his speech becomes hurtful. This should distance the audience from him, and detach them from that same response potential they may possess.

There are additional alienation devices in the script’s structure and these are intended to support the ongoing intention of creating tolerance and making preconceived stereotypes and judgments seem foreign and unfamiliar. The scenes are episodic in structure and form a non-linear progression of the action. This nonlinear format of the scenes removes the play from an accepted dramatic flow and their arrangement is structured to heighten significant moments in Bi’s life. Bi not only plays her part in the scenes, but also narrates the story, which offers additional information to the audience. In an early scene in the play, the Doctor informs Bi’s parents that their child has an intersex condition and offers them his medical recommendation:

DOCTOR. Our official recommendation is that you have the surgery performed as soon as possible. In this instance, we believe that your child has the greatest chance of living as close to a normal life as possible if we designate it now, and as a male.

BI. As close to a normal life as possible. You can imagine what a hope raiser that was. My parents had suddenly found themselves in a very difficult, and unexpected situation. They actually had to decide what sex I was going to be. Most parents argue about choosing their child’s name. But this, now this is pressure. And for those of you who resent your parents for what they named you, imagine how I feel. (7)
Bi emphasizes the outrageous decision her parents are forced to make, while also using a comedic undertone to prevent an overly dramatic presentation. My intention is to stress the extremity of the situation without removing it from a relatable context. Most of the audience won’t know what it feels like to have to make that decision, though comparing the idea of choosing a sex for your baby to choosing his/her name brings it back into a known context and invites a consideration of the question. Additionally, Bi’s narration of the scenes serves as an adaptation of the metatheatrical convention (a play within a play). Not only does the audience watch the play, they see Bi also watching it and commenting on it. In glory bi this is metatheatrical structure is intended to remind the audience that they’re watching a play while also, and perhaps more importantly, to make them aware of their own responses. In addition to the ongoing narrative, Bi frequently interjects one-liner commentaries. Earlier in the above scene Bi’s parents are at an appointment with the Doctor, during which he asks if they would like to learn the sex of their unborn child. At this point Bi is standing downstage watching the action:

    DOCTOR. Would you like to know the sex of your baby?
    BI. (sarcastically) Hello, wouldn’t we all?
    MOM. Yes, yes of course we would. (6)

Her frequent use of comic asides to the audience provides critical commentary to the circumstances of the scenes. Bi shows the audience that the circumstances in the play are malleable and it is possible to create a different outcome in real life situations. The comedic structure of the play allows Bi to emphasize specific points and give the audience direct information without sounding didactic or like she’s preaching to them.
All the while she’s doing this, she’s alienating preconceived beliefs and bringing the connection back to the audience.

**The Theatre and Moralization**

Marx’s relevance to Brecht and *glory bi* goes beyond the capitalistic model of alienation and the establishment of dialectics. Additionally, the Marxist perspective creates a reference point for the question of moralization in the theatre. Marx considered religion and its corresponding moral beliefs, as well as similar ideological systems, to function as an intellectual dulling device in society. He considered religion to be the metaphorical opium of the people, which allowed oppressive social structures to remain in place. In addition, religious beliefs and corresponding morals pacified the poor alienated worker, and deterred actions for progress and social change (McLellan 107, 108). This perspective was demonstrated to Brecht in the political environment and social conditions in which he was working. In addition, the majority of civil rights movements and social change efforts that have occurred throughout history have also demonstrated Marx’s theories. Luis Valdez encountered the oppressive nature of religious morals during his work with the Delano grape strikers. Moral authority was a major tool of the dominant culture’s resistance efforts to the Delano grape strike, and by attaching the oppositional force to religion, morals and even patriotism, resistance efforts created a bond between the farmer owners and the greater part of society. For instance, the school in which Ceasar Chavez’s children studied formed a group called Mothers Against Chavez. This organization was composed primarily of the wives of the farm growers who sent their
children to school wearing the group’s badges as pins. The moral force behind attaching a ‘mothers’ endorsement to a movement is evidenced by organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). In addition, morally justified resistance to strike efforts came when powerful Delano grape farmer Jack Pandol publicly labeled the strike, “unmoral, illegal, un-Christian and un-American” (“Ceasar Chavez, Social Justice, and the Chicano Movement”). Valdez responded to these resistance efforts by exaggerating the moral attitudes of the farmers and demonstrating their hypocritical behaviors in the physical comedy of the actos. This was an effective way of responding to the collective moral beliefs. To exploit their hypocritical moral judgments in an exaggeratedly humorous manner mitigated the impact their views they had on the psychology of the workers. The apathetic nature of socialized moral attitudes, as demonstrated in Marxist theory, played an essential role in the resistance efforts during the Delano grape strike. And recognizing its power was a counter tool used by Valdez, who, through comedy, turned the social structure upside down.

The concept of moralization and its place in the theatre is frequently controversial and Brecht expounded on his views on the subject, recognizing that his theatre was frequently criticized as, “moralizing too much” (Brecht 75). However, the epic theatre took more of a scientific approach to dealing with morals and society and Brecht’s “aim was less to moralize than to observe,” meaning that he opted to present the effects of moral attitudes on society rather than to preach from the stage (75). The potential for theatre to be moralizing and to reinforce preconceived moral attitudes and beliefs is an
ethical challenge, and a fault, which Brecht attributed to the dramatic theatre. In his Notes to *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht discusses the nature of moral perspectives in the play:

> It is a kind of report on life as any member of the audience would like to see it. Since at the same time, however, he sees a good deal that he has no wish to see; therefore he sees his wishes not merely fulfilled but also criticized (sees himself not as subject but as the object), he is theoretically in a position to appoint a new function for the theatre. (Brecht 43)

This concept of placing the audience as both subject and object is a major aspect in addressing the moral associations in *glory bi*. Dominant gender culture moral attitudes are paramount to beliefs about and social perspectives on intersexed people. And instead of taking an indictment approach to addressing moral judgments on those who are intersex, I use alienation to separate the audience from possible preexisting prejudicial beliefs and, through comedy, I introduce new ideas of tolerance.

**The Role of Empathy**

Empathy has traditionally held a controversial role in relationship to epic theatre, alienation and the presentation of dialectics, and it is my intention with *glory bi* to create a new perspective and use of the emotion, while using it in conjunction with Brechtian techniques to create stronger effects. Traditionally, empathy has been associated with its Aristotelian significance for personal conflict purging and social status expectation conformity. Brecht attributed this to an overly illusionary and intellectually apathetic dramatic structure, and used the term empathetic theatre in reference to this genre.
However, the act of identifying with or having an empathetic emotional response to what one sees onstage is a natural occurrence. Brecht himself used empathetic audience responses to further his dialectic arguments. This is seen in his play *Mother Courage and Her Children*, which is frequently considered to be his quintessential epic work. The play is set in the hundred years war and demonstrates the contextual nature of morals, social positions and economic markets. Mother Courage is a struggling merchant who peddles her goods in a wagon as she wonders the war torn land with her children. In the process she loses all of her children and is constantly balancing the gains and losses that are inherent to conducting business with war. In scene three of act one Courage loses her son Swiss Cheese who has been executed and is presented to her on a stretcher:

(YVETTE brings KATTRIN, who goes to her mother and stands beside her. MOTHER COURAGE takes her by the hand. TWO SOLDIERS come in with a stretcher on which something is lying under a sheet. The SERGEANT walks beside them. They set the stretcher down).

THE SERGEANT. We’ve got a man here and we don’t know his name. We need it for the records. He had a meal with you. Take a look, see if you know him. *(He removes the sheet).* Do you known him? *(MOTHER COURAGE shakes her head)* What? You’ve never seen him before he came here for a meal? *(MOTHER COURAGE shakes her head)* Pick him up. Throw him on the dump. Nobody knows him. *(They carry him away)*
Mother Courage is forced to deny her son in order to save her daughter and her wagon of goods. This is only effective on the intellectual basis if we recognize the difficult situation in which Courage exits. Later in the play, her daughter Kattrin (who is mute) is awakened to find the town is under attack and soldiers have invaded the house in which she and her mother were accepted as guests. Courage is away for business and Kattrin climbs to the roof and pounds a drum to wake the townspeople and warn them of the attack. She ignores the commands of the soldiers and pleas of the homeowners to come down and continues her attempt to warn the rest of the town. Kattrin is shot by the soldiers and “beats the drums a few times more and then slowly collapses.”

THE LIEUTENANT. Now we’ll have some quiet.

(But KATTRIN’S last drumbeats are answered by the city’s cannon. A confused hubbub of alarm bells and cannon is heard in the distance.)

FIRST SOLDIER. She’s done it. (541)

Kattrin sacrifices her life for the safety of the town and her mother. This scene is an overtly tragic event and while Brecht may not have written the play to cause emotional responses, the intellectual analysis that epic theatre encourages would not be possible in this play if the circumstances weren’t of such an emotionally tragic nature.

I developed the character of Bi with the specific intention of making her likeable, empathetic and even endearing to the audience. She represents a new population for many people and delivers to them a lot of information on intersex issues. In order to take an interest in Bi and her personal issues, I believe the audience should be receptive to her character. Brecht used alienation to remind the audience they are watching a play and that
they should intellectually consider the given subjects. In *glory bi*, I use alienation to promote tolerance, and to ‘make strange’ preconceived stereotypical beliefs and moral judgments. This chapter’s earlier discussion of Bi’s date with her co-worker Joe demonstrates the effects of empathy and the importance of the audience’s acceptance of Bi, which encourages tolerance for intersex people. The effects of this scene are possible only if the audience has developed empathy potential for Bi. This is a challenge for the actors’ performances and production development, though the effects are suggested in the script, and the play’s dialogue is structured to cause an empathetic outcome. And while the intention of the scene is to alienate preconceived judgments and views of intersexed people, the alienation is only possible if the audience has developed a connection with and cares about Bi. Empathy is used in the play as a convention that contributes to the effectiveness of alienation, rather than as an escape based dramatic structure genre. Similarly, the contradictory nature of profiting from war that is demonstrated in *Mother Courage* is only evidenced by the personal tragedies it creates.

I wrote *glory bi* with the intention of adapting alienation conventions to serve as social tolerance tools and I use comedy and empathy to support the play’s effectiveness. My intention was to create a script that would be entertaining and serve as a vehicle that promotes awareness and tolerance of intersex people. I specifically appeal to mainstream popularity as my target audience, because as Butler recognizes in her theories on gender identity development, “it turns out that changing the institutions by which humanly viable choice is established and maintained is a prerequisite for the exercise of self-determination” (Butler 7). This statement reflects the need to change the perspectives of
the individuals in society in order to change society. The next chapter discusses my continued efforts in the production of *glory bi*.
Developing the script for *glory bi* from the Brecht/Marx theoretical perspective had its specific challenges, and the rehearsal process for the play’s production had its own set of complications and challenges. One of the benefits I had while directing the production was the awareness of my theoretical intentions with the script. While writing *glory bi*, I visualized images and performance structures, and while this contributed to the rehearsal process for the CSUS Studio Theatre production I wrote the play to be producible for an outside company. Meanwhile, the privilege of directing the production allowed me to make necessary adjustments to the script as the rehearsals progressed, though I had to resist the desire to rewrite every scene after almost every rehearsal, which can be a common obsession for playwrights who direct their own work. Some of the changes made to the script were due to the available resources and venue specific adjustments, while others were related to the actors and new idea developments that occurred during the rehearsal. The transition from the page to the stage had its challenges though overall the process was successful and the production went smoothly, validating some of the previously discussed theoretical intentions. This chapter relates some of the adaptation challenges I made for the CSUS production and discusses decisions I made that were intended to bring the original ideas I had while writing the play to the stage.
Adaptations to the Script

I completed the script for *glory bi* in August of 2008, which was immediately prior to beginning rehearsals for the upcoming production. The script was still in its initial editing status while I was casting the play and the first read through occurred when it was literally hot off the press. During the rehearsal process I made a few adjustments to the script and most of these were related to the overall flow of the dialogue and character orientation structures. In addition, I made some adaptations that were specific to the CSUS production, such as some of the scenes that involved medical treatment, which were related more to the venue, its size and the production’s available resources, and these changes were not incorporated into the final working script. Working with the actors was an important aspect of some of the script’s adjustments. The cast was composed of actors from various levels of skill and experience backgrounds. The actors that adjusted to the demands of the script and developed their characters quickly actually smoothed over some of the issues that the lesser-experienced actors demonstrated by their lack of skill development. And while some of the more experienced actors gave quality comments, the lesser-experienced actors demonstrated script concerns through their own misunderstandings and how these affected their rehearsal. The diversity of skill and experience level in the cast posed some interesting rehearsal challenges and in the process contributed to some script adjustments. I restricted major script changes to the first week, and overall the production development process and the show’s run validated some of the theoretical concepts that were discussed earlier in this thesis.
The representation of the medical system is one of the major adaptations that took place during this production. The system itself is a major component of the lives of people with intersex and it is one of the primary social institutions represented in the play. The medical system has a strong influence on the personal identity dependence described by Butler in her theories on gender development and their socially oriented restrictions. In addition, there are controversial aspects associated with the medical system and its place of authoritative social status. The system is part of one of the fundamental dialectic relationships in the play and its treatment in the script took on many levels. For example, in dealing with the dynamic presentation of the various dialectic perspectives and overall relevance of the medical system throughout the twentieth century, I adapted Brecht’s use of historicization. Brecht did not believe in the universal character or circumstance of humans. To him, behavior was contextual and varied depending on the political, social and economic circumstances surrounding the individual. Brecht clarifies his intention by stating:

It was principally designed to historicize the incidents portrayed. By this is meant the following: The bourgeois theatre emphasized the timeliness of its objects. Its representation of people is bound by the alleged ‘eternally human.’ Its story is arranged in such a way as to create ‘universal’ situations that allow Man with a capital M to express himself: man of every period and every colour. (Brecht 96, 97)

Brecht’s historicization convention is best evidenced in a scene with Bi and the Doctor, which I adapted for this production. I felt it was important to present an objective
approach to the system in order for it to be criticized by the audience. Due to the medical system’s place of authority in society, a direct criticism of it in the play may cause a defensive audience response, which I specifically wanted to avoid. To achieve this I adapted Brecht’s historicization convention, which then required further adaptation needs during the rehearsal process.

Because the medical system is one of the primary social institutions in the play and is part of a diverse scene selection, the character Doctor was created to represent both the family physician and the medical system itself. In order to create an objective orientation to the medical system, the Doctor is part of every early treatment scene and represents everything from standard medical care to diagnostic information and recommended treatment procedures. From a place of objectivity, I attempted to demonstrate the fallibility of the system by writing the following scene, which features the Doctor who appears in a video that uses visual effects to give the illusion of a 1950s sexual education film. The actor playing the Doctor presents the topic in the same delivery style as what could be expected from these early educational films, and this is projected onto a screen while Bi sits center stage:

(Bi sits alone onstage with an oversized medical book. It should give the impression of an “Alice in Wonderland” quality. She flips through the book. Projected onto the stage will be pages from a 1950s medical book describing reproductive aspects of male and female anatomy. On screen the Doctor appears as though he is in a 1950s sexual educational video.)

DOCTOR. As you can see, we have both the male and female anatomy.
Genetically, the human body has 23 sets of chromosomes, with two of those relating to the individual’s sexual makeup. Males have one X and one Y, and females have two Xs. (*Points to corresponding images*)

**BI.** Oddly enough, it wasn’t sexual education in school, or even a discussion with my parents that really made me aware that I was different. (17, 18)

At this point, two child tormenters rush onto the stage, interrupting the scene, and bully Bi about her genitalia during a game of show and tell. The tormenters leave as quickly as the entered and the doctor resumes his sexual education video speech:

**DOCTOR.** As a child develops, changes in his body occur. This reaches a point of heightened and intense transformation, which manifests typically between the ages of 12 and 14, otherwise known as puberty.

**BI.** Painful, right? And did you hear what he said about that chromosome crap? Come on, it’s like he’s straight out of the 50’s or something.

**DOCTOR.** (*to Bi*) Hey, I am straight out of the 1950’s. And I’m working with the best information that’s available, so cut me some slack.

**BI.** Of course. That’s all any of us can do. Meanwhile, we all know that sexual and gender development are complicated processes that go far beyond the mere designation of X’s and Y’s. (*yells to Doctor*) We are not gender neutral—mutable creatures at birth!

**DOCTOR.** Don’t yell at me, you should be talking to Dr. Hampton Young. (17, 18)
In this section, the Doctor talks back to Bi in the video, which breaks the boundaries of the video format, and after Bi has an extended commentary on the information he has given; during which two surgical agents enter the stage and perform exaggerated procedures with mock tools. The Doctor finally steps out of the video and walks over to Bi in an effort to sooth and reassure her, “Look kid, I know you’re upset about a lot of the circumstances you’ve experienced due to no fault of your own. But try and separate your anger from your situation” (18). The video would be timed to interact with Bi onstage, and the actor playing the Doctor was to be positioned behind the screen to walk out at the moment the Doctor on the video crosses out of the shot. Due to complications with accessing video equipment, scheduling a shoot with the actor and obtaining the necessary projection features, I finally decided that the scene had to be adapted to the venue and production resources. I was concerned this would be a major compromise in the effectiveness of the scene, though I received reassuring feedback during the rehearsal process and became satisfied with final result. In the production I placed the Doctor onstage, in person, throughout the entire scene, and while that might have lost some visual dynamics, the scene was effective in presenting the various historic medical perspectives. The adaptation was effective for the Studio Theatre production, though it was not incorporated into the script.

**Staging the Play**

An important concept with *glory bi*, in both its writing and my direction of the Studio Theatre production, is to avoid an obvious emulation of Brecht. I specifically and
emphatically did not want audience members to leave the production focusing on Brechtian structural elements, either with the script or production, or with the feeling that they had been scolded or preached to. I believe that if an audience approaches a play from the perspective of anticipated alienation, than it will be less successful in its execution. Similarly, I did not want the audience to experience the play as though it were a lecture or leave with the feeling of having been preached to regarding social opinion.

While I had no control over the Brechtian background or performance expectations, or social orientation the audience might bring into the theatre with them, I approached the production’s thematic structure with the intention to entertain, and this was incorporated into the overall pace of the show and character presentation. I strongly believe that the information contained in and the social tolerance efforts of the play would be most successful if the audience was put at ease and enjoyed the presentation. This is similar to the theory that they would only accept an otherwise socially tabooed population by developing empathy toward Bi. Entertainment and empathy were two strong components of the production, though they were a means to an end, not the end in itself. And I trusted that the theoretical content and approach to the script development was strong enough to be effective in an entertainment setting.

My focus on the production’s entertainment value is related to Brecht’s theories on theatre and sport. It is easy to associate Brecht with a serious, politically oriented attitude about theatre, however, he had a strong focus on creating theatre that was fun, and part of his criticism of the traditional dramatic theatre was that it had no sport. In his discussions on theatre and sport, Brecht was clear on his opinion that, “nobody who fails
This is an important performance reminder as well as the essence of my approach to directing gl*ory* bi. I was beyond the concern that by focusing on entertainment, it would mitigate the social tolerance impact of the production. I use the theoretical considerations I’ve addressed in previous chapters to stress that by applying a sense of fun and entertainment to the rehearsal process and production outcome, it would only enhance the message of the play.

In addition to a consideration of Brecht’s views on theatre and sport, I incorporated an aspect of Clearance Darrow’s trial strategy in the Ossian Sweet case. During his summation he reminded the jurors that they had inherent prejudicial perspectives, “I know perfectly well that when you find a man who has no race prejudices you have got to find one out of a thousand” (Darrow). He did this by pointing out that eleven black people were on trial before twelve white people (the trial took place in Detroit, Michigan in November, 1925), and inviting them to consider their own chances for a fair trial if the situation were reversed. The rest of his summation included references to this idea, and though Darrow never told the jurors they were racist, he demonstrated to them in his speech that they were and asked them not to let this be. This was a thematic essence that was consistent throughout the production’s development, though there were specific points in the play were I emphasized this tactic. One of the primary examples occurred during the restaurant scene where Bi is having dinner with her co-worker Joe. This scene was discussed in the previous chapter and needs little introduction, other than to serve as a reminder that Joe had a cruel response to Bi’s
declaration that she was intersex and to point out the specific moment I wanted to
demonstrate an inherent bias in the audience. While Darrow’s approach to addressing
racism in the Sweets trial was an ongoing presentational consideration, there were
specific moments in the script I wanted to emphasize the audience’s inherent bias toward
intersex. This moment occurred during Joe’s instinctive response to Bi’s telling him she
is intersex. When Bi explains the condition by saying, “It means that I have certain
genital aspects of both biological males and females,” Joe’s immediate response is the
single word, “gross” (32). This seemingly crude and immature response could have
different effects on the audience depending on how it was played. At this point in the
scene I wanted the audience to like Joe and be hoping for the best. Meanwhile, due to the
nature of the conversation, I wanted them to be a little nervous for Bi. In order to
successfully alienate the audience from their own inherent response to Bi (and also
remind them of it) and the discovery that she is intersex, Scott, the actor playing Joe, had
to deliver his lines as spontaneously and naturally as possible. Presenting the simple word
gross, as an unexpected, automatic response gave the audience no time to judge it. This
was intended to articulate their inherent feelings, and hopefully elicit a surprised laugh. If
it were successful the audience would be surprised by their reaction, and might even feel
guilty. Joe has plenty of mean lines through the remainder of the scene, and I directed
Scott to portray them cruelly to allow the audience to disengage from their identification
with him, though I wanted their awareness of their own instinctive responses to remain.
Throughout the play I choose moments like this to emphasize the Darrowesque
‘argument through example’ structure to remind the audience of their socialized gender standards, before alienating them from their preconceived views.

In developing the thematic structural elements of the production I incorporated Brecht’s use of the gestus. And while this was a strong component of the epic acting technique as well as visual aspects of the staging and set design, for the purposes of glory bi, I used the gestus primarily in a visual snapshot structure. I decided that that the gestus would work best in the production by creating a series of images that were specific to the characters. I did not apply an overall gestic approach to their characterizations, but with the conception of snapshot gestus, I chose specific moments in the action that would best create a social dialectic image. The opening scene of the play best exemplifies my gestic application. As I previously mentioned, the action begins with Bi in her gender support group. During one of the rehearsals I decided that the action would begin during the final pre-show song, which was David Bowie’s Rebel Rebel. At a predetermined point in the song, specific actors set the stage for Bi’s support group. Then each of the group members entered the stage and positioned themselves as though standing in front of a mirror at down center stage. While the music was still playing I had each of the actors pantomime the personal hygiene rituals representative of their specific gender status and lifestyle orientation. Each of them had a specific physical action that cued a gestic image regarding their social position, as determined by their gender circumstances. Brecht described the gestus as a means to “speak the habits of and usage of the body” and not represent an expression of emotion, which was my intention with the actors’ physicalization and poses in this prelude (Brecht 45). Bi was the last character to enter
the scene and when she took her place on the couch the music was faded out and the scene began.

During the rehearsal process I decided to add a tribute to Brecht and his theory that the epic theatre “always shows both the dramatic illusion (the character, the setting, the action) and the process of its making (the work of the actor, the machinery of the theatre, the activities of the stage)” (Worthen 515). While Brecht wanted to show the play and the means of production, I articulate this in glory bi as showing the social perspective and the means of its development. I had already determined that the actors would perform all of the set changes in full view of the audience and incorporated this into the action, to serve both as a means of displaying the mechanics of the production, and also to represent symbolically the idea that people were the mechanics behind the perspectives and conventions of society. Kathleen Pane, the actor who played Bi, was the only actor that was not a part of the set changing crew. The other actors controlled the set on which Bi performed, and the dominant gender culture controls the social perspectives through which intersex people must navigate. In addition, I created an homage to Brecht regarding the deliberate display of the lighting devices and technical aspects of a production. At the beginning of the club scene late in the play, Bi walks onstage to address the audience. She does this while music is still playing from the previous set change, and the stage directions in the script stated the music would fade down when Bi entered to start the scene. During the rehearsal process I decided to keep the music playing and have Bi address the sound both directly. Patrick Thrasher was the light and sound technician and Bi called him by name and asked him to turn down the music.
Patrick responded vocally and then turned down the music. Bi thanked him and began her address to the audience:

(The stage transitions into a dark cocktail lounge, with a performance stage in UL corner set for a drag show. Bi watches, music for club scene begins, Bi interrupts)

BI. (to the tech booth) Hold on a second, we’re not ready. (beat) Hey, Patrick (substitute actual sound person’s name) could you turn off the music for a second please? (music is turned down) Turn it all the way off. (beat) Patrick!

PATRICK. (from booth) Yeah? Hi Bi.

BI. Hi Patrick. Would you turn off the music please?

PATRICK. Turn it off?

BI. Yeah.

PATRICK. All the way?

BI. Yes! Please.

PATRICK. I thought this was the club scene.

BI. It is, but I need to say something to the audience.

PATRICK. Oh, okay. Sure. (music goes off)

BI. Thanks.

PATRICK. No problem.

BI. (to audience) Sorry about all of that. I just wanted to tell you some things about my friends from work before we begin. I’m going to –
(laughter is heard off-stage) Oh crap. They’re coming. Sorry, I can’t talk. (Jule, Marge and Rockie enter, with drinks, laughing).

(20, 21)

In addition to its Brechtian association, this action was a symbolic representation of Bi’s taking charge of her life and her transition to a stronger self-identity and independence. Patrick’s apparent confusion over the scene is symbolic of the intention to question standard social perspectives as well as to emphasize the mechanics of the play.

**Working With the Actors**

In rehearsal for the production, I emphasized a specific character development process with the actors. It was important to maintain a fast paced, high energy level with the production while emphasizing key comedic timing choices. In addition, it was important to maintain a level of sincerity with each character in order to prevent the audience from dismissing the production as a lighthearted comic satire. The dialogue is structured to give Bi the most natural sounding speech, which emphasizes the fact that she is narrating her story and also promotes her identification with the audience. To successfully demonstrate the dialectical relationships at work, I instructed the actors who played the parts of Mom and Dad to work against their dialogue. Because their dialogue is condensed to the specific elements related to decisions about Bi, I wanted to avoid the characters’ appearing as cartoon representations or caricatures. I stressed the importance of comedic timing for the play, but also emphasized the need for dramatic representation of the characters. To accomplish this, I instructed the actors to struggle against their
words. They approached their dialogue as though they were confined to specific verbal expressions, though they wanted to say so much more. They had to fight to express themselves fully in the context of their speech. This was an essential aspect of the scene when Bi tells her parents that she discovered she is intersexed and realized she is a female instead of being a male, which she had been raised to believe.

MOM. We know this is a difficult time for you, for anyone your age.

You’re out on your own for the first time, you have all the pressure of succeeding in college, and you’re in transition from a child to an adult.

BI. Transition, yes, but not the one you’re talking about.

MOM. Max, you talk to him.

DAD. What do you think I’m doing?

BI. Stop calling me he.

DAD. He’s right, we shouldn’t refer to him in the third person.

MOM. You know we only want you to be happy. But suddenly changing yourself, so drastically, certainly isn’t the answer. Happiness comes from within, you know. Haven’t we always taught you that? (12).

In this scene, the Mom has some non-realistic cliché sounding lines and it was essential that Christin O’Cuddehy, the actor playing her, to convey her dialogue in a sincere manner. This was intended to emphasize the frustrations associated with intersex experiences as well as the absurdity of some dominant gender cultural responses. I believed strongly that it would only be effective with as sincere as possible presentation of the dialogue. This was compounded, both in skill difficulty as well as production
presentation, by the comedic interjections. And while Dad (Max) has the obvious comedic line in the above example, the Mom has them spattered throughout the scene. The above demonstrates the same acting approach I instructed Scott Spitzer, the actor playing Dad to create. Bi’s speech in this scene, as well as throughout the play, remains the most natural and is intended to emphasize her reality in the situation and also to support her connection to the audience. As important as it was to present a sincerity in the actors’ performance, I emphasized the need to maintain a comedic timing throughout this scene as well as the rest of the play. This balance was a common structure to the performances of the actors throughout the play and posed some of the more challenging aspects to some of their work.

In writing the script I knew I was going to use the actors for multiple roles, though I didn’t make specific decisions about actor/character coordination until after I had a finalized cast list. The only uncompromising determination I made while writing the script was that the actor who Bi would not play any other characters. This was theoretically important, though it is also necessary due to the amount of time Bi is onstage. I wanted emphasize consistent aspects of Bi’s character in an ever-changing world, as well as to strengthen her bond with the audience. Bi has the strongest personal transitions in the play and I wanted to juxtapose this against the dialectic relationships. Early in the rehearsal process I determined that the script, as well as the production, would be best served by having the actors who played the participants in Bi’s support group also play their opposite social roles in a nightclub scene later in the play. Bi and some friends of hers from work went to a nightclub to watch Bi’s friend Sal perform in a
drag show. Her coworkers represented the standard dominant gender culture perspective on alternative genders and lifestyles. And while I felt this was a strong dialectic orientation to the character presentation, some of the cast members struggled with creating the different characters. I applied an exercise that was a version of Brecht’s technique to have the actors say their lines in the third person. Brecht used this to prevent and overly emotional association of the actor to their character. I used this idea to work with the actors and have them approach their characters as if embodying specific social orientations. I told them, in essence, to be the dialectic or social perspective their character demonstrated. As a group, the cast demonstrated a strong commitment to the production, and worked hard. They each had specific challenges and confronted them bravely and responsibility. Because of the diversity in acting backgrounds and skill level, I concluded that this play could be produced without a specific Brechtian acting approach. There was a lot of laughter during the rehearsals, which spilled over into a sense of fun in the performance, and it was their commitment and character presentations that determined the play’s success.

Set Design and Lighting

The set design for the play was extremely simple and symbolic. In creating it, I had the mental image of a deconstructed set as an ongoing thematic consideration when making set pieces and property decisions. By deconstructing the visual imagery of the rooms associated with the play’s settings, I determined the essential, or symbolic, item/s that represented the scene. For instance, the scene with Bi and her best friend Kala at
school had only a large chalkboard as actual associated set piece. There were two chairs that served as school desks, but the desks were improvised from them. The scene included a Teacher, and the blackboard as the solo set piece represented her unchallenged authority and Bi’s early association to social conventions. There were two medical procedure scenes and the first one occurred early in the play with Mom and Dad in an examination room. During this scene the Mom is pregnant and has just had an ultrasound, she and Dad learn the ‘expected’ sex of their unborn baby. This scene only had the examination bed as set piece. Like many of the other scenes, it bled directly into the next scene. Bi was not in this scene, though she was onstage while it occurred. Bi watched, and sometimes commented on and even manipulated the scenes that were set prior to her birth, or during her infancy. When Mom and Dad transition from the examination room to a consultation much later with the same Doctor, they invade Bi’s space on stage left, and move her out of the way as they set up the new scene. This symbolically represents the dismissal of Bi’s individuality, which begins when the Doctor tells Mom and Dad that baby is intersex and they should raise “it” as a male. The deconstructive aspects of the set design are incorporated into the setting’s symbolic choices and also represent their dialectic associations to Bi.

As the play progresses, the amount of set pieces, trimmings and props that are used increases, though remains of a symbolic nature. By the time Bi arrives for her metaphysical consultation, after her disastrous date with Joe, the room features nuances of the counselor’s office. There are followers, and the setting was comfortable. It was similar to the living room setting that was established at the beginning of the play in its
focus on comfort. The early scenes in the living room represent innocence and the excitement of Bi’s parents before, as Bi put it, “the trouble began.” Similarly, the counselor’s setting represents Bi’s coming into her own, her self-acceptance and moment of taking charge in her life. It is at this point that Bi decides to have a surgery that will make her physical sexual biology represent her female gender. The play ends with Bi recovering from her surgery and the only set piece is her bed, which was also the surgery table. This is the same bed that was used for early medical examination scenes and symbolically harkens back to the uncertainty they contained. In the final scene, the uncertainty is with the future, and the audience’s potential for increased tolerance.

The lighting design for the play served a few functions, including the most obvious which was to light the stage. In creating the design, I wanted to incorporate Brecht’s theories on stage lighting. He believed that the lights should not get in the way of the mental processes of the audience. By this, he meant that lighting should not be used to create specific emotional moods in the audience. As with the other mechanisms of staging devices, he wanted the lighting equipment to be in full view of the audience and the light to be bright and white. Because there was so much physical action, as well as verbal, occurring most of the time throughout the play, I didn’t want the lighting to become confusing or get in the way of the show’s pace. If there were a lot of dimming, blackouts or tone changes, they would encumber the pace of the play, and possibly even detract attention or look ridiculous. For this reason, there were few blackouts or tone changes, and the most of the lighting changes were intended to highlight specific areas of action, while remaining relatively consistent in intensity. The lighting for glory bi was
designed to highlight action in certain areas (as scenes occurred almost simultaneously onstage) and to give efficient coverage to all areas of the stage, as needed.

**Incorporation of Music**

In Epic theatre, Music had the specific function of contributing to the distancing effect of the audience from an apathetic mind frame, and Brecht used music to interrupt and comment on the story rather than to progress it. To accomplish alienation with music Brecht had his “characters bursting into song at the most uncalled-for moments” and frequently used the songs for additional information and social commentary (Brecht 65). Brecht’s theories were developed in part as a response to his objection to traditional musical theatre styles, and the lyrics were structured to support the distancing effect he sought. Brecht stated that he “had no tolerance for the previous use of music in theatre,” emphasizing his opinion by saying, “nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing” (44). With his plays, Brecht turned the notion of musical theatre upside down and used the songs to interrupt rather than progress the story. He summarizes his views on the epic theatre’s use of music by saying, “in short, we muddled up people’s idea of the drama” (65). Brecht’s perspective on the use of music is reflective of his attitude toward theatre in general, to turn everything upside down, to turn the tragic into comic and visa versa (65). Brecht’s musical conventions presented a sharp contrast to the traditional musical theatre and emphasized certain dialectic aspects of the script.
While I did not include songs or music in developing the script for *glory bi*, I did give strong consideration to Brecht’s theories on music when determining its role in the production. Brecht wanted the songs to comment on the play, and did not want a seamless extenuation of the story. The music that I chose for the production did not interrupt the action as Brecht wanted, though the songs were chosen to comment on the scene that had just taken place or to introduce a new scene as it started. This was initiated by David Bowie’s *Rebel Rebel* at the beginning of the action, a song that comments on the nature of gender identity and their social roles. It was playing as the stage was set for the gender support group and the actors presented the initial gestic snapshot poses. Music was not a consistent element in the set changes, and this is due to a couple reasons. The first reason is the simple matter of time efficiency. Many of the scenes ran into each other and I wanted to create an almost simultaneous presentation of them. I also wanted to create the feeling that scenes were sometimes interrupting each other, which was symbolic of Bi’s social dialectic experience based on being intersex. One scene would transition into the next with the simple act of an actor/s crossing the stage or moving a chair. And as the actors in the scene crossed to a new acting area, others would manipulate the set around them. Music was included at strategic moments during the play, for commentary purposes and also for emphasis, and twice due to necessity.

The situations in which I used music to comment on the action, or emphasize a specific response from the audience, occurred in the later scenes, after a relationship between Bi and the audience had been developed. As Bi enters the stage for the club scene (featuring the drag show), Culture Club’s *Karma Chameleon* is playing, which
established an upbeat fun atmosphere for Bi and her co-workers. However, the tone of their conversation indicated judgmental attitudes toward alternative lifestyles, and when Bi’s friend Sal entered for his drag performance, he danced to Cher’s *Life After Love*. The drag show was intended to be a fun for the audience, though the already established bias on the part of the Bi’s co-workers lent to a sense of tension when Sal came out to talk to them after the show. When one of the co-workers says a rude comment, I wanted the audience to take Sal’s side. In addition to the immediate atmospheric determinations, the music in this scene had another purpose. The attitudes of Bi’s co-workers and Cher’s song (though symbolically) foreshadowed Bi’s upcoming date with Joe. The transition from the club scene to Bi’s date scene with Joe featured The Fugees arrangement of *Killing Me Softly*. This song was initially associated with the club scene, though it led into the date scene and contributed to the foreshadowing of Bi’s painful encounter. The date scene leads into Bi’s meeting with a metaphysical counselor. These final scenes of the play include more set changes and the music is used for this purpose as well as an important commentary function. As Bi enters the counseling scene, *You Gotta Be* by Des’ree is playing. This taps into a sense of renewed determination and strength for Bi and also represents one of the metaphoric associations to her name, the state of being (Bi-ing). Based on the audience’s response during the show, I believe the music was effective in its intended contributions. Overall, audience responded well to the songs, the comedy of the performances, and they seemed to appreciate the production. I included in the program a questionnaire with questions related to the possible effects the production may have had on their awareness of and views on those who have intersex, and asked the
audience to complete the forms and submit their answers to me. The following chapter uses, in part, the audience’s feedback and responses to substantiate my argument that Brecht’s epic theatre conventions can be adapted to the contemporary stage to create theatre for social change.
Chapter 5

RESULTS, CONCLUSION AND THE FUTURE

*Glory bi* is an experimental play that adapts the Brechtian theatrical convention of alienation to the contemporary stage. By incorporating the specific epic theatre tools of the dialectic and gestus, *glory bi* articulates these conventions in a manner that works in tandem with empathy and comedy to initiate greater tolerance for and awareness of the biological condition of being intersex. I use the word tolerance in this thesis specifically and distinguish it from other social advocacy terms like acceptance or intersex rights for an important reason. I want to emphasize my perspective that diversity of culture means tolerating and honoring the civil rights of individuals whose lifestyles, ethnic and racial background one may not personally like or agree with. By recognizing that everyone has their own likes, dislikes and personal opinions about the right way to live, I want to separate this from the tendency to apply oppressive beliefs to the lives of others. And while I would prefer acceptance, respect and even appreciation for others, I strongly believe that tolerance of the civil rights for people and respect for their humanity is all that can be asked and legally demanded. In addition, I believe that this perspective on tolerance is easier to promote than insisting that one ‘love their neighbors.’ Therefore, it was tolerance I sought with this production, and is the guideline by which I analyze the results.
I began this project as a major supporter of Brechtian theory, although an important aspect of *glory bi* is its experimental nature. As I previously stated, my intention is to use alienation and its associated conventions for the purpose of dissociating the audience from their pre-existing socialized beliefs and opinions. Brecht is typically associated with politically oriented subjects and the activism he encouraged is of a social/political nature. In adapting his conventions I recognize the mind/emotion connection and use this to make the audience aware of their own socialized beliefs, and promote expanding this awareness to include tolerance for a previously tabooed population. I included in the Studio Theatre production program an audience questionnaire that was intended to evaluate the play’s potential impact on social consciousness. There were at total of seven questions and these were based on both subject knowledge and social views. Because I guaranteed privacy in their responses, I did not ask personal demographic questions of the audience, or any identifying information. In order to establish the measurement of change in perspective, I structured the questions to provide some background orientations to the subject and to create a general guideline to the moral parameters regarding perspectives on intersex. The results were analyzed to determine potential influences on perception and awareness, and due to the structural elements of the script as well as the production, attribute the changes to the epic conventions. The questionnaire is an informal outcome evaluator and not an official statistical study. Additionally, I grant that this production may have received a high percentage of open and aware audience members. With these things in mind, the answers and comments in the questionnaire are beneficial to an outcome analysis. The questions
were: 1) Did you know what it meant to be intersex prior to seeing *glory bi*? 2) Were you offended by any subject matter or performance aspects of *glory bi*? 3) Do you think society should recognize a third gender that is neither male nor female, but could have characteristics of either or both? 4) Should parents choose a gender for the genitaly ambiguous child regardless of the need for surgery? 5) Do you think being intersex interferes with a person’s sexual orientation designation? 6) Do you think Bi’s decision to have the surgery was the right one for her? 7) Would you continue to pursue a romantic relationship if you found out your partner was intersexed? These questions were considered on an independent as well as collective basis to determine the success potential of the production regarding an increase in awareness and tolerance.

I quantified the response data and used the information to analyze the productions’ potential impact on audience perspectives and opinions. Three of the questions (3, 4 and 7) were intended to be primary reflectors of the effects *glory bi* may have had on perceptions. These questions indicate the responder’s views on introducing a third gender identity into society, the designation of a gender on intersexed infants and the responder’s willingness to continue dating a partner after learning that the partner is intersex. Sixty three percent of the responders indicated that they believed society should be open to a third gender identity. This percentage can be considered in context with the eighty two percent of responders that believe a gender should not be determined for intersex infants if there is no need for emergency surgeries. Combined, the questions reflect a consistent openness to new perspectives on genders, and the rights of intersex. Another level of tolerance, which indicates actual acceptance, is reached by adding the
results of the third question in the series. Thirty five percent of the responders claimed that they would stop seeing a person if they found out they were intersexed, which also indicates that sixty five percent of them would not let this affect a potential relationship. Some of the individual comments elaborated on this subject, indicating their opinion might change depending on the specifics of the condition. Comments such as, “it would depend greatly on how developed a penis the intersexed person had,” demonstrate openness to dating someone who is intersex, though there is also some hesitation. As a group, these questions present a consistent theme of tolerance for alternative genders and intersexed individuals. In addition, the large number of people indicating they would accept a person’s intersexuality and continue dating them elevates their level of tolerance to personal acceptance. These responses, which will be combined with individual comments, offers support for an increased social acceptance and awareness of the biological condition of being intersex and indicates that social tolerance is possible and does occur through theatre.

One of the main issues of the play was the question of whether or not Bi should have a surgery that was not medically necessary to her health or physical well being, though it would alter her genitalia to fit a more standard female gender description. Not all of the responses had an answer for this question, which affects the overall statistic. Given that, seventy two percent of the responders answered this question, and of those, one hundred percent of them indicated support for Bi’s decision to have her surgery. The personal comments provided by the responders confirmed their support for Bi as an
individual and for her choice, though there were a variety of reasons for doing so. The following comments refer to Bi’s sense of normalcy:

1) It seemed to be the right one because of the frustration felt when trying to explain/defend the physical. Everyone wants to be accepted as normal unfortunately we often use others definition to define our own.

2) Bi's decision was neither right nor wrong but simply a personal choice that is not up to me to judge. In that regard, it was right FOR HER because it is her body, her decision, and no one else's business. More than anything, I question her desire to be "normal" because the play makes me question the meaning of normalcy. What/who is "normal" and how does society determine or measure something so arbitrary.

It was my intention when writing the script to put into question societal views on what is considered to be normal regarding genitalia, and separate perceptions from medical definitions. The above responses are focused on Bi’s feelings of normalcy, and while this is one of their reasons for supporting the surgery, it is based on Bi’s desire, not the responder’s need to have Bi be normal. The following comments relate to Bi’s self esteem and confidence, most specifically in regards to intimate relationships:

1) Bi's decision was right for her; she had the surgery to please other people and to prevent other people from being confused/upset.
2) I think it was the right decision for her. As an adult, she was able to distinguish that how she was brought up didn't fit the person she had become. It would most likely provide Bi a better quality of life.

3) should have surgery. like removing a wart. we all want to be attractive to the largest pool of candidates. increases chances of happiness and fulfillment.

The following comment continues the focus on social perspectives and Bi’s decision to have the surgery based on relationships, though it incorporates some additional insight into the decision:

1) I think it was the right decision made for the wrong reason. She had decided she was a woman and that would be the reason to have the surgery, not to meet expectations of others. Furthermore, she still appeared in doubt about it, and it should have been put off until those doubts had answers.

The idea that the decision to have surgery was right for Bi, though it was made for the wrong reasons, is the perfect expression of the play’s intention. The fact that the responder considered the decision to be the right one reflects his/her support for intersex rights and personal autonomy; however, it was made due to outside pressures. The responder observes that Bi’s decision is compounded by her need to fit in, and this is a major part of her personal struggle. The struggle itself demonstrates the dialectic nature of Bi’s decision and the opposing sides of social conformity versus individually based self-expression. The comments included here are representative of the content of
responses in general, and no alternative opinion or statement was ignored. The responses also demonstrate an active and attentive audience base. With the support of the response data, I conclude that the audience accepts Bi for who she is, and regardless of the personal views incorporated into their opinions, they wanted Bi to do what was right for her. The majority of the responders supported Bi’s decision to have the surgery based on the idea that Bi determined it was right for her, and regardless of their own views, they wanted her to follow her own path. The responses indicate that it was not the surgery itself that was at issue, it was Bi’s sense of well-being that was their greatest concern, and they expressed this central theme from a variety of perspectives.

The idea of leaving the audience with specific considerations was an important aspect of the play, and was specifically relevant to the show’s ending. During the rehearsal process one of my graduate thesis committee members, Dr. Roberto Pomo, indicated that the ending of the play didn’t work. This was already a concern of mine, though I had decided to go ahead and keep what was already there and possibly change it in a future adaptation. However, Dr. Pomo strongly encouraged me to write a new ending for the Studio Theatre production, which I did. Below is the original ending to the script.

Bi has just undergone a surgery that will leave her genital area indistinguishable from exclusively biological females. Because the decision to have the surgery was one of the heavier elements in the play, I used comedy to bring the audience back from a potentially emotional based perspective:

    NURSE TWO. Welcome back Bi. How do you feel?
    BI. I might throw up.
NURSE ONE. (Puts a plastic bucket on the bed) Here you are dear. You’ll be pleased to know the surgery went well. It was a total success.

NURSE TWO. That’s right. You have a brand new penis, and it should be fully functional within a month.

BI. What?!

NURSE TWO. Got ya!

NURSE ONE. Don’t worry Dear. She’s kidding, you don’t have a penis.

BI. What do I have?

NURSE TWO. You only have the standard issue female parts.

BI. You mean I’m totally normal now?

NURSE TWO. Well, cosmetically speaking, no one could ever tell otherwise.

BI. Great. (to audience) Well, this has been a lot of fun, we should do it again sometime. Meanwhile, I’d love to get up and shake your hands or something, but I’m really too sore to move.

NURSE ONE. That’s right Bi. You stay in bed. You need your rest and shouldn’t be waking around quite yet. (Nurses exit)

BI. Well, I don’t want to keep you. Thanks for stopping by though, I do appreciate it. (Bi lays down. Blackout) (40)

Dr Pomo’s criticism was specific to the very end of the scene when Bi thanks the audience, with whom she has engaged directly throughout the play, for stopping by. In making the change, I considered Kushner and the end of Angels in America, with its
open-ended conclusion that invites the audience to participate (on an intellectual level). I wanted something similar for *glory bi*, though I knew the ending as it was did not achieve this. I wasn’t sure what was best, though I definitely knew what I did not want. I didn’t want a clean, wrap-up ending, nor did I want a sense of conclusion or closure. Finally, and with very little time (for myself or the cast) I settled on the following ending for Studio Theatre production:

BI. You mean I’m totally normal now?

NURSE TWO. Well, cosmetically speaking, no one could ever tell otherwise. *(Nurse One exits, Nurse Two hands Bi a hand mirror and helps her position it to observe the results, Bi stares at the mirror, transfixed)* Well, Bi, I’ll check back with you in a few minutes. You stay in bed and get some rest.

BI. Great. *(continues to stare at her new genitals in the hand mirror, Nurse Two exits, Bi stares for a long beat and then looks at audience, with a gesture she offers the mirror to them, and makes a facial expression suggesting they should do the same, blackout)*

This ending is intended to invite back the question of normal genitalia by drawing attention (in the audience’s imagination) to the appearance of Bi’s genitalia after her surgery. It also has the purpose of creating a moment of discomfort in the audience by suggesting that they should examine themselves. This metaphorically puts them in the vulnerable state Bi so frequently finds herself in, and is also intended to leave the audience with these considerations. Ultimately the actors reverted back to the original
ending during the performances, and I’m not sure if this ending works better. This is just one of my considerations for future adaptations and it is related to ongoing progressive possibilities with alienation. The ending, as it was played from the original version, did not seem to deter the audience from their experience with the production, and all of the comments were supportive. The responses to the questionnaires was both validating and encouraging, and the production’s success inspired greater considerations for applications of alienation and continued developments in theatre for social change.

Recent Developments in Representing Intersex Onstage

Part of my continued research on Brecht, gender studies and various additional aspects related to intersex has included keeping up to date with plays that deal with this condition. As I mentioned in my introduction, the theatre has been slow in representation of intersex, though 2010 has seen at least two new plays on the subject. In March of 2010 two stagings of intersex based plays occurred in London. A staged reading of The Specimen (written by Laurie Slade) took place at the Drill Hall at Rose Bruford College, and Memoirs of a Hermaphrodite (written by Sarah Leaver) was onstage at The Oval House Theatre. The Specimen was part of an event produced by the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, and was a daylong symposium titled intersex in performance. Memoirs of a Hermaphrodite ran from March 10 through 27 and is an hour long, one-person performance. The show is based on the true 19th century story of Herculin Barbin who had been raised in a nunnery, and as a female. Much like Bi in glory bi, Herculin discovered her true identity due to a romantic interest in another
person. Herculin fell in love with a girl, and was forced to leave the nunnery and move to the city. Due to her unique status, she is quickly forced into the fringe underworld of Paris and spends much of her life in freak shows. It is encouraging to see new works that deal with intersex issues and bring the subject into greater social awareness, however and particularly with *The Specimen*, my concern is still with reaching the mainstream, or dominate gender culture, audience. *The Specimen* was produced as part of the intersex symposium, and while it may be an excellent resource for people whose lives are directly, or indirectly, influenced by intersex conditions, it is unlikely to receive much attention or interest from outside populations. This is a similar concern I had with the production of *glory bi*. The question and challenge remains as to how to incorporate this subject and the people whose lives it effects into the mainstream arena.

**Chaos, Cognition and the Theatre as a Social Shaman**

There is a well-known story about Christopher Columbus’ initial arrival on the Caribbean shores. As the story goes, the inhibitors of the island didn’t recognize Columbus’ ships as they sailed to the shore. More than this, because these vessels didn’t exist in the world or reality of the islanders, they couldn’t even see that the ships were there. Eventually the local shaman was able to see them and described the ships to the islanders. Finally, after the shaman assured the people there were large, elaborate boats sailing toward them, the people were able to see the ships for themselves. This story was featured in the film *What the Bleep do We Know*, and demonstrates the power of socialization and the nature of reality and belief systems. The story and its various
philosophical and even scientific implications has remained with me since I first heard it, and it periodically creeps into my considerations of social change and the theatre. The power of theatre to introduce new ideas, alter beliefs and bring new concepts into the cultural consciousness can be used to demonstrate its ability to serve as a social evolutionary/revolutionary shaman.

When I began my research on Brecht and the initial structural aspects that were part of the development of *glory bi*, I had been considering elements of chaos theory and how they apply to human behavior. In his book, *Does God Play Dice? The Mathematics of Chaos*, Ian Stewart describes the butterfly effect, which is commonly associated to chaos theory:

> The flapping of a single butterfly's wing today produces a tiny change in the state of the atmosphere. Over a period of time, what the atmosphere actually does diverges from what it would have done. So, in a month's time, a tornado that would have devastated the Indonesian coast doesn't happen. Or maybe one that wasn't going to happen, does. (141)

In mathematics and physics, open systems and non-linear functions (fractals) have already been applied to the study of psychology and human behavior. Books like *Nonlinear Dynamics in Human Behavior*, edited by W. Sulis and A. Combs, and *Chaos Theory in Psychology*, edited by Frederick David Abraham and Albert R. Gilgen, are two examples and provide resources for incorporating chaos theory into a dramatic structure. And while sociology, psychology and linguistics have been slow to recognize chaos theory’s relevance to them, the theatre has been even slower to discover its
potential impact on social change. The basic idea of the butterfly effect forms the essence of a Theatre of Chaos and its potential to affect social attitudes. The concept is related to the challenge I previously mentioned with incorporating intersex plays into the mainstream audience. Perhaps plays such as *The Specimen*, *Memoirs of an Hermaphrodite* and *glory bi* can have the initial impact on an audience member that ultimately alters the entire collective consciousness. By applying these theories to the stage, complex social progression patterns can be affected by an interaction with the theatre and performance studies. Socialized belief systems are one of the most powerful forces at work in cultures and the lives of individuals, and these beliefs frequently form the basis of reality perceptions, including various religious and even moral views. The intention to create a theatre of chaos is an incredibly interesting prospect for me, though my experiments with alienation and their manifestation in *glory bi* was not the right time to fully explore this concept. However, as I conclude my discussion and analyze the results of the *glory bi* production, I realize that some aspects of the shamanic approach to theatre, with its incorporation of chaos theory, are already present in the script. One of the features of this dramatic structure includes new theories on linguistics and their connection to performance.

The December 2007 issue of *Theatre Journal* was devoted to topics related to performance, cognition and linguistics. Amy Cook’s article in this issue, *A Cognitive Scientific Approach to Theatre*, discusses conceptual blending theory (CBT) and its dramaturgical applications. She uses Shakespeare’s “now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer” speech in *Richard III* (1.1.1,2) to demonstrate the theory’s
combined metaphoric association potential. Cook describes the CBT process as taking information “from two or more input phrases” and projecting them into a “blended space” (Cook 581). In the passage, she demonstrates theatre’s ability to create entirely new concepts based on previous associations, “If ‘now is the winter of our discontent’ engages more of the imagination by linking mental spaces in unlikely ways, it follows that it will enrich understanding” (586). She goes on to discuss how Shakespeare incorporates CBT into his work by taking two association roots and blending them to create an entirely new metaphoric meaning and association. Shakespeare uses the root associations for the words winter and discontent and creates a new metaphoric relationship. The established root associations to glorious summer, and the roots of sun and son enhance this abstract understanding further. Cook’s argument is that through Shakespeare’s CBT structure, he compresses the entire state of England’s complicated affairs (582). The dramatic possibilities associated with the linguistic theory of CBT and the creative use of metaphors demonstrates the potential for theatre to introduce new concepts into the collective consciousness.

In her article, Cook discusses the discovery of the mirror neuron, which implies an inherent understanding of observed behaviors, including the sensation of experience, and the various implications for performance studies. In addition to having a profound effect on perceptions of reality and body images, the neuron suggests a strong connection potential between performances and audiences and that “seeing and doing are not as different as one might think” (588). These theories relate to glory bi and particularly with Joe’s response to hearing that Bi is intersex. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the
audience at this point in the play should be empathizing with and rooting for Bi. Joe’s response, epitomized in the single spontaneously emitted, “gross” will connect to the audience’s mirror neuron and activate the recall of the intention behind that response. And because the neuron theory claims that watching an action has the same result as doing it, by watching Joe in his response, the audience will be reminded of and even feel their own bias “since doing the action recalls the intentions necessary for such actions” (590). It should, in effect, bring the audience’s bias into their awareness and they should have experienced their own response through Joe’s. Cook compares this neural mirroring structure to Aristotle’s theories on imitation. It is also related to empathy and part of why humans empathize with others. By comparing Cook’s views to my incorporation of empathy in glory bi, the discussion supports a progressive approach to applying empathy to alienation for furthering social change. Cook supports the idea that theatre can serve as a social evolutionary shaman by stating that the linguistic studies suggest “powerful implications for an art form that uses live bodies to tell stories, that renders visible new worlds, and that animates the seemingly impossible” (594). And just as the shaman introduced the new ships to the local Caribbean community, theatre can introduce new ideas and possibilities to the audience it represents. The development of the glory bi script and the success of the production, were rewarding on their own, though as part of this incredible process they have inspired a whole new articulation of alienation and directions to pursue in creating new genres and dramatic structures for theatre for social change.
APPENDIX A

glory bi Script
Intersextions
(During final pre-show song, actors set the stage for a gender identity support group)

Elle
I can’t believe it. I’ve worked on boundaries and detecting red flags for 7 years, and look where it’s gotten me. I can’t believe he actually gave me an ultimatum. I’m supposed to be beyond this crap.

Lottie
I can’t believe you’re actually considering it.

Elle
What am I supposed to do?

Tess
We’re never beyond anything. The past is a hungry beast, if you don’t feed it, it will eat you alive.

Lottie
What does that even mean?

Bi
I think she meant if you do feed it – it will eat you alive.

Tess
That doesn’t make any sense. Why would it eat you if you fed it?

Bi
That’s the paradox.

Lottie
It’s kind of like being on a diet. Your stomach is hungry, but if you feed it – you will get fat.

Tess
Yeah, that makes more sense. (to Elle) So?

Elle
Well, I love him, I want to spend the rest of my life with him. (second guesses herself) I thought I wanted to spend the rest of my life with him.

Bi
My friend Sal broke up with his last boyfriend because he told him he couldn’t perform anymore.

Lottie
I once broke up with a guy because he couldn’t perform.

Elle
(ignores her) And he chose drag over his boyfriend?

Bi
Of course. In fact, some friends and I are going to see his show tomorrow night.

Elle
This is different. Kyle and I are soul-mates. I’ve never felt this way about anyone, not even close, before.
How do you know that’s different than Bi’s friend’s situation?

It’s obvious. You guys all know how deep our relationship goes.

(to Lottie) Don’t say it.

And how long we’ve been together. Besides, those gay relationships are more like one night stands. They never last long.

Judgment! That’s blatant judgment!

Sorry. Anyway, I meant gay guys.

It doesn’t matter, it was still judgmental.

Let’s get back to you and Kyle. That was a pretty unexpected thing for him to say, wasn’t it?

Yeah, totally. But I’m done. Someone else talk.

I’ve got something.

Wait, Elle, what are you going to do?

I don’t know. I need to think about it a little more. But I’m pretty sure I’m going to quit my job. (she tosses the penis to Bi)

What? No. Don’t start giving up pieces of yourself now.

I’m done I said. Bi has the penis.

Are you sure? (Elle makes dismissive gesture)

Piece by piece Elle, that’s how they do it.

I think I’ve developed a crush on a co-worker.

Uh oh.

You don’t want to go there, girl.
What do you mean, uh oh to me? Hold on, let me just tell you.

I don’t think I want any part of this.

Well then, it’s lucky for you that this doesn’t involve you. It’s my situation.

Let her talk. We didn’t judge you when you went home with that bar skank.

God that was an awful night.

(Holds up penis) Hey, it’s my turn.

Speak up then sport.

Don’t call me that.

Speak up then mija.

So, like I said, I work with him.

Yeah, we got that part.

Well, he’s really nice, and we’ve had some really good conversations. I just like being around him, and (beat) I think I feel a chemistry there.

Bi – careful.

Do your friends at work know him?

Yes

And have you told any of them you’re intersexie?

No, I haven’t. Look, I know, okay? I already know all of the uh ohs and don’t go theres and all that crap. I don’t want to hear it right now. I just wanted to talk about liking someone and not having to sensor it. Crap you guys. I should be able to tell you this without getting jumped on.

Sounds like you want to get jumped on.
I’m taking my work friends to Sal’s show tomorrow night. Maybe I’ll mention all of this then. Anyway, I don’t want to talk about it anymore. I have something else. I’m thinking about moving.

Oh, of course you are.

Bi, you see what you’re doing don’t you?

What is this? Jump all over Bi day?

I told you you were looking for it.

First, no one will let Elle talk without getting attacked, and now I feel like I can’t say anything. We’re supposed to support each, not tear each other apart.

Yeah, save that for the surgeons.

The reason I’m thinking about moving is strictly professional. It has nothing to do with anyone or anything else. Besides, I like it here. For once, I’m starting to feel like I belong somewhere. Besides, you act like I move all the time.

Uh huh, you’re also about to venture far out of your comfort zone and become extremely vulnerable. Look Bi, regardless of how it feels, this is support. We call each other on our crap, you do the same thing.

And look at all the possible rejection you’ll be saving yourself from if you move.

Screw it. Obviously I can’t just say what I’m thinking today. Someone else talk, I’m finished. Tess, you go. (tosses her the penis)You had something you wanted to say.

Well, I finally heard from my sister.

This should be good.

(Lights dim, music plays, set is changed Bi’s childhood front room. Bi crosses DRC)

**Bundle of Joy**

(Dad sits on couch upstage left.)

(to audience) Hi. I’m Bi. Bi Maximum Nyce. I don’t want to hold things up. I just thought you should know something before we continue. I was born Intersexed. We’ll get into that more later, but in case you’re not aware, it means that biologically I’m not
exactly a male or female. More precisely, medically it means, I have ambiguous genitalia. That was my support group you just saw. It’s actually an all-purpose transgender support group. It’s not just for us Intersexies. There’s so few of us, it’s hard to find a whole support group just for us. They’re a great bunch, but as you can probably tell, you really have to practice tolerance in a mixed crowd. We call ourselves the Mixed Nuts. Anyway, please don’t mention what you saw to anyone. I’m not supposed to talk about what goes on in there. Confidentiality.

(Mom enters excited from up left, with pregnancy stick. She jumps up and down as she speaks.)

Mom

A baby, we’re having a baby!

(Mom and Dad freeze)

Bi

And those were the words. (gestures to Mom) Those four little, ordinary words, strung together in that seemingly innocuous order – oh, and just in case you stopped listening because you started counting them yourself and are now thinking it was six words, watch it again.

(Mom and Dad reverse their actions in high speed and the sound of Mom’s voice is heard backwards. Mom immediately re-enters and they repeat the scene.)

She said “a baby” twice, but they’re only two words. And yeah, I’m considering the contraction – oh, get it? Baby, contraction? Okay, back to the point. It was those four,

Mom

(Mom and Dad resume, as before)

Max, look, (she shows him the test) we’re having a baby!

Bi

Okay, now it’s six words, but I don’t want to get hung up on semantics.

Dad

Finally! (He jumps up, hugs Mom, they freeze)

Bi

I mean, after all, aren’t words in and of themselves harmless? Exactly, of course they’re not, and that’s one of my points. But harmless or not, those are the very words that led us to where we are today. It’s interesting, when you think about it, how interrelated all of our lives actually are.

Dad

Darling, are you sure? Let me see, (she shows him the test) are you really pregnant?

Mom

Yes! It’s pink, I’m pregnant! We are really going to have a baby!

Bi

Etcetera, etcetera. So, there was much excitement and celebration on their part. They had been wanting to have a baby for, oh, forever. But it had been five years since they felt they were finally in the right place and could try to begin a family. I won’t go into all of the physical issues with why it took so long, and none of it relates to my biological
outcome, incase you’re worried. So, I’ll just leave you with the knowledge that it took five years, but they finally, and naturally conceived me.

(The Doctor, Mom and Dad enter from UR, place blocks and sheet for exam table. Mom sits on the table)

Doctor

Mr. and Mrs. Nyce, great to see you again. Good news, everything is going just fine with your pregnancy. All your tests look good, and you are perfectly healthy too Mom. The heartbeat sounds great. Would you like to hear your baby’s heartbeat?

Mom

Yes of course. (she listens) Max, our baby’s heart, listen.

(Doctor begins the sonogram)

Doctor

Let’s see if we can get a look here. Do you have any names picked out?

Mom

Well, I like Bjorn and Alexander for a boy and Genevieve, or Persephone for a girl.

Dad

Max. I like Max.

Mom

He likes Max for a boy.

Dad

What do you think Doc?

Doctor

What I think is that I can help narrow it down for you. Would you like to know the sex of your baby?

Bi

(sarcastically) Hello, wouldn’t we all?

Mom

Yes, yes of course we would. Wouldn’t we Max?

Dad

Definitely. Not only will it settle a bet, but we’ll be able to paint the baby’s room before it has to -

Mom

He or she, Max. How many times do I have to tell you? Our baby is not an it. Please tell us Doctor Under so my husband will finally quit referring to our baby as an object.

Dad

Fine, we can paint his or her room before he or she comes home, and have plenty of time for the paint to dry and leave clean air for her or him to breathe. Is that better?

Mom

And we can buy her or him all her or his clothes, and decorate the nursery.

Dad

As you can see Doc, it will be nice when we’re able to narrow down the personal pronouns.
Well, I can certainly help with all the pronoun traffic congestion. *(works with the sonogram)* Look here. Do you see that? Mr. and Mrs. Nyce you’re having a baby boy.

A boy, Max, we’re having a boy.

We’re having a boy! I’m getting a son! Is that his penis Doc?

Yes, you’re hearing that correctly. He said boy, they said son, and he said penis. They were getting a son. The multiple pronoun traffic congestion eventually turned into a multiple pronoun car crash. But then, does anyone’s child really turn out quite like the parents imagined? These early scenes are nice though. I like to see my parents’ excitement before the trouble starts. They seem so innocent, and young.

*(Mom, Dad and Doctor cross to office. They sit for consultation.)*

Our official recommendation is that you have the surgery performed as soon as possible. In this instance, we believe that your child has the greatest chance of living as close to a normal life as possible if we designate it now, and as a male.

As close to a normal life as possible. You can imagine what a hope raiser that was. My parents had suddenly found themselves in a very difficult, and unexpected situation. They actually had to decide what sex I was going to be. Most parents argue about choosing their child’s name. But this, now this is pressure. And for those of you who resent your parents for what they named you, imagine how I feel.

I can’t. Max, we can’t. I just don’t feel like it’s right - to alter him surgically.

Don’t be ridiculous Dear. This isn’t about feeling right. This is about our son having a normal life. Not to mention all of the possible medical complications.

But to change him surgically, it just seems -

Your husband has made some extremely valid points, Mrs. Nyce. Without surgery, your son may never function fully as a reproductive male. And he may have internal complications, not to mention the personal ridicule to which he’ll certainly be exposed. This is standard procedure in these cases.

You make it sound like an everyday occurrence. Surgery is so permanent. What if we’re wrong?

Wrong about what? Wanting a normal life for our child?
Mom

How can you say that to me?

Doctor

Actually, the statistics are promising.

Bi

Did you hear that? The statistics are promising. That’s great, right? Of course, statistics are showing that as many as 5 out of 10 surgically altered infants grow up to realize that their bodies don’t fit their true gender. That’s one half -

Doctor

(To Bi) Okay, we get it. Perhaps it ultimately comes down to whether or not you see the glass as half empty or half full. (exits)

Mom

I don’t care, you got to pick out his sex, I get to choose his name.

Dad

I didn’t pick his sex. If anyone did, it was you because you were so adamant that he shouldn’t have surgery. Well, you got your way on that, but I’m going to make sure his name is somewhat normal. We’re naming him Max, and that’s that.

Mom

Bjorn is a perfectly good name. There’s nothing abnormal about it. It was my Grandfather’s name, and his father before him. Maxwell is just so commercialized sounding, like he’s a coffee brand.

Dad

What does that mean?

Mom

Maybe we could alter it somewhat. We’ll keep Max of course. What if we named him Max – imum?

Dad

What?

Mom

Yes, Maximum. I like it. Because we’re going to fill him with the maximum love possible.

Dad

Give me a break. You’re worried about commercialized names? If you name a kid Maximum, he is going to grow up to be either a professional wrestler or a porn star.

Mom

Max, please. Can’t we compromise?

Dad

Fine, we can name him Maximum, but we’re still calling him Max.

Mom

Agreed. And since we’re calling him Max, can his middle name be Bjorn?

Dad

No
Mom
Or at least part of it. BJ? We can keep the first two letters. BJ is a cute name.
Dad
Maximum BJ? I see you’re pushing for the porn star.
Bi
Okay, you get the point.

(Mom and Dad exit)
They finally settled on B. Max. So, this is me, and that’s my name. Oh, one last thing, the
person who finalized my birth certificate mistook the period after the B, for an I. So, the
B is actually Bi, big B, little i. And that’s that. Bi Maximum Nyce. The whole story.
Well, almost.

Water and Air
(Kala enters)
Hey Max Attack, wanna go to the mall?
Kala
(to audience) Early adolescence can be a difficult time for everyone.
My best friend Kala and I told each other everything. We had lived on the same block
since her family moved in when she was six. She knew all about me, well that is, as much
as I knew all about me, or she knew all about anything. She understood that my
equipment was a bit different, but thought it had more to do with my being gay. Which I
was, back then. But she didn’t really understand how it all fit together. And I never
showed her. Of course, I didn’t exactly know what the difference was myself. Kala loved
having a gay best friend. At least I believed I was gay. I was attracted to boys and at the
time I was one, or so I thought.

Kala
Max, did you hear me?
Bi
What? Sorry.
Kala
You day dream way too much. What were you thinking about?
Bi
Nothing, forget it.
Kala
Well, come on then. Let’s go get some pizza.
Bi
I dunno. I have a lot of homework tonight. Junior Geometry is a lot harder than it was last
year. This crap is killing me.
Kala
Were you having a gay fantasy about John Stamos?
Bi
What? No, stop it.
Kala
Screw geometry, it’s boring. Come on, let’s get some pizza.

Bi
I can’t, I have to do well in this class. You know I need a scholarship if I’m going to be able to go to college. My parents will kill me if I don’t get an A.

Kala
Your parents are the biggest hard asses when it comes to school.

Bi
Yeah, well, they kind of have to be. They can’t pay for college, like some people’s parents I know. (to audience) Actually, I really didn’t mind studying.

(two desks are brought out, Bi and Kala sit. Bi’s desk has a geometry book on it, Kala’s has a Teen magazine. Teacher enters)

I kind of even liked it. I already knew I wanted to be a marine biologist, or a concert pianist. I’d had a sort of obsession with dolphins ever since a trip I took with my parents when I was a baby, maybe two. My parents say there’s no way I could remember this, but I do. It was some kind of swim with dolphins project in Hawaii. I remember the feeling of my face going into the water and I remember touching the dolphin. She was smooth, kind of like rubber, soft. And the look in her eyes. We made eye contact. Really. That feeling is something I could never forget, and still can’t really describe.

Teacher
For a quick review, who can tell me what the Pythagorean theorem is?

Bi
I also loved music and to play the piano. My parents had started me on lessons when I was five, and it kind of developed into an obsession. By the time I was 15, I was torn between the two.

Teacher
Max, do you care to share your thoughts with the class?

Bi
No, sorry.

Teacher
Then perhaps you could tell us about the Pythagorean theorem?

Bi
Uh, sure. A-squared, plus B-squared equals C-squared. (back to audience) So, it wasn’t until I was in college that I realized I could combine my passions. It became my ultimate dream to develop a communication system with dolphins based on music composition, with a particular focus on Bach’s orchestral suites.

Teacher
Max, when you’re back from your poetic musings, could you expand a little and tell us how Pythagoras’ theory can be used?
(to audience) Sure, it sounded sarcastic, but she meant it. Ms. Miller always told me I should be a poet. (to Teacher) The Pythagorean theorem can be used to determine the length of the side of a right triangle when the length of the other two sides is known.

Kala

Whatever. You need a break.

(Teacher exits and chairs are taken away)

Plus there’s someone I want you to meet. He’s a good friend of my cousin’s and I think you’ll like him. He’s going to be at the mall today.

Max

Kala stop right there. You know I hate it when you try to set me up.

Kala

I’m not trying to set you up. Okay, I am, but I think you’ll really like him. He’s totally into art like you, and he likes NSYNC and Ricky Martin. He’s totally your type. Plus, he has an extra toe on his left foot. So see, you already have something in common.

(Kala exits)

Coming Home Queen

Bi

Okay, so, she meant well. Really. What’s interesting is how we change as we grow up. And while we may be fighting in the same platoon as children, what we didn’t realize is that it’s always a losing battle. We were destined to become that which we fought against, grown ups, with grown up views. The last time I saw Kala, we were both home from college, (Bi changes into female appearance) and I was a girl.

(Mom and Dad enter)

Bi

Go away, I told you I don’t want to talk about it tonight.

Mom

Max, you can’t walk in the house after six months looking like that and expect us not to be concerned.

Bi

Yes, I can, and I’m fine.

Mom

If something’s wrong, we want to know.

Bi

Nothing’s wrong. We do need to have a conversation. I thought maybe we could go somewhere tomorrow afternoon, just the three of us, somewhere quiet and talk.

Dad

You don’t look well. You look pale, sickly. Are you sure you’re taking your hormones? When was the last time you went to the doctor?
Can’t we just talk about all of this tomorrow? I want to enjoy being home tonight, and seeing everyone. I’m healthy, okay, everything is fine.

But you really don’t look right.

You look sick or something.

I don’t look sick Dad. I look, like me. That’s all.

Are you eating?

That’s a ridiculous question, of course I’m eating.

Well, you look thin.

You always think I look thin.

Max, are you on drugs?

Gee Dad, what kind?

Don’t be that way. You know what he means. Are you taking illegal street drugs?

No. I am not taking illegal street drugs. No drugs, period. None. Get it? I’m not taking anything. That’s why you think I’m different.

What are you talking about? When was the last time you saw your doctor?

I don’t think he’s taking his hormones. Is that what you meant?

You tell us you’re an adult, and that we don’t need to worry, but look at you. Look at your hair. That certainly doesn’t make you look more like a man.

More like a man than a what?

Max, have you become a metrosexual?

Because I don’t want to look like a man, Dad.

That’s clear son.
We know this is a difficult time for you, for anyone your age. You’re out on your own for the first time, you have all the pressure of succeeding in college, and you’re in transition from a child to an adult.

Transition, yes, but not the one you’re talking about.

Max, you talk to him.

What do you think I’m doing?

Stop calling me he.

He’s right, we shouldn’t refer to him in the third person.

You know we only want you to be happy. But suddenly changing yourself, so drastically, certainly isn’t the answer. Happiness comes from within you know. Haven’t we always taught you that?

Stop talking to me like I’m a kid. Look at me, I’ve grown up. And this is who I am. And you’re right, happiness, like one’s true identity and gender reality comes from within. Whether it’s biologically based as true to your original designation and development, or whether it’s something you find in yourself as you grow up.

(simultaneous with Mom’s line) What are you saying?

I feel like I don’t even know you.

Bi, I’m Bi. And I’m not your son, Mom, (pause) I’m your daughter.

Oh, my.

(slight pause)When was the last time you saw Dr. Under?

You are still seeing him aren’t you?

Did you hear me?

Answer your Mother.

About six months ago. That was my final consultation, as – your son. We had a long discussion, though I had given things a lot consideration before then. It was really a difficult semester, I almost failed my intro to marine biology.
You didn’t though, did you? Are you still in school?

Yes, Dad. Gee, would you guys just calm down?

We need to know what’s going on with you.

I just told you. I’m a girl. I’m a girl Mom, that’s all.

I don’t think you realize what you’re saying.

Of course I do. I know better than anyone what I’m saying. Damn, do you have any idea how much thought I’ve given this? Of course I’ve thought about it! I told you, I almost flunked out of school. This hasn’t been easy.

Okay, let’s just take a breath and figure out how much damage has been done and determine what we need to do at this point to correct it.

Dad, it’s okay. School is fine, and I’m already registered for next semester. I did get a couple of B’s but I’m not losing my scholarship – fuck – this is not about school. This is not about fixing the fucking damage.

Max please, your language.

Bi! Look, if we’re going to talk about this tonight, can we just stop this for a moment.

Listen, son, we can –

Dad, don’t. Please don’t make this any more difficult, complicated, than it needs to be.

Max, I hardly think I’m the one creating a difficulty here.

Listen to me. I’m not your son, Dad. Honestly I don’t think I’ve ever been your son.

Now you’re being ridiculous.

Let him talk.

You know, I never knew the truth about my condition until I was eighteen years old. Eighteen. Doesn’t that sound strange to either of you?

We made decisions that we felt were in your best interest. Let’s sort out all of that later. Just tell us what’s been going on with you.
Okay, but you have to stop acting like there’s something wrong.

Okay, I promise.

I didn’t know anything before. I mean, I just thought I was a guy, you know? I mean, I felt a little different and all, and I knew I needed hormone treatments, which until I was 16 I just thought was medicine.

Yes, continue.

Well, I had an experience last semester where - I’ll just say it involved another guy. And after this, and hell of a lot of processing, I realized, I’m a girl.

Max, are you gay?

That doesn’t make any sense. And don’t call me Max anymore. I’m Bi, just Bi.

Actually, this is starting to make a little sense. Honestly, he was never that good at being a boy.

Thanks for the support Mom.

I’m just saying, maybe it wasn’t meant to be.

I’m just having a difficult time with all of this.

Welcome to my world. Dad, I’m a girl, okay? I’ve always been a girl, I just didn’t, I don’t know. It just suddenly became very clear to me one day, after I met with Dr. Under and told him what happened.

What did happen Max – Bi?

It’s not important. What matters is that I understood for the first time who I really am.

This is just so sudden.

It’s really not, Dad.

This isn’t going to be like gymnastics when you were seven is it?

What?
You remember. When you were seven you begged and pleaded to take gymnastics because you were definitely going to be in the Olympics one day and you just had to start lessons. You were so adamant.  

And?  

Well, I gave in of course and signed you up. And no sooner had I told all of my friends that you were going to be an Olympic star when you had already changed your mind and were back to being a pianist.  

(pause) No, Mom. This isn’t going to be like gymnastics.  

I just wish you had given us more time to prepare.  

How Dad? Exactly how was I supposed to do that? Shit, I would expect you to have some idea that this might happen. You should be more prepared than I was.  

(Kala enters UR, addresses Bi)  

So, basically you just dropped it on them.  

What? No.  

You just showed up at your parents’ house for Christmas and were suddenly a girl.  

It’s not that simple Kala.  

It seems simple enough to me.  

Well, it’s not.  

Yeah, you said that.  

It’s late. We should go to bed and talk more about this tomorrow.  

I think that’s a solid idea.  

Goodnight. Bi. We love you. I’m glad you’re home.  

(Mom and Dad exit)  

So, what, now you’re a girl?  

You heard the whole thing, you should know.
Yeah, it just seems a little weird. I mean, you were always a boy. And you’re gay. Are you still gay?

Kala, I guess I never really was gay.

I don’t get it. So, you’re like a drag queen or something? Do you do shows? I saw one once with some friends. It was cool, I guess.

I’m not a drag queen, Kala.

So then, you’re like a transvestite?

I’m a girl. I’m just a girl. It turns out I was born with ambiguous genitalia.

Oooh (*takes a step back*), is that a disease? How did you get it?

I didn’t get it. It’s a biological condition. That means, I told you, I was born this way.

Fine, dang Max. You don’t have to get so defensive.

I’m sorry. I don’t mean to be snappish. I’m just having a difficult time being home this year. And uhm, I’m Bi now.

Yeah, yeah. Meanwhile, what’s wrong with your gonads?

Nothing. Well, it’s complicated. I’m intersexed.

Which means?

It means for me that I have traits of both male and female sexes. Look, do you want to get coffee or something? We haven’t really seen each other or had a chance to hang out.

Uh, I don’t think I can today. My family’s having an early dinner with some friends.

Oh, hey is it the Wally’s?

Yeah, that’s them.

How are they? How are Tony and Kerri? Are they going to school anywhere?

I’m not really sure. I haven’t talked to them much, you know.
Remember when I always used to be your date for Christmas dinner with the Wally’s?

Of course I do. Look, I really should get going. I need to help my mom get ready.

Wow, that’s a change. I guess we’ve both made major transitions this year.

What do you mean?

You know, you said you were going to help your Mom and you never used to help her. You hated it. And then here I am, all full on being a girl and all, never mind. I was just trying to lighten things.

Yeah, well, I better go. Let’s definitely have coffee sometime next week. Will you still be in town?

Uh, yeah. I don’t leave until after the New Year. What about you? Maybe we can do something on New Year’s Eve?

Yeah, that sounds cool. We’ll definitely do that.

Definitely. Okay, great.

Yeah, so, great then. I’ll call you. Bye. (starts to exit)

Bye Kala, good to see you.

Yeah, uh, you too, Max -Bi. Hey, what ever happened with that guy?

What guy?

The guy you told your parents about.

Oh, nothing, I’ll tell you later.

Bye. (exits)

(to audience) So there it was. My final war wound, or so I thought. I haven’t seen Kala since that day. It’s funny how some of the most significant moments in are lives are also so tangibly uneventful.

(Stage is reset, projection screen is brought out)
Lessons

(Bi sits alone onstage with an oversized medical book. It should give the impression of an Alice in Wonderland quality. She flips through the book. Projected onto the stage will be pages from a 1950s medical book describing reproductive aspects of male and female anatomy. On screen the Doctor appears as though he is in a 1950s sexual educational video)

Doctor

As you can see, we have both the male and female anatomy. Genetically, the human body has 23 sets of chromosomes, with two of those relating to the individual’s sexual makeup. Males have one X and one Y, and females have two Xs. (Points to corresponding images)

Bi

Oddly enough, it wasn’t sexual education in school, or even a discussion with my parents that really made me aware that I was different. Technically, it happened playing show and tell when I was five.

(Two kids run onstage and expose themselves to Bi. She does the same to them)

Kids One and Two

Oooh, gross. Look at Max.

Kid One

What’s that?

Kid Two

You’re Weird

Kid One

Can I touch it?

Kid Two

Don’t touch him, he might have cooties.

Kids One and Two

(as they run offstage) Max has two pee pees, Max has two pee pees!

Bi

Touch what? I didn’t really know what they meant. I couldn’t tell what the difference was from that short encounter, but I knew it was there. I told that story years later to a good friend. It was after I was a girl and started going by Bi. Anyway, guess what my new nickname was? Two Pee Pee Bi, which so doesn’t even describe it. Anyway, until that point I had never really considered what was normal or not normal. Unfortunately, I didn’t get a good enough look at the other two to know what the alternative was. And at that age, I really didn’t know how to find out.

Doctor
As a child develops, changes in his body occur. This reaches a point of heightened and intense transformation, which manifests typically between the ages of 12 and 14, otherwise known as puberty.

Painful, right? And did you hear what he said about that chromosome crap? Come on, it’s like he’s straight out of the 50’s or something.

(to Bi) Hey, I am straight out of the 1950’s. And I’m working with the best information that’s available, so cut me some slack.

Of course. That’s all any of us can do. Meanwhile, we all know that sexual and gender development are complicated processes that go far beyond the mere designation of X’s and Y’s. (yells to Doctor) We are not gender neutral –mutable-able creatures at birth!

Don’t yell at me, you should be talking to Dr. Hampton Young.

(to Doctor) As if everyone’s going to know who that is. (to audience) I hate when I have to play the translator all the time. Anyway, Hugh Hampton Young was a (puts in quotes) “pioneer” in Intersex research in the United States in the 1930’s, and is commonly thought of as the father of modern urology. It was in large part due to his theories about us people that a standardized Intersex management agenda was put into place and they really started hacking away at us. (to surgical agents come out with oversized hammer and saw and cut away at Bi, then exit). There are other important names, like Dr. John Money, a medical psychologist, who unfortunately put a stranglehold on the idea that gender is socially and developmentally determined. This led to the belief that doctors, parents, gardeners, baby sitters, etc, could just pick a gender for an ambiguous infant and everything else would just fall into place. Anyway, there are way too many people to mention here, and some of them are great progressives, helping to move things forward. But hey, if you’re ever looking for a gruesomely gory bedtime story, just look into the history of the Intersexed. Juicy stuff.

I feel really bad about all that Bi, but you must understand we really felt like we were doing what was best for our patients and society as a whole. And look at you, you turned out all right.

(The agents leave. Bi checks herself over) No thanks to you.

(The Doctor steps out of the projection and crosses to Bi)

(fatherly) Look kid, I know you’re upset about a lot of the circumstances you’ve experienced due to no fault of your own. But please try and separate your anger from your situation. You lash out at those who only have your best interest at heart. You’re going to have a life full with struggles if you insist on keeping that chip on your shoulder.

Bi
Right, the glass is half full too.

*(Doctor exits)*

**Free Bi**

*(projected images of dolphins in the ocean, surround Bi, gives the appearance of being in the ocean with them)*

So, if you’ve never considered having sexual reassignment surgery you probably can’t imagine how confusing it is to try and choose what you want your- privates –to look like. Here’s the thing, it’s not sexual reassignment with me, it’s really more of a cosmetic alignment. I’m already the gender I want to be, but I’m also a little more than that. I’ll never be able to have kids, I know that. But I can be a little more functional, and, uh, let’s see, how did that one doctor put it? Aesthetically pleasing to intimate partners. As you know, my parents dealt with this issue as well as they were able, when I was a baby. But to be honest, I’ve always been a bit angry with them, they let me grow up this way. At the same time I understand their choice and am so grateful they didn’t choose infant designation surgery. Still, part of me feels like I’m stuck in some gender purgatory. Trapped here, between a hole and a hard place. And it was my parents that left me here. How could they not have seen this coming? Why didn’t they tell me? *(pause)* My poor parents, I know how much it would hurt them if they knew I secretly resented them, after everything they’ve been through for me.

*(Mom and Dad enter down left and talk to the Doctor)*

**Doctor**

You must be careful with your child’s development. Pay close attention during puberty and bring him in for frequent visits and exams. It’s important to be aware of the possibility of an acute case of psychosocial morbidity to occur with your child and monitoring for that should be constant and treatment options known and readily available.

**Mom**

Psychosocial morbidity? That sounds terrible. What does it mean?

**Doctor**

We’ll discuss it more as your son grows and develops. We’ll make sure you have the appropriate resources to help prevent maladjustment.

**Dad**

We just want a normal life for our son.

**Doctor**

And it is our intention to give him as close to a normal life as possible.

*(Doctor exits)*

**Bi**

Right, he’s the one that wanted to sow me shut. *(Mom and Dad exit)* That pretty much brings us back up to date. I finished college and got a job at the University doing research on, of all things, dolphin - human communication through music. It’s a dream job, and I’ve made some friends there. You already know I’m in a support group and you got to
meet some of the people from it, way back at the beginning of the show. So, we might as well pick up from there. I’m headed now to watch my friend Sal’s drag performance. Oh, also, I’ve never had any surgery, though I do wonder about it from time to time. Actually, in my medical consultations I’ve seen plenty of samples of normal genital styles to choose from. And all things considered, what I’ve got doesn’t look half bad in comparison. In fact, I think ambiguous genitalia is becoming the new chic.

(The stage transitions into a dark cocktail lounge, with a stage in UL corner, set for a drag show. Bi watches, music for club scene begins, Bi interrupts)

**Girls Just Want to Have Fun**

*Bi*

(to the tech booth) Hold on a second, we’re not ready. (beat) Hey, Patrick (substitute actual sound person’s name) could you turn off the music for a second please? (music is turned down) Turn it all the way off. (beat) Patrick!

*Patrick*

(from booth) Yeah? Hi Bi.

Hi Patrick. (beat) Would you turn off the music please?

*Patrick*

Turn it off?

*Bi*

Yeah.

*Patrick*

All the way?

*Bi*

Yes! Please.

*Patrick*

I thought this was the club scene.

*Bi*

It is, but I need to say something to the audience.

*Patrick*

Oh, okay. Sure. (music goes off)

*Bi*

Thanks.

*Patrick*

No problem.

*Bi*

(to audience) Sorry about all of that. I just wanted to tell you some things about my friends from work before we begin. I’m going to –

(laughter is heard off-stage)

Oh crap. They’re coming. Sorry, I can’t talk.
(Jule, Marge and Rockie enter, with drinks, laughing)

Bi, there you are. Why didn’t you wait for us?

Rockie

Sorry, I didn’t realize you were stuck in line back there. Did you have trouble getting in?

Jule

No, there was just a little commotion issue with the bouncer. He thought Rockie -

Marge

(hands a drink to Bi) What’s your friend’s name Bi?

Bi

(distracted) Who?

Marge

You’re friend, the one we’re here to see?

Jule

We did come to this place for a reason didn’t we?

Rockie

Chill out, you big snob.

Marge

They serve beer, you’ll be okay.

Rockie

This place is fine.

Marge

So what’s his name?

Marge

Or her name? Which is it, anyway?

Jule

Sal, his name’s Sal. You can call him a her though. He kind of prefers it when he’s performing.

Jule

Sal? That’s it? I thought you said something about being scary, or eerie –

Rockie

Spooky. You said his name was spooky something.

Bi

Oh, yeah, his stage name.

Bi

Drag name.

Marge

(They sit at table)

Bi

It’s Spooky Twelve

Jule

Right on.

Bi

I’ll be right back. I need to use the bathroom. (Bi exits)
Spooky Twelve, that’s a cool name.  

Yeah, I wish it was mine.  

What’s yours?  

Pepper Jack  

No way.  

That sucks.  

What’s yours?  

Wait, how does it go? My mother’s – 

You know how to do it. It’s your first pet and the street you grew up on.  

I thought it was your mother’s maiden name and the person you first kissed, down there.  

That’s ridiculous, where’d you hear that? It’s your first pet and the street. Everyone knows that. Don’t make it so complicated.  

Wait, so Pepper Jack isn’t really your name Jule.  

(lights fade, then rise on Bi, down stage left, music fades out, Bi addresses audience.)  

Hi, sorry to interrupt. I’ll just be a minute. Oh, and don’t worry, this isn’t the bathroom or anything. I don’t even have to go. I just wanted to tell you a bit about this scene. These are my friends from work. They’re cool and all, and they seem pretty open minded. It’s just that -  

(Lights change back to club, Announcer enters)  

Welcome back!  

Crap! (exits)  

Before we begin the second half of tonight’s show, let me remind you all that tonight you can vote for your favorite performer and the winner will receive a weekend for two at the luxurious ski resort, the Inn at Aspen, Colorado. Now take another couple of minutes to get a drink, settle in, find a date, whatever you need to do. And remember, there is a two-
drink minimum tonight. After all, we have a fabulous prize to sponsor. (*exits, club music resumes*)

Marge

We’re late. What if we missed Spooky Twelve?

Jule

Hey, can two transvestites get married?

Rockie

What kind of a question is that?

Marge

Well, if gays can marry. It seems like these people -

Jule

Maybe not for long.

Rockie

Whatever, that amendment will never pass.

Marge

I wouldn’t be so sure.

Jule

Roadside Tator Peeler

Rockie

What?

Jule

Roadside Tator Peeler. That’s my name.

Rockie

I’d stick with Pepper Jack.

(Bi enters with more drinks)

Marge

Bi, you missed it. The announcer came out and said the second half was about to start. I think we missed your friend.

Bi

Na, don’t worry. He told me he was in the second half. In fact, I think she might be up next.

Marge

What?

Jule

Hey Bi, do you think the amendment to ban gay marriage is going to pass?

Rockie

Arizona had a constitutional amendment on their ballot a couple years ago, to ban gay marriage. And they didn’t pass it. If Arizona doesn’t pass it, California sure as hell won’t.

Jule

What’s your name Rock?

Rockie

Shadow Yankee
Yeah, but in Arizona it was a little more complicated.

Bi

What about you Bi?

Jule

You had a pet named Roadside?

Marge

Yeah.

Jule

What was it?

Rockie

You’re doing drag names?

Bi

A cat.

Jule

Yeah.

Marge

How’d you know?

Jule

It should be fairly obvious. So, what was so complicated about Arizona?

Rockie

Tangled Tail Glory.

Bi

What?

Rockie

That’s my name. But you know, that’s not really how they do it. The way the ballet read. In Arizona it was a problem with the legislation. The marriage ban was tied in with some domestic violence protection. If it would have passed, some legal protection for straight victims of abusive relationships would have been affected. That’s why it didn’t pass.

Marge

Wow, that sucks.

Jule

One of my cousins knows a homosexual. He’s really paranoid.

Rockie

Some spokesperson from the Protect Marriage group called a change in the wording on this ballet, argumentative.

Jule

He thinks the only reason gays are being allowed to get married is so the government can track them better.

Bi

Yeah, it was a really minor change too, something about the economic effects.
Marge
Right, people who support the amendment think the language will sway voters to vote against it.

Jule
How can a ballet be argumentative?

Marge
If you ask me, denying two people the right to get married is pretty freakin’ argumentative.

Jule
My cousin’s gay friend thinks all these secret jails are being created to lock them away.

Marge
The gays?

Rockie
I don’t know if that’s paranoid, or just grandiose.

Marge
That’s the problem with conspiracy freaks. They take things too far, to the point of being ridiculous. They give regular, good old fashion skeptics a bad name.

Jule
Right, like the falafel terrorists a couple years ago.

Marge
What are you talking about?

Rockie
That was a true story.

Jule
No way. You’re crazy.

Bi
No, she’s right. The FBI had started collecting information on people who bought a lot of Middle Eastern foods.

Marge
Like falafel?

Rockie
Yeah, and stuff like that. It didn’t last long though. The head of the FBI stopped it because he thought it was ridiculous to think you could tell a terrorist by what they ate.

Jule
I don’t know. It might make sense.

Marge
Right, you’ll end up rounding up all the vegetarians in town.

Bi
Well, we all know how dangerous vegetarians are.

Rockie
Hey, what do you call a vegetarian with diarrhea? A salad shooter.

(beat)
Hitler was a vegetarian.

I want to ask you guys about something. I think I need your advice about someone.

No he wasn’t.

Oh, this will be good. Who is it?

Someone from work?

No he wasn’t.

(Announcer enters, club music fades out)  

Welcome back ladies and gentlewomen. It’s time to begin the second half of our show. So now, with no further ado, please welcome Spooky Twelve.

(The group applauds, Sal walks onstage as Spooky Twelve)  

Thank you Franz, you’re a doll. And now, who out there would like to come with me to bend some ass in Aspen?

(Bi, Jule, Rockie and Marge shout various cheers and clap.)  

Thanks gals. You’re precious, but I was hoping for someone who could hang with me, like in the sauna. What about you Bi? You hang, don’t you?

(Music begins, Sal performs. Jule, Bi, Rockie and Marge applaud and cheer throughout. When performance is over, Sal exits, lights fade then up again to indicate that the evening is almost over, they are a little drunk.)  

That was fun.

Yeah, your friend was really good Bi. I think she was the best. He, I mean.

That was kind of weird though, what she said to Bi? Why’d she ask you that?

Is he gay?

What do you think?

I think he has a crush on Bi. So, does he go by Spooky Twelve in everyday life?

No, just onstage. He doesn’t have a crush on me.
Is that who you wanted to ask us about?

No. We’re just friends. He only says stuff like that when he’s a she.

Right, like she’s going to date someone like Spooky Twelve. Could you imagine their children? I’ve never known a transvestite before. What’s it like to be friends with one?

I’m not sure what you mean.

That’s a stupid question Jule. You’re drunk.

No I’m not. Don’t tell me my questions are stupid.

So, this was really pretty cool. I mean, I’ve never been to a drag show before. They didn’t seem that weird.

So, what, you thought all drag performers were freaks?

Now that’s a stupid question.

Both of you, grow up.

(Sal enters and approaches the table, Jule doesn’t see him)

Be honest, who hear didn’t think they were all kind of freaky?

Hey Spooky.

(to Jule) Nice.

Hello Dearest. Hi girls. Thanks for coming to the show. What’d ya think?

You were great. I loved it. You were really good.

(Dinner)

(Joe sits, at table. He lights a candle, and checks the table, he wants everything to look nice. Bi enters, she is wearing makeup and a cocktail dress. She crosses to table, Joe sees her and smiles. He notices her appearance and obviously likes it)
(awkward) Hi.

Hi Joe.

(He stands to pull out her chair)

How are you?

I’m good, thanks. Glad the day’s over. How are you?

Good, too. Thanks. (he sits) Oh, I ordered some wine. I hope you like it. It’s a pinot noir.

That sounds great.

Good, I think you’ll like it.

You know me. I’m not picky, as long as it’s red, and not merlot.

And preferably a Gamay or noir, Chianti is good, but you’re particular. Oh and cabernet as a last resort.

Very nice. You would make a great date.

Well, I just might apply if the position is open. (pause) Hey, how did the meeting go today?

Like I said. I’m glad the day is over.

It’s fine, thank you.

May I start an appetizer for you?

(to Bi) I was thinking, maybe, the grilled artichoke.

Yeah, that sounds fine. Good, it sounds good.

We’ll have the grilled artichoke.

Nice choice. Enjoy your wine and I’ll check back in a little while.
Sounds good.

Thanks.

So. Oh, yeah, you were telling me about the meeting.

Yeah, I guess it went okay, but I’m worried about funding.

Yeah, of course. Research on possible musical compositions of dolphins is probably going to take a back seat in a recessed economy.

Yeah, and also, I just really need to be somewhere South, were I have more opportunity for hands on research. It’s ridiculous that I’m not out there building relationships or getting any practical work done.

But the dolphins are pretty well trained, it’s not going to take much to get acquainted and start working once you’re ready to go.

No, I need to work with free dolphins. I don’t want any of the outcomes to be contaminated by preconditioning, or trick performing. So, I mentioned that I was planning to put together a change of location request.

Really?

I’m just so removed from everything here.

Yeah, sure. But I thought it was conducive to your paper research though.

Paper research, I’m so tired of paper research, on its own. I’m just afraid I’m missing out on the latest developments.

(Food Server enters and puts bread on the table and two serving plates)

Your artichoke will be right out, would you like to order your entrees or wait until you’ve had your appetizer?

Uh -

I really don’t know what I want.

We haven’t really looked at the menu.
Food Server
That’s no problem. I’m here for you when you want me.

Joe
Thanks.

(Food Server exits)

Bi
Did it seem at all to you like she was flirting with you?

Joe
What? No, definitely not. How tacky would that be? (pause) Besides, I think maybe she’s into you.

Bi
Get out.

Joe
You mean me, or her?

Bi
You’re funny.

Joe
So, you want to get your feet in the water, and stop sitting at your desk daydreaming about dolphin ballets.

Bi
This must be getting boring to you. Let’s talk about something else. How was your day?

Joe
No, it’s interesting. Besides, I like hearing you talk.

Bi
That’s odd.

(They look at each other, Bi starts to turn away. Joe touches her hand. They hesitate. He leans over to kiss her. Bi starts to respond, then pulls away.)

Bi
(picks up her menu) We should probably decide what we want.

Joe
Bi, I do, know what I want.

Bi
You know what I mean. Joe, uhm.

Joe
It’s okay. Let’s look at our menus. We can talk about this later.

Bi
Joe, I don’t know if there’s anything to talk about.

Joe
Yeah, uh. Okay. It’s just that, well, Bi, I thought maybe –

Bi
Okay, you’re right. I’m sorry.
I think I made this whole thing awkward. Why don’t we just have a nice dinner and forgot about what just happened.

Okay, for now. Well, I mean, I don’t want to forget it happened. I just, maybe it’s just not the right time.

Sure, whatever. Are we cool?

Of course.

Where’s our artichoke? I’m hungry. So, I was thinking we could go to the Giants’ game this Saturday, if you want. They’re playing the Dodgers and it’s going to be a great game.

Yeah, sure, maybe. Actually, Joe, I do have something I need to tell you. I’ve been wanting to, but it’s one of those “waiting for the right time” stories, so I’ve been unsure when I should do it.

Hit me.

This is kind of serious.

Okay, lay it on me, gently. Whatever it is, you can tell me Bi, we’re friends. And don’t worry, you’re not going to surprise me. You can’t surprise me. (slight pause, Bi doesn’t say anything) So, you’re married?

No, nothing like that. I wish it were that simple.

Okay, you’re about to get married - to your brother?

Joe (slight pause) I’m intersexed.

(pause) Uh huh.

Say something.

So, (uncertain) that’s great. (tries to joke) I’m interested in sex too.

I’m serious.

Believe me, so am I. Okay, so maybe -

Joe listen. I’m intersexed. That means I have ambiguous genitalia.
You mean they’re confused?

Joe

No you dork. Ambiguous genitalia means that –

Bi

I know what ambiguous means. But I don’t know what you’re trying to tell me. Do you think you’re in the wrong body or something? To be honest, my own genitals are starting to feel a little ambiguous.

Bi

It means that I have certain genital aspects of both biological males and females.

Joe

Gross.

Bi

Thanks.

Bi

Sorry. (slight pause) So, are you serious? What are certain genital aspects? Do you have a penis?

Bi

Yeah, well, no, but sort of.

Joe

No, but sort of? And a vagina? You do have a vagina don’t you, you’re not just a man?

Bi

No Joe, you’re just a man. I’m much more than that.

Joe

Wow. Let me think about this for a minute. I don’t get it. Are you like having a sex change operation or something, right? How long have you known this?

Bi

I’ve always been this way. And no, I’m not having surgery. This is just the way I am.

Joe

Do your parents know? Who all knows about this?

Bi

This isn’t a security threat. And of course my parents know, I said I was born this way.

Joe

Well, crap Bi. It would be kind of nice for me to know, I mean, this is a date, isn’t it?

Bi

Maybe. I don’t know. I don’t just go around telling everyone I meet. And it’s not like I have a venereal disease or something.

Bi

No shit, it’s worse. You’re a dude, you queer. They don’t have antibiotics for that.

Keep your voice down, that’s not funny.
I’m not trying to be funny. And don’t tell me to keep my voice down. What, you don’t want anyone to know you’re a, what? What the hell are you Bi?

I told you, I’m Intersexed. I’m not a dude Joe, and I’m not gay.

How the hell can you tell?

What do you mean? How do you tell? And what difference does it make if I were?

Yeah, well, it makes a difference because this is supposed to be a date. I don’t know what you need me for, it sounds like you can screw yourself.

Well, I didn’t know this was a date.

Shit Bi, I’m sorry, but that’s disgusting. Were you ever going to tell me, or just let me find out on my own?

I’m telling you now, you jerk.

And what’s with this? (makes all inclusive gesture toward Bi)

What’s what?

The way you look. Like, you look - weird. I should have known something was up.

I think I just want to go home.

Yeah, that’s a good idea. (he stands and starts to get out his wallet)

Don’t, I’ll get it.

(he hesitates) Great. (He starts to turn to leave, then stops) I mean, you might as well, since you’re the dude and all.

(Hermes and Aphrodite)

(The office of a metaphysical based tarot reader. Candles and incense burn. It is a calm environment, soothing. Madame Reader sits in a meditative pose. Music. Bi enters.)
Madame Reader remains calm and guiding throughout, 
even when Bi is being disruptive)

Bi

I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to disturb you.

Reader

You’re not, and you haven’t. Please, come in Bi, you’re right on time. After you called 
and made the appointment, I meditated on your question.

Bi

Oh, thank you.

Reader

You should thank yourself for having the courage to confront such difficult questions.

Bi

Uh, okay.

Reader

I mean it. Our sense of identity is an intrinsic factor in our perceptions of the world and 
sense of well-being.

Bi

So it’s all about perception? Is this going to be one of those consultations?

Reader

Do come in, make yourself comfortable. Do you like tea?

Bi

Look, to be honest, I’m really not into the hocus pocus stuff. I heard you were pretty 
down to earth, and I was really just wanting some direct information.

Reader

From your subconscious?

Bi

From you.

Reader

I don’t have any information for you Bi. I only have the ability to help you read your own 
symbols and determine the message you have for yourself. So, tell me, what is it that to 
you has seemed hocus pocusy to this point? Tea?

Bi

I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to be disrespectful.

Reader

Of course you did. It’s okay, you’re nervous. To make yourself feel more comfortable, or 
possibly more in control, you diminished any aspect of me and this situation you might 
have found intimidating, or somehow threatening. The problem with this, is now you 
can’t really see me or hear what I’m saying to you. If you stay in that defensive 
mode, your mind will reduce me to some predetermined stereotype and our work here 
will be over, before it even begins. (pause) Don’t worry Bi, you are always in control 
here. Why don’t you sit down here with me.
Yeah I know all that. Believe me, I was force fed this crap from day one. I can’t control the situation, but I can control my own response to it. But then, I’m only in control of my own responses, right? So what does that have to do with the situation?

Reader
You didn’t finish. You are in control Bi, full control. Would you like to sit down?

Bi
Why don’t you tell me? (sits) Besides, I’ve always heard that control is a tricky word.

Reader
I’m not a mind reader Bi. You’re right though. Control has a standard connotation that doesn’t quite fit in here. Let’s use influence.

Bi
Influence, right. A much more benign word. Really, there’s no disrespect intended here, it’s just, I don’t believe that whole crap about circumstances not mattering, that it’s all about how you perceive it. Personally, I think the circumstances are kind of important, and they actually affect one’s perception.

Reader
Do you understand the power of physics, Bi?

Bi
I guess, somewhat.

Reader
Well, in my work, I combine a metaphysical approach to physics and search for a compatibility between the two. For instance, you’re familiar with the idea that the very act of observing something changes that which it observes.

Bi
Yeah, yeah.

Reader
Which, in turn, changes you, and your life.

Bi
So, if I change the way I look at my body, I change my body?

Reader
Yes.

Bi
Uh huh. (checks herself) Still there.

Reader
It’s not that simple.

Bi
Exactly.

Reader
No, I meant your perspective. You had a distinctly sarcastic perspective just now. And, consequently, you experience your body as some kind of a parody.
Yeah, it’s called, Bi Maximum Nyce: A Genital Satire. I’m coming soon, in a theatre near you.

You know, in some cultures, and periods throughout history, the hermaphrodite is revered, and seen as a sacred figure. For example, we have Tiresias from Greek mythology. Not only was he –

Hold on. He wasn’t an hermaphrodite, and by the way, we don’t like that word. He was more of a sex-reassignment case. He had a total sex change from male to female, which, really had to have been painful and disturbingly blotched considering the technology back then.

Technically, he was changed into being a female against his will. And then, finally, after seven years he was able to change back into being a male.

And I bet the botched surgery is the reason why. Look, I didn’t come here for a lesson on Greek mythology. What’s your point?

Think about it. Tiresias has a lot in common with Intersexed people. He had a gender assigned to him without his consent or control, and was not happy with it, as many surgically altered Intersexes turn out. And then he chose his true gender and changed back into being a male.

But he was never ambiguous. He was not born ambiguous, and never lived that way. Hey, did you know his Mom was a dyke?

Because she bathed in a pond with Athena?

Pretty hot, huh?

I guess it depends on the version you read, and or, like.

Yeah, like all history. It depends on the version you read. At least today we know it’s written by the winners, so you know it’s one sided and you also know which side you’re reading. You know whose version of the truth you’re getting.

You’ve heard of sacred sex, haven’t you?

Heard of it, sure. But I can barely manage to get the laymen’s version.

And sacred marriage, the union of opposite energies into a greater whole. In Egyptian mythology, this can be found in Sol and Luna. In the Greek, Hermes and Aphrodite. You
know, Carl Jung was very interested in the synchronicity of physics and alchemy, and their archetypal manifestation through psychology and the subconscious.

Bi

Yeah, so?

Reader

So, this sacred union produced a child, Hermaphroditus. And this child is the archetype for Intersexed people. In alchemy, Hermaphroditus represents an enlightenment and spiritual advancement.

Bi

Advanced spiritually, but physically a bit messed up.

Reader

As it is inside, so shall it be outside.

Bi

Right. Look, I’m not looking to be revered, I just want to live my life without constantly deciding what to reveal to whom, when to do it, and how. Besides, that sacred marriage thing sounds a bit homophobic to me.

Reader

It’s not trust me, though that is a common misconception. Remember, these are archetypes and are symbolic. We all have both masculine and feminine energies. (slight pause) It’s really more like completing your proteins. (beat) There’s more than one way to do it. (slight pause) Why don’t we look at your cards.

Reader

But what about physics, metaphysics and a unifying theory?

Bi

Bi, skepticism may be a healthy intellectual attitude toward most subjects and it displays an analytical mind. However, talking yourself out of receiving what you came here for just doesn’t make sense.

Reader

Okay.

Reader

Take these cards and ask your question.

Bi

Should I have surgery?

Reader

Try to rephrase that so that so you’re not looking for a yes or no response.

Bi

How will my life change if I have the surgery?

Reader

Shuffle the cards as long as you feel like it.

(Bi shuffles cards)

Reader lays out Bi’s cards

Remember, Tiresias was a prophet, a seer. He was the one that told Oedipus that he had murdered his father and married his mother. Cut them.
Yeah, that’s exactly the association I’m looking for. Didn’t he also confirm that women like sex more than men? Because he had actually been both, completely, so he alone knew, right? By the way, that’s one of my concerns. I’m afraid of how much sensation I might be giving up.

Reader
Okay, here is your question. You see that it’s covered by the Hanged Man?

Bi
Yeah, so? What does it mean?

Reader
There’s a bigger question hidden behind the one you asked. The question you asked is more of decoy than it is your true question. You asked it to find a sort of back door route to your real question.

Bi
But, I don’t know what the real question was.

Reader
And that’s why the Hanged Man appeared here. You need to search it out. This is what is holding you back. You see this? The Moon is affecting your surroundings. Your subconscious is trying to reach you Bi, but the King of Swords, here, tells me you’re only looking on the outside. The Moon is a beautiful card, she’s full of mystery and knowledge. You have to be careful, you can get lost in illusions. But you can also discover secrets you never knew were possible. It’s all there Bi. You can lose yourself by attaching to false beliefs, or you can discover wonderful new aspects of your existence. (slight pause) Do you believe everyone is special?

Bi
I think maybe everyone wants to be.

Reader
Have you heard the expression that everyone is special in their own way?

Bi
Yeah.

Reader
Well, do you believe it?

Bi
I don’t know why you’re asking me.

Reader
If everyone is special, then being special isn’t special. It’s normal. We’re all normal Bi.

Bi
But that’s just it. I don’t want to be special! For once, I just want to (slight pause) I’m just tired. Tired of it all.

Reader
You’re tired because you struggle against yourself. You are already normal. We’re all special, and we’re all normal. And we all have unique gifts to offer the world. The question isn’t how they’ll be received, it’s whether we stay willing to share. (turns over
another card) Ah, huh. The Nine of Swords in your present emotional state, (turns over another card) and the Wheel of Fortune in your future. (pause) Follow the Moon, but don’t stay there too long, and keep your mind open. (slight pause) You need to make the decision Bi, who’s going to write your history?

**Damned if I Do, Damned if I Don’t**

(Surgery room. Bi is on the table. Surgeon and two nurses prepare her for surgery. A mask is placed over her face.)

**Surgeon**

This is it Bi. Relax and count backwards beginning from 100.

**Bi**

99, 98, 97

**Surgeon**

Stop. I said begin with 100. Start over.

**Bi**

100, 99, 98

(Surgeon and nurses fade away. Bi sits up.)

Okay, you caught me. I have decided to go ahead and have the surgery. Don’t worry, it wasn’t a spur of the moment decision. And I didn’t base it on the tarot reading. I’ve considered this throughout my life, and sometimes have come close. Thought about it, at great length, and went through the whole psychological preparedness testing and stuff. It was an interesting journey.

(Surgeon enters, sits next to Bi.)

**Surgeon**

You know Bi, there are some very important risk factors with the surgery.

**Bi**

Yes, of course. And when I wanted to stay the way I am, there were all sorts of risks with that too. Either way, I’m playing with fire, physically and personally.

**Surgeon**

What personal risks?

**Bi**

Look Doc, nothing personal, but am I hallucinating? I mean, the personal aspects of this gig aren’t really your concern.

**Surgeon**

No Bi, you are not hallucinating. It’s really more like a dream state. Remember, you’re totally knocked out. Can you feel this? *(He pinches her)*

**Bi**

Ouch!

**Surgeon**

Sorry.

(Mineful enters and sits next to Bi’s bed, on the opposite side of the Surgeon)
You were right though, this really isn’t my field, so I’ll leave you to talk about these things with Dr. Mineful.

*(he exits)*

**Mineful**
Hello Bi, let’s talk about why you think you want to have this surgery.

**Bi**
Why I want to have this surgery? Hold on a second. My whole life everyone has been telling me to have the surgery.

**Mineful**
Oh, that’s right, you’re the sexually ambiguous one.

**Bi**
Genitally ambiguous. I’m genitally ambiguous. My sexuality isn’t ambiguous at all.

**Mineful**
Right, no need to split hairs. So, let’s talk about how this surgery will affect you. What are you hoping to gain from it?

**Bi**
And there it was. The real question, that I hadn’t actually, ever truly acknowledged, until that moment. I had to be honest with myself. Ultimately, I decided to have the surgery for others. I mean, I’m not a sell-out or anything. But, I have to admit it will be nice to feel normal for once. And don’t jump on me for saying that, okay? It’s true. I mean it literally. After all, how many times do you think I’ve had anyone say to me before we got too intimate, “hey, just so you know, I’m intersexed?” Exactly, zero. How about you? How many of your intimate partners have mentioned before hand that they were intersexed? And how many times do you think I’ve said that to potential partners? Well, that’s really none of your business, but you get the point. *(Bi lies down)*

**Bi**
96, 95, 94

*(nurses fade back into scene, Surgeon enters and approaches Bi on the table. Lights fade then come back up. Bi wakes up.)*

**Nurse One**
It’s a girl!

**(to audience)** Did that sound at all to you like, “it’s alive?”

**Nurse Two**
Welcome back Bi. How do you feel?

**Bi**
I might throw up.

**Nurse One**
*(Puts a plastic bucket on the bed)* Here you are dear. You’ll be pleased to know the surgery went well. It was a total success.
Nurse Two
That’s right. You have a brand new penis, and it should be fully functional within a month.

Bi

What?!

Nurse Two

Got ya!

Nurse One
Don’t worry Dear. She’s kidding, you don’t have a penis.

Bi

What do I have?

Nurse Two

You only have the standard issue female parts.

Bi

You mean I’m totally normal now?

Nurse Two

Well, cosmetically speaking, no one could ever tell otherwise. (Nurse One exits, Nurse Two hands Bi a hand mirror and helps her position it to observe the results, Bi stares at the mirror, transfixed) Well, Bi, I’ll check back with you in a few minutes. You stay in bed and get some rest.

Bi

Great. (continues to stare at her new genitals in the hand mirror, Nurse Two exits, Bi stares for a long beat and then looks at audience, with a gesture she offers the mirror to them, and makes a facial expression suggesting they should do the same, blackout.)

(End of play)
Dear Audience Member:

This play was written and produced as a component of my thesis. I would greatly appreciate your feedback and opinions. I will use your response in a final analysis in my thesis.

Will you please take a few minutes during the next week to go online and complete a short survey about this production of glorybi? All comments are anonymous.

I would be happy to send an email reminder to you. Your email address will only be used for this purpose and will not be connected to your responses. You will not hear from me or anyone else regarding this show or its subject after the reminder is sent out.

Thank you and enjoy the show.

Michelle Cruff

Please write your email address here and return this portion to the box at door.

Email address:
WORKS CITED


<http://incolor.inbraksa.com/reneeprice/>


Darrow, Clearance. “Everybody is Prejudiced,” *Closing Argument of Clearance Darrow*. 


McLellen, David, Ed. Karl Marx Selected Writings. Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1977.


<http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex>

