The College of Wooster

The Electric Current: Presenting the Changing Waves of Gender and Sexuality in Performance

By

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Abstract

This independent study poses the following critical question: How can I as an actor negotiate the signifiers of gender and sexuality in performance and recognize the fluidity between both ends of the gender spectrum? To answer my question I studied representations of gender and sexuality in twentieth-century American drama to identify American theatre's problematic history with gender and sexuality. I utilized methodologies from Judith Butler, semiotics, Sue-Ellen Case, and Diane Torr to analyze how gender and sexuality are constructed and perpetuated in a Western culture. I then applied these methodologies to a textual analysis of scenes from the plays *Take Me Out, Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches,* and *Cloud 9.* These scenes were then presented in a devised performance titled *The Electric Current* to question how we construct and represent identities based on gender and sexuality and to demonstrate how those identities are oppressed and unacknowledged by patriarchal ideology.

An Overview of the Project

On April 26th, 2010, *Newsweek* published online Ramin Setoodeh's article "Straight Jacket," which argued that gay actors cannot play straight, heterosexual roles in performance. What sparked him to write this essay was Sean Hayes' performance in the Broadway musical *Promises, Promises*. Hayes plays the sexy leading man, Chuck, who is trying to pick up his sexy co-worker played by Kristen Chenoweth. Setoodeh commented that, "it's weird seeing Hayes play straight. He comes off as wooden and insincere, as if he's trying to hide something, which of course he is" ("Straight Jacket").

According to Setoodeh, Hayes was not very good at hiding his sexuality on stage, nor could he play the role of a straight character, labeling his performance as "the big pink elephant in the room." Setoodeh further noted that Hayes' performance at one point as the leading man resulted in "unintentional camp" when he tries to take home a drunk woman from the bar. He questions whether, "it is funny because of all the 60's-era one-liners, or because the woman is so drunk (and clueless) that she agrees to go home with a guy we all know is gay" ("Straight Jacket").

In response to "Straight Jacket," Chenoweth wrote online at *newsweek.com*, criticizing the author for writing a hurtful and homophobic portrayal of Hayes. While her comments appeared on *Newsweek's* website, they were republished on *Broadway.com* to further distribute it to a wider audience. Chenoweth came to Hayes' defense stating,

"I've observed nothing 'wooden' or 'weird' in his performance, nor have I noticed the seemingly unwieldy presence of a 'pink elephant' in the Broadway Theater" (Broadway.com).

Furthermore, she noted that thousands of audience members did not seem to care about Hayes' sexuality on stage.

> ….thousands of people have traveled from all over the world to enjoy Hayes' performance and don't seem to have one single issue with his sexuality! They have no problem buying him as a love-torn heterosexual man. Audiences aren't giving a darn about who a person is sleeping with or his personal life. Give me a break! We're actors first, whether we're playing prostitutes, baseball players, or the Lion King. Audiences come to theater to go on a journey. It's a character and it's called acting…. (Broadway.com)

Chenoweth also added that as a supporter of LGBT causes and equal rights she understands how meaningful it can be for more young people who struggle with their sexuality to see proud and out actors living successful lives (Broadway.com).

Due to waves of criticism he received for his article, Setoodeh wrote an editorial in *Newsweek* titled "Out in Focus" to followup on the controversy he started by attempting to explain what his original article's intention was. What prompted him to write "Straight Jacket" was reading a review of Hayes' performance in *The New York*

Times for *Promises, Promises*. He noticed that the review described Hayes' performance as emotionally "colorless," with a relationship with his co-star that appeared more like a younger brother instead of a lover. To Setoodeh, this was code, or "a way to say that Hayes' sexual orientation is getting in the way of his acting without saying the word *gay*" ("Out of Focus"). According to Setoodeh, he wrote "Straight Jacket" to examine why he thought it is often hard for society to accept openly gay actors to play straight roles.

It is interesting to note that Hayes did not officially come out of the closet until March 2010 in the April issue of *The Advocate* in an interview. According to the author, Ari Karpel, when Hayes portrayed the role of Jack, a very effeminate, and flamboyant gay character on the TV-series "Will & Grace," critics and people alike questioned whether Hayes was gay or not. Karpel explained that when the TV-series premiered in 1998, out gay characters were rarely portrayed on television. Though Hayes enjoyed some success in films after "Will & Grace," "the kind of leading man roles that he hoped he would get to play—the straight guys his commercial career suggested he could carry —never materialized" (Karpel).

In contrast, it is interesting to point out that heterosexual actor Eric McCormack, who played Will on the same TV-series, did not recieve the same attention as Hayes did for playing a gay character. The character Will was not as flamboyant as Jack, but McCormack's portrayal of a gay male did not garner him questions about is sexuality or

whether he was in or out of the closet. According to Karpel, after the debut of "Will & Grace," the public wanted to know how Hayes felt playing a gay character and if he was gay himself. But Hayes became afraid of revealing his sexuality because it could have jeopardized his chances of playing heterosexual roles later in his career. So he never answered questions about his sexual orientation, only giving the press stock answers like, "'When I play a gay character I want to be as believable as possible. And when I'm playing a straight character I also want to be as believable as possible. So the less that people know about my personal life, the more believable I can be as a character"' (Karpel).

The controversy that was generated out of Setoodeh's article on Haye's sexuality prompted me to ask this question: why does prior knowledge of an actor's sexuality and personal life matter in accurately portraying a heterosexual performance? Furthermore, Setoodeh reinforces our society's strict cultural constructions of gender: images of heterosexual male and female dictated by the ideology of a patriarchal society.

To explain what these strict cultural constructions of gender are, I must define the following related terms: sex, sexuality, gender, and heteronormative. Sex is usually understood as the main biological categories: male and female. While there are a range of sexualities, sexuality can be represented as a single choice as in straight or gay. Gender is often assumed to be a culturally defined binary of heterosexual male and

heterosexual female. These culturally defined binaries are heteronormative, which is heterosexuality repeatedly reinforced by normative values in a patriarchal society. What becomes problematic here is that while sex, sexuality, and gender can be distinguished from one another, they in turn create cultural constructions that do not represent a range of identities.

For example, the public is generally exposed to images of straight men and women in print advertisements and other forms of media. There are few representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) persons in this same media. Therefore, our range of identities are limited to tightly controlled depictions of heterosexual men and women. We commonly see men performing traditionally assigned masculine roles in business or politics, with women carrying out roles that are deemed feminine such as domestic service and motherhood. As these people are performing the assigned roles in their gender construction, they give off signals that reinforce binary gender constructions, where we assume they are attracted to the opposite sex. But in reality, there are a number of people who identify as LGBT because they are attracted to the same sex, but they appear to be a straight male or female. What happens then if these signals for a heterosexual man or woman do not align with his or her sexuality?

As an actor, I decided to further investigate these questions, especially in American theatre from the twentieth-century. Since gender and sexuality can be illustrated in performance, I utilize Keir Elam's *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* to

help define and analyze the use of signifiers in theatre. Elam describes the basic definition of semiotics as the study of the production of meaning in a society (Elam 1). He further states that this process of communication and signification within semiotics is "the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged" (Elam 1). Elam applies this idea of semiotics in performance to theatre and drama. He notes that theatre is a transaction between the audience and the performer and is the "production and communication of meaning in the performance and the systems underlying it" (Elam 2). Within drama though, Elam identifies this as a type of fiction for representation on the stage, which is constructed according to particular "dramatic" code (Elam 2). While semiotics is applied differently in different aspects of theatre, Elam's observations and insights into semiotics in theatre will give a full picture of how semiotics operates in all kinds of performances.

Imagine a family of four standing in a line on the stage holding hands. Standing in the middle is the father dressed in a business suit with a briefcase and newspaper under his arm. His wife is by his right side, hooking her left arm into his arm. She is wearing an apron and his holding a bowl in her right arm. On the father's left side is his younger son, dressed in sports clothes with a baseball bat and cap. The daughter, dressed in a pink dress, is holding a Barbie doll as she stands next to her mother. The positions, alignment, clothing and props of these characters on the stage communicate that they are a representation of a traditional family unit in a patriarchal environment.

The imagery allows spectators to decipher what each person in this image represents. The father is in the middle because he is considered the head of the household due to his business suit and briefcase. His business suit and briefcase signify the reinforcement of his male gender construction to ensure the economical survival of his family. Since he is holding the newspaper, it suggests that he is the one who possesses access to knowledge of the outside world. Because he is connected with the outside world through business, this is clearly a patriarchal model that signals that men are better equipped to handle outside business, culture, and politics. His wife appears to be obedient towards her husband because she is clutching onto his side, obeying his patriarchal reign and order. Plus, since she is wearing an apron and is holding a bowl, she is performing her assigned duties of her gender: domestic service. The apron signifies the wife as feminine because the apron is similar in form to a dress, which is a common patriarchal sign of woman. Furthermore, the apron symbolizes that she performs the role of motherhood. Her bowl in turn also reinforces her role as a mother and as a caregiver for her husband.

The children symbolize how their gender construction is placed upon them through patriarchal order. With her Barbie doll and pink dress, the daughter is learning how to use her femininity to fit into her female gender construction. The Barbie doll as a sign represents the ultimate example and origin of beauty and perfection of a female gender construction. Also, the daughter's pink dress signifies a reinforcement of

femininity to code her gender as a female. On the other side, the son is becoming familiar with his masculinity through sports to form a male identity. By wearing sports clothes and a baseball cap, his gender is coded as male. The baseball bat signifies a reinforcement of masculinity and his male gender construction. Though the baseball bat in this instance signifies the boy's connection between masculinity and sports, it could also be signified as an extension of the power of masculinity if the father was holding the bat.

These identities are locked into tight societal gender constructions, limiting the opportunity to consider alternative identities based on gender and sexuality. To demonstrate the existence of these identities, the signals that broadcast and reinforce these stereotypes need to be disrupted. If we place a sign inside a person, such as a hidden signifier, we can reveal the true internal identity of a character that does not align with heterosexual constructs in terms of sexuality. For example, the father figure in the family portrait has signals that indicate that he is a heterosexual straight man. But how do we create a signifier for him to illustrate his homosexuality while all of his other signifiers are broadcasting his apparent heterosexuality?

The signifier for this example cannot be placed on the outside of the character since the rest of his semiotics are communicating that he has a straight identity. If we place this signifier for his homosexuality internally within the character, it becomes an element of his identity he is hiding from the outside world. The hidden signifier for this

man's homosexuality is negative, which can be considered internalized discrimination because the character avoids certain behaviors that are stereotypical of a particular identity. If the hidden signifier indicates that negative stereotype, that negative identity, it is a component that can disrupt the meaning of outward signifiers. There is then a conflict between the outward identity indicators and the hidden signifier. For the father figure in this case, if he felt inside that he was gay, he would suppress his impulses and the signs that would signify him as a gay male. He therefore could act super masculine or distance himself from other people who identify as LGBT in order to maintain the illusion that he is a straight male. Therefore the performance of his identity is not fully seen because of his attempts to hide his hidden signifier or inner true self. The hidden signifier will be considered the hidden semiotics of sexuality for a character during a critical analysis of plays.

With an understanding of semiotics applied to images of gender and sexuality on stage, I explore this application by incorporating signs and codes into my performance as an actor. How can I as an actor negotiate the signifiers of gender and sexuality in performance and recognize the fluidity between both ends of the gender spectrum? To answer my critical question, I will be looking at the plays *Take Me Out* by Richard Greenberg, *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* by Tony Kushner, and Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*. All three of these plays question society's constructs of gender and sexuality through unique perspectives. In narrowing my scope of twentieth-century

drama, I chose these plays because the problems of gender and sexuality presented in these texts identify and sometimes combat these issues.

Take Me Out poses the question of what would happen if a major league baseball player came out in the prime of his career. In this play, Darren, a bi-racial baseball player, makes a pivitol decision to come out as a gay man. This results in the exposure of the internal and hidden danger of homophobia in sports. The character appears as a heterosexual male, but he disrupts the signifiers of that strict gender construct when he comes out as a gay man. Greenberg illustrates the world of baseball as a system that relies on a fraternal code that appears to be broken when Darren announces that he is attracted men. It causes the other team members to tense up because they feel as if their space has been violated by something outside their patriarchal ideology. McCrae supports this idea in his review of the play, noting that Darren seems to have robbed the idea of a fraternity from the team, which causes a loss of camaraderie. Homophobia creeps into the space at that moment, which becomes evident when no one looks each other in the eye, with hugs and friendly slaps on the ass no longer happening (McCrae). With the baseball locker room influenced by patriarchy, the baseball players are reinforcing heteronormativity, which categorizes the space as a straight male only zone.

While *Take Me Out* focuses on the problems of including gay male sexuality in a sacred straight space, *Angels in America, Part I* illustrates more problems with gender and sexuality through all kinds of characters in a political arena and religious setting.

The play exposes how the AIDS epidemic in the 1980's attached itself to the identity of gay men, which is highlighted by Prior Walter. The identity of the apparently straight, white male is further complicated through Joe Pitt and Roy Cohn. Joe is a Mormon and Republican lawyer in the court of appeals who struggles with his sexuality. Roy, a New York powerbroker and lawyer, is a homophobic and closeted gay man who becomes infected with AIDS. The character is based on the real life politician and lawyer Roy Cohn, who was involved in the espionage trial and execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg during the 50's. Cohn died of AIDS in 1986. Ethel Rosenberg's ghost taunts and teases Roy throughout the play. Joe and Roy's image of the straight, white politician is compromised by their homosexuality. While their culturally constructed images on the outside supposedly signal that they are males who are heterosexual, on the inside, there appears to be a hidden signifier that changes their identity completely.

Since Joe and Roy operate in a heterosexual environment, the full spectrum of their identities are kept close to their chest because of the fear or resistance of revealing their true sexuality. Roy continually insists that he is not gay. When he learns from his doctor that he has AIDS, he tells him "*what* I am is defined entirely by *who* I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man, Henry, who fucks around with guys" (Kushner 52). So Roy argues that he is not gay because of his actions, but because he considers himself to be a straight male, which causes him to not acknowledge his hidden signifier. Similarly, Joe feels pressure not just from patriarchal

ideology to act as straight man, but also he feels the weight of his religion on his shoulders to remain a heterosexual in the eyes of God. For example, when he finally garners the courage to touch another gay man, Louis, he hesitates and then says, "I'm going to hell for doing this" (Kushner 122). He recognizes the presence of his hidden signifier through his impulse to touch Louis, but since he still feels the influence and control of his religious background, he has a difficult time fully accepting his identity as a gay man.

Cloud 9 concentrates on the reversal of gender roles by questioning the construction of gender and thoughts on masculinity and femininity. It also gives exposure to sexual oppression. The reversal of gender roles is most apparent in Act I, which is set in British colonial Africa, featuring the mother, Betty, portrayed by a man and her young son, Edward, played by a girl. The first act demonstrates the tight constructions of gender and oppressed nature of sexuality. In Act II, the setting changes to modern times in London, but for the characters it is merely twenty-five years later. The action that takes place in London illustrates that while patriarchal ideology still exists, the constructions of gender and sexuality are challenged. The events involving gender and sexuality that occurred in Act I appear strange, but not unusual when compared to Act II. This shift into the modern era allows the characters to explore different facets of sexuality and gender that were considered strange and oppressed in Act I. Betty and Edward's gender roles are switched back with Betty being played by a

woman, and Edward portrayed as a man. But with the appearance of a male playing a five-year old girl named Cathy, the character demonstrates how reversing gender roles complicates patriarchal constructions of gender. The reversal of gender roles and exposure of sexuality push for further consideration of what the codes and signs of sexuality and gender communicate.

Cloud 9 acknowledges the restrictions placed upon gender and sexuality from patriarchal ideology and attempts to solve the problem through a reversal of certain roles. With certain characters being played by an actor of the opposite gender, for example, it gives the audience an opportunity to witness how gender is not static while recognizing the oppressive nature of a heteronormative culture. It also challenges the audience by communicating how gender and sexuality can change based on how one performs their own gender, which considers gender as a set of behaviors and choices rather than an outward appearance. Gender can then be based on the performance of the signs that you display through a character, allowing for alternative identities to be accepted.

To fully understand the troubled nature of the images of gender and sexuality present in the theatre, I rely on texts that highlighted issues surrounding the construction of gender, sex, and sexuality. Judith Bulter's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* demonstrates that we live in a society that sticks to restrictive societal constructions of gender leaving no room for other identities. However, she

challenges her readers to rethink the idea of the categories of gender. She states that "there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 25). She elaborates on her theory by explaining that gender presents stylizations that are coded through the body as a set of repeated actions within a tightly controlled and regulated frame that settles over time to construct an appearance that looks natural (Butler 33). Furthermore, to expose the occurring repeated gender stylizations within a heterosexual frame, the appearance of gender must be recognized as "possibilities that have been forcibly foreclosed by the various reifications of gender that have constituted its contingent ontologies [constructed cultural images]" (Butler 33). Basically she argues that the possibilities of gender fluidity are prevented by the strict constructions of gender binaries, which highlights the problems surrounding a restrictive cultural thinking of gender.

Sue Ellen-Case further investigates the problem of gender and sexuality when semiotics are applied. She notes that cultural feminists began to deconstruct cultural codes that were dominant in society, leading to the discovery of utilizing signs and codes as a way to break down the association between the patriarchal order and sign systems (Case 114). Her attempt to separate semiotics and patriarchal ideology goes beyond questioning Butler's theory of gender trouble by directly questioning and challenging how the signs and codes of gender build strict cultural constructions of

gender. Furthermore, Case explains that cultural coding is a component of ideology, which is related to the values and beliefs that create connotations within a society (Case 116). Furthermore, Case asserts that the prevalence of cultural coding is within theatrical language or communication on stage, which causes the perspectives of artists such as the director, actor, or author to be directly influenced by ideologies constituted in a patriarchal society (Case 117). Case's discussion of how semiotics is inserted within theatre provides an understanding of how compositions of characters are limited not by the artists in a production but through the surrounding cultural beliefs of a society.

As Butler and Case question and provide further insight into the problem of gender and sexuality within society, performance artist Diane Torr observes and experiments with the cultural construction of the straight male to uncover why this identity causes these issues. This is possible because her "Man for a Day" workshop teach women to create a male character to interactive with the world as a man (Torr 2). Her exploration of this common gender identity demonstrates that the male identity is built upon performance and social contexts (Torr 2). Furthermore, it provides a platform to call into question these images and perceptions of gender identity and break the division between these two strict cultural gender constructions (Torr 2-3).

An analysis of the methodologies of Butler, Case, and Torr was applied to a selection of scenes from *Take Me Out*, *Angels in America, Part I*, and *Cloud 9* to answer my critical question. Before the theories were applied to the texts for analysis, there was an

examination of the representations of gender and sexuality in American theatre through historical perspectives. To comprehend American theatre's relationship with homosexuality, I analyzed David Savran's *A Queer Sort of Materialism*, especially the chapter titled "The Queerest Art." Savran comments that the theatre has traditionally been a sanctuary for closeted gays and lesbians, but American theatre did not truely "come out" until the nineties (57). This was due in part to the increased visibility of out lesbian and gay artists and queer-themed driven plays and films. Savran demonstrates that the theatre could be the queerest art form of all because the "writing and performance always functions to disarticulate and disrupt identity—whether the identity in question is that of the playwright, the performer or the spectator" (70). He reinforces this notion by stating that in theatre the act of identification is not always permanent and consistent because it is improvisatory, unpredictable, and unstable (71).

Savran also notes that during the 80's and 90's, a new type of theatre that universalized and deconstructed the queer subject emerged with a representation of a utopian project designed for spectators to create intersections between desires and identifications to promote "a queer colonization of the public sphere" (76). Essentially, as this new type of theatre appeared, it questioned and deconstructed the perceptions of sexuality by putting the issue right in front of the audience. He goes on to theorize that this progression of new theatre was historically linked to social movements of the period, including "the power of identity politics among those who consider themselves

to be on the left, to the rise of queer nationalism in the streets and queer theory in the academy, and to the escalating struggle for lesbian and gay rights" (76). In preparation for my performance, I want to develop a type of theatre as described by Savran that challenges and provokes an audience's societal perspective of how gender and sexuality is constructed and restricted in a Western culture. With a selection of scenes from *Take Me Out*, *Angels in America, Part I,* and *Cloud 9* that call into question problems surrounding gender and sexuality, I will be able to produce a production that creates an opportunity for spectators to think about how we construct our identities in everyday life.

Alan Sinfield's *Out on Stage: Lesbian and Gay Theatre in the Twentieth Century* reminds readers that Western theatre has been a complex and struggling space for gay and lesbian identities. He states that some people assert that lesbian and gay identities were invisible and unspeakable in most of the twentieth-century. Sinfield notes though that, "representations in theatre helped to establish, consolidate and challenge notions of lesbians and gay men which were held by them and in society at large" (4). Sinfield examines a number of subjects ranging from societal scandals with homosexuality, to the relation between gender and gay men. To give a background of homosexuality in society, he theorizes that queerness was viewed as a transgression in society since it was provoked and evoked by scandals during the times of Oscar Wilde through the 1920's (36). Sinfield mentions that sex-gender scandals consisted of, "illegitimacy, marital

discord, adultery, bigamy, homosexuality. They too were ultimately about money—conventional transmission of property through the legitimate male line not only regulated the distribution of wealth; it appeared to justify it" (39). He also notes that scandals within society "marked a structural faultline at which the system was struggling to maintain equilibrium" (47). This could mean that the eruption of scandals surrounding homosexuality were helping reveal the queer identity. Sinfield also points out that people now think that if a person does not posses a heterosexual enthusiasm, the person must be queer (114). He asserts that this stigma is attached "to fussy bachelors, mannish spinsters, sissy-boys and tomboys—violators of gender hierarchy" (114). Sinfield further examines these profiles in a variety of British and American plays in the twentieth century.

Robert Vorlicky's *Act Like a Man: Challenging American Masculinities in American Drama*, provides an in-depth analysis of all-male cast dramas while also critiquing issues of masculinity, gender, and sexuality in the theatre. He first approaches the subject by stating that an all-male cast offers a unique perspective on culture, especially with its relationship to realism and changing gender codes (1). However, due to the absence of women from these realistic contexts, and the push for patriarchal ideology, "most variations of American male-cast drama resist the diversity of American male experience and its challenge to traditional masculinities; rather they aggressively limit themselves to perpetuating a rigid, antihistorical account of male identity" (1).

However, Vorlicky explores how during the past decade male-cast plays on the cutting-edge of challenging traditional models sometimes shared two commonalities. First, there was an influence and response to the Civil Rights movement, the AIDS crisis, and the impact of contemporary feminism in America. Second, these dramas consisted of persons who were gay, or of color, or both (3). These minority male-cast dramas, according to Vorlicky, do not challenge the patriarchal norm because these "characters have been presented as objects within the dominant culture who become subjects only after they claim their status as gendered subjects—that is, as men, culturally defined" (3). By identifying how minority male-cast dramas are culturally defined, it will be possible to observe how these types of casts exist as non-challenging objects in patriarchal environments. Vorlicky also mentions that gender codings subsume representations of sex, race, and class in American realism due to the overdetermination of a dualist gender codings (22). What Vorlicky challenges here is how patriarchal ideology oppresses other elements of identities based on class, race, and sex in American realism through a strict gender binary. Furthermore, Vorlicky considers the realist male-drama canon to be a semiotic system that is so rigidly coded it restricts the spectrum of representations that are available for drama (23). He notes though that when the mechanics within the system are revealed "the playwright has the option—through a radical reworking of the codes of male dialogue—to articulate and stage new types of male subjectivity, new masculinities" (23). While Vorlicky acknowledges the

presence of a tight and restrictive gender construction in all-male dramas through semiotics, he theorizes that a deconstruction of the patriarchal ideology in the text can deliver different considerations of masculinity and gender.

To fully layout and examine my thoughts on performance of gender and sexuality on stage, my process has been solidified into three main chapters. Chapter One will provide an overview of the problem with gender and sexuality in twentieth-century American drama. I will be consulting Savran's *A Queer Sort of Materialism*, Sinfield's *Out on Stage,* and Vorlicky's *Act Like a Man* to examine how historically sexuality and gender in American drama has been formed, represented, and repressed. My survey will start with Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the play which traditionally marks the start of realism in theatre. Realism is defined "as the dramatic mode that makes the strongest claim for forging links between a play's theatrical system and its cultural context. The characters in realist drama purport to voice our thoughts" (Vorlicky 1). *A Doll's House* is centered around Nora and her tense relationship with her husband Torvald, who treats her like a doll. Nora leaves her husband so she can live independently and escape the oppression he has placed on her as a woman. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is not an American play, and is not feminist literature because the playwright was mainly exposing a societal problem (capitalism). However, I begin with this play because when the production was introduced in America, it provided a realist dramatic structure that plays continue to utilize today. In addition, I

will also examine other instances of gender and sexuality trouble as pointed out in plays such as Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Boys in the Band* by Mart Crowley, Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9, M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang, and *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner. These twentieth-century American plays cover a myriad of important issues related to gender and sexuality.

Hellman's *The Little Foxes* focuses on southern aristocrat Regina Gidden's struggle to become financially independent from her wheel-chair bound husband, Horace. She exerts power over her husband near the end when she lets him die of a heart attack. As a result, she becomes a stronger woman who inherits his wealth but loses respect from her daughter, Alexandra, and the rest of the family. Regina's actions signal the complication the female gender experiences when being controlled financially by the dominant male gender.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is set in the Mississippi delta and focuses on Big Daddy Pollitt, a wealthy cotton tycoon, and the rocky relationship with the rest of his family. When Maggie tries and fails to conceive a child with her alcoholic and resistant husband, Brick, Big Daddy interrogates him about his strange behavior. This leads to a heated confrontation with Big Daddy, pressing Brick to answer if he ever had a desire for his friend, Skipper. Brick reveals that Skipper made a drunken confession to him over the phone, leading him to hang up the phone, which resulted in Skipper committing suicide. Brick's fear, confusion, and denial of having a desire for Skipper

reveals the conflict of an apparent desire or love in direct opposition with the straight male identity. Though it is not perfectly clear if Brick had a homosexual love or desire for his friend, it does communicate how these kinds of feelings are repressed within a patriarchal society for males. Furthermore, Maggie's insistence and desire to love Brick and have a child with him reinforces the ideologies of a patriarchal society to define her actions and image as a worthy straight female.

With *A Doll's House, The Little Foxes,* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* demonstrating the issues of gender and sexuality repressed within patriarchal contexts, *The Boys in the Band* and *M. Butterfly* address these problems directly by objecting to the strict patriarchal ideologies placed upon gender and sexuality. Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band* is centered around a group of gay men who are friends in New York City during the 60's/70's. A birthday party turns into a night of soul searching when someone's straight friend accidentally arrives at the party. The relationships between the men highlight the different identities of the gay male in society, representing the possibilities of different identities within male sexuality that are not completely repressed by a patriarchal culture.

M. Butterfly is about the relationship between Rene Gallimard, a french civil servant in China, who falls in love with the Chinese opera singer, Song Liling. Song is a man disguised as a woman, providing an opportunity to observe how gender can be fluidly represented. Though Song's identity opens up the possibilities of a flexible

gender spectrum, his relationship with Rene signifies how sexuality is oppressed and masked by strict gender constructions.

Chapter Two outlines various scholar's opinions and observations of the problem with gender and sexuality in culture and the stage. To answer my critical question, I will primarily discuss theories and observations about gender and sexuality from Butler, Case and Torr. Butler's *Gender Trouble* demonstrates that there are strict gender binaries that are closely prescribed in society. However, I plan to use her idea of gender as performance for my production as a tool to explore how I can stretch the boundaries of representations of gender and provide the opportunity for reconsideration of multiple identities in the gender spectrum. Case argues that semiotics can be utilized to deconstruct and disrupt its influence from patriarchal ideology. I intend to utilize her theory of examining semiotics as a deconstructive tool by manipulating the signs and codes within a character to further reveal hidden gendered and sexual identities. Torr's exploration of the straight male identity through the "Man for a Day" workshops allows for an examination of how this dominant gender identity operates and is controlled by patriarchal ideology. Her findings and observation will serve me in constructing the whole image of some particularly masculine characters. By examining gender or sexual representations with semiotics through a non-heteronormative lens, my queer perspective could allow for more

opportunities and considerations for more identities outside of the set standards of gender and sexuality.

In Chapter Three, I will explain how these theories and strategies will be applied to my performance of three specific scenes chosen from the plays *Take Me Out*, *Cloud 9*, and *Angels in America.* Chapter Four will consist of my preparation for the performance of those scenes, as well as a review of the outcome of the production after applying the methodologies. Furthermore, this chapter will consist of reactions and other observations during my performance. Chapter Four will also reflect upon my findings, and analyses as an actor negotiating and challenging gender and sexuality on stage.

The Problematic History of Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century American Theatre

Introduction

There are a number of signs coded within the appearance of human beings that convey particular meanings to us. For example, imagine a voluptuous, blonde woman walking down the street in a tight red dress and black high heels carrying groceries. She is communicating a number of signals which adhere to society's standards of beauty through her red dress, high heels, and blonde hair. Her voluptuous figure represents the ideal feminine image of a woman's body as sensual and desirable. In addition, her groceries also signify that she is fulfilling the role of her female gender construction: domestic servitude. In contrast to the female image is the male gender construction which embodies more masculine qualities. The male identity can be described as a tall, handsome, and well dressed man in a top hat, grey business suit, and well pressed tie. He holds a door open for the woman, allowing her to enter the building first. The man's apparel signifies that he is dominant and independent. He holds the door for the woman because he has been culturally conditioned to provide assistance to a lady in public. Automatically, we also assume that these gender binaries are heterosexual because they are cultural constructions in a patriarchal environment.

While these depictions are gross demonstrations of common identities, the actions, clothes, and objects of these gender binaries all communicate a meaning that is controlled and influenced by a social ideology. As these strict depictions of two main

identities continue to be portrayed in everyday life, there are also signs and signals that are found in theatrical performance, which continue to reinforce a culture's construction of gender and sexuality. With an explanation of how signs, or semiotics, are applied in theatre, it will be possible to examine how the codes of gender and sexuality are depicted on stage. As previously mentioned, semiotics, according to Elam, is the study of how meaning is produced in society through signifiers (Elam 1). He notes that semiotics is a process of communication and signification within the signs of an object to allow for meanings to be generated and exchanged (Elam 1). Since semiotics has the ability to dictate and reinforce meanings associated with an image, there will be an analysis of how identities based on gender and sexuality are defined by different codes and signals in the theatre. An understanding of semiotics can reveal and provide an analysis of the problematic nature of gender and sexuality and how it affects those representations.

Semiotics: How Meaning is Conveyed through Signs and Signals

In order to comprehend how depictions of gender and sexuality are coded by semiotics, there are some basic elements of this process that need to be defined. According to Elam, a sign is an entity that links a signifier or material vehicle with a mental concept or signified object (Elam 5-6). Essentially, a sign is an object which represents a larger idea or concept to convey a meaning. The semiotic unit of a sign is an ensemble of elements that is signified as an aesthetic object that resides in the

collective conscious of the public (Elam 5-6). The application of a semiotic unit to an object means that the item or image being signified is composed of one or more elements that influence an already culturally accepted and acknowledged meaning and representation. If semiotics is then influenced by patriarchal ideology, these signifiers help form and represent the constructions of a gender and sexual identity. Therefore, there are common signs and codes that identify a construction of a heterosexual male and female.

For example, the previous description of the male character in a business suit could represent the ideal image of a straight man as dictated by patriarchal ideology. His gray business suit and top hat could signify the dominance and power of masculinity that is granted and perpetuated by a patriarchal society. Conversely, the sexy female type as previously profiled can be symbolized as a sexual and desirable object because of her voluptuous figure, red dress, high heels and blonde hair. When audiences view these representations on stage, these portrayals become socially accepted because the performance is most likely portraying the cultural idea or identity associated with those characters. Is it plausible then to use semiotics to challenge those socially accepted and restricted symbols? There might be a potential to utilize semiotics to question these cultural constructions, but, at this moment, it is important to comprehend how an object becomes signified and communicates meaning.

The communication process from a signifier, as described by Elam, is generally a signal that is transmitted to a destination from a source (31). He further details how the signifier's communication process works by outlining the details of this transmission and defining certain terms related to the process. First, the source of the information can be an idea or impulse from the mind of a speaker, an event, or state of affairs (conditions of a surrounding area). To send the information from this source out to a destination, a transmitter, such as speaker's voice, a lamp, computer, or any object that is capable of sending out a signal, is utilized. The transmitter sends the signal through a channel towards the destination. Assuming the signal has traveled undisturbed, this signal is then selected by a receiver, which is then adapted into an understandable message for the destination (31). The destination can be considered the eyes, ears, or touch, a point for one of the senses to recieve the broadcasted message from the sign.

With this process of how meaning is communicated through semiotics, Elam outlines how theatrical communication is composed of many communicational factors. The source of theatrical communication can be traced to the dramatist (the dramatic or performance text). Next, the director makes decisions and gives instructions based on the text that chooses the transmitters (modes of communication). The transmitters start as the voices and bodies of actors combine with a number of accessories, such as properties and costumes, and further attach to the pieces of set, lights, the sound, and the technology. The bodies, movement, electrical impulses, and sound on the stage are

then arranged and selected syntactically to traverse physical channels of communication through sound wave and light to tactile and olfactory means (Elam 31-32).

According to Elam, the encoding and decoding (formation and understanding) of a message is possible by the code: an ensemble of rules that assigns a certain meaning to a specific signal (Elam 31). Linguistically, the code gives a speaker and an addressee a chance to recognize and form sequences through phonemes (units of sound that differentiate one word from another) and provide semantic material to them (Elam 31). Furthermore, a code can attribute a value to an object such as traffic light colors, which are coded commonly by three different colors to communicate to the traffic what vehicles need to stop and go at a junction. In terms of gender and sexuality, codes help define certain gender constructions. The symbols for men's and women's bathrooms are defined by single images of male and female to indicate which gender can use a particular bathroom. A men's bathroom is designated by a outline of a male figure that looks like he is in a business suit. The women's bathroom symbol is in the form of a female figure that is defined by a dress, which is the only major difference between the two. From this discussion of how semiotics operates, it is possible to observe how the history and gender and sexuality in performance can be viewed through signs and codes.

Savran: Why Theatre is "the queerest art"

In Savran's chapter "The Queerest Art" from *A Queer Sort of Materialism,* the author argues primarily that theatre "is queer in art because of its particular mode of address and its uncanny ability to arouse a spectator's mutable and mutating investments" (Savran 60). Savran defines queer as a provocative way of thinking about how theatrical forms/genres and sexual subjects intersect by analyzing American theater (Savran 58). Queer can then be considered a code for an object to communicate a questioning of the relationship between sexuality and theatre. The influence of queer on an object could lead to a deconstruction or questioning of heteronormative or patriarchal ideas placed in theatre. In terms of semiotics, queer can signify an opposition to heteronormative values or patriarchal ideology. For example, to queer the look of a business man, some portions of his outfit could be changed. The tie would be replaced by a bow-tie, silk gloves would be worn, high heels would take the place of the standard business shoes, and the business suit would be a different color such as light pink. Now the image of the straight business man appears queer because his signs have been changed to reflect his separation from a patriarchal construction of a heterosexual male. If we added a skirt to his outfit it would suggest that he is feminine, while the gloves and heels signify that he is gay.

Savran notes that all art, including theatre, has been oppressed by the heterogeneous views of history, which does not allow for, or marginalizes, a number of

cultural productions that do not neatly fit into the model (Savran 61). Therefore, the semiotics of theatre has been heavily influenced by the ideologies of a patriarchal society from the West, which has prevented the opportunity for a range of identities based on sexuality and gender to be equally considered and represented within society. While Savran demonstrates how applying queer to theatre can shake up established conventions of the art form, he points out that theatre, historically, has been notoriously linked to queer pleasures and bodies.

According to Savran, Elizabethan and Kabuki stages were regularly attacked for abetting and aiding in same-sex sexual practices (Savran 59). During Elizabethan Theatre and Kabuki performances, only men played male and female characters in productions. This caused the public to think that the men were having sex with each other because there were no women performing in these plays. At the end of the nineteenth century, the theatre bars in London's West End became widely acknowledged as places for same-sex encounters (Savran 59). The early queer influence on theatre through semiotics communicates that it was a site considered to be sexually deviant because the public was interpreting its signals as something that went against the ideologies of their culture. Here, perception of early queer influence continued to depict theatre as a place for sexual deviance and a site of opposition against patriarchal ideologies. Though not every production during these time periods was using semiotics to communicate a problem with ideologies oppressing sexuality, these movements of

theatre were considered places that did not completely prescribe to patriarchal ideologies.

Savran cites that in the 1920's New York theatre scene, George Chauncey commented that a "gay enclave" had formed around Times Square. These theatre districts and amusement (entertainment) industries attracted a number of gay men who were working in theatre. But during this same period, Times Square became a significant center for male prostitution. Homosexuality and other "unconventional sexual behavior[s]" were permitted by theatre professionals because they were stigmatized as well for the unconventional lives they experienced in the theatre (Savran 59). Though theatre was still subject to "queer" influence, it was now establishing a code for allowing homosexuality and other sexual identities to come into the space to be separated from oppressive patriarchal ideologies. While patriarchal ideology was oppressing the nature of sexuality in society, it was thriving in theatre due to its strong connection and influence to queer identities.

While theatre has been historically associated with homosexuality, musical theatre has been particularly judged as a sacred place for gay men who were the most visible devotees, especially as one of its most important producers (Savran 60). While theatre has been hospitable to a variety of sexual and social rebels often viewed negatively; gay men since WWII have played leading roles in U.S. theatre. For example, during the McCarthy period in the late 1940's and 1950's, critics did not reveal the

sexual orientations of some very prominent artists within the theatre, but they occasionally doubted other artists, such as playwright Tennessee Williams (Savran 64). While a theatrical form, such as musical theatre, can be symbolized as a safe-haven for gay men, the homophobic tension was starting to rise from the outside.

According to Savran, in 1961 critics, such as Howard Taubman, (*The New York Times)* believed that the New York stage was increasingly influenced by homosexuality and declared that this "indirection" was caused by playwrights because it was distorting human values. The human values he believed being distorted were producing dramas that depicted women as unpleasant, exaggerated, and grotesque while the men were turning into lustful, raging beasts or limp, handsome, neutral creatures of mystical purity (Savran 64). In terms of semiotics, the female and male identities here were communicating the ideas about gender and sexuality from the playwright's perspective. These "distorted human values" are identities that were separating from ideologies of cultural constructions of male and female gender.

A reconstruction of the homosexual identity came in the 1990's when Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* was produced. Kushner's play became a "queering" of national political culture as it was appropriately titled "A Gay Fantasia on National Themes" (Savran 66). The image of the homosexual was now changing to help communicate a challenge to the political system by applying queer to it. Savran cites this play as a significant event in theatre because the production utilized strategies to

undermine conventions within social realism and question minoritized sexual identities (Savran 67-68). The purpose of *Angels in America* is to communicate an effort to challenge the patriarchal influence of a person's sexuality within their identity by introducing characters that are considered a sexual minority, or gay.

Sinfield: Identities that are "Out on Stage"

As Savran links American theatre's "queer" relationship with homosexuality, Alan Sinfield's *Out on Stage: Lesbian and Gay Theatre in the Twentieth Century* notes that theatre in Western culture has been a struggling and complex site for lesbian and gay identities. He asserts that representations of gayness in the theatre were hostile or oblique because theatre during this period was influenced by respectability, keeping up appearances and an assumption of good manners (2). Symbolically, theatre helped represent and communicate the cultural ideals of the West which did not make room for any other identities outside the norm. While theatre can be viewed as a signifier for cultural ideology, Sinfield does not believe that gay and lesbian identities were invisible and unspeakable, because these representations do appear with careful analysis. He argues that representations in theatre helped challenge, consolidate, and establish views of gay men and lesbians held by society (4). Theatre should then be considered as a source of information that uses lesbian and gay identities as signifiers to broadcast and question notions from society that are attached to them.

To understand homosexuality's relationship with society, Sinfield theorizes that queerness (homosexuality) was illustrated throughout the West as a fault in society during the 1850's to the 1920's because queerness was evoked and provoked by scandal (36). He states that society at this moment was based on an ideology that declared a settled and stable social ranking within Western society that was based on family lineage and public and private virtues of responsibility to uphold morals (37). In terms of semiotics, society in this context can be depicted as an object that communicates ideas of social order based a system of social ranking and dynasty.

Sinfield's analysis of Western culture and theatre starts in the United Kingdom. He suggests that the exposure of Oscar Wilde's homosexuality can be viewed as a reassurance to the public that societal standards were being maintained (38). In the spring of 1895 in London, Wilde stood trial against John Sholto Douglas, the Marquee of Queensberry, who accused him of being a sodomite (homosexual term used at that time). Queensberry attempted to defame and publicly embarrass Wilde because he discovered that his son, Lord Alfred Douglas, was having an affair with the playwright. Wilde's homosexuality was exposed during two separate trials through witnesses of young men that alleged that Wilde engaged in sexual affairs with them. He was convicted of "gross indecency" by the jury and was sentenced to two years of imprisonment. After serving his sentence, he traveled through the rest of Europe and passed away November 30, 1900 in Paris, France (Linder). In terms of semiotics, the

exposure of Wilde's sexuality and subsequent trial signals that his identity as a gay man was not compatible with society's image of the straight man. The signal from this action then limits the possibilities of alternative gender and sexual identities.

Sinfield notes that sex-gender scandals similar to Wilde's consisted of marital discord, illegitimacy, bigamy, adultery and homosexuality. Overall, the components of sex-gender scandals were centered around money because property was transferred through the patriarchal line which regulated and justified the distribution of wealth (39). With sex-gender scandals considered as a semiotic, scandals involving queerness signifies a problem within society because scandals threatened the stability and wealth of a patriarchally influenced family unit. Sinfield supports this notion by remarking that scandals within society were branded as a structural faultline of a system that was scrambling to maintain an equilibrium of social order (47). This could mean that the eruption of scandals surrounding homosexuality helped reveal the queer identity. Yet, with scandals in society signified as a cracking faultline, it reveals that the ideologies of this culture experienced issues with struggling to keep its ideals influential on the public as previously ignored queer identities were being exposed.

While Sinfield acknowledges that Wilde's trial and conviction for being a homosexual established the idea of an existence of a queer identity, he investigates how society labels someone queer if they were thought not to posses a heterosexual enthusiasm (114). This stigma is attached, according to Sinfield, to a variety of

stereotypes that are considered violators of the gender hierarchy such as the fussy bachelor (114). He profiles the fussy bachelor from the character Ambrose Holland in the British play *Jack Straw* (1908); the character begins the play by declaring as a well-dressed, elegant man at thirty-five that he wants to retire to a corner of a restaurant with is wife so they can "'gossip in peace'" (115). Ambrose's statement is referred to by Sinfield as a queer note (115). The character's appearance and words seem to signify that he is gay since his image is associated as the stereotypical gay, effeminate male. Interestingly, during the course of the play, Holland's relationship with other women and his martial status are not touched upon and possess no specific allegiance to an identity that is attracted to the same sex (115). What makes this image of a bachelor "fussy" is how the subject of his apparent sexuality is ignored and hidden, which would definitely cause the public to question his sexual identity.

During WWII, Sinfield points out that female impersonation in Europe thrived because it was avoiding a popular realization that it was a queer act. American soldiers gazed with amazement over the illusion of these performances because the performers were sexy and appeared to be women; some of these acts were even comical with some "husky men looking silly in women's clothes" (120). With men starting to perform and act like women, it signifies a hidden identity within the performer as it revealed homosexuality. Sinfield agrees with this idea by noting that if this performance was viewed by a gay spectator, some could perceive it as gay men singing to each other and

unveil a hidden subplot about homosexuality being formed in front of an audience (120).

Vorlicky: Masculinity in American Theatre

Though Sinfield discusses how the queer identity has been present in twentieth-century Western theatre, Vorlicky's *Act Like a Man* analyzes issues of masculinity, sexuality and gender in all male cast dramas. Vorlicky notes that while an all-male cast can offer a unique outlook on society through gender and realism, the absence of women promotes an influence of patriarchal ideology that resists a diversity and history of male identity (1). With semiotics applied, the image of an all-male drama reinforces the beliefs and standards of male dominated society. The discussion of all-male cast dramas gives insight into the tight construction of male identities in terms of gender and sexuality.

Vorlicky acknowledges that some male-cast plays in the last decade have challenged traditional models because they were responding to or affected by the civil rights movement, the AIDS crisis, and/or contemporary feminism (3). With these social movements applied to male-cast dramas, the signifier for these casts changes by challenging patriarchal ideology. Moreover, these dramas consisted of persons who were gay, or of color, or both (3). These minority male-cast dramas, according to Vorlicky, do not challenge the patriarchal norm because these "characters have been presented as objects within the dominant culture who become subjects only after they

claim their status as gendered subjects—that is, as men, culturally defined" (3). Vorlicky also mentions that gender codings subsume representations of sex, race, and class in American realism due to the restrictive nature of a gender binary (22). Furthermore, Vorlicky considers the realist male-drama canon to be a semiotic system that is so rigidly coded it restricts the spectrum of representations that are available for drama (23). Vorlicky here begins to expose the problem with the restrictive representations of gender and sexuality. Instead of continuing to present these very restrictive roles based on gender and sexuality, he uses the ability to challenge codes to consider alternative appearances.

With an apparatus of heterosexual identities that is established as the culture norm, Vorlicky can identify how to deconstruct these heterosexual identities in order to open up the possibilities for consideration of alternative identities. He notes, however, that when the mechanics within the system are revealed "the playwright has the option —through a radical reworking of the codes of male dialogue—to articulate and stage new types of male subjectivity, new masculinities" (23). Instead of participating in these determinations of gender and sexuality roles, Vorlicky considers how the apparatus of patriarchal ideology can be questioned.

Vorlicky relies upon Elam's concept of semiotics in theatre to help him in further analyzing and understanding the codes broadcast in a production. He asserts that there are cultural codes working in a play because when male characters talk amongst

themselves in various situations, these plays also demonstrate a variety of components that are specific and indigenous to the coherence of the dramatic dialogue (13). Cultural codes in these performances then dictate the thoughts and actions of the characters. Vorlicky provides numerous examples of plays examined through this idea, but there is a selection that particularly touches upon some interesting ideas about sexuality and gender.

Vorlicky analyzes certain plays that place ideas of masculinity and sexuality in uncommon contexts. *Shorts Eyes* (1974), by Puerto-Rican American playwright Miguel Pinero, provides commentary on the tensions masculinity unleashes in a prison, which makes the play a society within society. The story follows Clark Davis, a convicted child molester, who is sent to prison where he discovers the criminals there are harsher than the ones in society (134). Pinero uses the dialogue to construct the environment of the prison; Act I moves from standard social dialogue to physical violence to social dialogue and then back to the violence. This cycle of dialogue becomes broken when only two men are alone to engage in a personal dialogue. However, the interaction between those men changes when the other inmates reenter, activating again a physical and verbal violence cycle (135). The cycle of dialogue signifies an instability in this masculine environment because the language is prone to violent acts when a group of men are in the room.

At the beginning of the play, each inmate establishes the coded duality of their gender roles against another. From their social dialogue, the group of racially mixed men designate Julio "Cupcakes" Mercado, a young, beautiful, adolescent Latino as their object of desire. According to Vorlicky, the character represents the inmates' object of desire because his young, beautiful looks codes him as feminine (135). Cupcakes fulfills the mens' object of desire—femininity since there are no women present in the prison. But Cupcakes' signifiers can also communicate a homosexual desire amongst the men because the males in this environment are attracted to one male. While Cupcake's appearance substitutes for the prisoners' desires for femininity, this situation signifies that if women are removed from a social situation, then their gender identity is placed upon the other men. If Cupcakes was a homosexual in this play, this identity would signify him as an object of desire, which is problematic because this identity of a homosexual is dictated by patriarchal ideals of desire.

Another play examined by Vorlicky shows an interesting interaction between strong masculine order and sexuality. *Streamers* (1976), by David Rabe, takes place during the Vietnam war when four young men recruited for the army have to confront their prejudices towards one another when they learn that one of them is gay (151). When the men become intoxicated, one soldier, Billy, starts up a conversation about homosexuality, revealing that he knows that someone amongst them is gay. This fascination with homosexuality is detailed in a monologue from Billy about how he

finds out that his good friend, Frankie, was gay. He speaks of Frankie's sexuality "as though he became addicted to a drug, one from which he could never unlock or recover" (162). Billy's portrayal of Frankie's sexual orientation as sign creates a meaning that communicates that homosexuality is a problem. Though Billy defines his friend's sexuality, his understanding of it appears to be in opposition with patriarchal ideology.

Savran, Sinfield and Vorlicky's perspectives of American theatre's historical relationship with homosexuality reveal how sexuality and gender have experienced problematic representations that were influenced by ideology from a patriarchal society. Through these sources we see a patriarchal society oppressing and repressing alternative identities based on gender and sexuality. While gay men have had a presence in society and theatre, their identity has been unacknowledged and sometimes invisible due to the incompatibility of their gender and sexual identity when compared to patriarchal ideology.

With an analysis of significant moments and characters in twentieth-century American theatre, it also becomes clear that the ideologies of a patriarchal society restrict considerations of alternative identities within gender and sexuality. This causes the constructions of characters in these plays to align with the strict cultural depictions of male and female identities. Even though questions around gender and sexuality began in the late nineteenth century, *A Doll's House* and other plays produced at that time challenged the representations of gender in a patriarchal society. The plays that

questioned gender roles opened up consideration of how sexuality was understood in a Western patriarchal culture. The earliest questioning and examination of sexuality can be seen in plays like *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Little Foxes.* The American theatre at different times has been a vehicle for questioning the problematic nature of gender and sexuality. To understand this phenomenon, I will examine a selection of plays from the twentieth-century in American theatre that highlight some important issues surrounding gender and sexuality.

A Doll's House: Ibsen Demonstrates the Problem through Realism

A Doll's House, by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, presents images of gender that are reinforced by societal ideology through Realism. According to Judith Barlow, Realism operates in conjunction with ideology by naturalizing the relationship between the world and setting, and the actor and character. The genre depends on this stability of naturalizing these roles because with a purpose of a world as a source of knowledge, Realism reinforces the arrangements and agreements of that world (156). Essentially, Realism mirrors the ideologies and beliefs of a society. Since *A Doll's House* depicts the strict cultural constructions of female and male identities, the play is widely considered to be a part of the theatrical genre Realism. Though the play was first performed in America under the title *The Child Bride* in 1882, it was faithfully translated and given a more accurate title in 1889, which marked the start of Ibsen's fame and the controversy surrounding the story ("Ibsen").

The story of the play is centered around the tense and troubling relationship between Nora and her overbearing husband Torvald. Nora first reveals to Torvald's friend Krogstad that years ago she forged her dead father's signature to obtain a loan when her husband was extremely ill, and that she was secretly paying off the loan. Krogstad, who is desperate to keep his position at the bank and not get fired by Torvald, tries to blackmail Nora and threatens to expose her for the crime she had committed. Nora tries to persuade her husband to not fire Krogstad, but he does not listen to her. At a holiday party, Nora performs a traditional folk dance which Torvald is critical of, calling it a horrible performance and patronizing her for being his play-thing or child. After the party, Nora and Torvald return home where Torvald discovers the letter from Krogstad, exposing Nora's pat crime and sending him into a rage. He further rebukes Nora for being immoral and unfit to be a mother. The maid then brings in another letter for Nora. It is from Krogstad, and it includes the contract with the forged signature and apologizes for the blackmail. Torvald reads the letter with joy and brightens up around Nora, no longer insulting her. Nora then recognizes his control of her gender construction for the first time, and sees that her gender construction allows him to have that power over her. She tells him she is leaving him to go find herself and set herself free. No matter how hard Torvald begs to keep Nora from leaving, Nora walks away from her husband.

What makes the last moment significant in the play is Nora's final defiance against her husband's control. Her action of leaving Torvald signifies that if the female identity separates from patriarchal ideology, the codes that define female gender no longer have influence in defining that gender role. Torvald's power of controlling Nora becomes destroyed once she leaves him, which eliminates his patriarchal dominance. Since the play does not have a moment of reconciliation (because Nora walks away from her husband), Toril Moi asserts that this became a defining characteristic of Realism. Moi cites Fredrik Petersen to explain that through deliberately withholding reconciliation, Realism demonstrates that it has lost faith in the influence of the divine (Moi 259). With a feminist perspective applied through semiotics, Realism resists the code for reconciliation to ignore the effect from patriarchal ideology. Here, the constructions of gender identity are questioned because Nora refuses to reconcile signals that she does not wish to continue to participate with society's strict ideology of gender. As Moi continues to observe *A Doll's House* critique on idealism, she notes that the play is calling for a radical transformation of institutions and laws, but also human beings and their views of love (Moi 256). The author points out that the roles of Torvald's idealism and Nora's opposition to it "make them theatricalize both themselves and each other, most strikingly by taking themselves to be starring in various idealist scenarios of female sacrifice and male rescue" (Moi 257). Again, Torvald's image of a dominant man signifies him as a representation of patriarchal ideology while Nora's

opposition to it signals an opposing force that begins to challenge these ideologies of gender constructions. In addition, Nora's resistance to being defined as a mother and wife is a rejection of the role of women in society and family, which helps mark the transition of women from being labeled as a member of the family to becoming individuals (Moi 258). The resistance signifies a separation between an individual's identity from other codes and signs that define the strict cultural construction of female.

Moi mentions that much later after *A Doll's House* premiere, Ibsen insisted that he never wrote his plays with social or political philosophy in mind. He stated at the Norwegian Association for the Cause of Women in 1898 that he considered himself more of a poet and less of a philosopher, adding: "'I am not even quite clear what the cause of women really is. For me it has appeared to be the cause of human beings. My task has been to portray human beings'" (Moi 261). While many scholars have attempted to theorize that Ibsen was promoting the cause of women, his primary focus with *A Doll's House* and many of his other plays was to provide commentary on the problems and actions of human beings.

Though scholars' interpretations of a text can differ from the intention of the playwright, Realism's display of actions, symbols, and signs on stage offers an opportunity to critique the messages and ideas within the text. Barlow argues though that Realism as a genre naturalizes the relationship between the actor and character, world and setting, causing Realism to operate within ideology. She further states that

Realism reinforces these arrangements of ideology through an insistence of stability as reference, making the world objective as a guarantor and source of knowledge (Barlow 156). Therefore, Barlow asserts that Realism cannot be used as a method for social criticism because its methods undermine the goals of this criticism (Barlow 156). Realism cannot be used for providing criticism on social problems because it has the potential to reflect the ideology of a particular culture. Though it is true that Realism can reinforce cultural ideals and beliefs from a society, the genre can also help demonstrate opposition to the influence of ideology from a patriarchal society.

To fully comprehend these specific actions of defying gender constructions from society, Unni Langas notes that Ibsen's presentation of the play demonstrates how women were affected by the patriarchal system and how gender operates through performed and spoken acts (148). He interprets from theologian Marcus Jacob Monrad that gender is biologically determined and tied to social class where the woman is considered subordinate to the superior man (Langas 149). If this is viewed through semiotics, the image of the female is supported and dominated by the inherited superiorness from ideologies in religion. For example, when Torvald tried to plea to Nora to not go, he states, "Why not try to understand your place in your home? Haven't you got a dependable guide in things like—your religion?" (Ibsen 113). Religion in this case becomes code to communicate that its purpose is to keep the gender constructions in line with patriarchal ideology. Additionally, Torvald further attempts to assert his

dominant role as a man by saying "But if religion can't put you on the right path, then let me prick your conscience. You have some moral sense, don't you?" (Ibsen 114). What Torvald tries to remind Nora is that her moral obligation is to be a caring wife and mother to the children. By reminding Nora of her duty as a mother and wife, Torvald tries to signify his image as male to keep social order in place because he represents the ultimate idealized image of a male in society. Despite this, his pleas to keep Nora from leaving only demonstrate how society and religion place problems and restrictions on the female identity. Langas supports this idea by citing that Torvald fails to call upon religion and societal institutions because Nora has discovered that these institutions were predominantly problems thrust upon her (Langas 150). By identifying the restrictive nature of societal and religious ideology, Nora helps begin the separation and deconstruction of the patriarchal ideology placed upon the female identity. The restrictive elements placed upon Nora's culturally assumed female identity is motherhood and her expected devotion and care for her husband.

With Torvald's failure to keep Nora under his patriarchal influence, her action of defying him offers her an attempt to be free from this ideology. To highlight Nora's start of defiance towards her husband, Langas notes that "Nora's final encounter with Helmer [Torvald] is, for instance, marked by a change of clothes followed by a change of language" (Langas 152). For example, in Act III, Nora changes out of her holiday costume and into everyday clothes. She then sits Torvald down and tells him, "Do you

realize that this is the first time that we two, you and I, man and wife, have had a serious conversation?" (Ibsen 109). The change in her clothes signifies her effort to get Torvald's attention and to begin resisting the image of the female identity in society. Langas partially agrees with this notion by commenting that Nora does this to be taken seriously by her husband, but he does not understand what she means by being taken seriously (Langas 152).

There is a moment, however, where Nora performs an action that has been traditionally coded to be performed by the male gender. At the beginning of the play, she reveals how she forged her father's signature to get a loan. Langas illustrates that she was not legally allowed to perform this financial transaction because she was a married woman (157). In terms of semiotics, her action of forging a signature signifies her attempt to ignore her culturally constructed gender as a female. Although this is not the first time a play has depicted the problem of gender in society in theatre, it is important to acknowledge how *A Doll's House's* use of Realism highlights that there is gender trouble going on and how gender can oppose that construction and influence from society.

***The Little Foxes*: A Critique of Capitalism and Gender**

The problem with the representation of gender in American society is encountered again in Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* (1939). The play takes place in 1900 in the deep South and tells the story of Regina Hubbard and her struggle for

financial independence from her husband, Horace, resulting in the unhappiness of her marriage. When Mr. Marshall, a business man from Chicago, agrees to help the family create a cotton mill in the town, Regina tries to convince her husband to invest in the new mill. However, Horace refuses, so her brothers, Ben and Oscar, arrange to have his bonds moved to a safe deposit and make a deal with Mr. Marshall without Regina's involvement. When Horace finds out that funds are missing and states that he has no plans to replace it, Regina rebukes him, causing him to stuffer from a heart attack. Regina refuses to help him take his medicine to stay alive. As Horace scrambles to a crawl to obtain his medicine to save his life, he collapses and dies on the stairs. As Ben and Oscar arrive to find Horace dead on the stairs, Regina confronts the brothers about the whereabout of the bonds. After Oscar and Ben try to deny that nothing has happened to the money, Regina threatens to sue them for stealing the bonds unless she is given 75% ownership of the investment. Regina's apparent triumph in financial independence is squashed when Ben finds it strange that Horace died at the bottom of the stairs while her daughter threatens to leave her because she no longer trusts her mother's actions.

The gender problem becomes further complex by the continuing dominance of the male identity over the female identity while showcasing three different female's interaction and sometimes reaction to society's ideologies. Regina, Birdie, and Alexandra all represent different female identities that are heavily influenced by

ideologies within a patriarchal society. However, Regina and Alexandra's position in this society shifts at the end of the play while Birdie's remains trapped by it. Barlow asserts that Hellman utilized Realism in her plays as a method to expose and explore the narrowly inscribed gender roles from capitalist society and "counter the demeaning portraits of women typically proffered by male playwrights" (168). Here, Hellman is demonstrating through Regina, Birdie, and Alexandra a test and resistance of patriarchal ideologies.

Regina overtly rejects the feminized role of caregiver in patriarchal society by refusing to help Horace take his medicine. As Horace struggles to breathe, Regina tells him "I'd have known that you would die before I would. But I couldn't have known that you would get in trouble so early and so bad. I'm lucky, Horace. I've always been lucky" (Hellman 233). After Horace dies on the stairs to reach his medicine, Regina does not move at all from her seat until she doesn't hear anything else (Hellman 234). Regina's action signifies her refusal to perform her duties as a woman to help her husband. Her still movement also expresses a code that communicates her performing her own identity and not that of the gender code of culturally constructed female identity. As she attempts to resist patriarchal ideologies to dictate her actions as a female, she gains control of her husband's fortune. It is interesting that her still movement aides her only at a time when her husband is on the verge of dying. Unlike Nora in *A Doll's House* who physically walked away from Torvald, Regina only needs to

sit still and let Horace's poor health give her the freedom from patriarchal ideologies. Barlow supports this idea by noting that Regina wants to "shape a narrative for herself beyond the boundaries set by her husband, brothers, and the patriarchal society in which she lives" (167).

Birdie, Oscar's wife, represents a restricted cultural female construction because she is constantly ordered to follow and obey the men surrounding her. One day she warns Alexandra that she will eventually end up like her and not have a day of happiness to herself. She cautions Alexandra about this upcoming event by telling her "that's the way you'll be. And you'll trail after them, just like me, hoping they won't be so mean that day or say something to make you feel so bad" (Hellman 227). Birdie's plea to Alexandra reveals that she is forever trapped and controlled to continue participating in a patriarchal society within her female identity. Furthermore, this signifies her attempt to warn other female identities to not suffer the same fate as she has endured. While her gender code expresses the full identity of a female in society by obeying the men around her, part of her plea could be considered a cry to the next generation to stop the mistreatment.

Alexandra is obedient towards her mother and father at the beginning, but after Horace's death, she begins to defy her mother's commands. After Horace's death, Regina tells Alexandra in the final act that she wants her to come to Chicago with her. But Alexandra refuses to go, telling Regina "You only change your mind when you

want to, I won't want to" (Hellman 247). Her mother tries to convince her daughter that she does not have to go with her, but she would like to keep her with her. Alexandra responds by stating that she had heard from her father and their maid, Addie, that there are some people who eat the earth and then there are other people who who stand around and watch them do it (Hellman 247). She then asks Regina to tell Ben "I'm not going to stand around and watch you do it. Tell him I'll be fighting as hard as he'll be fighting some place where people don't just stand around and watch" (Hellman 247). Alexandra's defiance towards her mother signals her intention to not be controlled by some outside force (Regina and society) and to think independently on her own. In terms of gender, she is forming her own identity independent of her mother's because she does not want to gain the same behavior and commit the same actions Regina has. During the course of the play, Regina tries to put on male behavior to secure financial independence away from men, but she loses because Alexandra rejects the patriarchal authority Regina took on before and after the death of Horace. Alexandra refuses to accept society's cultural construction of a female by not allowing her mother to continue to be an influence on her. Barlow holds a similar belief by stating that "this conclusion [Alexandra standing up to Regina] points not toward the re-inscription of some previous social structure but to the hope of creating a new order—still undefined—based on sharply different values" (162-163).

While Hellman utilizes Regina, Birdie, and Alexandra to not only test and challenge the ideologies placed on women, Barlow argues that *The Little Foxes* questions and interrogates the traditional belief of women's domestic roles (161). Barlow outlines that "By locating *Foxes* in the home, Hellman demystifies the relationship between the domestic on the one hand and the economic and political on the other" (161).Though it could be argued that Hellman wrote this play through a feminist perspective, her main goal was to reveal how capitalism was a problem and demonstrate its effects on gender through Regina, Birdie, and Alexandra.

***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*: Oppressed Desires and Identities**

While *A Doll's House* and *The Little Foxes* started to question the problem of gender and its representation in society, Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) gives exposure to the possibility of an oppressed homosexual identity. The play profiles a powerful Southern family in the Mississippi Delta. As they celebrate the birthday of Big Daddy, the family members hide the truth of his illness from him and his wife, Big Mama. In the middle is the tense relationship between an alcoholic former football hero, Brick, and his sexually frustrated wife, Maggie "the Cat," who tries to confront Brick about his apparent relationship with his friend Skipper. She also pressures Brick to help her conceive a child to secure her marriage and inherit the family estate to ensure economic survival. Big Daddy then corners Brick and coerces him to tell what happened to Skipper while bribing him with liquor. Brick angrily

questions whether he is thinking he is queer. Brick finally reveals to Big Daddy that Skipper called him one night drunk and made a confession, but Brick did not respond and hung up on him, which became the last time he spoke with Skipper.

Maggie's constant display of sexual frustration reinforces her desire to be pregnant with a child with Brick so she can save her relationship with him. Since she is not able to conceive a child with Brick at that moment, her persona as Maggie the Cat also reinforces her desire to conceive. In terms of semiotics, Maggie's image as a sexual and fertile cat eager to become pregnant confirms her strict gender role as a straight female in society. When Brick asks her why she is catty, Maggie responds by saying "Cause I'm consumed with envy and eaten up with longing" (Williams 36). The envy stems from the jealousy Maggie has for the five children that Mae has with Gooper. Maggie refers to Mae as the "monster of fertility," creating another motivation for Maggie to become pregnant because Maggie tells Brick, "Mae an' Gooper are plannin' to freeze us out of Big Daddy's estate because you drink, and I'm childless" (Williams 52). With Mae and Gooper's large family threatening her current relationship with Brick and right to inherit the family wealth, her only option is to have a child with him. By attempting to become a mother, Maggie is desperate to fulfill her patriarchal construction as a female.

In contrast to Maggie's urge to become pregnant, Brick resists her advances and motivations completely. As his name suggests, his personality and responses are

semiotically similar to that of a brick due to his alcoholism and withdrawal after the death of his friend Skipper. He tries to hold onto the relationship he had with Skipper when he tells Big Daddy, "Skipper and me had a clean, true thing between us!—had a clean friendship, practically all our lives, till Maggie got the idea you're talking about" (Williams 117). What Brick appears to be resisting is an acknowledgement of how his relationship with Skipper was probably more than just a friendship. In combination with resistance towards Maggie, his alcoholism and torn relationship with Skipper, he represents an image of a male that is weaker and not as strong as the ideally strong man in a patriarchal society. The opposite of the weak, male image is Gooper, Brick's brother, who is a successful corporate lawyer. Gooper's image clearly signifies him as the perfect ideal image of the male identity in a patriarchal society. But since he has a tense relationship with his father, Gooper is not regarded as the perfect male. For example, when he is talking to Big Mama, and Maggie about Big Daddy in Act III, he says that he always resented how Big Daddy favored Brick over him and how he was treated like he was "barely good enough to spit on and sometimes not even good enough for that" (Williams 150). It is ironic then that Big Daddy has more partiality towards Brick instead of Gooper because Brick does not fit the mold of the ideal male since he is weakened by alcohol and has not produced any children with Maggie. Though Gooper has a large family with Mae and an established career as a lawyer, Big

Daddy does not respect his accomplishments to fulfill his patriarchal male gender construction.

While Maggie and Brick have difficulties settling into the parameters of their heterosexual gender constructs, Big Mama and Big Daddy's gender roles fulfill the constructions of the standard mother and father of a family. Big Mama is a gentle and protective mother. For example, she accuses Maggie that there is a problem between her and her son Brick because she states, "Something's not right! You're childless and my son drinks!" (Williams 46). At this moment, Big Mama can be signified as a reinforcing element of patriarchal ideology because she is sensing something is out of order based on the fact that Maggie and Brick do not seem to be fulfilling their gender roles by having a child. Similarly, Big Daddy also serves as a strengthening element of patriarchy because of his attempts to keep his son Brick in line with the same ideology about a strong male identity. He tells Brick, "Life is important. There's nothing else to hold onto. A man that drinks is throwing his life away. Don't do it, hold onto your life. There's nothing else to hold onto" (Williams 82). If semiotics is applied to alcohol, it signifies it as a element that hinders and weakens the strong male identity in a patriarchal society.

Big Daddy mistreats Big Mama consistently to maintain his centralized position as the patriarch of the family. When Big Mama pulls Reverend Tooker to sit on her lap at Big Daddy's party, he angrily shouts at her, "...WILL YOU QUIT HORSIN'?—You're too

old an' too fat fo' that sort of crazy kid stuff an' besides a woman with your blood pressure—she had two hundred last spring!—is riskin' a stroke when you mess around like that" (Williams 66). Big Daddy is trying to patriarchally enforce upon Big Mama her culturally expected feminine identity to behave like a lady. In terms of semiotics, his negative reception of her old age and large weight signifies that her identity is not perfectly aligned with the ideal female gender construction. Later, as Big Daddy accuses Big Mama of taking control over the family and business while he had problems with cancer, he tells her "Ida, because I'm not gonna die, you can just stop now this business of taking over because I'm not dying" (Williams 74). By reminding Big Mama that he had a presence, Big Daddy continues to reinforce patriarchal ideology and control to communicate his masculine order over his environment.

With the lack of Brick identifying his sexuality and relationship with Skipper, many scholars have attempted to reason why Williams did not fully disclose Brick's true sexual identity. John S. Bak, in his article "'Sneakin' and Spyin' from Broadway to the Beltway: Cold War Masculinity, Brick, and Homosexual Existentialism," asserts that Brick's resistance to classify his relationship with Skipper was due to his inability to understand or define homosexuality because of the pressures from Cold War society (Bak 227). He asserts that "performing one's heteromasculinity required much more than being manly and hating queers, which Brick was successful at doing, with society calling for evidence of a sexual identity that homosexuality (which could equally

achieve both) could not faithfully reproduce" (Bak 245). The Cold War society favored the replication of the nuclear family, which is the backbone of consumerist American society (Bak 245). From this example, the identity of the homosexual is signified as an object that is not compatible with American society because it did not carry on the traditional image of the family.

In addition, heteromasculinty can be imagined as a code for dismissing and hiding homosexuality and keeping intact the ideologies of the heterosexual family social structure in a patriarchal society. Bak also notes that Williams frequently denied to the press that Brick was homosexual, which can be seen as an attempt for Brick to redefine his heterosexual role by acknowledging that he had a desire for another man, or accept society's then vague definition of homosexuality. Instead, he chooses to run away from a definition because according to Bak, Brick's "recourse is through the bottle and not through suicide, as was Skipper's, alcoholism becomes the perfect cover—socially and physiosexually—to justify his impotence, and hence his refusal to confront or exclaim the truth of his sexual identity" (Bak 247). Again, alcohol becomes signified as a tool to mask the identity of the homosexual through panic and denial so the male can reconfirm his heterosexuality.

In *Homosexual Panic of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* Douglas Arrell argues that Brick is an example of homosexual panic because when he is confronted with the possibility that his relationship with his football buddy Skipper may have been homosexual, he

sexually shuts down (Arrell 72). By sexually shutting down, Brick's gender code freezes, making it harder to define what his true sexuality is because he is afraid to confirm what it might be. Arrell acknowledges this point by noting that this is a male character who has little knowledge of himself and distances himself away from any behavior that might reveal or arouse his sexual identity (Arrell 67). His representation of male gender can then be communicated as a sign that he is sexually unavailable. Arrell further supports this idea by explaining that "Homosexual panic is a profoundly negative phenomenon, especially when it takes the form of 'sexual anesthesia'" (Arrell 67). The fear of understanding one's sexuality in this case causes the identity of a gay man to become oppressed and continue to be dictated by patriarchal ideology to realign with the strict gender construction of a heterosexual male.

According to Bak, Tennessee Williams denied in the press after the opening of *Cat* in 1955 on Broadway that Brick was a homosexual because he believed that the character's relationship with Skipper was only a close friendship (226). While Williams privately admitted to being gay, his insistence to regard Brick as a heterosexual signals an attempt to avoid discussion of his sexuality. Bak supports this notion by stating that it would have been dangerous for Williams during the 1950's to write about homosexuality openly because there were Congressional witch-hunts seeking out artists who were gay (226-227).

The Portrayal of Gay Men in *The Boys in the Band*

As Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* showcases how homosexuality is repressed by the family unit, Mart Crowley's play *The Boys in the Band* displays multiple identities and personalities of gay men on the stage. According to John Rickard, *The Boys in the Band* was "the first 'commercial' play not only to deal with homosexuality, but in which all but one of the characters were self-identified homosexuals" (Rickard 9). Timothy Scheie adds that audiences "witnessed for the first time a group of men discussing their sex lives, dancing together, kissing, and even having sex on the mainstream stage" (Scheie 1).

The story takes place in a New York City apartment on the Upper East Side where nine acquaintances gather to throw a party for one of their friends. Michael, a lapse Roman Catholic, is undergoing psychoanalysis; Donald, his friend, moved away from the city to get away from the homosexual lifestyle; Harold, the birthday boy who is turning thirty is concerned with losing his youthful looks; Bernard, an African American who vies for the attention of a wealthy white man; Emory, who acts extremely girlish and flamboyant; and Hank and Larry, a couple that lives together but does not agree on the issue of monogamy. Tensions rise when Michael tries to hide his sexuality from his apparently straight, old college roommate, Alan, who arrives at the party in an uneasy emotional state. More chaos ensues once Emory gives Harold his birthday present, a hustler named Cowboy.

While all of these characters represent different identities of gay men, some of them have noticeably strong characteristics that create their own gender codes that are separate from the straight male identity. For example, Michael and Donald used to be in a relationship but are now good friends. Their snappy interactions reveal how their identities are not completely influenced by patriarchal society, but are instead constructed within their own culture. As they are getting ready before their friends arrive, Michael tells Donald he'll know the same "fairies" he has met before (Crowley 6). When Donald asks Michael if he is calling him a tired fairy or screaming queen, Michael replies by saying "Oh, I beg your pardon—six tired screaming fairy queens and one anxious queer" (Crowley 6). Queens, fairies, and queers are all signifiers for a gay male, but in this queer culture, these images communicate identities that are somewhat separate from patriarchal ideologies. The effeminate qualities of these constructions borrow ideological elements of the female identity by taking these standards and placing them on a male body. The male body in this play disrupts the straight male identity by utilizing feminine traits of the female identity to create different gender codes and sexualities.

While Michael and Donald feel free to express their identities as gay men, other characters appear resistant to being associated with a queer identity. Alan is considered a closeted character because he is accused by Michael of being gay. When Michael accuses him of previously being in a relationship with another man named Justin, Alan

tries to tell Michael that is wrong because it never happened. As Michael keeps egging him on about it, insisting it did happen because Justin told him, Alan says he had to drop Justin as a friend because he wanted to be his lover. But Michael tells him that "You ended the friendship, Alan, because you couldn't face the truth about yourself" (Crowley 105). Alan's attempt to deny the relationship signifies his actions as a way to confirm his straight male identity. Michael's insistence of exposing Alan's supposedly gay identity can be viewed as a tool to challenge the straight male construct by stripping away the patriarchal ideologies attached to it.

In turn, Michael may not also like his identity as a gay man. After Michael embarrasses Alan when he phones his wife, Harold confronts him and says, "You're a homosexual and you don't want to be. But there is nothing you can do to change it" (108). After everyone leaves, Michael cries hysterically to Donald about what happened, telling him, "If we could just *learn* not to hate ourselves quite so much" (111). When Harold accuses Michael of trying to become a heterosexual, he communicates that Michael's identity cannot fit within patriarchal ideology because his construction of a gay male is not compatible with the image of the straight male. But Michael's plea about "not hating ourselves" notes that he wants his and other identities to be accepted for what they are. Timothy Scheie supports this statement by explaining that these portrayals of gay men "refutes the commonsensical notion that increased visibility constitutes an unequivocal gesture of empowerment for a historically invisible and

oppressed minority" (Scheie 2). While an increased acknowledgement of an unrepresented group of people might recieve more recognition and examination of their identity, it is not always guaranteed that this increased visibility can liberate and empower them as well. The gay men in *The Boys and Band* appear to be content with how they personally represent themselves around people similar to them, but in the end they are still aware and experience the oppressive and restrictive nature of patriarchal ideology.

M. Butterfly: A Different View of Gender and Sexuality

While Crowley's *The Boys in the Band* reveals how patriarchal ideology continues to oppress the identity of gay men, David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* challenges the influence of patriarchal ideology by considering the fluidity of gender and sexuality. The play is based on the true story of a French diplomat who engages in a twenty-year affair with a Chinese opera singer and actor, and does not realize this his partner is a man pretending to be a woman. We first meet the french diplomat Gallimard in prison as he takes us through flashbacks of his affair with Song Liling, a performer for the Peking Opera. He first met Song while watching her perform *Madame Butterfly*; becoming infatuated with her, he then starts to have an affair with Song. Unfortunately, the romance between the two is complicated by the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Gallimard being accused of treason by the French government. Song reveals his true identity as a man to Gallimard during the court trial, but Gallimard rejects Song's

revelation and efforts to convince him that there are still feelings between the two men. Gallimard states that he does not want the truth because what he loved was a fantasy.

In an interview with Hwang about *M. Butterfly,* John Louis DiGaetani helps provide a more in-depth look into the issues of culture, gender, and sexuality. Hwang first mentions that he wrote the play as an attempt to deal with some aspects pertaining to orientalism. While he notes that it can be a criticism or commentary on the Western attitudes placed on the East, Hwang mentions that the East is also guilty of cultural stereotyping too (DiGaetani 141). While the West pushed colonialism upon other cultures, Hwang states that the East culturally stereotyped the West through a "short-term advantage without thinking of the long-term ill effects that reinforcing those racial stereotypes causes. I think both parties are equally guilty" (DiGaetani 142). In terms of semiotics, the East and West can be signified as opposing gendered roles. With the West representing masculinity through the act of domination, colonialism is used to push patriarchal ideologies on to other cultures. In turn, the East represents femininity because it is dominated by western ideology and does not initially realize the effects of how it starts to reinforce "radical stereotypes," or binaries of identities.

Later, when asked about the subject of gender and sexuality in the production, Hwang notes that the play does blur the lines of what is considered straight and gay, with the playwright mentioning that he thinks that Gallimard "knows he's having an affair with a man. Therefore, on some level he is gay" (DiGaetani 145). Gallimard's

relationship with Song then signifies that be could be considered a homosexual, even though Gallimard is under the impression that he is romantically invested in a woman. Hwang also comments that while some can deny that they had an affair with another man, the basic fact remains though that they are sleeping with another male which can can be considered to be a fantasy of believing that they were having an affair with a woman (DiGaetani 145). The gender code that pertains to Gallimard becomes ambiguous because he does not fit into the strict cultural construction of a male. He may be denying his true identity by trying to fulfill his belief that he is male within a patriarchal society. Furthermore, the playwright discusses that one of the main reasons why he chose to use Chinese Opera in his play is because he could explore and question why men in both Chinese Opera and Shakespearean theatre played the roles of women. Hwang also revealed that what he learned from studying Kabuki theatre was that "only a man can be a man's idealization of a woman" (DiGaetani 146). The signifier of the straight male becomes disrupted because this type of male identity has knowledge of how to satisfy the desire for femininity, indicating an appearance of the gay male identity.

The playwright also notes that Song is able to be an effective fantasy for Gallimard since he is a man. She (Song), understands how a man wants to view a woman, which therefore allows him to transform into a man's ideal woman (DiGaetani 146). During the final moments, Song stands up and defiantly declares to Gallimard,

"Men. You're just like the rest of them. It's all in the way we dress, and make up our faces, and bat our eyelashes. You really have so little imagination!" (Hwang 67). In terms of gender and sexuality, Song represents a different gender identity that understands the straight male and female image in order to display the signifiers of femininity the straight male identity wants. At this point, Song reinforces the strict cultural construction of the female identity by using his male body to mimic its desirable properties as dictated by the ideologies of that construction in a patriarchal society. Hwang's explanation of Song's ability to fulfill the image of woman for another man explains why Gallimard states at the end, "I'm a man who loved a woman created by a man. Everything else—simply falls short" (Hwang 66). Gallimard realizes that his love for Song as a woman was created by someone of the same sex. The image of a woman is now reduced to an idea that communicates and represents the internal desires of the straight male identity.

How *Cloud 9* Turns Gender and Sexuality on its Head

The boundaries of sexuality and gender are further pushed and tested by Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*. In Act I, the story begins in British Colonial Africa during the Victorian era to establish the strict structure of a patriarchal society. The influence of patriarchal ideology is enforced through Clive, an officer of the British Empire. He introduces all of his family members and demonstrates his authority over their identities. His wife, Betty, who is played by a man, expresses her complete devotion to

Clive because "what men want is what [she] want[s] to be" (4). The servant of the family is an African named Joshua, who is played by a white man. As a loyal servant, he regards his master Clive as his guiding light and like Betty, similarly states, "what white men want is what [he] want[s] to be" (4). Clive then introduces his son, Edward. He wants to teach his son "to grow up to be a man" (4). But while Edward looks like a boy, he is played a female actor. Clive then only acknowledges the presence of his daughter (Victoria, played by a dummy), mother-in-law (Maud, Betty's mother), and governess (Ellen).

After Clive presents the family to the audience, he starts to interact with Betty by swapping stories of their daily activities. When Clive learns from Betty that Joshua has been rude to her, he scolds Joshua for his actions. Harry, an explorer and friend of Clive's, stops by to visit the family. Mrs. Saunders, a widow, arrives to find protection from the natives. When Harry meets, Joshua, he asks him privately to have sex with him, prompting them to have it behind the barn. After Clive tries to chase Mrs. Saunders away from the house, he argues with her and then performs oral sex on her. Clive and Harry play a game of handball with Edward, which then turns into a game of hide and seek, where Harry and Edward reveal that they have had a sexual relationship. While Edward wants to reopen the relationship, Harry is unwilling. During that time, Ellen professes her love to Betty. Betty in turn regards what Ellen says as ridiculous. Clive and the men later try to sort out the natives by beating them, but

this causes tensions to further rise between the natives and the British Empire. After Clive tells Harry about the situation, Harry shows Clive affection by hugging him. Clive is disgusted by this, which causes Harry to reveal his homosexuality. Clive then tries to convince Harry to marry a woman to cure him of his problem, like Mrs. Saunders. However, Mrs. Saunders refuses to marry Harry, but reveals that Joshua's parents have been killed by British troops, prompting Clive to offer his condolences to Joshua. Clive then forces Harry and Ellen to marry. At the wedding party, as Clive toasts the newly engaged couple, Joshua raises a gun to shoot Clive. Edward sees this happen but does not say anything.

In Act II, the characters age by twenty-five years, but the action now takes place in modern day London. The characters switch gender roles again. Betty is played by a woman, Edward is played by a man, and a five year old Cathy, the daughter of Martin and Lin, is played by a man. Victoria, a dummy baby in Act I, is now played by a female actor. While Cathy moves away from her mother to play elsewhere, Lin tells Victoria that she is lesbian. When Victoria and Lin go to the movies, they are accompanied by Edward, now a gardner, and Betty, who considers leaving Clive. Later, Edward gets in an argument with his lover Gerry over his lack of commitment to their relationship, causing Gerry to break up with Edward. During one night of the summer, Victoria, Edward, and Lin hold a ceremony for a sex goddess in the park. When Martin comes looking for Victoria, he gets pulled into the beginning of the orgy. Lin's dead brother

then makes an appearance to reveal his experience in the army, causing Lin to collapse. Then, the characters from Africa start to make some appearances and interact with some London characters. As Betty later reveals that she has rediscovered the joy of masturbation, Gerry and Edward reconcile and plan to go out some time in the future. While getting some ice cream Cathy gets beat up by the Dead Hand Gang (a group of boys), causing Martin and Lin to fight over who was suppose to be watching her. Betty comes to terms with the fact that Edward is gay when she has a chat with Gerry. Betty from Africa then returns to embrace the modern Betty.

Dimple Godiwala's article "'The performativity of the dramatic text': domestic colonialism and Caryl Churchill's Cloud Nine" provides an explanation on Churchill's choices of problematizing the issues of sexuality and gender through her characters. She comments that the play places British Imperialism in colonial Africa by domestically critiquing the nuclear family in the West (Godiwala 8). The story explores the parallels that sit between colonization of races, the subjugation of gender from patriarchy, and the gendered and sexual process from culture. All these subjects are explored in the colonial Africa setting (Godiwala 9). Therefore, colonial Africa signifies the ideologies of a patriarchal society because it serves as a setting that allows for these strict cultural constructions of gender and sexuality to be formed.

Godiwala notes that Churchill questions the subordination of gays, children, women, and color by reversing the roles. Betty the wife is played by a male because she

wants to become what men what her to be, while Joshua, the black servant is played by a white man "as the latter educates and constructs the black man in his own image, fostering Western norms and values in the colonized" (Godiwala 9). In terms of semiotics, the reversal of gender and race directly challenges cultural constructions of gender identity by changing the gender code externally to hide and disrupt hidden and known identities. What becomes hidden within Betty's identity is her different gender code because a male identity is performing the female construct, disrupting society's accepted ideology of the female identity. Furthermore, the role of Edward played by a woman in the first act "points to gendering as a cultural process—Edward likes to play with dolls, Edward is sexually attracted to males" (Godiwala 9). Edward's identity as a male is disrupted because he performs actions that are ideologically associated with the female identity, which leads to his signifiers communicating the gender codes of a male identity through the physical body of a female actor. His first appearance in Act I as a boy signifies that he has a homosexual identity. Bascially, since he likes to play with dolls and is sexually attracted to men (he engages in a sexual relationship with Harry Bagley, a friend of Clive's), his actions cause a disruption of his culturally constructed straight male identity by performing through female gender codes.

In Act II, Godiwala demonstrates how Cathy is played in the second act. She is played by a man because the presence of a man on stage was appropriate as the emotional force of young children. But, similar to Edward's purpose in the first act,

Cathy's portrayal by a man highlights the issues involved with learning and understanding what is considered the correct behavior of a girl (Godiwala 16). Cathy playing with toy guns and a rifle, and her friends (the Dead Hand Gang), along with aggressive behavior "reflect the theory that gendering is a cultural process rather than a biological one, and that aggression and crudity, far from being innate to the male, are, rather, learned and acquired behavior patterns" (Godiwala 16). Cathy's image of a young girl illustrates how male behavior can be placed on any gender identity because it is culturally infused in their gender code. By playing with toys and possessing aggressive behavior that is typically portrayed by straight males, Cathy signifies that gender is fluid and performative, making gender codes based upon actions. While patriarchal ideology attempts to create and culturally pass along strict cultural constructions of male and female identity, the elements of those constructions can be mixed up and not fully establish those images. Instead, the gender codes are attached to these identities which allows for different gender identities to be recognized.

AIDS and Gays: Honest Representations from *Angels in America*

Tony Kushner's two part play *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* exposed the hidden identity of straight men in politics who turned out to be gay while also revealing how the spread of AIDS became a plight for the gay community. When Prior Walter discovers that he has AIDS, his partner, Louis, leaves him and starts to have an affair with another man, Joe Pitt, a Mormon appeals court judge who is a log

cabin (closeted gay) Republican. Joe leaves his wife, Harper, for Louis, but his mother, Hannah, follows Joe to set things right. Meanwhile, Joe's colleague, the conservative, homophobic and cruel Roy Cohn, becomes infected with AIDS. While Prior's conditions worsen because of AIDS, he is called upon as a prophet by the Angel to do the "Great Work." Here, there is a clash of identities and backgrounds which challenge the audiences' perspectives of how the gay community is affected by homophobia, AIDS, politics, and religion.

Roy Cohn tries to constantly reaffirm his heterosexuality, despite his desire to have sex with other men. He tells his doctor "This is reality. I have sex with men" (Kushner 52). In terms of semiotics, Roy's identity as a heterosexual man is not completely in sync with the ideologies of a straight male identity in society. What makes it out of sync is that he is sexually attracted to men. When he learns from his doctor that he has AIDS, he tries to deny this by stating "AIDS is what homosexuals have. I have liver cancer" (Kushner 52). Here, Roy tries to assert that AIDS can be signified as a disease that is only relatable to gay men which he claims is not a part of his identity. The problem is that he is in the closet by not wanting to admit his true sexuality. Savran supports this idea by noting that *Angels* works to actively "interrogate and undermine the binary opposition between public and private and, indeed expose the presence of (usually closeted) gay men in American political culture" (Savran 63). Therefore, one of Kushner's goals as a playwright for this play is to reveal the existence of closeted U.S.

politicians during the AIDS epidemic and question how these people operate within their private and public lives. It also challenges the oppressive influence of patriarchal ideology on men who resist and or struggle to accept the true nature of their sexuality.

Another character who tries to oppress his sexuality in politics is Joe, the Mormon court of appeals judge. He tries to hide his sexuality initially when he meets Louis, but eventually gets in a relationship with him. When Joe questions Louis why he would want to take him home, Louis says "Strange bedfellows. I don't know. I never made it with one of the damned before" (Kushner 123). While Joe's willingness to go to bed with Louis disrupts his signifiers for a straight male identity, it reveals another side of his identity that goes against his culturally constructed gender. His oppressed sexuality is what labels him as a closeted gay man. It is activated by Louis, who represents the queer male identity. His identity at this moment signifies that he represents the sexual nature of the gay identity in men because he helps reveal the hidden queer signifier in Joe. Though gay men are defined by their sexuality, their gender code differs from the straight male and straight female identity. By being sexually attracted to the same sex, the queer male identity separates itself from the ideologies of gender maintained by a patriarchal society.

Conclusion: How do we solve the problem?

With gender and sexuality constantly restricted and influenced by the ideologies of a patriarchal society, it is necessary to investigate how gender and sexuality are

constructed within these frames. By exploring how this occurs, we will be able to consider different identities based on sexuality and gender in society. In Chapter Two, an examination of arguments from Judith Butler, Sue-Ellen Case, and Diane Torr will be conducted to observe how gender and sexuality is restricted by patriarchal society. Furthermore, these arguments will be analyzed through semiotics to determine how signs and codes reinforce these depictions of gender and sexuality and how it can deconstruct them too to acknowledge more possible identities.

Methodologies of Butler, Case, and Torr

Introduction

Cheryl Kilodavis discovered one day at home that her five year old son Dyson was attracted to objects that were beautiful, pink, and glamorous. When she picked Dyson up from Day Care, she noticed that he had gained unwanted public attention for wearing pink high heels and a red sequin dress. Dyson was becoming the subject of scrutiny from his peers and teachers at school for dressing up as a girl. This lead Kilodavis to write the picture book *My Princess Boy* in summer 2010 as a teaching tool for instructors, summer camp counselors, day care providers, and leaders of after school programs to confront the issues of bullying while promoting tolerance (Italie). Kilodavis narrates why her son enjoys dressing up, how wonderful he is, and how he feels if someone taunts him for buying items meant for the opposite gender. She notes that "when he buys girl things, [people] laugh at him and then they laugh at me. It hurts us both" (Kilodavis 11). She pleads to her readers to love and accept her "princess boy" for who he is. Kilodavis dedicates the book to all of the princess boys of the world by thanking them for teaching her how to appreciate their uniqueness (Kilodavis 1). Her simple request for tolerance of her son's discovery and observation of his gender identity raises questions with society's cultural views of gender and sexuality. How do the signifiers reinforce patriarchal and ideological images and representations of gender

and sexuality? Can signifiers be used to further investigate and deconstruct these fixed codes and signs related to gender and sexuality?

In this chapter, I will examine a number of observations and theories from various scholars to help examine the problems attached to categorization and limitations set upon sexuality and gender identity in western society. From the analysis of Judith Butler, Sue-Ellen Case, and Diane Torr, semiotics will be applied to investigate how signs and codes for gender and sexuality can be utilized to question ideological viewpoints and push the boundaries of possible identities.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* describes and explains that gender is confined to strict cultural constructions based on ideological perspectives. Essentially, she argues that there is no middle room for multiple gender identities because society's interpretation of gender is tied to biological sex (Butler 6). She offers a tool though to provoke this line of thinking by stating that gender is performative because it is based on expression (Butler 25). In this case, gender is not viewed as a biological marker, but as an individual identity that is uniquely available to every person.

Though Butler begins to combat the problematic restrictions placed upon gender and sexuality, Sue-Ellen Case notes that semiotics can help break down the codes and signs attached to the identities that are restricted by a dominant gender. She theorizes that a questioning of the signs of gender lead to the deconstruction of the connection and alliance between semiotics and patriarchal ideology (Case 114).

As Butler identifies the problem at large, and Case reveals and explains how the deconstruction of the semiotics and ideology can happen, performance artist Diane Torr pushes the issue the furtherest by having the opposite sex study the behavioral patterns of the dominant gender identity. By exploring the inner codes and signs of the dominant gender identity (the straight male), Torr has given women the tools through "Man for Day" Workshops to comprehend and question the perception of identities based on gender and sexuality.

Butler: The Problems Placed Upon Gender and Sexuality

The first site of the problem is two tightly maintained and controlled gender identities: heterosexual male and heterosexual female. These identities reinforce an ideological belief of heteronormativity, where a person is culturally assigned one of these two constructions, making it impossible for any consideration of another gender identity. Judith Butler supports this notion in her book *Gender Trouble.* She establishes the problem by observing that gender intersects with a number of other aspects of class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity that are discursively enforced identities in society (Butler 3). Therefore, according to Butler, "it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" (Butler 3). With gender heavily tied to other components of cultural identities, there is a limited opportunity to question how patriarchal ideology confines gender into tightly controlled binaries. Furthermore, Butler maintains the belief that

gender is related to sex, causing gender to be mirrored with sex and be restricted by sex (Butler 6). In terms of semiotics, gender is a sign that is influenced by a culture to represent patriarchal ideology through codes that convey the images and presence of straight male and female gender.

With restrictions placed upon gender constructions, the heterosexual male identity becomes established as the cultural norm. To maintain this apparent platform of power and normativity, masculinity is applied culturally to suppress femininity because it is not masculine. Butler further demonstrates that dialectical appropriation [ownership and control of the language], and suppression of "Other" is one of many tactics of expanding and rationalizing the masculinist domain (Butler 14). If Bulter's observation of how gender constructions are maintained is viewed through semiotics, then certain signs and codes dominate over another set that are precieved as "Other," (in this case, femininity) which helps expand the platform of the straight male gender identity, pushing away any alternatives.

As gender is restricted by patriarchal ideology from creating and promoting multiple gender identities, sexuality suffers from the same problem, but the situation and circumstances of its restrictions differ. Biologically men and women have different sexual organs and functions, which are automatically categorized into binaries of sex. With two separate categories, the sexuality of both sexes have a cultural problem that is similarly placed upon gender identity. Butler explains that "If sexuality is culturally

constructed within existing power relations, then the postulation of a normative sexuality that is 'before,' 'outside,' or 'beyond' power is a cultural impossibility" (Butler 30).

The power relations that Butler refers to exist in patriarchal ideology, which limits the opportunities for other identities to be recognized, causing a struggle between female and male sexuality. The struggle is acknowledged by Butler as phallic relations of power, which are constructed by "male identified" sexuality that helps realign and redistribute identification within sexuality (Butler 30). If male sexuality is signified as phallic relations of power, then it constitutes a meaning that male sexuality has power and domination over female sexuality. But another way to illustrate this situation is to create a signifier for Phallus (male) and Other (female) based on this line of ideological thought. To support this notion, Butler comments that "To 'be' the Phallus is to be the 'signifier' of the desire of the Other and *to appear* as this signifier" (Butler 44). Bascially, "Other" now becomes a signifier that reflects and represents desire for heteronormative male sexuality.

So are the signs and codes of gender completely regulated from opening up the possibilities of different sets of gender identity and sexuality? There may be a way to disrupt this notion of strict gender identities through a different application of signifiers. According to Butler, gender can open up to multiple identities in terms of divergences and convergences without being obedient to a definitional norm (Butler

16). If more identities are allowed, more signifiers will surely follow and attach themselves to those identities because the construction of identities, and the signifiers of those identities, feed off each other.

The best way to investigate this belief is through performance, meaning that a performance of a gender is used to challenge or change the signifiers related to heteronormative gender identity and sexuality. Butler asserts a similar belief by assessing that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 25). Here, gender is re-imagined as a performance that is dictated by expressions. Since signifiers (along with expressions) and the construction of identities influence each other, the expressions that create a performance of a gender introduces new signifiers for that construction, and vice versa. Furthermore, when a new signifier emerges and changes that identity, it can be modified because of cultural and economically based ideas. For example, the image of the straight male in a business suit wearing a tie (a.k.a. power tie) signifies dominance. With the tie placed in the front of the chest, the straight male here also uses his tie to communicate that his gender is of a high economic and social status. He reinforces the high rank status of his gender by keeping his tie and chest centralized, which signifies the importance of his gender construction. In contrast, the image of a young man wearing low-ride jeans and holding a gun signifies that he is from a lower social and economic rank.

Sue-Ellen Case: Using Semiotics to Deconstruct Gender Constructions

While there is the potential for creating new signifiers and codes to explore multiple identities based on gender and sexuality, it is equally applicable to apply semiotics as a tool to expose the issues surrounding the restrictions placed upon gender and sexuality. For example, while Butler reveals and explains the problems gender and sexuality experience through patriarchal ideology and how these elements influence semiotics, Sue-Ellen Case argues that semiotics can be utilized to pinpoint the problems of gender and sexuality represented in society. Identifying the issues surrounding sexuality and gender can lead to a deconstruction of the cultural codes that are dominant in society. Case explains that once cultural feminists started to break down dominant culture codes that imposed sexualization of women, new discoveries were utilized "in semiotics and reception theory to deconstruct the alliance between sign systems and the patriarchal order" (Case 114). With this process of breaking down the dominant cultural codes, new findings lead to a separation of sign systems and the patriarchal order, which removes the chance of a patriarchal order or ideology from directly influencing the sign system. Here, the method of directly questioning the semiotics of gender and sexuality may begin to help solve the problem in addition to Butler's theory of investigating sexuality and gender through performance and expressions.

Though we can use semiotics to deconstruct patriarchal meanings, there needs to be an examination of how semiotics identifies codes. Cultural coding on a signifier causes ideologies to be placed upon an idea or object that is signified. According to Case, cultural coding is an imprint of ideology on a sign, which is connected to the beliefs, the set of values, and the ways of observation that command the connotations of that sign in a culture (Case 116). When a culture assigns meaning to an object, it enforces biases. If these ideas of semiotics are applied to theatre, it reveals that cultural ideals can directly influence and control all aspects of performance. As explained by Case, when she observes theatre through a feminist perspective, she notices that the dominant notions of gender, race, and class compose the meaning of the text, stage pictures of the production, and the audience's reception of the meaning. Case further asserts that if cultural beliefs are inserted into communication on stage, the set and language no longer appear as utilitarian. Then, the intention of the actor, director, or author might be perceived not as a single independent entity but as a mechanism that works in alliance with the beliefs and ideology of a culture or society (117).

With cultural codes inserted in theatrical communication, cultural signs are established as tools for casting roles in a production. The influence of these cultural codes originates not from the text, but from patriarchal ideology. For example, Case demonstrates how casting decisions in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are determined by cultural codings. Juliet's image usually conforms to a standard of beauty

found in an everyday culture, with these standards controlling the makeup and costumes to showcase in front of an audience her beauty. Juliet then becomes encoded culturally as an image of a female love object. With semiotics applied to this situation, Juliet's image signifies the set cultural criteria for beauty and is objectified as a device that represents female love and desirability. There are also other images of women that follow a prescription of cultural ideology of gender. The image of an ingenue (usually blonde) portrays a cultural attitude of innocence, versus the vamp (often times with dark hair) which represents desirability (Case 117). Again, this illustrates that the semiotics of these images of women are designed to communicate a cultural belief. If viewed from Butler's perspective, this cultural belief appears to be tightly controlled and maintained by a dominating patriarchal ideology.

While Juliet represents that ultimate depiction of female beauty, her lover Romeo fills the void as the ideal image of male beauty. However, his image as the male lover is not entirely similar to the strict cultural construction of the straight male identity. Since the straight male image is not associated with passion, his emotional outbursts of love and devotion could be considered feminine which is viewed as weakness. Interestingly, as an emotional character, his passion for Juliet, causes him to use violent means to protect the idea that he is in love with her killing Juliet's cousin Tybalt and himself in the tomb. With violence fueled by intense passion and love, Romeo's identity reinforces the violent nature of the straight male identity.

The image of women and men is obviously restricted from moving away from a heavily influential ideology in a patriarchal society, but the image of men is not always discussed as a restricted gender construction. Here, the straight male identity is restricted from borrowing elements of femininity in society, which prevents the identity from being considered feminine. However, the identity is given cultural and patriarchal power to dominate and manage femininity. If women were given the opportunity to learn how to embrace male behavior, it could be possible to understand how to operate it as well.

Torr: Putting Women in Men's Shoes

While Case's investigation of semiotics to identify the struggle from strict gender constructions focuses mostly on women, Diane Torr takes a look at the male identity and teaches women in "Man for a Day" workshops about how to use the signifiers of male behavior to act as men and do what they cannot do as women. Torr is not trying to have women conform to societal standards of male behavior, but instead she is encouraging them to explore how that gender construction operates in everyday situations and society. For example, her drag king persona, Danny King, commands presence and authority just by walking into the space, which creates an impression of "innate" masculine entitlement (Torr 1).

To compose Danny King, Torr created a character that carried a lot of authority and an innate sense of superiority to compensate for Diane's short height at five foot

four inches. As a calm and collected character, Danny King's movement is withheld and minimal, but "every gesture is imbued with an energy that is condensed and focused into significance" (Torr 108). To achieve a commanding presence, Danny King simply glares at someone, forcing them to back off it they are invading his space by looking through them to almost say "who the hell are you?" (Torr 108). Torr identifies that a trick here is to "have the confidence never to come out of character" (Torr 108). Furthermore, her use of space as Danny King semiotically implies that she understands how the male identity utilizes space for the purpose of communicating his relation with the same or opposite gender. Torr explains in her workshop that "men tend to assume that they own whatever space they're occupying in a given moment: they won't sit perched on the edge of a chair when they can fill it up completely" (Torr 145). She points out that men do this for a matter of comfort because if a man sits with his legs too close together, his balls can feel pinched (Torr 145). In terms of proxemics (the semiotics of space), a man's presence in a particular space can signify that they are located in this space and can command some notice and attention. Yet, it may also signify that he is comfortable in a space by keeping his legs apart; if his legs are together, he might communicate that he is uncomfortable in the area.

In addition, Danny King's appearance of inherent authority reminds Torr of how her father and uncle behaved when she was a girl. For example, Danny King wears fancy suits, polished shoes and slicked-back hair. Furthermore, the gestures for Torr's

drag persona are similar to her father's. In one example, Torr describes how when her father pulled his earlobe while cupping his elbow in the other hand, it usually signaled that "a row was brewing and the cow-buckle belt would soon be wielded" (Torr 109). By deriving selected aspects of her male family relatives identities as straight men, Torr establishes mannerisms and signifiers that mirror the image of the straight male. She supports this claim by noting that Danny King is a stereotype that represents male authoritarianism because a lot of his gestures come from male behavior in the 1950s and 1960s, making him almost anachronistic.

What Torr is representing is a culturally constructed depiction of a male identity placed on a female body. While there is nothing feminine about her performance as Danny King, it demonstrates that gender is a performance that is based on expression and movement. Stephen Bottoms, the co-author of Torr's book *Sex, Drag, and Male Roles: Investigating Gender as Performance,* supports this thought by commenting that "her apparent ease in exposing this strange artifice of naturalized masculinity is an unsettling reminder that the assumptions men have about their own identities are themselves based on performance, even pretense" (Torr 2). Butler's theory that gender is based on a performance is similar to Torr's work because both authors are challenging the perceptions of strict gender constructs.

Diane Torr's performance of her drag king identity originates from her "Man for a Day" workshops which help women pass as male in the world at large. By viewing

the world temporarily through a male perspective and responding as a male, women participating in this workshop separate themselves from the socialized perception as females (Torr 2). The act of taking a male character developed in a studio and performing it outside as a functioning identity crosses not just the lines between art and life, but also the lines between male and female experience, creating an opportunity to challenge a number of assumptions and constructions (Torr 2). The questioning of these set ideologies could help open up a dialogue about how gender is restricted to tightly controlled constructions, but also the possibility of how semiotics may be applied to investigate how cultural signs and codes help the male identity perform in society and test the boundaries of gender identity. Bottoms confirms that one of Torr's goals from her exploration of the male identity is to test presumed and restrictive boundaries of sex and gender through a performance of the male identity, making the signifiers of the agents of the performed objects subject to scrutiny (Torr 3). The reversal of how the male identity is analyzed supports Butler and Case's statements of how the female identity is dominated and scrutinized by patriarchal ideology. By deconstructing the male identity through a performance investigation, observations and analyses can be made on what the behaviors and actions of the male identity signify.

As noted earlier, Torr theorizes that men tend to occupy a space to signify their presence or authority with movement that is inherently different from female movement when studying the basic movements of everyday people. Torr provides a

demonstration of these different gendered motions by frying an egg in her workshop. While as Danny King, she fries an egg in a linear fashion by completing one task after another by making all of the steps seem purposeful and significant, "as if he's having to think carefully about each step" (Torr 147). In contrast, the presentation of a woman's motions in this situation is more fluid and animated. While multitasking (doing multiple things to prepare the egg efficiently) her movements become defined and almost "vaporous; her fluidity makes her less *visible"* (Torr 147). Torr's observations and displays of everyday actions men and women perform appears to limit male and female identity to move in only two ways: precisely and carefully as a male, or animated and fluidly as female. Her illustration of a woman frying an egg seems to signify that because women possess this feminine quality, they are defined by this type of movement due to how they are suppose to operate in society. Interestingly, Torr acknowledges that these demonstrations are very generalized and notes that her portrayal of this kind of male behavior originates from her observations of men sitting in diners in New York City (Torr 147).

Instead of creating multiple clones of Danny King, Torr tries to encourage women in her workshops to make their own observations to develop their character (Torr 148). But, this opens Torr up to the possibility of being criticized for promoting these strict gendered stereotypes. She combats this criticism by noting that these examples and demonstrations based on her observations are not applicable to all men

and women. However, she does claim that these distinct behaviors hold true for a large proportion of the population (148). In terms of semiotics, if the signs of male behavior are drawn out and observed then it creates a better understanding of how and why one gender acts a certain way. By "sketching out" male behavior, the codes and signs of the male identity are more easily recognized for further exploration of the possibilities of gender identity. So, in order to pull out these signifiers, one must work within the confinements of a stereotype. Torr supports this notion by instructing her participants that they "need to work through the stereotypes in order to get past them in [their] character's distinctive mode of individual behavior" (Torr 148). Furthermore, Torr comments that some women at times become intuitively aware of how to present "straight male behavior" by previously learning what those signals meant in order to protect themselves (Torr 148). These are some interesting discoveries that Torr has made because with women picking up signals in order to protect themselves, it relates to how Butler and Case believe that one gender identity attempts to dominate over the other one. Here, one must learn what these signifiers are to perform them publicly and eventually obstruct them.

But a complete investigation of one gender identity helps paint the full picture of that construction. For example, Torr asks her participants to think of themselves "psychologically" as male because this helps them express their true self vocally as a character (Torr 150). To challenge these gender constructs, one must get into the mind

set of the other gender. This allows not just for the authenticity to pass as a male, but a chance to observe what certain behaviors signify in a culture that idolizes patriarchal ideology.

With women using ideological male attributes in order to be seen and heard, it helps force open a discussion and challenge strict cultural constructions of female and male gender. According to Torr, the issue then solidifies down to a problem of the tightly controlled perception of gender in society, making it necessary for women in this case "to fight back as men" (159).

Conclusion

Through an analysis of these multiple methodologies, these observations and examinations can provide tools to perform characters from plays that possess central issues surrounding gender and sexuality. With an application of these methodologies through performance, it is possible to perform with straight male behavior and as a straight male character in a theatrical context. The performance of a straight male character with this type of behavior will be used by actors as a tool to misplace and disrupt these traditional signifiers of gender and sexuality. Hopefully, the end result will lead to closer examinations of how gender identity and sexuality are constructed in a performance and how the signs and codes accompanying them can be disrupted to allow other identities to be acknowledged in space.

Applying Butler, Case, and Torr's Theories to Texts

Introduction

The following chapter applies the theories of gender and sexuality from Judith Butler, Sue-Ellen Case, and Diane Torr to a selection of scenes from *Take Me Out* by Richard Greenberg, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches,* and *Cloud 9* by Caryl Churchill in order to analyze textually how identities based on gender and sexuality are oppressed by patriarchal ideology. Additionally, examination of the plays will make it possible to comprehend how the context of the written text relates to my critical question: How can I as an actor negotiate the signifiers of gender and sexuality in performance and recognize the fluidity between both ends of the gender spectrum? The scenes from these three plays not only challenge strict constructions of gender and sexuality, but also allow for the opportunity to explore the hidden signifiers of its main characters. With an application of the theories from Butler, Case, and Torr to the plays and scenes through a textual analysis, it will become possible to create a devised performance that challenges strict constructions of gender and sexuality in culture.

***Take Me Out* Scene**

The first scene of the devised performance entitled *The Electric Current* opens with a moment from *Take Me Out,* which demonstrates how Darren's appearance as a hyper-masculine male is complicated by his sexuality. In *Take Me Out*, Darren Lemming,

an all-American, bi-racial baseball star, decides to come out of the closet during a press conference. As the baseball team becomes increasingly uncomfortable with Darren's sexuality and presence, the racist and homophobic Shane Mungitt arrives as a new team player, and causes more tension among the team. Darren then struggles to understand and accept his identity as a baseball player who is now openly gay.

Darren is considered the best player on the baseball team, the New York Empires, and possesses a god-like complex, making him appear untouchable and all-mighty. His best bud on the team, Kippy Sunderstorm, who serves as a narrator and commentator throughout the play, shows the most compassion for Darren during the entire controversy. Shane Mungitt, a new team member from the minor leagues, shows little respect for Darren because of his race and sexuality. Mungitt has poor speech and is treated as an idiot on the team. While Mungitt does not make an appearance in the scenes that I will be analyzing, his homophobic and racist remarks are the primary catalysts for complicating Darren's outward masculine identity.

My first scene opens with William R. Danziger writing a letter to Darren where he appears supportive of Darren's identity at first, but then he reveals that he cannot accept having him play baseball. While Danziger only makes one appearance during the beginning of Act II, he serves as a microcosm of the average male's reaction to Darren playing baseball once he is out of the closet. Danziger is communicating how Darren's revelation of his sexuality has ruined his perception of baseball as a purely

heterosexual activity and environment. His letter to Darren demonstrates how Western society's perspective considers baseball to be a space for heterosexual males. As he begins to write the letter to Darren, he states that he feels outraged by Mungitt's racist and homophobic remarks made towards him and commends him on his "brave and unprecedented revelation of [his] sexual preference" (47). While Danziger appears to be supportive of Darren, he considers Darren's sexuality as a sexual preference. He further reinforces this notion by also remarking that being gay is an option when he mentions that if his son declared if he was gay, he thinks that Darren would make a great lover (47). This makes Danziger's behavior problematic at this point because since he considers Darren's sexuality to be a choice, he is less likely to acknowledge it within the patriarchal construction of a heterosexual male. In terms of Case, Danziger recognizes that the sign of Darren's sexuality disrupts his outward signals as a straight male, which causes a separation of his identity from patriarchal ideology.

Danziger attempts to then construct Darren as a straight male by indulging in what he thinks are the good positive qualities that Darren possesses. He mentions that Darren is a sterling example of a young man and would be proud if he was his eight-year old son's math and chemistry teacher, with a particular emphasis on being a gym teacher (47). In terms of Butler, Danziger is considering that Darren is embodying the ultimate construction of a male identity, because he fulfilling these masculine roles to continue reinforcing these strong qualities of masculinity, causing Danziger to align

Darren's identity within a patriarchal construct. Though he seems accepting of Darren's sexuality, he is not acknowledging how it fits into these strong masculine qualities and roles. Essentially, he is ignoring it by focusing on what his outward appearance is communicating semiotically: heterosexual male baseball star. Interestingly, when Danziger continues writing to Darren, he notes that if he was a religious instructor, he would hope that he could imbue within his son a true sense of Christian charity (47). Christian Charity in this instance can be interpreted as patriarchal ideology because Danziger considers Darren to be a masculine element (religious instructor) that reinforces the patriarchal ideology of heterosexual male construction within young boys through Christian values. But, Danziger then refers back to Darren's identity as a gay male by noting that while being gay is an option that is open for his son, he would hope that his son would find a lover like Darren (47-48). At this point, Danziger begins to move away from Butler's view of restrictive patriarchal ideology by acknowledging his identity as an alternative because he recognizes that his sexuality still has a presence.

We see Danziger's true motivation when he questions Darren why he has to play baseball (48). Though he wishes Darren the best, he notes that him playing baseball "hurts his feelings" (48). Danziger is arguing that Darren's sexuality disrupts the notion that baseball is a straight masculine sport that has no room for gay men. His consideration of how Darren's sexuality is incompatible in the masculine world of baseball is similar to Butler's theory of how gender and sexuality is tightly controlled by

patriarchal ideology. In terms of Case though, Darren is acting as a sign here that is changing the code of baseball as a non-exclusively heterosexual sport. Instead, baseball is coded as a sport that can also attract identities that are gay. But with Danziger representing the enforcement of patriarchal ideology, we notice that baseball according to him is coded as a heterosexual and masculine activity that is not open to homosexuality. With Torr's theories of typical male behavior in mind, Danziger feels as if his space, baseball, is threatened. According to Torr, since men use their bodies to mark their presence in a specific masculine territory, Danziger is afraid that homosexuality will make baseball a site of weakness and not one that reinforces the dominance of masculinity.

My second scene finds Darren angrily entering the locker room, telling Kippy how frustrated he is with the increased attention from the media and with Mungitt's homophobic and racist comments broadcast during the TV interview. Darren tries to reject this image as a poster boy, furious that the discussion of his sexuality and Mungitt's comments have garnered him more attention about his sexuality. Throughout the scene, Darren struggles to operate as a straight male identity, but the revelation of his sexuality prevents him from fully accepting his image as a baseball player who is gay. He tells Kippy in a somber moment his belief that the public thinks his secret is out, and it will follow with a "cavalcade of revelation" (49). He denounces the possibilities for more revelations about his identity by noting that his secret is not his sexuality, but

that he is a secret (49). Darren is attempting to shift the focus away from his sexuality. His outward appearance as the big shot baseball player perfectly fits within the straight male gender construction, so he is attempting to keep himself aligned with that patriarchal image. In terms of Torr, Darren is attempting to hold on to his typical male behavior so that he does not break the confidence he has in the construction of his image as a straight male.

Darren's secret though is he is struggling to accept his new identity as a baseball player who is gay. Though he revealed his sexuality to the public, he is still uncomfortable about his image as a baseball player who is gay. As he attempts to stop the focus on his sexuality, he is oppressing his hidden signifier (his sexuality) which has the ability to disrupt all the other signals within his straight outward appearance. Therefore, he does not like his identity being completely associated with his sexuality. In terms of Case though, he is eliminating the association of his signifiers towards patriarchal ideology because as he tries to suppress the recognition of his sexuality, it continues to complicate his overall image as a heterosexual male.

With Butler's understanding of strict gender binaries, it is possible to picture how he should operate as a male. One can imagine him tall with an intimidating stance, and a quality of movement that is strong and appears masculine, with no hints of any feminine gestures. Darren has to remain within the confines of his gender construction or he will be considered weak. Therefore, Darren needs to think like a dominant straight

male because his identity is based solely on a strict patriarchal construct. After Kippy tells Darren that men like him just don't walk away from a career in baseball, Darren yells at Kippy, "Maybe I'm somethin' that's never been seen before. Maybe I'm somethin' brand new" (50). In terms of Case, because Darren recognizes that his identity is unique within the arena of baseball, he is acknowledging a sign that codes the rest of his identity as a homosexual, further distancing his image from patriarchal ideology. Therefore, his hidden signifier has become recognizable and completely exposed because he admits that this layer of his identity as a baseball player who is gay is rare.

Darren's story is an example of what could happen if a highly publicized figure in baseball reveals his sexuality during the height of his career. At this point in history, only lesser-known baseball players have come out of the closet during retirement. Glenn Burke, an African-American who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, quit baseball in 1980. He revealed in 1982 that he was gay and noted that the management and the team knew he was gay while he played baseball. Burke died of AIDS in 1995 at the age of 42 ("Out. The Glenn Burke Story"). Billy Bean publicly came out of the closet in 1999 after retiring from playing for the San Diego Padres in 1996 (Bean).

In combination with Case's theory of how the semiotics can deconstruct gender and sexuality codes, Darren's sexuality within his identity separates him from patriarchal ideology. However, Darren still struggles to completely accept his identity.

When Kippy remarks to Darren that he likes him better because he appears more human now than god-like, Darren questions what Kippy said to him by asking "Isn't that a demotion?" (51). By considering the demotion of his status from god-like to human, he finds his sexuality to be a weakness that has granted him a lower position of authority and importance. His sexuality, therefore, has complicated his appearance as a heterosexual male because his sexuality as a gay male is deemed incompatible within a patriarchal society.

***Angels in America* Scene**

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* revealed how AIDS affected gay men in the 1980's while exposing how straight men were hiding their sexuality in US Politics. In the play, when Prior discovers that he has AIDS, his boyfriend, Louis, leaves him out of fear of catching the disease. One day, Louis meets Joe, a conservative politician and devout Mormon who works in the appeals court in New York City. Joe constantly struggles to accept his sexuality while the marriage with his wife, Harper, deteriorates. His mother, Hannah, tries to step in to save the marriage. Meanwhile, Joe's colleague, Roy Cohn, a conservative and homophobic lawyer, learns that he has AIDS and constantly denies that he is gay. By the end of *Millennium Approaches*, as Joe and Louis start to engage in a relationship, Prior's condition grows worse due to AIDS. He is then called upon by the Angel as a prophet to help begin the "Great Work."

While there are a number of characters and relationships that can be examined in the play, I will be primarily focusing on the development and interactions between Joe and Louis. Due to his conservative politics and religious beliefs as a Mormon, Joe is in constant denial of the true nature of his sexuality. Though he appears to be a straight, Republican politician, he continually oppresses his sexuality because his devotion and commitment as a Mormon prevents him from accepting his homosexuality. This causes Joe to rely heavily on his masculine image to hide anything that might deem him as gay. In contrast, Louis is a Jewish and effeminate gay man who is comfortable with his sexuality. When he notices that Joe is holding back a secret, Louis questions and teases Joe about his sexual orientation. While Louis accuses Joe of being a closeted gay man, Joe begins to reveal his sexual attraction for men to Louis.

As the scenes from *Take Me Out* depict the deconstruction of the typical image of a baseball player in a traditionally masculine sport, a performance of two scenes from *Angels in America, Part I* demonstrates how politicians like Joe struggle to accept their sexuality in another heterosexual environment dictated by politics and religion. Joe first meets Louis in the bathroom, crying over leaving Prior alone to fight his battle with AIDS. After awkwardly introducing themselves to each other, Joe offers Louis a tissue. Louis considers the previous men who walked in the bathroom and ignored him to be "Reaganite heartless macho asshole lawyers" (35). As Joe tells Louis that was not a fair

comparison, Louis then begins to question Joe if he is a gay Republican. Joe angrily denies that he is gay.

In the first scene, we notice that Joe consistently defends his identity as a heterosexual man. As Louis tries to test him by calling him a gay Republican, Joe shoots back stern remarks like "Not gay. I'm not gay" (35). Joe's determination to declare that he is a heterosexual demonstrates that he is hiding a secret, or what he considers an embarrassment, from the outside world, which is his sexuality in this case. This is similar to how Butler asserts that strict gender and sexuality constructs are dictated by patriarchal society. Since Joe insists that he is not gay, he creates this wall that denies any acceptance of homosexuality by reinforcing the appearance of a strict heterosexual male construct. What he clearly hates is being considered a homosexual, which is evident in his persistent denial. Joe's aggressive behavior is similar to Torr's observations of typical male behavior. He is very direct with his language toward Louis, signaling that he uses his speech and language to re-assert his heterosexual masculinity and to emphasize his point. What Louis is threatening is the foundation of Joe's identity as a straight male. Though he initially shows Louis compassion, Joe's resistance to reveal his full identity demonstrates his desire to maintain his image as a heterosexual male.

In contrast, Louis's construct as male does not follow patriarchal ideology because he identifies himself as a gay man. When he tells Joe "Well, sometimes you can

tell from the way a person sounds that...I mean you *sound* like a…" he is hinting that he detects that Joe's sexuality is not straight, but gay (35). To appease the angry Joe from blowing up at him for questioning who he is, Louis quickly attributes his behavior to being a Republican (35). Louis recognizes that Joe appears to be a straight male because he identifies as a typical Republican politician, but he also his opening up the possibility that he thinks Joe is gay. In terms of Cases's theory of deconstructing gender codes through semiotics, Louis is trying to expose Joe's true sexuality by showing that he does not fit within the straight male construct, which begins to break away Joe's alliance from patriarchal ideology. The main signifier that Joe exhibits that is not considered masculine is when he handed Louis a wad of toilet paper as a tissue to blow his nose.

What Joe was giving Louis was compassion, which Louis is translating as a non-traditional masculine quality. Torr's theories would argue that Joe was performing an action that was more feminine than masculine. So, in terms of Torr, what Louis was noticing was an instance where Joe was possessing non-typical male behavior by handing him a tissue. The other signifier that Louis was attributing to Joe as a sign that he was gay was his vigorous attempt to defend his conservative politics and insisting that he was not a homosexual. Therefore, Louis's attempts to make Joe admit that he is gay are not completely successful though, as Joe emotionally and verbally stiffens up in order to continue connecting with his apparent straight identity. In terms of Case, Joe

was trying to insert his cultural belief that he was not a homosexual because his image as a straight male was in perfect alignment with patriarchal ideology.

According to the stage directions though, Joe senses that he is being teased by Louis. As Louise notices that Joe is catching on to this, Joe becomes "a little brave." He then makes sure that no one is around and says to Louis, "Do I? Sound like a….?" (35-36). Though Joe tried to cover up any sign of being gay, he then begins to question whether the sound of his voice is revealing the hidden part of his identity, which is his sexuality. At this moment, Joe is beginning to find a fault in his identity as a heterosexual man because he looks like a straight politician, but Louis is calling into question why Joe is so protective of his conservative politics and continues to deny that he is a homosexual. In terms of Butler, Joe is thinking that something is wrong with his heterosexual male construction because a force outside of patriarchal ideology (Louis) is not accepting his image as a straight man. Therefore, Joe's most obvious sign that he is gay is his constant reliance on super masculine construction to resist anything feminine because it could be considered "weak."

The second scene transitions to a park, where Joe enters looking at Louis who is sitting on a bench. Once Louis notices Joe, he questions him if he comes here often. While Joe tries to initially deny it, he admits it. He then reveals to Louis that he followed him to the park, but Louis tells him that he fooled him as someone who was compassionate for Joe. Joe then tries to touch Louis. After much hesitation, he finally

touches him on the cheek with his hand. Louis then tries to get Joe to come home with him, but Joe seems unsure, and can't believe that it is happening. Louis then kisses Joe, telling him that he does not want to spend the night alone. Though Joe hesitates again, Louis convinces him that they have a lot in common because they both consider themselves to be horrible people who don't deserve to be loved.

In the second scene, we notice how Joe's identity is dictated also by his religious beliefs as a Mormon, making it difficult for him to break way from his ideal image as a heterosexual male. When Joe meets Louis again he is hesitant to become personal with Louis about who he is. Joe admits though that he often comes to the park, demonstrating that he often cruises the park for pick ups. In terms of semiotics, Joe's action of cruising through the park can be interpreted as slightly admitting his true sexuality. Though Joe does not admit that he is gay at this point, the final layer of his identity, his sexuality, is beginning to be acknowledged by him. When Joe then expresses to Louis that he wants to touch him, he suffers through a great moment of hesitation to give into his desire to touch Louis's face. While Louis is initially caught off-guard by Joe wanting to touch him, it becomes evident that Joe is giving into his impulses, which signals that he is starting to admit that he is attracted to other men.

By touching Louis in a tender manner, Joe's semiotics of his identity are attempting to break away from patriarchal ideology, fully revealing his identity as a gay Mormon and politician. His hidden signifier can be considered his sexuality because it

is an element of his identity that he is embarrassed to expose publicly since he perceives it as a weakness. The hidden signifier has been restricted by Joe from being revealed up until this point because he feels that his sexuality is not in perfect alignment with the construction of his straight male identity. If we apply Case's theory here, we notice that he is breaking away from patriarchal ideology by allowing his hidden signifier to disrupt his straight male identity and cause his gay male identity to be recognized.

However, he holds back when he says "I'm going to hell for this" (122). While he is giving into his impulses to touch Louis and reveals his hidden signifier, his religious beliefs as a Mormon still weigh down on him, demonstrating that his religious ideology controls his actions and reinforces his apparent male heterosexual construction. In terms of Butler, Joe is still trying to connect with his heterosexual male identity because he feels that touching another man is forbidden and sinful in the eyes of God. Joe has a very complicated identity because while he begins to acknowledge the impulses of his homosexuality, he is held back by the fear of persecution from his religion. He is still experiencing the oppressive influence and control of patriarchal ideology and Mormonism, which is preventing him from accepting his identity as a gay man. Case would argue that because Joe acknowledges his desire to touch Louis, he is breaking away from patriarchal ideology.

In order to motivate him to break away from the influence of his religion, Louis tries to get Joe to come home with him. By kissing Joe, Louis is deconstructing the

image of the heterosexual male identity and reconstructing it back as a queer one. Joe is pulled further away from allowing his religious beliefs to oppress his sexuality. In terms of semiotics, Louis and Joe kissing signifies a defiance of restrictive patriarchal ideology because it symbolizes a resistance of the restrictive influence of that ideology and changes the codes of Joe's sexuality within his gender from straight to gay. But, this could also be interpreted as Louis breathing life into Joe, as Jesus breathed life into Lazarus to revive him from the dead. When Louis and Joe met again in the park, Louis asks Joe if he knows the story of Lazarus. Joe then explains to Louis that Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead by breathing life into him (121). So when Louis kisses Joe, he forces out what was dead inside Joe (the fear of stepping outside the boundaries of his gender construction and his religious beliefs) and gives him life (the confidence of accepting and acknowledging his sexuality). At this point, Joe's behavior as a straight male, as outlined by Torr, begins to melt away. Joe's image as a straight male is complicated by the revelation of his sexuality and his growing acknowledgement of it.

***Cloud 9* Scene**

While the scenes from *Take Me Out* and *Angels in America* demonstrate how sexuality can disrupt the construction of the heterosexual male identity to allow for the gay male image to be recognized, the beginning scene in *Cloud 9* exposes how patriarchal ideology oppresses alternative gender and sexual identities. In Act I of *Cloud 9*, the action take place during the Victorian era in British Colonial Africa. When Clive

returns from a mission with the British Empire, he learns from his wife Betty that their African servant Joshua has been rude to her. Clive then reprimands Joshua for what he has said. Then, Harry, an explorer and friend of Clive's, arrives to pay a visit to the family. During a game of hide and seek, Clive's son, Edward, and Harry reveal that they have had a sexual relationship. Harry remains unwilling to continue with the relationship while Edward wants to rekindle it.

Meanwhile, Betty dismisses Ellen's love for her by considering what she says to be ridiculous. Tensions between the British and the natives rise after Clive and a group of men try to sort out the natives aggressively. Later, when Clive tells Harry about what happened, Harry hugs Clive to display his affection for him. Clive is disgusted by Harry has done, which prompts Harry to reveal his homosexuality. Clive then tires to persuade Harry that he must cure himself of this problem by marrying a woman. But when Clive learns that Joshua's native parents have been killed, Clive quickly offers Joshua his condolences for the loss of his parents. Clive returns his focus back to Harry by forcing him to marry Ellen. Act I comes to a close during the wedding party as Clive gives a toast to the newly engaged couple. Edward then notices Joshua aiming a gun at Clive, but takes not action. Though Act II provides further commentary on the influence of patriarchal and the construction of gender and sexuality, I will be primarily focusing on Act I because it establishes how patriarchal ideology oppresses alternative identities based on gender and sexuality.

Clive is the head of the family and exerts complete control while upholding the strict ideals of gender and sexuality through patriarchal ideology. His wife, Betty, played by a male actor, is completely obedient towards Clive, and does whatever he tells her to do. Edward, played by a woman, is a young and impressionable boy who likes to play with dolls versus acting like a man. Joshua, played by a caucasian actor, resents being a servant because his fellow natives are poorly treated by the British.

My scene from *Cloud 9* occurs at the beginning of the play to demonstrate how patriarchal ideology reinforces strict cultural constructions of gender and sexuality. The scene also serves as an example of how gender can become fluid and performative through role reversal (an actor performs a character that is of their opposite gender). Clive introduces all of the members of his family to the audience: Betty, his wife, Joshua, his African servant, and Edward, his son. After the introductions, Betty welcomes Clive home from his adventures in the wild. As they interact, we notice how Clive clearly dominates over Betty by treating her like a child. But when Betty reveals that Joshua said something improper to her, Clive coercively asks Betty what happened. She is hesitant at first to explain, telling him that Joshua refused to fetch her book for her because he told she could get it herself since she had legs under her dress. Clive then angrily shouts for Joshua to come see him. By establishing the identities of his family in a patriarchal environment, Clive allows compulsory heterosexuality to keep their identities in line with their culturally assigned strict gender constructions. But despite

Clive's attempt to categorize these identities, Betty and Edward demonstrate that gender is fluid and performative since they are performed by actors of the opposite gender identity, which allows for consideration of constructing and performing any gender and sexuality based on actions and appearance.

When Clive introduces his family, he acts like a ring leader: he dictates what everyone's identity is and how it is suppose to operate. For example, when he points out his wife Betty, she acts completely obedient by stating "what men want is what I want to be" (Churchill 4). Though Betty is played by a man, she is upholding the strict cultural construction of a heterosexual female. If we examine this through Butler's theory of strict gender constructions, we notice that Betty would be considered "Other" because she is feminine and is dominated by masculinity through her husband. This also relates to Butler's idea that gender is performative because Betty later performs her actions based on the construction of her gender through patriarchal ideology. Clive continues establishing the patriarchal order by introducing his African servant, Joshua, played by a caucasian actor. Joshua declares that he dislikes his tribe, but considers his master, Clive, to be his light, commenting that "What white men want is what I want to be" (4). While Joshua is portrayed by a caucasian actor, the play on his race signifies that his identity is only marked by the appearance of his skin, which is controlled against him by patriarchal ideology.

When Clive introduces his son Edward, played by a woman, he states that he is teaching him how to be a man (4). While Edward clearly wants to become the man that his father wants him to be, he notes "I find it rather hard as you can see" (4). What Edward is pointing out is how his appearance is not completely in line with a straight male image because he looks like a woman. Again, Edward's actions represent that he is performing his gender based on the guidance of his father even though he does not appear to be a boy. In terms of Case's theory of semiotics, Churchill is using Edward to deconstruct the gender codes of his identity by having him portrayed by someone of the opposite gender. By hiding the semiotics of the actor's gender with Edward's signifiers of his male gender construction, it is possible to play Edward's gender identity as a performance based on his appearance. This allows for the opportunity to consider alternative gender identities and examine how gender can be performative and fluid in a performance.

As Clive and Betty represent the ultimate and tightly controlled gender binaries, they serve as perfect examples of how patriarchal ideologies reinforce restrictive ideals of gender and sexuality. For example, when Clive declares that he needs new boots after getting a blister on one of his feet, Betty becomes very concerned over his "poor dear foot." While Clive tries to state there is nothing wrong with his foot, Betty thinks that it looks sore (5). Though Clive's foot was okay, Betty's willingness to take care of Clive at that moment symbolizes that she is trying to fulfill her role as caregiver for her

husband. It also signifies that Betty is disciplined by patriarchal ideology within a Western society in order to remain under controlled by masculinity because she is feminine. Her behavior at moments also shifts to acting like a child. For instance, when Clive provides her with clues of who is coming over for a visit, Betty responds with short remarks that make her sound like she is interested in played a game with him (6). Also, she acts more child-like when she is afraid of telling her husband what the bad thing Joshua told her was:

> CLIVE. Tell me what happened.
>
> BETTY. He said something improper.
>
> CLIVE. Well, what?
>
> BETTY. I don't like to repeat it.
>
> CLIVE. I must insist. (8)

Though Betty is a grown woman, the child-like behavior that she exhibits illustrates that she is controlled by Clive through patriarchal influence. Her identity as a female is then viewed as dependent on her husband because he exerts control over her. Her obedience and devotion to Clive aligns with Butler's beliefs of how what is considered feminine is heavily influenced and controlled by patriarchal masculinity.

With Betty performed by a male actor, the performance of the character allows for an investigation of how the female gender operates under patriarchal influence. While Torr instructs women how to operate typical male behavior, it is possible to assert

that Betty's gender construction can be explored to understand how she uses and possesses typical female behavior. Ultimately, Torr's knowledge can be utilized to analyze how gender is performative. Betty's cultural construction as a woman is based on her actions and how she interacts with Clive, eliminating the notion that gender is exclusively tied to one's biological sex. Therefore, gender is performative through role reversal, which makes it possible to investigate how one can perform the actions of a character's gender construction.

However, Clive's construction as a straight male represents the enforcement of patriarchal ideology on people that are considered feminine or weak. For example, Clive exerts the most control over Betty when he presses her to tell him what Joshua said to her. By insisting an answer from Betty and treating her like a child, Clive reinforces the strict cultural constructions of male and female in a patriarchal environment. The power and influence he exhibits over Betty are similar to how Butler theorizes how the identities of male and female are tightly maintained through patriarchal order. By asserting his dominance over Betty and his surroundings, Clive embodies the power and strength of a patriarchal ideology that oppresses other identities based on gender and sexuality.

In the rest of Act I, Clive continues to enforce patriarchal ideology. When Edward is caught playing with dolls, Clive tries to imbue masculine behavior upon him. He tells Edward that he must always respect him because he respected his father and notes,

"Through our father we love our Queen and our God, Edward. Do you understand? This is something men understand" (Churchill 43). By reminding Edward of the order of respect for authority, he is instilling into Edward a sense of respect for the order of masculinity. Though Queen Victoria was a woman during her reign, she still gained the same sense of respect from men because she was in a very high position of authority due to her royal status. In addition, Clive instructs Edward to spend more time with him and Edward because he is around the women too much. What Clive is attempting to do is keep Edward aligned within his male gender construction by avoiding any influence that is considered feminine.

As Clive tries to direct Edward to maintain his masculine behavior, he also tries to oppress and eliminate Harry's homosexuality. After Harry reveals that he struggles with his sexuality, Clive declares that effeminacy is a contagious disease (Churchill 52). In terms of semiotics, by communicating that effeminacy is a disease, Clive is reinforces a notion that anything that is feminine is considered weak and can be posed as a threat to masculinity and patriarchal order. Clive then offers a solution to Harry by telling him "You must save yourself from this depravity. You must get married" (Churchill 53). By considering marriage to be a cure of Harry's homosexuality, the patriarchal ideology administered through Clive oppresses Harry's sexuality because it is deemed in compatible with the heterosexual male construction.

Conclusion

An analysis of the plays and the selected scenes reveals how patriarchal ideology oppresses different identities based on gender and sexuality. While Darren appears to signal on the outside that he is a heterosexual baseball player, his sexuality as a gay male disrupts his image. With increased attention and focus on his identity as a baseball player who is gay, Darren struggles to come to terms with his sexuality. Joe's construction as a morally straight politician and Mormon is shattered when he meets Louis. Though his religious beliefs restrict him from accepting his sexuality, he begins to feel the weight of his religion lifted from his shoulders through Louis. As Darren and Joe's identities as gay males who appear straight in heterosexual environments start to gain a presence, Betty's construction as a straight female and Edward's image as a young boy are controlled by her husband Clive through patriarchal ideology. But because these characters are performed by actors of the opposite gender due to role reversal, it allows for an investigation of how gender is fluid and performative.

In the next chapter there will be an analysis of the physical texts within those moments of the scenes. There will also be an explanation of how I used the visual text in order to construct the physical elements of a devised performance. An examination of the blocking, costumes, and casting choices made in the production will provide the reasoning for why these choices were made. There will also be an analysis of the

"electrical theme" of the show and how a silhouette will be utilized to display how gender sexuality is performative and fluid in performance.

Composing the Performance through the Physical and Visual Texts

Introduction

As previously stated in the introduction, my critical question was inspired by Setoodeh's *Newsweek* article "Straight Jacket" where he commented that Sean Hayes was not fit to play a heterosexual role in *Promises, Promises* because he was gay. His comments reinforced strict cultural constructions of gender and sexuality as dictated by the ideologies of a patriarchal society. My critical question was "How can I as an actor negotiate the signifiers of gender and sexuality in performance and recognize the fluidity between both ends of the gender spectrum?" After investigating the problematic historical relationship of gender and sexuality in twentieth-century American theatre, semiotics in theatre, and the theories of Judith Butler, Sue-Ellen Case, and Diane Torr, I created a devised performance titled *The Electric Current*. To answer my critical question, the performance was designed around scenes from *Take Me Out*, *Angels in America Part I: Millennium Approaches* and *Cloud 9* in addition to original narration designed to connect all the pieces together as one cohesive unit.

To explain how this devised performance answered my critical question, the following outlines how I used the physical and visual texts to create this production. Topics to be discussed about the physical text include how I constructed my characters' movement based on Torr's theories, the blocking incorporated in the performance, and the casting decisions I made. The visual text of the performance will consist of a

discussion of how the silhouette screen was constructed and utilized, how the costumes were used, and how the "electrical current" became a theme of the performance. After outlining and explaining the elements of the physical and visual texts used to create this devised production, there will be a discussion of the feedback that I received for this production through the performance talk-back night and the Department of the Theatre and Dance Roundtable discussion. My analysis of the criticism and feedback from this performance will help note how well my critical question was answered based on these reactions and comments.

The Physical Text

To explore how gender and sexuality is fluid through semiotics, I relied upon Torr's notes from her "Man for a Day" Workshop to compose the movement of the characters I played: Darren from *Take Me Out* and Joe from *Angels in America Part I*. Since these characters appear "straight" in terms of their outward appearance, I needed to study and practice how to make my body operate as a heterosexual male. While I was constructing these qualities of movement for Darren and Joe, I focused on composing their images separately to portray how their gender construction was influenced by patriarchal ideology. In contrast, I constructed Betty's movement for my scene in *Cloud 9* to demonstrate how her identity as a woman was restricted in terms of operating in a patriarchal environment. Since I am a male playing a female character, I used Torr's idea's of typical male behavior and movement in opposition. In addition to

creating the movements of these character, I also had to adjust my voice to fit the personality and gender construction of the characters I was playing.

Darren's Physical Construction

To create Darren's quality of movement, I imagined his gestures as direct and sharp because he appears to be a god-like figure. For example, Torr points out that male gestures tend to be direct in order to emphasize not embellish. She notes that a male can point his forefinger during specific moments of a line to emphasize their point (265). Darren becomes very direct when he yells at Kippy by declaring "*This is how* it is with me, *this is how* it has always been" (Greenberg 49). Certain gestures, such as pointing his finger, making a fist or clenching together his hands were placed upon Darren to reinforce his hyper-masculine identity. I also worked on ways in which Darren's body conveys how his presence takes up space, signifying that he is in his territory, which is in a locker room in this case. Torr provides insight into how to take up space noting that by acting as if the space is yours, you can signal that you are comfortable in the space and your surroundings (Torr 265). Torr also comments that "each time that your foot steps on the floor, it owns that piece of the floor for the period that it rests there" (266). With this idea, Darren's movement throughout the locker room conveyed that he has ownership of the space with each step that he takes because he is walking within his territory. As Darren entered the space, I made sure that my feet pounded on the floor to

show not just how angry he was in that moment, but how he charged through the space to declare that he was present in the locker room.

The movement of an apparent straight male character is important to construct because there needs to be an emphasis on how Darren walks through the locker room. Torr comments that the movement of males comes from the shoulders with frozen hips. When walking, Torr suggests to move by shifting your weight from side-to-side as a way to take up more space. She also notes that when men walk, they move their bodies around like blocks, so you cannot move from your waist. Instead, you need to turn your whole body around to face the other direction (266). Darren's quality of movement became very rigid and did not appear feminine. This was accomplished by walking around a rehearsal space by leading with my heels first on the ground to warm up into his style of movement as a strict male heterosexual construct.

Though the locker rooms for major league baseball players may be great in size, I had to create an intimate setting for *Take Me Out* because I performed in a small thrust stage environment. So Darren's movement throughout the space was purposeful with each step to communicate his dominance as a male. As Butler notes that patriarchal ideology restricts gender into binaries, Darren's identity is also oppressed by this ideology because the construction of his identity is not compatible within the construction of a heterosexual male. While Darren provides signals from his movement and gestures that he is a heterosexual male, in reality he is gay. His sexuality then

disrupts all of the other signifiers that portray him as a straight male. His hidden signifier, (his homosexuality) throws off all of these other signals and instead highlights that he is gay. With Sue Ellen Case's idea that semiotics can disrupt the alliance between the codes and patriarchal ideals, his hidden signifier deconstructs his straight masculine image and separates him away from the influence of patriarchal ideology. I placed his hidden signifier within his chest because I believe as an actor that he is a character that leads with his chest to express his dominance and command of respect as a male.

The hidden signifier, an element of his identity that he tries to conceal from the public, can be imagined as a necklace that rests upon his chest to further reinforce his image as a god-like figure. All of his masculine energy is centralized in his chest, so if he loses that energy, he won't be able to continue communicating his strong heterosexual male construction. The hidden signifier sits in his chest, unnoticeable, until Kippy points out to Darren that he is no longer a god-like man. The prominence of his chest drops to demonstrate that his hidden signifier for being gay has been activated, communicating that he feels "demoted" because of his identity as a baseball player who is gay. It looked as if the hidden signifier has weight on his chest because he feels that his image as a straight male has been compromised by his sexuality.

Darren's voice needed to display his hyper-masculinity as a baseball player, so I adjusted my voice by slightly lowering it to convey his raw anger and boastful personality. To achieve this quality of voice, it was important to keep some of Darren's

speech slurred to reinforce his rough attitude as a baseball player. There were certain bits of the dialogue written in by Greenberg to give an idea of how Darren would sound. For example, when Darren gets really mad in the scene, he yells "You think you're gonna get this torrent of me, commin' at ya?" (Greenberg 49). I paid attention to lines like this to remind myself that Darren's speech needed to sound natural. So my diction as an actor was relaxed to reinforce the patriarchal construction of his heterosexual male gender.

Joe's Physical Construction

Though Darren's movement was created to show off his dominant personality and how his identity is restricted through his movement, Joe's movement and physical presence in *Angels in America* demonstrated his desperation to oppress his sexuality by relying on his masculine image. Since Joe feels a lot of pressure from his religious ideology to be morally straight, I composed his stance to appear stiff and cautious to signal that he was afraid of alluding or revealing is sexuality. To reinforce this appearance, there were moments where Joe used direct gestures to emphasize to Louis that he was not gay. By angrily pointing his finger, and slamming his suitcase on the ground, he was trying to reaffirm to Louis his straight male construction. Since Joe felt threatened by Louis's inquiry into his sexuality, his arms remained tight and unmovable to communicate that he was trying to hold together his straight masculine image. These direct gestures also served as tactics to defend his heterosexual male construct by

preventing Louis from locating his true sexuality. Joe was trying to maintain all of the outward signs of his masculinity to conceal and oppress his sexuality.

Joe's movement was confined to shorter steps to communicate that he was on alert about keeping his sexuality a secret. By walking with short steps, I also demonstrated his careful attempt to physically maintain his image as a heterosexual male. In terms of Butler, Joe's identity is confined into a strict cultural construction of a heterosexual male. Joe's quality of movement eventually appeared strong and masculine to broadcast signals that he was straight man. I also warmed up to Joe's mode of walking similarly to Darren's by putting the pressure on to my heels and not my toes. If I walked on my toes I was not signaling that I was a straight politician. Since Joe tried to conceal his sexuality, I had to make sure that is movement remained as masculine as possible so he could appear to have no weakness.

After creating Joe's appearance as a religiously devout and politically conservative man, I implanted a hidden signifier within his body to disrupt his straight male construction and expose his queer identity as a gay politician. Like Darren, Joe's hidden signifier was his sexuality, which he continuously oppressed to avoid public recognition of it. This was accomplished by placing his hidden signifier through his hands in the second scene which marks the point where he starts to accept his identity as a gay man. During this scene, this was applied during the moment where he hesitated to touch Louis. By struggling to act on his impulse to touch Louis, his hands

signified the internal conflict within himself by trying to keep the semiotics of his straight male appearance aligned. The struggle that Joe endures is caused by the influence of patriarchal ideology and his strict Mormon religion. But when Joe touches Louis's face, his hidden signifier is fully revealed because he starts to acknowledge and accept the existence of his sexuality.

To complete the physical construction of Joe, I had to lower my voice to reinforce the masculine image of the character. I practiced a lot to find a comfortable range to speak in so I could create the illusion that I was playing a character whose heterosexual appearance was complicated by the revelation of his sexuality. Essentially, I avoided utilizing any part of my voice that sounded effeminate because I wanted to demonstrate a character that was gay but his appearance communicated that he was straight. In terms of semiotics, the deep masculine voice for Joe was reinforcing his strict cultural construction as a male.

Betty's Physical Construction

To show a sharp contrast to how Darren and Joe's identities as gay men were finally being recognized, I constructed Betty's movement to convey how restricted she was as a female in a patriarchal society. Her movement was composed in opposition of Torr's observations of male behavior. Since I was a male playing a female character, her quality of movement needed to reinforce her strict cultural construction. Betty had perfect posture, very reserved and fluid movement, and walked delicately on her toes. I

imagined Betty as a puppet whose strings were pulled by Clive to dictate her thoughts and actions. For example, she followed Clive around obediently to show how dependent she was on him. When Clive declared that his foot was sore, she kissed his foot, even though she was not instructed by him to do so. But you sense that in order to appease her husband and fulfill her duties as a wife, she needed to act as a caregiver at any moment to keep him satisfied.

As a male, I had the opportunity to play Betty as a female and observe more closely why her identity was restricted by steering away from her cultural construction. But it was not my intention to fulfill a stereotype of women. Instead, I considered how to perform her gender to convey the construct in action. This was accomplished by understanding how she was suppose to operate under the influence of a patriarchal ideology. To signify this tight control, I imagined her body as a very elegant and straight stick that did not bend out of place and always kept its composure. So Betty had a straight back and very soft hand gestures to show how sensitive she was as a woman. In terms of her movement, I made sure each step she took was careful, light, and balletic to demonstrate how feminine her movement was. Since Betty is completely loyal to her husband, she had to act according to his commands. For instance, when she wanted to get the children, Clive tells her to wait a minute. She completely adhere's to his command and does not move an inch. By waiting and completely respecting Clive's commands, Betty does not allow herself to move without permission from her husband.

Though this is not typical female behavior, her actions communicate that all of her motions are influenced by Clive's control through patriarchal ideology.

Unlike Darren and Joe, Betty did not have a hidden signifier because she was not oppressing an element of her identity. Her purpose as a character was to demonstrate how gender is fluid and performative based on the actions of what the actor uses. With her highly feminized image and movement, her construction was reinforcing the strict ideology placed upon the gender binaries. I developed Betty's voice to sound feminine by utilizing the higher range of my voice to maintain her strict cultural construction as a female. The character also had a British accent because she represents a Victorian image of women. To represent how Betty embodies the tightest gender construction in the production, I changed my voice to display a range of feminine tones. This was accomplished through a soft, articulate speech that included shrieks. These different levels in her voice communicated not only her identity as a female, but also how it was possible to perform gender as a fluid subject.

Blocking

The blocking of these scenes was formed around the parameters of a thrust performance space in Shoolroy Theatre. Before I introduced these scenes, I created an opening scene to visually represent the disconnected gender binaries and how combing these gendered energies emphasized the possibility of considering alternative identities based on gender and sexuality. On either side of the transparent screen were two

mannequins, a male and female, which served as symbols of polar opposites of the gender binary. I connected the two gender binaries from black electrical cords wrapped around their necks to illustrate to the audience that if these masculine and feminine energies were combined together, they would form a current that would provide the opportunity to recognize multiple identities along the gender spectrum. Then, I stepped forward to speak to the audience directly about the purpose of the show. While I delivered my opening monologue, I approached the mannequins to demonstrate the tight patriarchal constructions of these gender binaries. As I stood by the male mannequin, I created strong arms and pounded my chest with a deep voice to perform the common energies culturally associated with masculinity. When I moved over to the female mannequin, I displayed a feminine representation of the female gender by using a higher range of my voice while gracefully and fluidly wrapping around the mannequin.

The blocking for each scene was designed to emulate an intimate environment where spectators would closely observe the actions and semiotics from each character. In *Take Me Out*, the benches were closely placed together to show how the confined space highlighted Darren's struggle to operate within the little room he had to keep his identity functional. Plus, to further demonstrate how small and intimate the space was, I had the characters move with small steps. Since the scene was designed to move the characters forward into the showers after a practice, I worked extensively with figuring

out when articles of clothing needed to be removed. With each piece of clothing removed, I tried to communicate that Darren was stripping away the layers of his straight appearance to reveal his hidden signifier. This was accomplished by having him change out of his sports clothes during the course of the scene. In the original blocking, when Darren first entered into the space, he stormed in angrily to sit on the bench complaining about Mungitt by removing his shoes and slapping them on the ground. He then removed his socks when he was questioned by Kippy why he needed compassion. I felt it was a subtle way to demonstrate how by removing one element of his costume, we were witnessing the deconstruction of his character.

The two final layers that were reinforcing his straight male identity, the shirt and shorts, came off near the end of the scene. I purposely had Darren remove his shirt during a long dramatic pause when Kippy wondered why he was keeping a secret from him. With his shirt removed, Darren's body was almost fully revealed to give the audience a peak into the inter struggle he was experiencing to keep his hidden signifier at bay from complicating his identity. Darren removed his shorts and wrapped a towel around his waist when he stated that everything, including him, was changing. In terms of Case, Darren's straight identity had separated from patriarchal ideology because his removed clothing could no longer communicate his heterosexual appearance, allowing his hidden signifier to broadcast his true sexuality.

While Darren was removing his clothing at certain points in the scene, I blocked Kippy's movement to be more fluid because his role in the scene was to listen to Darren, which allowed him to passively strip away and expose how he truely felt about Darren. Plus this was something that Darren did not notice until the very end when Kippy, who had a towel wrapped around his waist, grabbed him to force him to understand that he knows when Darren is putting on a show or acting up. When Kippy grabbed Darren, I tried to block in an initially forceful but relaxed grab because Kippy was the only other player who understood Darren's struggle. By having Kippy relax into a gentle grip on Darren's arms, I was drawing attention to the softer more compassionate side of men that is not often seen on stage.

The blocking for *Angels in America* was challenging initially because I was afraid that if I kept the action in one specific area, it would have wasted the energy and connection between Joe and Louis. But, after isolating the movement to specific spots within the space, it became possible to keep the audience's focus on Joe's struggle to come to grips with his sexuality. In the bathroom, he took small steps to show not only how small it was, but to show how he could not move around as much because his sexuality was being questioned by Louis. So, by having little room to move in the space, Joe was forced to defend the construction of his identity as an apparent heterosexual and religiously right politician. The park scene though was given more space to let the characters move around since this contained a pivitol moment where Joe acts on his

impulse to touch Louis. Since Joe finally reveals his true sexuality, the final layer of his identity, I kept his attempt to walk away from Louis to small steps to signal that he does not feel comfortable trying to maintain his identity. But, when he finally admits to Louis that he followed him from work, I gave Joe the opportunity to move more swiftly because he was starting to expose his identity to Louis. All of the action in this scene was directed around the bench that Louis was sitting on because Joe directs all of his energy to come to terms with his sexuality to Louis.

Once Joe sat on the bench with Louis, I had Joe's hands shake with some hesitation to signify the struggle he faced with touching another man. As Joe's hands then abruptly reached out to touch the right side of Louis' cheek, he tenderly touched it for a moment to communicate that Joe revealed his hidden signifier by giving into his impulses to touch another man. The moment was designed to demonstrate that his identity as a male was complicated because although he appeared to be heterosexual, the action of touching another man disrupted all of those other signifiers to display his true sexuality. Before Louis kissed Joe, I blocked the movement building up to the kiss to catch Joe off-guard to create a spontaneous moment. This was accomplished by having Joe step away slowly from Louis so he could then be turned around quickly by Louis to surprise him with a kiss. By kissing Joe in an abrupt manner, it communicated that Louis was freeing Joe from his oppressive religious guilt to accept his identity as a

gay man. Simultaneously it signaled that Louis was attracted to Joe and wanted to take him home.

The blocking in *Cloud 9* was structured carefully to demonstrate the strong influence of patriarchal ideology on the characters. In the beginning, the family surrounds the bench to reinforce the notion of the picture perfect family. But, since Clive is the master of ceremonies in his world, he was placed at the other side of the family portrait so we could see his control over them as he introduced them. When the family leaves, Clive and Betty's movement was reserved to keep the space intimate and to continue highlighting Clive's control and influence that he has on his wife. I played with the levels more in this scene to show how far Clive's patriarchal influence reached. When Clive declared that his foot was in pain, I had Betty drop to her knees to kiss his foot to demonstrate that she was attempting to fulfill her role as an obedient caregiver to her husband. The patriarchal gender constructions of these characters were reinforced by having Clive still standing to communicate that he had dominance over Betty.

To further illustrate Clive's control and dominance over his wife, Betty rarely stood up on her feet because she was either laying on the ground or sitting on the bench. Since Betty was dependent on Clive, I had her stick closely by him to show how she constantly looked up to him and relied on his sense of order. I reinforced her dependence on Clive by having her lean into him while sitting on the bench as she said,

"Clive you are so good" (Churchill 7). To keep Betty's gender construction in line, I had Clive use a riding whip to serve as an extension of his masculine control over Betty. Furthermore, the action of Clive pointing the riding whip at Betty signified that Clive was enforcing patriarchal ideology within the space and reinforcing his image as a ring leader. When Clive was dropping hints to Betty about who was coming to visit, Betty is on the floor, touching it and lowering herself down to convey that she was playing a game. However, since she was invested in playing a short guessing game with her husband, Clive's playfulness toward her showed how far his influence upon her would go.

At the end of the scene from *Cloud 9*, I blocked the epilogue as a still portrait to highlight the oppressed identities in the production and demonstrate once more how gender and sexuality is fluid and performative. All of the actors stood spread out behind a bench with the mannequins from *Cloud 9* to remind the audience of the identities that were displayed on stage. While still in my costume for Betty, I sat in the middle of the bench in a neutral position with my feet apart and hands resting on my legs to shift seamlessly into the identities of the characters I portrayed. To transform into Darren, I leaned forward with my hands clasped together to present his complicated identity as a baseball player who is gay. For Joe, I leaned back with my hands on the bench to separate away from Darren and illustrate Joe's identity as a religiously devout politician who is gay. To shift into Betty, I straightened my back,

while clasping my hands on my lap and moving my legs together to demonstrate her highly feminized gender construction as a female.

Casting Decisions

To continue demonstrating how gender was performative and sexuality was fluid, I made specific casting choices that exemplified how actors can play characters of the opposite gender. Maria Cox was cast to portray William R. Danziger from *Take Me Out* and Joshua in *Cloud 9* to demonstrate how gender can be performed through actions and expressions. Maria has a deep and commanding voice, which could be altered to sound like a male. Plus, she was able to use her body to signal that she was male. When playing Danziger, I worked with Maria to make her gestures and movements as masculine and authoritative as possible. This was achieved by having her sit on the bench with her legs rigidly apart, similar to Torr's idea that males like to take up space to signal how they want to push their masculinity out there to be acknowledged. I also challenged her to use gestures that were masculine, such as pointing her finger to prove a point, or making a fist when the character becomes mad at Darren. To complete her image as a typical male, her voice was lowered so she would not sound high pitched and feminine. This was achieved by working with her on how to say Danziger's lines in the most non-feminine way possible.

Her physical transformation into Danziger was achieved by using costumes to mask her feminine identity and create a performance of male identity. She was dressed

in slacks, brown leather shoes, and a white button-down shirt to signify that she was a typical male character. Furthermore, she binded her chest to reduce the appearance of her breasts and create a masculine physic to convey power and confidence. We hid her hair through a baseball hat, covering up a defining feminine feature of women: long hair. When Maria played Joshua, we used a Victorian-like costume that communicated that she was a servant during the era. While Joshua is traditionally played by a white male, I elected to have Maria play the role in order to question how gender is performative and is not tied to gender identity. Again, since Maria's appearance could be molded to make her look like a man, I felt that her performance as Joshua provided commentary on not only how our societal perception of race is dictated by patriarchal ideology, but also how gender is based on expressions and actions.

Since the character role reversals were created by Churchill in *Cloud 9,* I followed her instructions to cast actors who could portray the characters that had a reversed role. To continue demonstrating how gender is performative, I cast Bridget Hillyer as Edward in the *Cloud 9* scene. Physically, she we was able to transform into a young boy because she had a small frame that could be molded around a boy's Victorian costume. I also had Bridget wear a hat appropriate for the Victorian era to hide her long hair. The result was a complete transformation that changed Bridget's gender codes because based on her appearance she was signaling in her role reversal that she was portraying a boy. Furthermore, while her voice was very low, we were able to alter it to make her

sound like a young boy. With Bridget playing Edward, the semiotics of her character were covering her female identity and communicated that gender is fluid and performative because her appearance and voice was modified to signified how identities could be altered to showcase a range of identities based on gender.

While I was challenging myself as a actor to play two heterosexual-acting roles, I wanted to cast an actor who could play the role of a gay male (Louis) and a straight and dominating male (Clive) to illustrate how sexuality is fluid in terms of representation. My intention was not to reinforce stereotypes of gay and heterosexual males but showcase through performance how identities based on sexuality could be considered fluid and not restricted by patriarchal ideology. Kevin Glass was cast as Louis and Clive because he was a heterosexual male who was able to play both of these roles. I worked extensively with Kevin on his character development to identify the signifiers that indicated that these male characters were gay or straight.

To prepare for Louis, we had to initially rely on stereotypes of gay men to find out how we could then mold the character outside of that stereotypical image. I had Kevin observe and explore how a gay male like Louis moved differently from other men and to study common gestures that effeminate gay men performed. For example, I instructed Kevin to study the character Jack on "Will & Grace" to see how his character fit into the effeminate, gay male model. Jack possesses some of the most stereotypical gestures and movements as a very effeminate and gay character. Some of these

effeminate gestures included a limp wrist, a classic gesture that signifies that a man is gay. The action of the limp wrist was toned down so it would not become too obvious as a semiotic that identified Louis as a gay man. To communicate through movement that Louis was gay, I had Kevin practice walking from toe to heel to create a walk for Louis that was tight and feminine. Kevin also incorporated a higher part of his voice for Louis to show the contrasting difference in tone and volume from Joe's typical male voice.

As Clive, I helped Kevin construct his character as the ultimate heterosexual male identity because his character embodied the ideology of patriarchal order that dominated over other identities that were not considered masculine. To demonstrate the dominance of his character, Kevin took large and forceful steps (heel to toe) to signal his control and presence in any space he currently occupied. His gestures were also very rigid and not effeminate like Louis's. He accomplished this by having straight fists that were behind his back and sharp finger pointing to signal that he could emphasize a point because he was the dominating gender. In contrast to Louis's higher voice, Kevin gave Clive an extremely boastful and booming voice to further reinforce Clive's image as an uber dominating heterosexual male figure. Since Clive acts as the ring leader when he introduces his family, I gave Kevin a riding whip to act as an extension of his arm. With the riding whip, Kevin was able to use it as a semiotic unit to demonstrate how his character constantly reinforced patriarchal ideology upon his family and

environment. So, Kevin's performance of Clive and Louis indicated that sexuality was fluid because he was able to present two characters that had different sexualities. He also delivered a successful presentation that straight actors could play roles that are gay and heterosexual in different scenes but within the same performance.

The Visual Text

To demonstrate how fluid gender and sexuality are, I utilized a screen with a back light. The purpose of the screen was to serve as a place for me to change into my costumes for the three characters, but also to show the audience that I was placing the identity of that specific character on my body. With the energy and code of characters embodied within the clothing, it was possible to express how gender was performative and sexuality was fluid. The screen had three sides, with the middle panel made of Clorafilm, allowing the audience to see my silhouette as I changed. Furthermore, the screen served as an opening for freeing the energies of masculinity and femininity. These energies would then combine at different points to allow other identities along the gender and sexuality spectrum to be free. This was accomplished by placing a male and female mannequin at either end of the screen. The two mannequins were then connected by two black electrical cords to signal that I was connecting the gender binaries to open up the possibilities for multiple identities.

To further represent the disconnection between the two gender binaries, I engineered the sound file of an electrical current through GarageBand with noises that

sounded like popping sparks and electrical fizzles. The visual flashing of a disconnected electrical current was created by a strobe light that flashed behind the screen. In the theatre, a blue light shined above the screen to draw attention to the screen and help highlight the flashing white sparks of light generated by the strobe. The sound file, strobe, and blue light were all run together at the same time to create a single effect, which represented the disconnected electrical current between the gender binaries. Between each scene, the readers presented the context of each upcoming scene in blue lights to refer back to the electrical theme of the devised performance.

Additionally, the screen also acted as a place to store the costumes and props, serving as a site that connected all the pieces together. The costumes were necessary to convey the complication of Darren and Joe's identities as gay men, while wearing Betty's Victorian outfit served as a reminder of how gender constructions are restrictive and controlled by patriarchal ideology. Darren's costume was a simple sports outfit with a white t-shirt and blue sports shorts. Kippy's costume was similar because I wanted to convey how they both shared a commonality which was their love and dedication for baseball. Darren's costume concealed his hidden signifier initially because his outfit was displaying his image as a heterosexual male baseball player. When he took off parts of his costume, he was peeling away the layers of masculinity which started to reveal his hidden signifier.

In the *Angels in America* scene, I gave Joe a costume that would signify his forced construction as a heterosexual male. This was accomplished by giving him a business suit and power tie to express the dominating influence of patriarchal ideology fueling his masculinity. Since a business suit signifies professionalism, Joe's outfit acted as a shield from allowing others to fully see his hidden signifier. Louis's costume was different from Joe's because his identity operated outside of patriarchal ideology. Therefore, Louis's outfit was more casual and without a tie because he did not possess the typical masculine behaviors like Joe. After the first scene in *Angels*, I had Joe and Louis wear coats to communicate with the audience that the action had moved outside to the park. Furthermore, the coat served as another layer for Joe to conceal his identity because after having his sexuality and identity initially questioned by Louis, he continued to resist exposing the final element of his identity: his hidden signifier. As Joe's clothes shielded his hidden signifier, his outfit served reinforced the appearance of his heterosexual male identity.

The costumes in *Cloud 9* were pulled from the Theatre and Dance Department's costume shop storage to accurately represent the restrictive nature of patriarchal ideology on the characters in the Victorian era. Betty's costume was tailored to fit tightly around my body to signify the oppressive construction of her gender identity. This was accomplished by wearing a garment that covered the neck and arms. Plus, I defined her gender construction by a skirt because it reinforced her culturally determined image as

a female. To complete the transformation of Betty, I wore a brown wig in a style similar to the one women wore during the Victorian era. In addition to wearing heels, Betty's appearance allowed me to portray her gender as performative. All of these elements of Betty's costume worked together to code her gender as feminine, which helped create a reinforcement of her gendered movement. For example, since I was wearing heels, I took small steps to create a feminine and graceful walk. Furthermore, I made a straight back to create a lady-like posture because the blouse covered my arms and neck. The skirt ultimately defines Betty's gender as feminine because the symbol for woman is defined by a dress. Therefore, the skirt helped me create gendered movement by reminding me that I had to portray a strict cultural construction of a gender that had to always remain feminine.

Clive's costume was also tight in form and function to refer back to the oppressive patriarchal ideology that he pushed upon his family and especially Betty. His outfit was constructed to make him look like an explorer or officer for the British Empire by giving him tall boots, a tan shirt, jacket and pants, and a riding cap to display his dominance and importance in the scene. Backstage, another female mannequin was dressed to stand in as Maud in *Cloud 9*, while the female mannequin on stage was dressed before the start of the scene to portray Ellen. They were moved on stage by the actors. These mannequins were able to represent Maud and Ellen since these characters

did not speak during the performance, allowing them to serve as silent reminders of the restrictive construction of the female identity in a patriarchal society.

Discussion of Feedback

I received critical and thoughtful feedback about my performance from a talk-back session after my opening performance and during the Theatre and Dance Department Roundtable. The criticism and analysis that I collected from these sessions were mainly positive and signaled to me that audiences were able to understand and think about the problematic and oppressive construction of gender and sexuality in our patriarchal society. In turn, some of these responses answered some portion of my critical question and reaffirmed my intention of keeping the performance together as a cohesive whole.

During the Thursday night talk-back session, Dr. Season Ellison, visiting assistant professor of theatre, asked the audience my and Nina Takacs' questions. Our questions were combined together and asked what moments in the pieces spoke to the audience, what their idea of theatricality was, and what particular moments within the performances seemed particularly theatrical. One member of the audience thought the silhouette screen was striking and presented as a theatrical device because it served as a reference point for the audience about why gender and sexuality is fluid. I personally doubted in the beginning that spectators were going to fully understand what the meaning of the silhouette screen was. But, it was refreshing to hear and understand that

the silhouette screen did help keep all parts of the play together. This set piece was instrumental in connecting all of the scenes' energies together to question our construction of gender and sexuality in society, so I think a lot people noticed that quality and the purpose of the screen.

Other people participating in the talk-back pointed out that because the screen was deliberately placed in the performance space, they knew that the production was going to possess theatrical qualities. What I found fascinating was how easily the audience could analyze the meaning and purpose of the screen. Some believed that it helped perpetuate the idea of gender as fluid and that my shadow cast upon the silhouette reconstructed their view of gender right before their eyes. Plus, it was interesting how someone noted that vulnerability was generated out of seeing a human figure changing identities. That same person went further to assert that because I was changing clothes, I was putting on that particular character's gender and sexuality, which was something I did become aware of. However, as I thought about it more, I realized that what I was doing was putting on the external signifiers of those characters. Another moment that some audience members found to be theatrical was the epilogue at the end of the performance. One person noted that it was a great way to bring together all of the ideas that were communicated in the scenes and focus on the issues presented to them.

When Season asked the audience if the performance changed their views of gender and sexuality, I got some very thoughtful answers. One person pointed out that from seeing this performance, it became easier for them to understand how gender identities were located on a spectrum, so the possibilities of alternative identities is open ended. People also commented that they noticed the different levels of discussion within those scenes and how they provided specific commentary on how it is hard for these identities to be acknowledged in a patriarchal space. Furthermore, some noted that putting these scenes together helped make them think about the connection between all the characters. So, I think I achieved one of my goals here by allowing the audience to witness how these character's identities experience similar struggles of finding acceptance for their sexuality or how they feel trapped by the influence of patriarchal ideology.

What was fascinating was when one audience member considered how they thought about their own life based on actions and how we treat others. They went on to further comment that while we are enlightened as individuals, prejudices and misconceptions about other people and their identities still exist in our world today. This comment helped me realize that there was a dual purpose to my production. While I was focusing on how these identities are oppressed by patriarchal ideology, I also demonstrated that there are still misconceptions and prejudices in the world about people who are gay or those who have identities that do not align perfectly within a

binary gender construct. In turn, *The Electric Current* definitely combated these issues through these selected scenes by displaying and presenting characters who struggled to come to terms with their complicated identities. Therefore, the performance could advocate for more than just a consideration of acknowledging the fluidity of gender and sexuality. It also demonstrated how we should think about how we treat these identities in our own lives.

At the Theatre and Dance Roundtable, I gathered some interesting comments about the format of the production. Season indicated that she would have liked to have seen me trusting the audience more connecting the scenes together without the transitional dialogue. There might have been some audience members who were familiar with the material. In contrast, Ben Pfister, the stage manager for the I.S. Productions, wanted more incorporation of the electrical theme throughout the performance, such as more inclusion of the dialogue. What I noticed at this moment was I had struck a balance between the audience's accessibility of the production's purpose and message.

Furthermore, it was my intention from the beginning to create a performance that could allow me to talk to an audience about issues involving the treatment and construction of gender and sexuality. You cannot present these scenes without connecting and transitional dialogue because you have to build a context when introducing a moment that depicts an idea about how gender is performative and

sexuality is fluid. Plus, since these scenes are focused on subjects such as gender and sexuality, you need to call attention to them by speaking to the audience because these subjects are not easy for a lot of spectators to pick up on. Furthermore, you cannot expect that everyone in the audience will be exposed to the same kind of theatre you are studying. And, it is much harder for an audience to pick up the context of a presented scene when it is performed outside of its original site of origin (the text of the play). Therefore, by conversing with the audience through a dialogue that is inter-woven between the scenes, it helps compose a performance that has cohesive energy.

The electrical theme in the production was designed to help communicate the fluid nature of gender and sexuality. In turn, I did not want to over use the theme because I did not want it to steal the audience's attention away from the main point of the show. I incorporated the elements of the idea of electricity through connecting the energy between the gender binaries. Plus, I used certain key phrases in the transitional dialogue such as "Electric isn't it?" and "the restrictive and shocking pressure of a gender construction." By using phrases like this, it reinforced the notion of how connecting the energies of these gender binaries together allows for a recognition of alternative identities based on gender and sexuality. And I purposely tried to contain the visual representation of electricity around the screen setup because it was a site that was designed to generate an idea of how an electric current exists between these binaries. The electric current in this case signified how gender and sexuality fluidly

move within a range of identities outside of patriarchal ideology, but can it become oppressed and restricted by that same ideology as well.

Conclusion

As an actor, I answered by critical question by negotiating the signifiers of gender and sexuality through the methodologies of Butler, semiotics, Case, and Torr. In turn, I applied my understanding of those methodologies in a devised performance to reveal how oppressed and restricted alternative identities based on gender and sexuality are due to patriarchal ideology. What I demonstrated through my characters was my ability to acknowledge these strict cultural constructions of gender binary and sexuality and then deconstruct them by showcasing how gender and sexuality is fluid. The study and application of semiotics in theatre helped me identify the problematic constructions of gender and sexuality, as well as develop an idea of how I could challenge those restrictive constructions. To symbolize and analyze how Joe and Darren's straight male identities were complicate by their sexuality, I imaged their internal struggle as a hidden signifier, an element of their identity that they try to suppress and ignore or were embarrassed to acknowledge publicly. When these characters allowed their hidden signifier (sexuality) to be revealed, it disrupted all of the outward signs that communicated their identity as a straight-acting male and gave recognition to their identities as gay men. What Darren and Joe's hidden signifier

symbolized was internal discrimination of their sexuality because they did not want to acknowledge the incompatibility of their identity in a patriarchal environment.

While I was studying the theories of Butler, Case, and Torr, I discovered how well these ideas complimented each other in creating a layered process of answering my critical question: identify the problem placed upon these constructions, question the problem (patriarchal ideology), and solve the problem through deconstruction. Recognizing Butler's observations of the strict gender binary became the first step in identifying the problem by noting that patriarchal ideology was perpetuating strict gender constructions and alternative sexualities. Her theories also added the second layer of the process by challenging the influence and control of patriarchal ideology through her theory that gender is performative. Case's theory of semiotics applied to gender and sexuality further challenged patriarchal ideology. Her theory explained that the constructions of gender and sexuality could be broken down by disrupting the signifiers of those identities to separate them from the codes and influence of patriarchal ideology. This idea lead to the third layer of the process: deconstructing the heteronormative values placed on an identity. With Torr's observations of typical straight male behavior and how it could be applied to everyday performance, it became possible to challenge the problematic construction of the straight male identity through performance. By acting as a heterosexual or straight-acting character, I could observe and question how the operation of that character was limited by the influence of

patriarchal ideology. The third layer of the deconstruction of patriarchal ideology lead to an acknowledgment and study of how gender and sexuality is performative and fluid.

I presented my findings in an original devised performance called *The Electric Current* through the demonstration of three scenes from different plays. The scenes with Darren from *Take Me Out* and Joe from *Angels in America, Part I* served as examples of how the struggle with their sexuality complicated their outward appearance a straight-acting men. My performance of those characters revealed how the influence of patriarchal ideology caused them to continue to maintain their outward constructions as heterosexual males, which prevented them from acknowledging or accepting their homosexuality as part of their identity.

The scene from *Cloud 9* illustrated that the problematic constructions of gender and sexuality originated from patriarchal ideology. Betty was the primary example of how her identity was oppressed and restricted by Clive's patriarchal influence. But since her character was played by a man, my performance of her communicated that gender is performative and fluid because her gender identity was based on expressions, gestures, and actions.

While Setoodeh's article "Straight Jacket" argues that gay actors cannot play straight roles, it is possible for any actor, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, to portray any identity based on gender and sexuality outside of patriarchal

ideology. The signifiers of gender and sexuality are fluid, which allows for a greater acknowledgement and respect for these identities.

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Appendix A

Rehearsal Journal and Notes

Thursday, December 9th 2010

A. Rehearsed with Matthew Simpson today for "Take Me Out" Scene.

B. Got to understand the characters a little more:
    1) Kippy is supportive of Darren (bascially, he is like the baseball pal from the Little League, hey, buddy, what's up)
    2) In complete contrast, Darren in this scene is almost like a loose cannon who has a hard time dealing with all the new attention he is getting

C. We read the script multiple times to warm up our voices and analyzed what **moments** we wanted to really capitalize on.
    1) The jokes (the furniture joke, the demotion joke)
    2) Times of compassion, when Kippy reaches out to Darren, hugs him on the bench, the "I play with you moment" —
        - Want to use these to show maybe the softer side of baseball, but not demonstrate sexual tension
        - This is something I want to avoid, but there could turn out to be some homoerotic-a imbedded into the script *(do some more investigation into this on the side)*

D. Then, we roughly blocked the scene to figure out how we wanted to use the space. The action in the scene takes place in the locker room with Kippy in his towel, and Darren enters with practice clothes.

E. I have to figure out what Darren and Kippy will be doing on stage (their movement).
    1) Kippy is in a towel, ready to take a shower, and Darren is stripping down to his underwear to eventually get a towel and head for the showers.
    2) The problem that I run into is figuring out Kippy's actions because he is ready to go to take a shower. We (Matt and I) figured that at certain moments, Kippy would follow Darren at a few times, but not always (don't want to create a chasing effect).
    3) Darren is bascially moving through the space back and forth and pissed off.

F. Scene Setup
    1) As stated before, we are in the locker room after a game or practice
    2) A bench is vertically placed in the middle on stage left

G. Vocal Quality
    1) Kippy should have a bright voice, sometimes cheerful
    2) Darren needs to be loud and slightly hard (strong masculine tone), but needs to have somber moments (not to somber/soft though, not an emotional character, I think he is questioning his emotions more)

H. Physical Stance
    1) Kippy is thin, laid back, scrawny
    2) Darren is thin, more muscular that Kippy, movement should not be too fast but careful and precise like he is trying to calculate or predict his next move (what signifier should I displace within Darren?)

I. At the end, I collected the actor's schedule so I can start to plan out rehearsals in the second semester. I told instructed the actor to read the play throughly, study his character and memorize his lines. This way we will be able to rehearse the action immediately and give more time to think about our character's goals on stage.

Friday, December 10th 2010

A. Did table reading with Kevin for *Angels in America* and *Cloud Nine*.

B. *Angels in America* Notes
    1) Read through the script multiple times to figure out our characters objectives and how the action propelled forwarded in the scene
    2) Joe is trying is hardest to hide the secret that he is gay - so, got to act as nervous and closeted as possible
    3) Louis can detect that he is gay, so he uses certain tactics to get at Joe to admit that he is gay - there will be moments that Louis will "camp it up" to tease Joe about his sexuality
    4) Because there are two scenes that shift from a bathroom to a park setting, Joe and Louis will just put on coats to signal that they are both outside

C. *Cloud 9* Notes

1) Read with Kevin the interaction Clive has with Betty, ultimately I want to show how oppressive masculinity in a patriarchal society is on women, but also for other identities on the gender spectrum
2) Clive has to be a very boastful and chauvinist man, very loud, proud of how he is, treating Betty like a prized possession
3) Betty has to be extremely obedient and cheerful, but extremely animated, we are poking fun here at these strict gender constructions of male and female in society

January 17th - 21st 2011

A. Held a lot of initial table reads with the actors at separate times so we could understand what was going on

B. Once we were comfortable with moving on, we began to block the scenes
    1) *Take Me Out* Notes
        - I put two benches in the space to make a locker room environment
        - It was initially a challenge to figure out when we could move
        - So, we just kept practicing to see what worked in terms of our characters' movement, while acknowledging then tight space of the locker
    2) *Angels in America* Notes
        - Bathroom scene was challenging to setup, did not have a sink to practice with
        - So we kept running the scene to see what worked in terms of movement
        - Blocking the park bench was easy, we were able to figure out what would work in terms of creating the space
        - Placing the park bench in the middle helped form the rest of the blocking
    3) *Cloud 9* Notes
        - Blocking this scene was easy with Kevin, I primarily kept Betty sitting the entire time
        - But, we did have her get up from the bench so we could see her move around the space
        - Did not have time to block beginning of scene with introduction to family members from Clive, we will do this on Saturday before the full run through

C. The actors and I started working out the rehearsal schedule, consulted with Shirley on what days she wanted to come in and see a rehearsal and full run through of the show

D. I also worked with Jody in starting to gather my props and set pieces (that way my rehearsals included all of the necessary items to work out any potential problems)

Saturday, January 22nd 2011

A. Called actors at 12 pm to warm up bodies, voice and concentration before presenting what I had so far to present to Shirley for feedback

B. I blocked the beginning of *Cloud Nine* with the whole family *(we will hopefully have two female mannequins to stand in as Maud and Ellen, Chelsea and Matt will hopefully help move those on)*

C. Then, ran the show before Shirley came, noticed actors cannot jump across from side of the stage to the other because of the silhouette screen, will need to figure out who needs to stay where and enter from where….

D. General Comments from Shirley
   1) She worked with me on what I should try to do improve the dialogue I wrote to connect the scenes together.
      - I need to refine my point to this formula for the show: here is one example of an oppressed identity (Darren), and the problem continues here (Joe), but the root cause of the whole problem is the strict gender constructions from a patriarchal society (Cloud Nine)
      - We have these two polar opposite gender constructions (heterosexual male and female) but with combine these two charges together, we open up the current between the genders to reveal these other identities (they're there, we just don't easily see them)
   2) There were also some more edits made to the dialogue in between which I will later share with the actors.
   3) There needs to be better ending:
      - Shirley suggested having Chelsea and Bridget come out and reciting a concluding dialogue to tie it all up,
      - Then have important lines stated from important moments the audience just witnessed, ending with Betty saying "What men want is what I want to be."

- This will really help bring it back to full circle as a review of the problem.

4) Hair
   - My hair style need to change
   - Has to be masculine and a darker color
   - Look up butch styles
   - Change your hair just before the show (and conceal it)

E. Take Me Out Notes (Notes from Shirley)

1) Person 2 should come down and plant their self
   - All readers should, so the focus does not lie on their movement but on their words and the actions of me changing behind the screen
   - Really ask the question about Derrick Jeter coming out of the closet
2) Danziger — needs to slow down and not rush through certain transitions in the dialogue, such as "after a round of tennis"
   - We want to see your thought process, so start to write, then stop, you should be thinking aloud, and then write your signature,
   - We want see the "shift" from "I support you Darren, but...here are my problems with you…"
3) Danziger and Kippy should enter at the same time to start the scene quickly
4) The locker room space needs to be closer
   - This is an intimate scene
   - If not, the focus goes to KIppy and not Darren
   - Push the set pieces closer together and practice it
5) Darren Notes
   - Too much wandering and shifting
   - Ground your character and butch him up
   - Go back to studying the specific male mannerism
   - We need to see Darren, not George
   - Change your exit to up stage to change behind screen

F. Cloud Nine Notes

1) Clive Notes
   - Needs to become super masculine, larger than life
   - Be extremely boastful
   - Every character is larger than life and an extreme
   - And, we all need to British accents
2) Language
   - Need to work on pronunciation of certain words

- Monotony
- Caval**cade**

3) Physicality of Betty
    - Want to see Betty move
    - She can't always just sit there
    - All the other characters move
    - The moment where she did move looked like a director's choice, not an acting choice
    - So, make it purposeful and demonstrative of her characters
    - I think then Betty should move when she first calls for Clive (work on this with Kevin)
    - I will be thinking of reserved, feminine movement for Betty

G. Angels in America
1) Joe's Physicality
    - I can't put my hands on my hips; it looks feminine
    - Alternative: I'll cross my arms over my chest
    - Try to work more on Joe's nervousness
2) Bench Scene
    - Sitting too soon
    - Sit down at "touch you, here"
    - And make the area much more closed it
    - Using too much space
    - Needs to be more intimate

Monday, January 24th 2011

A. Take Me Out Rehearsal
1) Ran a rehearsal with Matt on the *Take Me Out* scene
2) We accomplished a lot by putting the benches closer together and changing Darren's exit.
    - Trying to make the space more intimate and small because the locker room is not a very big space
    - We need to feel how close these characters can physically get
    - Darren will not be using a chair anymore, but using a bench just like Kippy
    - Chairs are not common in locker rooms, so we will be having another bench to work with
    - The benches will be across from each other, but not perfectly lined up

- Want to create a line that is diagonal in the space so the exchange between Kippy and Darren can be seen by everyone in the space
- Darren is now exiting up stage left so I can go back to the screen to change into the next costume

3) I changed the delivery of a line
    - After Darren says, "...I don't have a secret Kippy, I am one," I am having Kippy immediately say "Even from me?"
    - This produces a stronger dramatic pause to lead into Darren stating he wants out of baseball
    - Basically, I think this choice will help further grab the audience's attention
    - Plus, it avoids me awkwardly walking over to the other side waiting for Kippy's line "Even from me?"

B. <u>Character Development</u>
1) Decided to turn on the "mean factor" for Darren = find out what makes him boil
    - Shane Mungitt
    - Kippy not listening to him
    - People thinking they know his secret
    - Becoming demoted from a God to human (more disappointment)
    - Keeping all this in mind helped me create Darren's raw anger
    - He just needs to be a bullet that just bursts into the room initially but eventually fizzles away when Kippy tries to knock some sense into him and calm down (stop playing)
2) Movement is getting more masculine
    - Remembering to lead with my heals
    - Making my body still at time (has to have big and boastful chest)
    - Need to be careful with hands, don't want to make feminine gestures
3) Language
    - Need to continue reviewing how Darren would speak
    - Not gonna be proper speech, he's a baseball player
    - So, no pronunciation of t's for example

C. <u>Rehearsal with Chelsea (reader)</u> - 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm
1) Rehearsed reading part that introduces *Take Me Out*
2) Worked with Chelsea to slow down, savor her words
3) Practiced each paragraph so we could find out the rhythm

4) She will be working on adding hand motions so she presents this like a newscaster
5) We need to work "asking the question"
6) Asking the question about what if Derrick Jeter came out of the closet needs to be asked seriously, to point where spectators are gonna think about what happened

Tuesday, January 25th 2011

A. Did another evening run-through for Shirley, she gave more notes on the performances and certain sections

B. Work on Pronunciation
   1) Multiplicity
   2) Patriarchal

C. Opening Scene (Monologue)
   1) Need to talk conversationally to audience
   2) Relax into it, you are stiffening up

D. Notes for Readers
   1) All of you have to really ask the question
   2) Can't just say it, these posed questions need to really provoke the audience

E. *Take Me Out* Notes
   1) Make sure William R. Danziger and Kippy are not aligned in the same way
   2) Matt (Kippy) — cut thru to saying "I know how you feel man" quickly
   3) Kippy can have side actions while Darren talks
   4) When Kippy braces Darren, Kippy can get closer to him, he is Darren's friend
   5) Kippy and Darren's interactions — need to go head to head, not diagonal, want space to feel intimate and do not want a character upstaging another
   6) Darren Notes
      - Need better voice consistency, it's all over the place at the moment
      - Really pound into the glove like a man, it's very feminine at the moment

F. *Angels in America* Notes

1) Bathroom Scene
    - Pace of scene needs to pick up
    - Shirley was confused by the action going on
    - We will practice saying our lines more quickly
2) Park Bench Scene
    - Joe needs to touch Louis quickly, have to really act on that impulse quickly (1st attempt to touch Louis)
    - 2nd attempt to touch Louis — use your right hand, hold it, keep it there, Louis will hold (action sequence)
    - Louis kisses Joe — Joe needs to be in shock, he needs to act joyful but petrified by what happened

G. Side Notes
1) Need to write out Light Que requests
2) Divide up script on computer (making proper format)
3) Inform cast about the roundtable event after the performance

Wednesday, January 26th 2011

A. *Take Me Out* Rehearsal
1) Ran in the beginning scene with Danziger and Kippy
2) Now going to have both characters enter in with benches to set up scene and sit on them
3) Danziger Scene Notes
    - Danziger was blocked to have very manly positions (big opening of legs, well planted feet), having character initially writing the letter but then holds a conversation with Darren (as if he is there)
    - Tried to block out how we can see Danziger's thought process (wanna see the character think — "Darren I support you, but I have some reservations" — this is what I am after)
    - Points where we see Danziger think: "...revelation of your sexual preference…" and "I would have no problem sharing a communal shower with you…" (moments before he gets visibly angry at Darren)
    - Need to work more with Maria on how we can make Danziger motivated to think (showing how Danziger thinks, by looking up at the audience, at the moment, she is burying her head down while writing the letter)
    - Idea: Danziger really wants to talks to Darren because he has the urge the tell him how he feels about his actions

- Danziger's Thoughts:
    i) Dude, Mungitt should not have treated you that way,
    ii) Crucial Point — but the revelation of your sexuality pisses me off — Darren invades Danziger's personal and private space (his belief that baseball is a completely masculine sport, with no room, or unwilling to make room for gay identities, does not consider them masculine)
- Maria needs to work on butching up Danziger's appearance (in addition to pulling back hair and binding breasts)

4) Kippy and Darren Scene
    - Made sure benches would be pushed closer together before scene began
    - Want to make sure we create a close and intimate environment, but need to be able to breathe in it (move comfortably in it)
    - Both characters now interact with each other head on and not diagonally (this works really well for the scene's intensity)
    - Need to make spot at end (when Darren is about to walk away) to end faster — need to push through it (want audience to feel Darren's raw anger and struggle over the situation)
    - Going to work with Matt more on making Kippy's bracing Darren moment softer (he keeps grabbing my arms too quickly)
5) Personal Thoughts on Darren
    - Need to practice a tone of voice, find a comfortable low pitch
    - Work on his walking (heel to toe) to make him look more masculine
    - Incorporate a baseball glove into the scene, might give the scene more depth (something for Darren to do with his hands)
    - Practice not pronouncing words precisely — be sloppy, look at lines to see what can be slurred to sound more gruff and masculine

B. *Cloud 9* Rehearsal
1) Clive Notes
    - Using a riding whip now to act as an extension of his strong patriarchal control and masculinity
    - Working more with Kevin at next rehearsal to see how he better incorporate it with his character (he needs to act like a ring leader, he's commanding attention and respect from everyone around him, especially Betty)
2) Betty Notes
    - Need to deliver lines faster, go to say them with speed

- Voice — try not to go too high, keep the changing levels, this really works well for the scene (probably do voice warm ups beforehand)
- Don't be afraid to get close to Clive (Betty wants him…)
- Think of Betty as a child who is controlled by Clive's leash (she can't move on her own)
- Have a high prominence in chest — you are a proper Victorian lady

3) Reminder for next rehearsal
   - Block in on Saturday rehearsal the moving dummies (Maud and Ellen) on and off stage at the start of the scene
   - Need to get a baby doll to represent Victoria, it will held by Betty

C. *Angels in America* Rehearsal

1) Bathroom Scene
   - Work on picking up speed of words after "Heartless, Reagenite…" line from Louis
   - Interaction between Louis and Joe need to click quickly back and forth (review lines more)
   - Louis kissing Joe's hand without a feminine bow = works well
2) Park Scene
   - Pick up the pace after Louis says "Come on…," Joe can get excited about this
   - But, Joe needs to pull away and doubt this when he says "This is absurd…"
   - So, work on happy/shock reaction from kiss — got to have nerves but also a "Oh boy" excitement
   - When Joe hesitates to touch Louis, you really need to sound desperate, you are freaking out at what might happen next
   - Then, sit on the bench at "Can I please just...touch you…"
   - When you sit on the bench, make it a thump, you are trying to not freak out, but you are...you are at your lowest point before your impulse completely takes over
   - Need to get Hell line right — "I'm going to hell for doing this."
   - Imagine that you are trying to stop your impulse, but the impulse that you feel is good, though you are afraid to go further with them (remember, you have to be scared and freaked out)
   - Like Darren, practice heel-toe walking, watch out for making feminine movement, we want Joe to remain as masculine as possible

Friday, January 28th 2011

A. *Take Me Out* Rehearsal
    1) I ran the full scene with Matt and Maria so we could work on the overall energy of the piece
    2) We ran through the scene a couple of times, I worked with Maria at the beginning of the scene to continue fleshing out Danziger's anger towards Darren
    3) I want the audience to be able to see this shift from a Danziger who could be Darren's buddy and then a mean man who is offended by Darren's homosexuality
    4) So, I am having Maria work extra hard to show this through her performance, I told her that Danziger is getting this angry because Darren has entered into a space that he deems masculine and does not want Darren's energy (which he could consider feminine and weak) to enter it
    5) Matt is doing very well as Kippy, he is investing a lot of energy in the character

B. Epilogue Blocking
    1) I moved the entire cast to Shoolroy to block out the epilogue
    2) My idea of the epilogue is to give the audience an opportunity to reflect upon the identities they saw performed in front of them
    3) So, I want the epilogue not to stand still, I want people to see the energy of these characters while they move
    4) I had it blocked where Bridget and Chelsea entered from Stage Right and stood there to deliver their lines in the epilogue, while Matt, Maria, Kevin and me entered and moved down stage to form a circle
    5) After that, we turned around in two beats on the line "...gender is performative," I think it made a cool affect to grab the audience's attention once more about gender is performative
    6) So we ran it a couple of times to practice maintaining the energy and direction of the epilogue, those run throughs went very well

Saturday, January 29th 2011

A. Ran a complete full rehearsal in Shoolroy so everyone could adjust to the size of the performance space, this proved to be very helpful

B. *Take Me Out* Rehearsal

1) We maintained our high level of energy for the scene, which is great
2) I worked with Matt on the moment where Kippy is grabbing onto Darren, but Darren is trying to struggle out of his grip
    - I need to use my full body to maintain Darren's masculine appearance
    - If I just use my shoulder, I will look feminine on stage
3) I need to be more careful about throwing the glove around in the scene, it bounce a couple of times to distances where I could not feasibly continue running the scene and pick it up again, I don't want to break the energy in the show
4) Maria did an excellent job as Danziger, I think she is really understanding how to talk to the audience as the character and display that shift in happiness to anger
5) And, Matt did a great job as Kippy today, I need to work with him more on grabbing Darren closer to him, we are looking too far apart

C. Readers
    1) Matt (introduces *Cloud 9* scene)
        - I need him to keep a wider stance
        - Needs to slow down when he says his lines, I will need time to change back stage, plus, he needs to work on his diction, project
        - I wrote out the pauses in the transitional dialogue so he could get more use to reciting what he was saying like a news anchor
        - Needs to practice walk for entrance, it looks a little too bouncy
    2) Chelsea (introduces *Take Me Out* scene)
        - She needs to get a lot louder and work on her diction
        - I am going to work with her more on containing her energy, she is making head turns and hand motions that are distracting me from hearing her performance
    3) Bridget (introduces *Angels in America* scene)
        - Same thing that I did for Matt, I wrote out the pauses in the transitional dialogue so she could sound like a news reporter
        - She needs to not keep her feet together, it does not look right, she needs to make a neutral stance
        - I will be working with her more on her making natural movements so she does not look completely still on stage

D. *Angels in America* Rehearsal
    1) Kevin and I ran the scene, we really picked up the pace
    2) I need to pick up my lines sooner, especially for the Bathroom scene

3) When I opened the door in that scene, I worked on miming it to look more natural, need to practice this more
4) Eureka moment - for park scene, I need to enter looking for Louis, this explains why Joe said "I followed you," he does not enter in the scene passively, he comes in carefully looking for him, but tenses up when Louis sees him
5) Tried having Louis going behind the bench when Joe reveals that he followed him, this really worked, looked natural and propelled the action forward
6) I am going to be keeping in mind during Joe's hesitation that he really wants to touch Louis, this has to be one of his main goals

E. <u>*Cloud 9* Scene</u>
1) Had some great energy for performing this scene, did very well with remembering the blocking, it is looking organic
2) I am messing up on my mini-monologue/line about Harry, I need to practice it, plus I need to review my lines more so I am comfortable reciting them
3) When Shirley looks at this rehearsal again, I am going to have her look at Clive's handling of the riding whip again, I want him to really enforce his masculinity through it — it should look like moments where Clive is attacking or confronting Betty with his dominance over her

<u>Tuesday, February 1st 2011</u>

A. Ran a full run through for Shirley is Shoolroy, she gave me a lot of helpful feedback and criticism (see notes below)

B. <u>Epilogue Notes</u>
1) Move away from trying to make a circle effect, not working
2) Shirley said that I need to be the center of the attention
3) So, we make a quick tableau of that included everyone behind me while I sat on the bench
4) Also brought in the mannequins to be a part of this family picture
5) Now it will be easier for me to transform into my characters right in front of the audience

C. <u>Readers Notes</u>

1) Shirley said that the readers can turn to look at the audience while they are performing

D. Danziger Notes
   1) Don't write your letter at the beginning, we want to see this buddy personality from your character
   2) Then, when you get mad at Darren, get really mad at him, show us that anger
   3) (Side note: get a pen and notepad for Maria to practice with
   4) Really need to show this transition of anger to show that you are hurt by Darren

E. Darren and Kippy Notes
   1) Keep sight lines at angled head ons so everyone in the space can see the interaction between the two characters
   2) If it is made on a diagonal, it looks awkward and too far apart

F. Louis Notes
   1) Take a peek at Joe when he comes into the bathroom
   2) Blow nose loudly, it will add to the scene to show how upset your are
   3) When you say, "Louise," go vocally higher, just feminize that portion a little bit

G. Joe Notes
   1) Need to say under your breath in the same tonal manner, "Not so nice"
   2) You need to notice earlier that Louis is sad, need to remember handing him a wad of toilet paper
   3) For transition into the park scene, have Bridget and Chelsea bring on the the coat and bench
   4) Put more emphasis on your line "I don't remember"
   5) Do not grab Louis, you need to tenderly touch his face first, we need to see Joe struggle heavily up to that point

H. *Cloud 9* Notes
   1) Matt has to be the one to adjust the bench from *Angels* into this next scene
   2) No one pre-placed it during the run through, so we fixed the problem
   3) Betty = Review your lines more, you need to get them right
   4) Edit the dialogue of Person 2 in the epilogue, the language and flow of it is not right

Thursday, February 3rd 2011

A. Did another full run through of the show in Shoolroy

B. Notes on the Run Through
   1) The readers need to really slow down with their lines, I am struggling to change as fast as I can
   2) *Take Me Out* - I think I worked out the glove situation, when I throw it and if I cannot get to it, Kippy will pick up and place on the bench when Darren moves over there
   3) Setup for the beginning of that scene (Maria and Matt come in with the benches) needs to happen faster
   4) Transition into the epilogue did not go smoothly, need to practice this more so everyone one is use to it
   5) Our energy level this evening was down, maybe I should consider figuring out a warm up routine for them so we can maximize our highest performance level
   6) Other scene transitions worked well
   7) Need to fix stage directions in the script and tracking details (entrances for the actors were wrong)

Friday, February 4th 2011

A. Costume Notes
   1) Have to carefully time out changes for costume since the scene transitions are fast, remind readers to speak as slowly as possible to give you more time
   2) Need to especially practice with getting into Betty's outfit, she has a lot to put on, going to have Chelsea help me with this
   3) Also practice Darren and Joe's costume transformations, they need to be quick and crisp

B. Rehearsal in Shoolroy at 7:30 pm
   1) I am unsure if my movement in the opening monologue to explain the purpose of the show is working, going to ask Shirley to see what we can do to make it look natural
      - Trying to play to all sides of the audience
      - Doing twists of body to make it interesting, trying to keep all eyes on me

- I like imitating the masculine and feminine energies from the mannequins when I describe how the gender binaries are constructed
- I am finding it better to hold a conversation with the audience
- The audience will probably respond better to me if I sound happy tone vs. an angry tone (I don't want to give off the impression that I am talking down to the audience

C. *Take Me Out* Rehearsal

1) Chelsea needs to continue slowing down her lines when she speaks at the reader, I almost had no time to change
2) So, I told her to chew on her words more, savor the moments that she speaks, make it softer
3) Need to spike benches tomorrow, they are getting too close together for this scene, I want that distance so I have room to resist Kippy's grip on me
4) Throwing the baseball glove and then having Kippy pick it up = works for me (grab it right before you go to the bench…)
5) Loosen your diction, you need to sound like a tough cookie baseball player

D. *Angels* Rehearsal

1) Going to need to work on opening the door more, it is still not looking natural
2) Need to try and find a happy medium within in Joe's voice, it is getting to low
3) Rapid pace of lines with Louis pushing Joe's button's about his sexuality is working well, but let's kick this up a notch for the next time
4) Try to act protective of your core identity (do not want to reveal true sexuality)
5) Park Scene Notes
    - Action seemed to go too far up the stage, bring it back to the middle, spike position of this tomorrow
    - Doing well in terms of holding back Joe's impulses to show his struggle with his identity and hesitation to touch Louis
    - Keep paying close attention as to how his hidden signifier pops out through his hands, maybe be more impulsive, fell that there is some time deep inside Joe that he wants so badly to get out, but he is also at the same time restraining it by trying to keep it down (the fear of

hell is on your mind)

E. *Cloud 9* Rehearsal: ran the scene well, not noticing any major problems here, I am a little sick, so I am not going to strain my high voice until performance time

Saturday, February 5th 2011

A. Had a full tech rehearsal today in Shoolroy theatre with lights, and some costumes, the whole tech ran really well since we only had to run the show once

B. Opening Scene Setup: Synchronized the lights and electrical sound together, it really created a cool special effect with the screen

C. Notes from Shirley
   1) Plant yourself at "exploration" line during the opening monologue
   2) Polish your dress shoes for Clive
   3) Double check that your collar, coat and tie are perfectly placed on body, it looked messed up in the performance
   4) Make "I don't" line for Joe sound the same both times your recite it (try to make it sound the same in terms of volume and tone)
   5) Really kiss the foot on the "Poor dear foot" line at Betty
   6) Monoto**n**y = really pronounce that **n**
   7) Epilogue — bring everyone in closer together so it looks more like a family picture for a moment

D. Notes for Self
   1) Record your voice for the reader lines and practice changing into the costumes, get a better feel of the speed of the costume change
   2) Need to get a coat for Joe's costume
   3) Practice with Chelsea on Monday the costume change for Betty
   4) Going to have Maria and Bridget help Kevin change into his costume at Betty
   5) Remind Maria about coming in for her costume fittings on Monday
   6) Send Shirley potential feedback questions for the Thursday talk back
   7) Remember to put the silhouette of Darren a little more off to Stage Left so we can see his baseball glove

E. Costume Notes/Updates
   1) What is OK at the moment

- Darren and Kippy's costumes and towels have been gathered
- Joe has a good business suit
- Louis has a good business attire and coat
- Edward's outfits have been pulled
- Got all black clothing for the readers

2) What Needs to be Adjusted/Fixed/Acquired

- Need to fit Maria in Danziger's outfit
- Polish Joe's shoes
- Practice Betty's costume transformation with Chelsea on Monday
- Gather simple female garments for female mannequins, Matt will be putting one of these pieces of one of the mannequins, while the other will be pre-placed on the other mannequin
- Remind Bridget to bring out on her side the dressed female mannequin for *Cloud 9*
- Kevin needs to practice getting into Clive's outfit

3) Idea for Betty Costume Procedure

- Chelsea puts the wig on me immediately (I make the devil horns to hook in on my head)
- I then get into my shoes by slipping in quickly
- Next, quickly put on the blouse (which is already hanging), Chelsea helps me button it
- After that, snap my dress on (Chelsea brings this on before I begin changing into the costume)

F. <u>Ideas for Photo Call Moments</u>

1) *Take Me Out* — Darren on the bench with the baseball glove (LQ 33)
2) *Angels* — park bench scene, Joe touches Louis' face (LQ 38)
3) *Cloud 9* — the family portrait or Betty on the floor with Clive standing by (LQ 41)
4) Potential Idea — plugging together the two gender binaries on stage
5) In the end, we took pictures of the first three ideas (for *Cloud 9*, we took shots of Betty on the ground and then ones where she was reaching for Clive)

<u>Monday, February 7th 2011</u>

A. Final Dress and Tech rehearsal for the show in Shoolroy, all went as smoothly as it could, some bumps to iron out, but they will be solved by opening

B. Notes from Charlene (Costumes)
    1) Cut out the converses in *Take Me Out*, they are becoming cumbersome for your to take off on stage
    2) Going to rig Joe's costume for easy snapping
    3) Going to drop Betty's skirt by four inches
    4) Clive costume will be rigged as well
    5) Kevin will be wearing fake glasses for Louis (helps complete transformation of character), and then contacts for Clive
    6) Keep hair as butch as possible during the performance week, comb it to the side, see Charlene on Tuesday to dye it

C. Notes from Shirley
    1) Move the mannequins on to the stage during pre-show setup
    2) Double check screen is pre-set properly (this will be your only job during pre-show)
    3) Remind Patrice to put up a sign that you have a strobe in your show so the Box Office is aware of this
    4) Make sure your actors are quiet back stage
    5) We will work on the opening after I give the rest of these notes out
    6) Maria as Danziger = flesh out the anger for your character, we need to see that moment more clearly
    7) Do not mime opening the door for *Angels*, it is not working
    8) Your tie was not on correctly, and your pant leg was stuck in your sock for Joe's costume

D. Reworking the Opening Scene
    1) Looking shocked when you enter = good
    2) You are moving around too much in the space
    3) All is good up till you say "At both ends of the gender spectrum…"
        - Walk down center to audience and plant yourself there
        - Do not want the movement to trump your voice (it's a fact of life, this always happens in performance)
        - So take snapshot moments, turn to each section of the audience before stating each line
        - Need to try to equally talk to everyone
    4) Then after the line "expanding the possibilities…" walk back to the mannequins
        - Take a two to three second pause then turn around to the audience and finish the monologue

- Creates a sense of suspension in the air, audience will be on the edge of their seats
- Bascially you are communicating "But wait, I'm not done talking yet"

Wednesday, February 9th 2011

A. Worked with Charlene and Chelsea on the Betty Costume change, here is the new procedure

B. Adjusted Betty Costume Procedure
   1) Coming out of Joe's outfit
      - Take off shoes
      - Turn around to Chelsea, she takes off your jacket and suit (you unbutton the jacket and suit)
      - Immediately take off the tie and shirt, these things snap off
      - Then turn around to drop Joe's pants
   2) Begin applying Betty's Costume
      - Chelsea puts your Betty shirt on you from behind
      - You snap on Betty's shirt (and then at the same time, turn around) get ready for the dress
      - Chelsea puts the dress over your head, then you hold the right side of it so she can snap the dress together
      - Then Chelsea helps you put on your shoes
      - Next, she helps you put on your wig (make the devil horns to capture the wig), adjust it to see the widow's peak

C. Other Notes
   1) Bridget and Kevin worked on putting Clive's outfit
   2) They will be practicing more with Charlene tomorrow
   3) I am going into the theatre tomorrow to prep the props and costumes to make sure everything will be in place for tomorrow
   4) Practice pulling out the hanky from Joe's suit (remind Kevin to return it you after the performance)

D. Thoughts that Popped in my head
   1) What is it that activates my characters to come alive?
   2) Since I switch characters frequently, there is something that clicks that just makes these characters come to life
   3) Might also be turning on the hidden signifiers of Darren and Joe

4) Darren
    - It's all in his walk
    - As soon as I walk out into the space from behind the screen, he just comes alive
    - Hidden signifier is in his chest because that is where all his core masculine energy lies (the hidden signifier once activated will cause his chest to slump because he feels "demoted" from his god-lie status to a human)
5) Joe
    - Holding the briefcase because he has some baggage with him (conflict between self perception of sexuality and oppressive religious views)
    - It's like he is carrying around some kind of dead weight (just trying to go through the motions of life)
    - hidden signifier is placed in his hands because he wants to touch Louis desperately
6) Betty
    - Her straight back - she has to keep in line with her tight female gender construction
    - This causes the rest of her movement to as feminine as possible

Thursday, February 10th 2011 — Opening Night

A. Opening Night, overall it went really well
    1) Got to the theatre at 6:00 pm to stretch and relax
    2) Need to recite lines sooner (7:00 pm) so we do not rush this at the last minute
    3) Put your stuff away sooner so you have more time to concentrate on getting ready

B. General Notes
    1) Opening Monologue — I am not sure if I was loud enough, I might have been shaking during performance
    2) Need to warm up more to calm down (maybe meditate)
    3) I thought I was not going to see the audiences's faces when performing, but I did, and it was a slight distraction, but it will not be for next time, I will look above their heads instead
    4) Check with Shirley tomorrow to make sure movement for opening monologue worked
    5) Yell "faggot" line more in *Take Me Out* scene

6) Joe's tie was a problem again, the shirt would not velcro at the top, and I could not place the tie in there (I went to Charlene the next day to work on a fix for this)
7) Beginning scene of *Angels* (Bathroom scene), Louis needs to enter sooner
8) *Cloud 9* Notes
    - Changing into Betty's costume was seamless
    - Clive came on stage on time (Kevin was able to change into his costume quickly)
    - The bench was not set correctly (make sure Matt is properly setting it for next time)
    - Matt first put on the blue vest on the female mannequin on stage, and then he talked (slowly) = that really worked very well
    - Forgot a line after "I just missed when you were away…," I usually take a pause there but Clive instead jumped in when the pause got too long

Thursday, February 10th 2011 — Feedback from the Talkback

A. Comments from those questions posed by Season
    1) Moments people were drawn to:
        - Thought the Silhouette Light Source Screen (SLSS) was striking and organized, served a purpose in the IS performance, referred back to all of the elements of the play
        - The SLSS acted as a kernel that held it all together
        - My reaction: I am glad people think that the SLSS kept all parts of the show together, I did not know how it was going to work, but it did in the end

B. What was theatrical?
    1) People defined theatricality as something that makes you think, generates a moment
    2) The last moment (the epilogue), brought it all together, you were star struck by it
    3) The SLSS - deliberately put there in the theatre = theatrical
        - Putting on a performance, that is what it's placement indicated
        - Helped create this fluidity of gender
        - Reconstructs how we are by seeing the silhouette
        - Because we see this human figure changing, it generates vulnerability out of it because I was changing behind everyone

- Changing of clothes = putting on that character's gender and sexuality
- My reaction: "Changing of clothes = putting on that character's gender and sexuality" — never quite thought about that before, relates to how our identities can be signified based on what we wear

C. How did this performance question your views of gender and sexuality?
    1) Gender identities are on a spectrum, so everything is open-ended
    2) Saw something different in each scene (intense, emotional, lots of activity of motion)
    3) Putting those scenes together made some think what was connection with everyone
    4) Prompted one individual to think about their own life, such as what we do and how we treat others
        - Although we are enlightened there are still prejudices and misconceptions about these people/identities in our world
        - My reaction: that was another un-subconscious goal achieved, I was focusing on identities, but yes, there are still misconceptions and prejudices in our world, so this play definitely attempts to combat those issues (referring mostly to Take Me Out and Angels)

Saturday, February 12th 2011 — Closing Night

A. Closing Night went very well
    1) I had a lot more confidence performing tonight
    2) Running my lines earlier was very helpful, which gave me more time to meditate backstage before going on (I was really relaxed before going on)
    3) I picked up the pace a little bit more during the opening monologue
    4) Everyone have stellar performances, I could have not asked for a better cast

Tuesday, February 15th, 2011 — Feedback from the Roundtable

A. Asked by what it was like to play a role that I would not be typically cast in, here was my response:
    1) Referring to playing Darren and Joe
    2) I had to remove myself, all elements of George, away from those characters

3) So, it was a matter of changing my quality of movement from tight to loose
4) Walked around a lot on my heels to practice getting into "straight" walk so I could feel more comfortable walking that way
5) Changing my voice, so going lower, changing rate of speech, no enunciating as much (Darren)

B. Balance of Opinions
    1) Would have liked to have seen you trusting the audience more on connecting the scenes, especially for those who are familiar with the material
        - In reference to having the readers introduce the context of the scene
        - It felt like you were patting us on the head (Season Ellison)
    2) More incorporation of the idea of the electric current throughout the play, such as in the dialogue (Ben Pfister)
    3) <u>Striking a Balance</u>
        - I feel that I struck a balance between these two ideas about what some people would have liked to have seen
        - Some wanted more, and others wanted less
        - There was a reason for some of those choices, and it was for the purpose of striking a balance so any kind of audience could recieve the message of the show well
    4) <u>Trusting the audience</u>
        - My intention was to create a performance where I could talk to the audience about issues involving gender and sexuality
        - You can't just present scenes like this without providing some commentary, you have to build a context when introducing a moment that depicts an idea about how gender is performative and sexuality is fluid
        - Furthermore, not everyone is going to be exposed to the same kind of theatre, not everyone can pick up the context of a scene performed outside of its original site of origin (the text of the play)
        - By talking to the audience inter-woven dialogue, you can more easily connect all of your pieces together as cohesive production
    5) <u>The Electric Theme</u>
        - I did not want to go over board with the electrical device/theme in the show, it could have stolen attention away from the main point of the show
        - So, I tried to use the idea of electricity connecting the two-gender binaries together carefully

- Using keywords in the dialogue such as “Electric, isn’t it?,” “...and how sexuality is as fluid as an electrical current...,” “the restrictive and shocking pressure of a gender construction”
- The SLSS was suppose to generate all the ideas about how an electrical current opens up idea about how sexuality and gender is fluid, and it worked since some wanted more of the electrical theme included

Discussion of the Rehearsal and Production Process

While I was selecting my scenes for the performance, I knew that I had to deliver the context of those moments to the audience so they could identify and look for the main message. It would not have been helpful to just perform the scenes on their accord, something was needed to help tie together the action of those moments together. I decided to write transitional dialogue before each scene so the audience could understand what the purpose of the performance of the scene was and why it contained important commentary and questioning of society's construction of gender and sexual identities. The transitional dialogue followed a generic formula that established what the plot was for the displaced scene so the audience could understand the context of a particular scene. This was followed by a brief profile of the character who had a complicated identity and unique questions to allow spectators to consider examining the oppressive patriarchal ideology place upon those characters. In addition to using transitional dialogue to act as a narration to string together the scenes, I created an opening monologue that I conveyed to the audience to explain and demonstrate how identities based on gender and sexuality were oppressed by patriarchal ideology.

One of the major benefits that I created for myself with this production was keeping my paper work detailed and organized. Since I was performing, directing, and managing all functions of the performance piece, it was important for me to keep the production process smooth. This was first accomplished by creating a tracking sheet

that categorized all the props, costumes, set pieces, and furniture into their own separate sections. Within those separate sections, I noted where each item would travel during the piece. For example, I paid particular attention to where the benches moved throughout the space because almost all of the scenes contained a bench. Plus, I created a pre-set list so I could have a guide to instruct me and my crew person how Chelsea needed to set up the space in order to successfully run the show.

Another major benefit that helped create a smooth production process was a consist but flexible rehearsal schedule. I first rehearsed the three scenes separately in order to work on the core message and action within the scene. Those scenes were blocked and rehearsed almost four to six times a week in the afternoon. The rehearsals of those scenes also allowed me and the actors to explore the possibilities of how we could move around in the space of the scene. For example, in *Take Me Out* we timed and rehearsed how the benches were moved on and how Danziger entered and exited the space, allowing us to create a fluid transition between Danziger's opening monologue to the interaction between Darren and Kippy. While I was blocking *Angels in America*, we used a portion of our rehearsal time to experiment with the placement of the action in different spots. I wanted to create inmate and closed off environments that focused the audiences' attention on Joe's struggle to find a compromise with his sexuality. The action for both the bathroom and park scene were located in the middle because I found that it was the best spot to give spectators an opportunity for multiple identities to be

recognized. For *Cloud 9*, we also used a section of our rehearsal time to explore how to setup the image of the family portrait in the beginning part of the scene. All of the rehearsals of these core scenes also included times for the actors to explore and compose the movement of their respective character. Once the main action from those three scenes were blocked, I then started adding in the readers to the beginning of the rehearsals to practice the transition between the end of the reader's introduction to the scene to the actual beginning moments of that scene. This helped with me being able to identify where the energy of the scene was balanced or needed to be changed in order to continue delivering the message of the show to the audience. After that, I then began running the show will all the transitional dialogue and scenes together in order to practice maintaing the energy of the performance and to identify areas with the production that needed extra attention to create a unified performance.

Though the transitional dialogue, tracking of the props and the smooth rehearsal process helped create a great production schedule. There were some places along the way that could have been improved or were improved upon. Originally, I did not compose an epilogue after *Cloud 9* because I wanted to leave the audience in a state of suspense to force them to continue calling into question how we construct the identities based on gender and sexuality as a society. However, I noticed that the show needed to conclude with some kind of closure, an abrupt ending was not allowing me to tie up my main ideas that were broadcasted through the performance. So instead of letting the

audience hang their suspension, I created an epilogue that incorporated all the characters facing them that wrapped up the main points of the show. After having the two speakers provoking the audience to continue thinking out the oppressive construction of these characters, I asked the audience through the dialogue to not allow the voices of these identities to be left unheard. Then, every character spoke at different moments lines that summarized their main purpose in the production. I was sitting on the bench in the middle of the actors, seamlessly morphing into Darren, Joe and Betty to convey how gender was performative and how sexuality was fluid in each identity I portrayed.

The timing and pace of the transitional dialogue was designed to be presented in a slow manner so I could have time to change into the costume for the upcoming scene. My readers for the transitional dialogue did a fantastic job, but I feel that I should have spent more time with them to work on a slower pace of reciting the dialogue. I communicated and practice with my readers how to present their dialogue like they were a news broadcaster: slow, precise with special emphasis on the main points of what they were saying. So, instead of spending fifteen minutes of rehearsal time working on the pace of the transitional dialogue, I should have worked thirty or forty minutes with them. But the performance of those transitional dialogues worked, it just took a little while to get it to that slow pace of talking that I wanted.

An area that I could have improved upon was gathering the Victorian costumes. I worked with Hannah Middendorf to pull examples of these costumes so I could decide early what my characters for those scenes were going to wear. After having some initial difficulty keeping in contact with Hannah, it took me a while to getting around to pulling all the costume elements I needed for *Cloud 9*. But, I eventually found the time to get the costumes ready for the performance. What I could have improved upon was starting earlier on working with Hannah on getting those costumes ready. When it came time to practicing the moments to change in and out of the different costumes between the scenes, I did not seek advice on developing the most efficient system for changing seamlessly into the different identities that I was portraying. During tech week, the most problematic costume changes for me became getting into Joe's business suit and Betty's Victorian outfit. I was struggling and panicking behind the screen to rapidly change. Charlene Gross, our costume designer for the department, noticed this and offered to help me develop a plan for changing into those costumes in a stress-free manner. So, I worked with her on how to quickly and calmly get into Joe's outfit. Then, we brought in my crew person Chelsea to assist me in changing into my costume for Betty. In the end, this really helped me relax and focus on switching to Betty's character as Chelsea helped me add on the necessary elements to signify Betty constructed female gender.

Appendix B

Production Documents

Rehearsal Schedule

Week 1

Monday, Jan. 17 - Wise Studio

- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: block Take Me Out (George and Matt)
- 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: block Angels in America (George and Kevin)

Wednesday, Jan. 19 - Wise Studio

- 12:00 pm: Rehearse with Chelsea as a reader
- 1:40 pm - 2:00 pm: Rehearse with Bridget as reader
- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: rehearse Take Me Out (George and Matt) Shirley will be coming in at 4:00 pm to watch and provide feedback
- 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm: block Cloud Nine (George and Kevin)
- 8:45 pm: rehearse with Maria as a reader

Friday, Jan. 21 - Wise Studio

- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: rehearse Take Me Out (George and Matt) - add Maria
- 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: rehearse Angels in America, maybe Cloud Nine (George and Kevin) Shirley will be viewing this rehearsal at 4:30 pm to provide feedback on Angels in America
- 7:30 pm: everyone is called. Checking to make sure all parts of the upcoming schedule works out (bring all conflicts). Blocking the beginning of Cloud Nine, running transitions between scenes and running full show to work out any major kinks.

Saturday, Jan. 22 - Wise Studio

- Arrive at 12:00 pm - warm up
- GO at 1:00 pm to show for Shirley

Week 2

Monday, Jan. 24 - Wise Studio

- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: run Take Me Out (George and Matt) - with Maria (letter read to begin the scene)

- 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: run Angels in America (George and Kevin) - with Bridget at 5:00 pm (as reader to introduce the scene)
- 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm: work with Chelsea

Tuesday, Jan. 25th - Wise Studio
- 7:30 pm: run through with everyone, Shirley will be watching this run-through providing feedback

Wednesday, Jan. 26th - Wise Studio
- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: run Take Me Out (George and Matt) - with Maria until 4:00 pm
- 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: run Cloud Nine (George and Kevin) - with Matt at 5:00 pm (reader)

Friday, Jan. 28th - Wise Studio
- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm: run Take Me Out (George and Matt) - with Maria, possibly add Chelsea (reader) at 4:00 pm
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm: run Angels in America and Cloud Nine (George and Kevin) - with Bridget at 5:00 pm for "Angels" (reader) and Matt at 5:30 pm for "Cloud Nine" (reader)

Saturday, Jan. 29th - Shoolroy
- 12:30 pm - full rehearsal with everyone

Week 3: Final Rehearsal/Start of Tech Week

Monday, Jan. 31st - Wise Studio
- 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm: run Take Me Out (George and Matt) - with Maria and Chelsea (add her at 4:00 pm)
- 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm: run Angels in America and Cloud Nine (George and Kevin) - with Bridget at 5:00 pm for "Angels" (reader) and Matt at 5:30 pm for "Cloud Nine" (reader)

Tuesday: Feb. 1st - Shoolroy
- 7:00 pm: full show run through, Shirley will be watching to provide feedback

Thursday: Feb. 3rd - Shoolroy
- 7:30 pm full show run through

Saturday: Feb. 5th - Shoolroy

- 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm: tech rehearsal in Shoolroy (Nina's production goes at 1:00 pm, George's production will start when Nina's is done)

Week 4: Tech and Performance Week

Monday: Feb. 7th - Shoolroy (costumes added)
- 5:30 pm: Crew called
- 6:00 pm: Actors called
  - ➡ *Quickly see me to work on Curtain Call*
  - ➡ Then, go get ready
- Photo call at 6:45 pm
  - ➡ Three moments from the show will be photographed
  - ➡ *Moments to be determined*
- 7:00 pm: GO
- Running final tech of Nina and George's performances

Tuesday: Feb. 8th - *Possible afternoon/evening rehearsal if needed (no tech)*

Wednesday: Feb. 9th - Shoolroy
- Opening of IS Productions by Lindsay, Owen, and Jackie
- (Actors, you may attend these performances)

Thursday: Feb. 10th - Shoolroy
- Opening of IS Productions by Nina and George
- 6:45 pm: Crew called
- 7:00 pm: Actors called
- 8:15 pm: GO
- Talkback with audience after the performance

Friday: Feb. 11th - Shoolroy
- Performance of IS Productions by Lindsay, Owen, and Jackie
- (Actors, you may attend these performances)

Saturday: Feb. 12th - Shoolroy
- Performance of IS Productions by Nina and George
- 6:45 pm: Crew called
- 7:00 pm: Actors called
- 8:15 pm: GO
- STRIKE AFTER SHOW (requires everyone's help)

Tuesday: Feb. 15th - IS Roundtable

- 11:00 am, Lowry 119/120
- Come and participate in a discussion about the IS Productions
- Please attend if you can, your input and insight into the production is important

Tracking Details Sheet

Main Tracking Details - Props, Costumes, Furniture, Set Pieces

Opening Scene

- ☐ Special Silhouette Set Piece (on stage)
- ☐ Male and Female Mannequin (on stage)
- ☐ Electric cords (pre-placed and never moved)
- ☐ Backstage and dressed:
  Other Female Mannequin for Cloud Nine

Scene One: Take Me Out

- ☐ Two benches
- ☐ Note pad & pen (Stage Right)
- ☐ Baseball glove (behind screen)
- ☐ Baseball (Stage Left)
- ☐ Towels (one on each bench)
- ☐ Sports clothing
  (Matt - Stage Left, George - behind screen)

Scene Two: Angels in America

Part A

- ☐ Tissues (in Joe's business attire)
- ☐ Joe: Business attire (behind the screen)
- ☐ Louis: Casual ware (Stage Right)
- ☐ Briefcase for Joe (behind screen)

Part B

- ☐ Joe: same business attire with coat (Stage Left)
- ☐ Louis same casual ware with coat (Stage Right)
- ☐ One bench (Stage Right)

Scene Three: Cloud Nine

- ☐ Victorian Costumes
- ☐ One bench
- ☐ Riding Whip (Stage Right)
- ☐ Baby Dummy (Victoria, behind screen)
- ☐ Two Female Mannequins

Top of Show Pre-set:

On the stage

- ☐ Silhouette Light Source Screen (on stage)
- ☐ Strobe (check connection, DO NOT turn on)
- ☐ Male Mannequin (Stage Right corner of Silhouette)
- ☐ Female Mannequin (Stage Left corner of Silhouette)
- ☐ Electric cords (wrapped around mannequins necks, drape on floor)
- ☐ Backstage and dressed: *Other Female Mannequin for Cloud Nine*

Behind the screen

- ☐ Coat Rack
  - ☐ *Joe's suit (with hanky), shirt, tie, pants*
  - ☐ *Black socks (extra)*
  - ☐ *Betty's Shirt*
  - ☐ *Darren's shorts, shirt*
- ☐ Joe's briefcase
- ☐ Baseball Glove
- ☐ Victoria (baby - in basket)
- ☐ Betty's shoes
- ☐ Basket for clothes

Back stage (on stage right)

- ☐ Betty's wig
- ☐ Betty's dress
- ☐ Clive's outfit

Pre-set on Stage Right

- ☐ One bench with a towel
- ☐ Other female mannequin (dressed)
- ☐ Notepad and pen
- ☐ Actors wearing appropriate costumes
- ☐ Louis's glasses

Pre-set on Stage Left

- ☐ One bench with a towel and baseball
- ☐ Joe's park coat
- ☐ Matt's black clothes
- ☐ Piece of Victorian clothing (for female mannequin by silhouette)

On George

- [ ] Black shirt, pants, and shoes
- [ ] Darren's underwear

Costumes:

Readers (Chelsea Gillespie, Matt Simpson, Bridget Hillyer):

- ☐ Black shirt, pants, and shoes

Take Me Out

- ☐ Sports clothes (George Myatt and Matt Simpson)
- ☐ Athletic shoes
- ☐ Casual outfit (Maria Cox)

Angels in America

-Part A

- ☐ Joe: Business attire (George Myatt)
- ☐ Louis: Casual attire (Kevin Glass)
- ☐ Business shoes

-Part B

- ☐ Joe: Business attire with coat
- ☐ Louis: Casual attire with coat
- ☐ Business shoes

Cloud Nine: Victorian Costumes

- ☐ Victorian Costume for Female Mannequin 1
- ☐ Victorian Costume for Female Mannequin 2
- ☐ Wig and shoes for Betty
- ☐ Betty's outfit: George Myatt
- ☐ Clive's outfit: Kevin Glass
- ☐ Edward's outfit: Bridget Hillyer
- ☐ Joshua's outfit: Maria Cox

Props

Take Me Out

- Note pad
- Writing Utensil (pen)
- Baseball glove
- Baseball

Angels in America

-Part A

- Tissues
- Briefcase
- Louis's glasses

-Part B

- None
- Louis's glasses

Cloud Nine

- Baby Dummy (Victoria)
- Riding Whip

Furniture

Take Me Out

- One bench, on the side of stage left
- One bench, on the side of stage right

Angels in America

-Part A

- None

-Part B

- One bench (from Stage Right), in middle of space

Cloud Nine

- One bench from Stage Right

Set Pieces

Throughout whole performance:

- Silhouette Light Source Screen (S.L.S.S.)
- Two Female Mannequins
    - ✓ 1 undressed that is always on stage
    - ✓ 1 dressed brought on later
    - ✓ Both will be on stage dressed in Victorian costumes for *Cloud Nine*
- One Male Mannequin
- Coat Rack (behind S.L.S.S.)
- Electrical plugs (attached to the mannequins)

Lighting Description and Notes

Opening

- Top of the show, electrical flashing from strobe behind the silhouette screen
- Actor (George Myatt), enters from stage left to plug in the two mannequins, the strobe light goes out, and a light source behind the screen goes up
- **Before** plugging mannequins in: stage is lit with a dark shade of blue
- **After** plugging mannequins in: stage is lit with a light shade of blue

Transition Lights - the light shade of blue

Scene One: Take Me Out

- Stage is lit with an industrial/grey color to signify the atmosphere of a locker room
- One light will be shining on the character William R. Danziger, who is reading/writing a letter
- Full lights come on when William R. Danziger exits

Transition Lights - the light shade of blue

Scene Two: Angels in America

- Part A
    1. Same color scheme from *Take Me Out* scene
- Part B
    1. Light green lights to signify that the scene is taking place in a park
    2. Or, a gobo makes leaves on the ground

Transition Lights - the light shade of blue

Scene Three: Cloud Nine

- Yellow or cloudy color to indicate that the scene is taking place in colonial Africa
- At the end of the scene when Clive yells, "Joshua!," a red light flashes quickly and then after four seconds fades into a light blue scheme (possibly a variation of the blue lights from the opening scene)

Epilogue

- Forms right after the flash of red lights in *Cloud Nine*, and then transitions into a light blue scheme
- As actors come in to form a circle, lights shine down to form a circle of bright light on the floor

Appendix C

The Script - *The Electric Current*

TITLE:

The Electric Current: *Presenting the Changing Waves of Gender and Sexuality in Performance*

A Devised Performance by George Myatt

CAST / ROLES

Maria Cox: *William R. Danziger, Joshua*

Chelsea Gillespie: *Person 2*

Kevin Glass: *Louis, Clive*

Bridget Hillyer: *Person 3, Edward*

George Myatt: *Person 1, Darren, Joe, Betty*

Matt Simpson: *Person 4, Kippy*

ORDER OF SHOW

Opening Scene

Scene One: Take Me Out

Scene Two: Angels in America

Scene Three: Cloud 9

Epilogue

OPENING SCENE

LQ 30 GO - House to black

LQ 31 - Add blue back light (lights up silhouette screen)

& Strobe (creates electricity behind silhouette screen)

Sound A GO (electric sound comes on)

The stage is barely lit with two electrical cords separated but near each other on two mannequins; one is female, the other is male.

The mannequins are placed at the sides of the silhouette light source screen. There is the sound of an electrical disconnection with a flashing light projected on the silhouette light source screen.

A person walks in from Stage Right in the dark, and heads towards the silhouette light source screen. The person then plugs in two electrical cords together, and the lights in the space turn on.

LQ 32 - Reader Lights (brings up all lights and light behind screen)

&

Sound B GO (electric sound goes out with a fade)

The person begins to speak:

PERSON 1

Electric, isn't it? The feminine body and masculine body operate on different currents. But why? As a culture we construct gender as a binary that is constantly reinforced in society. For example: we assume a masculine identity exhibits an energy that is simple, omnipresent, strong, striking and boastful.

In turn, an expected feminine identity carries an energy that is delicate, weak, obedient, invisible and quiet. At both ends of the gender spectrum, that's what we find. But in reality, these energies move throughout space and show a multiplicity of identities that exist. If we combine the two gender binaries together we can eradicate these polar opposites and create a full spectrum of gender possibilities.

What could be causing the full spectrum of identities to become invisible and oppressed? How can we be allowed to accept these identities if we cannot see them?

The problem is caused by our patriarchal society embracing only two strict, non-adjustable gender constructs: heterosexual female and heterosexual male, who are only compatible with one another. There is no room for gay, effeminate men, butch lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons. They don't fit on the tight rope of the gender spectrum.

And yet throughout western society, gender is performed on a much wider stage, where the current flows on a broader spectrum, expanding the possibilities for multiple identities to be expressed. This is an exploration of how gender is performative and how sexuality is as fluid as an electrical current.

SCENE ONE: TAKE ME OUT

Person 1 exits to Stage Left and goes to change behind the silhouette light source screen.

Person 2 enters from Stage Right to introduce the next scene.

PERSON 2

In Richard Greenberg's play, *Take Me Out,* Darren Lemming, a bi-racial, all-American Baseball star decides that he's going to reveal his sexuality but has a hard time facing the reality of why his revelation has caused so many sparks.

With the arrival of a new team member, the racist and homophobic Shane Mungitt, tensions rise between him and the rest of the team when they learn of Darren's sexuality. However, Kippy Sunderstorm, Darren's team mate, is supportive of him.

Take Me Out portrays the possibility of what would happen if a major league baseball player came out in the prime of his career.

Imagine turning on ESPN or FOX Sports and watching Derek Jeter holding a press conference where he reveals that he's gay. What would happen if Derek Jeter came out of the closet? How would you react?

Here's one example of that reaction….

LQ 33 GO - Industrial Gray Wash (Locker room)

Person 2 exits to Stage Right. William R. Danziger enters from Stage Right with one bench. Kippy Sunderstorm enters from Stage Left with another bench. Kippy sets down his bench, sits on it and freezes. William R. Danziger sits down on his bench and begins to write a letter.

WILLIAM R. DANZIGER

Dear Mr. Lemming:

I am writing you first to express my outrage at the appalling remarks made by Shane Mungitt, and to commend you on the grace you've shown through this whole difficult time, beginning with the brave and unprecedented revelation of your sexual preference.

You are indeed a sterling young man, and an example to all.

Mr. Lemming, I have an eight-year old.

I would be proud if you were my son's chemistry teacher or math teacher or even—especially—gym teacher.

If you were his religious instructor, I am sure you would imbue him with a truer sense of Christian charity than any questionable types holding forth in the Sunday School he now attends.

Were my son your age and gay—an option, being gay, that is, that he already knows is open to him, since all we ask is that he follow the truth of his heart—he could do not better than find a man like you for his lover.

It would be a kick to have you as a friend. And I would have no trouble sharing a communal shower with you after a round of tennis at whatever club.

But do you have to play BASEBALL?

Don't you know what baseball *means to me?*

I wish you well in all other things, but this hurts my feelings..

Cordially,

William R. Danziger

Rahway, New Jersey

(Lights.)

*(*KIPPY, *towel wrapped around his waist, solo.)*

KIPPY

But mostly it was support.

Which was killing Darren.

(DARREN enters from Silhouette screen from Stage Left.)

DARREN

I am so freakin' *sick* of this *welcome* I'm getting.

KIPPY

Welcome?

DARREN

Ever since fuckin' Mungitt went on TV. Alluva sudden I'm a *vitcim*. Fuck that! I want slurs—brickbats—epithets. Do you know what I'm getting?

KIPPY

What?

DARREN

Offers!

KIPPY

Like…?

DARREN

Endorsements for, like, cheap furniture.

KIPPY

Those can be very moving.

DARREN

Fuck this shit, Kippy. Do you know what I'm getting.

KIPPY

...Offers?

DARREN

Compassion. I need compassion?

KIPPY

Nah.

DARREN

Don't you have compassion for me. You envy me! This is how it is with me, this is how it's always been, take your fuckin' compassion and stick it up your ass, 'cause you're not gettin' *me there!*

KIPPY

(hugs him with compassion)

I know how it is man, and I *feel* for you.

DARREN

(throwing him off)

You fuckin' faggot.

(KIPPY laughs. DARREN quiets down, gets somber.)

Ya know what it is Kippy.

They think they've figured me out.

They think my secret's out.

And what's gonna follow is this cavalcade of revelation.

IS THAT WHAT EVERYBODY THINKS!

You think you're gonna get this *torrent* of *me* comin' at ya?

You think you *know* me? You think you know my *secret*?

Shit, that wasn't a secret—that was an omission. I've *got* a secret—but that's not it.

KIPPY

What is?

DARREN

… Wha—?

KIPPY

What is your secret? You said you had a secret.

DARREN

… I don't *have* a secret, Kippy. I *am* a secret.

KIPPY

Even from me?

(Beat. The question slides away.)

DARREN

I'm sick of baseball. I want out.

KIPPY

Oh, bullshit.

DARREN

I mean it—I might walk right out of all this—

KIPPY

Nobody playing the way you're playing "walks right out" of it—
Nobody making your salary "walks right out" of it—

DARREN

How do you know? What makes you sure'a that?

KIPPY

The world's old, there've been a lot of people: I extrapolate.

DARREN

Maybe I'm somethin' that's never been seen before. Maybe I'm somethin' brand-new. Maybe—

KIPPY

I *play* with you. I play on your team (which is not to say that I play on your team, but) I … play on your team. I know you. I know you when you're playing.

DARREN

… Things are … changing. I'm changing.

KIPPY

I like you better now.

DARREN

Bullshit.

KIPPY

No, I liked you before—*loved* you in a manly sort of way. But now you're….more human.

DARREN

What was I before?

KIPPY

Sort of….godly.

DARREN

And now I'm human?

KIPPY

Yeah.

DARREN

Kippy?

KIPPY

Yeah, Dar?

DARREN

Isn't that a *demotion*?

(Darren exits Stage Right then goes behind the silhouette light source screen.)

LQ 34 GO - Blackout

During a brief blackout, Kippy exits to Stage Left.

SCENE TWO: ANGELS IN AMERICA

Person 3 enters from Stage Right and walks into the space to introduce the next scene.

LQ 35 GO - Reader Lights

PERSON 3

Tony Kushner's groundbreaking play *Angels in America* exposed the reality of closeted US politicians during the 1980's, while delivering an honest look into how the AIDS crisis was affecting gay men.

The play follows a variety of characters in late 1980's New York City during the height of the AIDS epidemic. One character, Joe, a devout Mormon who works for the Justice Department, is holding back a secret: he's gay. But when he meets, Louis another gay man, Joe becomes guarded and cautious about fully revealing his identity.

There are plenty of politicians today who are open about their sexuality, but some are still afraid to reveal it to the public, preferring to keep their personal lives private.

So what's at stake for politicians like Joe who must choose to accept or not their sexuality? Are men like him doomed to never walk about and feel free from the restrictive and shocking pressure of a gender construction?

Here is another example, written ten years before *Take Me Out*, where men struggled to reveal their sexuality.

Person 3 exits to Stage Right. Louis enters from Stage Right and plants himself down on the floor in the space.

LQ 36 GO - Bathroom Lights

(Joe enters from Stage Right from behind the silhouette light source screen and walks into the bathroom and sees Louis crying.)

JOE

Oh, um...morning.

LOUIS

Good morning, counselor.

JOE

(He watches Louis crying): Sorry, I don't know your name.

LOUIS

Don't bother. Word processor. The lowest of the low.

JOE

(Holding out a hand): Joe Pitt. I'm with Justice Wilson...

LOUIS

Oh, I know that. Counselor Pitt. Chief Clerk.

JOE

Were you...are you okay?

LOUIS

Oh, yeah. Thanks. What a nice man.

JOE

Not so nice.

LOUIS

What?

JOE

Not so nice. Nothing. You sure you're...

LOUIS

Life sucks. Life...just sucks shit.

JOE

What's wrong?

LOUIS

Run in my nylons.

JOE

Sorry...?

LOUIS

Forget it. Look, thanks for asking.

JOE

Well...

LOUIS

I mean it really is nice of you. *(He starts crying again)* Sorry, sorry, sick friend...

JOE

Oh, I'm sorry

LOUIS

Yeah, yeah, well, that's sweet.

Three of your colleagues have preceded you to this baleful sight and you're the first one to ask. The others just opened the door, saw me, and fled. I hope they had to pee real bad.

JOE

(Handing him a tissue): They just didn't want to intrude.

LOUIS

Hah. Reaganite heartless macho asshole lawyers.

JOE

Oh, that's unfair.

LOUIS

What is? Heartless? Macho? Reaganite? Lawyer?

JOE

I voted for Reagan.

LOUIS

You did.

JOE

Twice.

LOUIS

Twice? Well, oh boy. A Gay Republican.

JOE

Excuse me?

LOUIS

Nothing.

JOE

I'm not...Forget it.

LOUIS

Republican? Not Republican? Or...

JOE

What?

LOUIS

What?

JOE

Not gay. I'm not gay.

LOUIS

Oh. Sorry. *(Blows his nose loudly)* It's just....

JOE

Yes?

LOUIS

Well, sometimes you can tell from the way a person sounds that...I mean you *sound* like a...

JOE

No I don't. Like what?

LOUIS

Like a Republican.

(Little pause. Joe knows he's being teased: Louis knows he knows. Joe decides to be a little brave.)

JOE

(Making sure no one else is around): Do I? Sound like a....?

LOUIS

What? Like a...? Republican, or...? Do *I*?

JOE

Do you what?

LOUIS

Sound like a....?

JOE

Like a...? I'm...confused.

LOUIS

Yes. My name is Louis. But all my friends call me Louise. I work in Word Processing. Thanks for the toilet paper.

LQ 37 GO - "Brown out" / Scene Shift Transition

Transition to next scene. Joe and Louis put on coats from backstage, bench brought on from Stage Right.

LQ 38 GO - Park Lights

Louis is in the park on a bench. Joe enters into the park from Stage Left. He sees Louis and stands at a distance. They stare at each other, then Louis turns away.

LOUIS

Do you know the story of Lazarus?

JOE

Lazarus?

LOUIS

Lazarus. I can't remember what happens, exactly.

JOE

I don't...Well, he was dead, Lazarus, and Jesus breathed life into him. He brought him back from death.

LOUIS

Come here often?

JOE

No. Yes. Yes.

LOUIS

Back from the dead. You believe that really happened?

JOE

I don't know anymore what I believe.

LOUIS

This is quite a coincidence. Us meeting.

JOE

I followed you. From work. I...followed you here.

(Pause.)

LOUIS

You followed me. You probably saw me that day in the washroom and thought: there's a sweet guy, sensitive, cries for friends in trouble.

JOE

Yes.

LOUIS

You thought maybe I'll cry for you.

JOE

Yes.

LOUIS

Well I fooled you. Crocodile tears. Nothing... *(He touches his heart, shrugs)*

(Joe reaches tentatively to touch Louis's face.)

LOUIS

(Pulling back): What are you doing? Don't do that.

JOE

(Withdrawing his hand): Sorry. I'm sorry.

LOUIS

I'm...just not...I think, if you touch me, your hand might fall off or something. Worse things have happened to people who have touched me.

JOE

Please

Oh, boy...

Can I...

I...want...to touch you. Can I please just touch you...um, here?

(He puts his hand on one side of Louis's face. He holds it there)

I'm going to hell for doing this.

LOUIS

Big Deal. You think it could be any worse than New York City?

(He puts his hand on Joe's hand. He takes Joe's hand away from his face, holds it for a moment, then) Come on.

JOE

Where?

LOUIS

Home. With me

JOE

This makes no sense. I mean I don't know you.

LOUIS

Likewise.

JOE

And what you do know about me you don't like.

LOUIS

The Republican stuff?

JOE

Yeah, well for starters.

LOUIS

I don't not like it that. I *hate* it.

JOE

So why on earth should we...

(Louis goes to Joe and kisses him.)

LOUIS

Strange bedfellows. I don't know. I never made it with one of the damn before. I would really rather not spend the night alone.

JOE

I'm a pretty terrible person Louis.

LOUIS

Lou.

JOE

No, I really really am. I don't think I deserve being loved.

LOUIS

There? See? We already have a lot in common.

(Louis and Joe stare at each other intently.)

LQ 39 GO - Blackout

SCENE THREE: CLOUD 9

Person 4 enters from Stage Left to introduce the scene.

LQ 40 GO - Reader Lights

PERSON 4

Characters like Darren in *Take Me Out,* and Joe from *Angels in America* indicate that the problem still exists: male gender constructions are still tightly controlled by patriarchal ideologies. Because they are attracted to the same sex, their sexuality separates them from being recognized as natural, normal, and universal, or in other words heterosexual males.

If we look at how gender constructions are formed, we can understand why countless of identities become invisible.

Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill is one example that examines how the ideals of female and male gender are constructed within a patriarchal society.

The play is first set in the Victorian-age of colonial Africa. We notice this patriarchal order with the extremely boastful, and chauvinist Clive and how he exerts control over his obedient wife Betty.

Person 4 exits to Stage Left after disconnecting the female cord from the silhouette screen.

LQ 41 GO - Jungle Lights

Clive enters from Stage Right with all of his family members (Betty, Edward, Victoria [baby doll], Maud, Ellen [female mannequins]) and his servant Joshua to create a picture perfect moment.

CLIVE

This is my family. Though far from home
We serve the Queen wherever we may roam
I am a father to the natives here,
And father to my family so dear.

(He presents Betty. She is played by a man.)

My wife is all I dreamt a wife should be,
And everything she is she owes to me.

BETTY

I live for Clive. The whole aim of my life
Is to be what a man looks for in a wife.
I am a man's creation as you see,
And what men want is what I want to be.

(Clive presents Joshua. He is played by a white.)

CLIVE

My boy's a jewel. Really has the knack.
You'd hardly notice that the fellow's black.

JOSHUA

My skin is black but oh my soul is white.
I hate my tribe. My master is my light.
I only live for him. As you can see,
What white men want is what I want to be.

(Clive presents Edward. He is played by a woman.)

CLIVE

My son is young. I'm doing all I can
To teach him to grow up to be a man.

EDWARD

What father wants I'd dearly like to be.
I find it rather hard as you can see.

(Clive presents Victoria, who is a dummy, Maud, and Ellen.)

CLIVE

No need for any speeches by the rest.
My daughter, mother-in-law, and governess.

(All exit except Betty.)

BETTY

Clive?

CLIVE

Betty.

BETTY

I thought you would never come. The day's so long without you.

CLIVE

Long ride in the bush.

BETTY

Is anything wrong? I heard drums.

CLIVE

Nothing serious. Beauty is a damn good mare. I must get some new boots sent from home. These ones have never been right. I have a blister.

BETTY

My poor dear foot.

CLIVE

It's nothing.

BETTY

Oh but it's sore.

CLIVE

We are not in this country to enjoy ourselves. Must have ridden fifty miles. Spoke to three different headmen who would all gladly chop off each other's heads and wear them around their waits.

BETTY

Clive!

CLIVE

Don't be squeamish, Betty, let me have my joke. And what has my little dove done today?

BETTY

I've read a little.

CLIVE

Good. Is it good?

BETTY

It's poetry.

CLIVE

You're so delicate and sensitive.

BETTY

And I play the piano. Shall I send for the children?

CLIVE

Yes, in a minute. I have a piece of news for you.

BETTY

Good news?

CLIVE

You'll certainly think it's good. A visitor.

BETTY

From home?

CLIVE

No. Well of course originally from home.

BETTY

Man or woman?

CLIVE

Man.

BETTY

I can't imagine.

CLIVE

Something of an explorer. Bit of a poet. Odd chap but as brave as a lion. And a great admirer of yours.

BETTY

What do you mean? Whoever can it be?

CLIVE

With an H and a B. And does conjuring tricks for little Edward.

BETTY

That sounds like Mr. Bagley.

CLIVE

Harry Bagley.

BETTY

He certainly doesn't admire me, Clive, what a thing to say. How could I possibly guess from that. He's hardly explored anything at all, he's just been up a river, he's done nothing at all compared to what you do. You should have said a bit of a drinker and a bit of a bore.

CLIVE

But you like him well enough. You don't mind him coming?

BETTY

Anyone at all to break up the monotony.

CLIVE

But you have your mother. You have Ellen.

BETTY

Ellen is a governess. My mother is my mother.

CLIVE

I hoped when she came to visit she would be company for you.

BETTY

I don't think mother is on a visit. I think she lives with us.

CLIVE

I think she does.

BETTY

Clive you are so good.

CLIVE

But are you bored my love?

BETTY

It's just that I miss you when you're away. We're not in this country to enjoy ourselves. If I lack society that is my form of service.

CLIVE

That's a brave girl. So today has been all right? No fainting? No hysteria?

BETTY

I have been very tranquil.

CLIVE

Ah what a haven of peace to come home to. The coolth, the calm, the beauty.

BETTY

There is one thing, Clive, if you don't mind.

CLIVE

What can I do for you, my dear?

BETTY

It's about Joshua.

CLIVE

I wouldn't leave you alone here with a quiet mind if it weren't for Joshua.

BETTY

Joshua doesn't like me.

CLIVE

Joshua has been my boy for eight years. He has saved my life. I have saved his life. He is devoted to me and to mine. I have said this before.

BETTY

He is rude to me. He doesn't do what I say. Speak to him

CLIVE

Tell me what happened.

BETTY

He said something improper.

CLIVE

Well, what?

BETTY

I don't like to repeat it.

CLIVE

I must insist.

BETTY

I had left my book inside on the piano. I was in the hammock. I asked him to fetch it.

CLIVE

And did he not fetch it?

BETTY

Yes, he did eventually.

CLIVE

And what did he say?

BETTY

Clive—

CLIVE

Betty.

BETTY

He said Fetch it yourself. You've got legs under that dress.

CLIVE

Joshua!

LQ 42 GO - Blackout

EPILOGUE:

LQ 43 GO - LIGHTS UP

Person 2 and 3 enter from Stage Right, with Person 4 entering from Stage Left, while the rest of the actors remain frozen on stage. William R. Danziger enters from Stage Right.

PERSON 2

It appears that it's challenging to separate from strict gender constructions. We lose our individuality if we allow our gender to be coded as a binary. Our identity becomes exclusively tied to our gender, restricting us from breaking away from the influence of patriarchal ideology.

PERSON 3

As you have just seen, gender is performative and sexuality is as fluid as an electrical current. If we don't keep the electrical current connected, these identities won't be able to speak up and tell their story. Darren came out the closet in *Take Me Out*, but when will the first baseball player come out during the prime of their career? While Joe in *Angels in America* is now beginning to accept his sexuality, will other politicians follow? Are women like Betty still trapped and oppressed by men such as Clive?

WILLIAM R. DANZIGER

Don't you know what baseball *means to me?*

DARREN

… I don't *have* a secret, Kippy. I *am* a secret.

LOUIS

Well, sometimes you can tell from the way a person sounds that...I mean you *sound* like a…

JOE

I don't think I deserve being loved.

KIPPY

I know you. I know you when you're playing.

BETTY

...what men want is what I want to be.

LQ 44 GO - Blackout

LQ 45 GO - Curtain Call

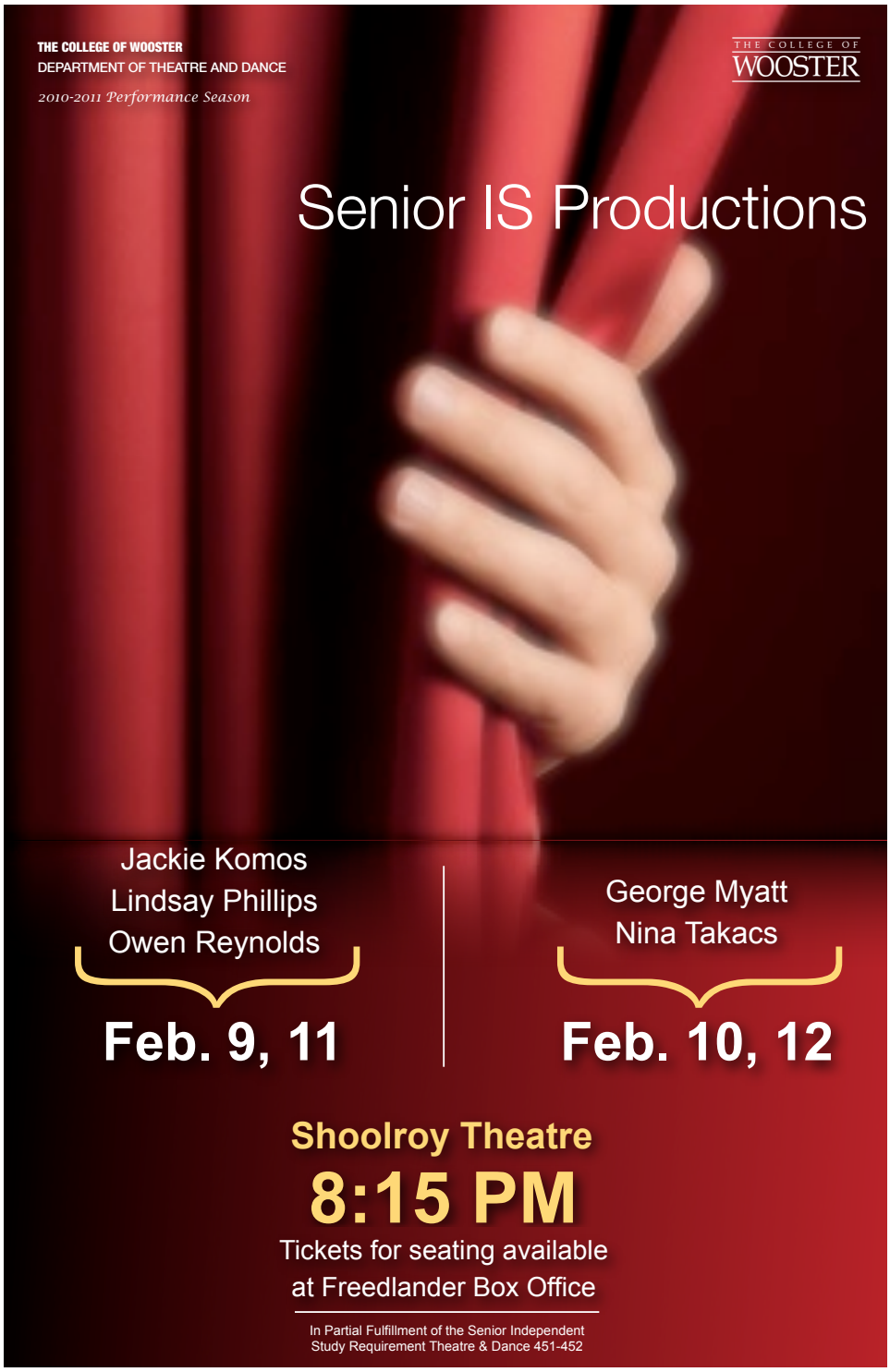
LQ 46 GO - Exit

LQ 47 GO - Blackout

Appendix D

Poster and Photos

Poster



Photos of scenes from *The Electric Current*

Scene from *Take Me Out. Matt Simpson as Kippy, and George Myatt as Darren.*

Scene from *Cloud 9. Kevin Glass as Clive, and George Myatt as Betty.*

Scene from *Angels in America, Part I. George Myatt as Joe and Kevin Glass as Louis.*

Appendix E

Program Information

The College of Wooster Department of Theatre and Dance presents:

February 9 & February 11

The Regular Season
Lindsay Phillips

*The Legend of Casey**
Owen Reynolds

Kuvugurura
Jacqueline KomosΔ

February 10† & February 12

Terminus
Nina TakacsΔ

*The Electric Current**
George MyattΔ

All performances presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Senior Independent Study

Stage Manager:
Ben Pfister

Shoolroy Theatre

*Strobe lights used in this production
ΔAdult themes and strong language used in this production

† There will be a talkback after the February 10th performance.

The Regular Season
Music by Igor Stravinsky
Act II of Le sacre du printemps
Choreography by Lindsay Phillips
Dancers: Shakera Blackmon, Malcolm Campbell-Taylor, Darius Dixson, Adriana Maxton, Claire Miller, Amadi Washington, Annie Woller, Aaron Yi

The Legend of Casey
Performance by Owen Reynolds
Actors: Miles Batson, Casey Biggs, Owen Reynolds

Kuvugurura
Devised Performance by Jacqueline Komos
Actors: Jacqueline Komos, Jasmine Verreen

Terminus
Acting Recital by Nina Takacs
"A Little Priest" from *Sweeney Todd* by Stephen Sondheim
Featuring: Owen Reynolds, Nina Takacs, Paul Winchester (Accompanist)
Monologue from *Terminus* by Mark O'Rowe
Featuring: Nina Takacs
Scene from Act III of *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder
Featuring: Maria Cox, Bridget Hillyer, Alexandra Horning, Matt Policastro, Rachel Rothenberg, Steve Schott, Ryan Shafranek, Nina Takacs, Lauren Tweddale

The Electric Current
Devised Performance by George Myatt
Take Me Out by Richard Greenberg
Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches by Tony Kushner
Cloud 9 by Caryl Churchill
*Original between scenes dialogue by George Myatt
Actors: Maria Cox, Chelsea Gillespie, Kevin Glass, Bridget Hillyer, George Myatt, Matthew Simpson
Costumes by: Hannah Middendorff

Technical Director: Jody LS Tidwell
Lighting Designer: James Lance
Assistant Lighting Designers: Kaleigh Richards, Kent Spargue
Crew: Lindsey Allen, Chelsea Gillespie, Janna Haywood, Ben Pfister, Paul Swanson
Light board: Kaleigh Richards
Sound board: Maria Janasz

The Regular Season
Notes by Lindsay Phillips

This performance was made possible in part by the Henry J. Copeland Fund for Independent Study.

"You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't. You get to decide what to worship… Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship… [is] that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly… But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is not that they're evil or sinful, it's that they're unconscious. They are default settings… They're the kind of worship you just gradually slip into, day after day, getting more and more selective about what you see and how you measure value without ever being fully aware that that's what you're doing… [But] the really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day." -David Foster Wallace

The Legend of Casey
Notes by Owen Reynolds

The purpose of this production is to explore the art of storytelling, a tradition that goes back centuries and has an important place in cultures from around the globe. Today we mostly see stories told through movies and plays that emphasize thrilling spectacle (think Disney's Broadway version of The Lion King or any movie directed by Sam Raimi). However, do we need this pizzazz to tell a story effectively? Perhaps we

do and perhaps we don't. For Aristotle spectacle was the least important aspect of theatre but times have changed.

This performance is not a play or a movie. It is simply a story told from one person to another. The first half of this performance is inspired by the storytelling traditions of Native Alaskans, and the second half is modernized, emphasizing spectacle over plot, theme, character, and other aspects of a story. It will be up to you to decide which method is more effective and more entertaining.

Kuvugurura
Notes by Jacqueline Komos

In 1994, the fastest, most efficient genocide took place in Rwanda—a country the size of Maryland situated in the heart of Africa. For 91 days, Immaculée Ilibagiza—a survivor of the genocide and now best-selling writer (*Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*) and motivational speaker—hid in a 3x4' bathroom with seven other women as approximately one million Rwandans were killed, including four of her five family members. Not only did Immaculée miraculously survive the holocaust, but also with time, she found it in her heart to personally approach the man who killed her family and forgive him.

This performance is based on my travels to Rwanda with this remarkable woman whose witness transformed my worldview and brought me closer to God. This project was emotionally difficult, and at times, I felt very hopeless. However, traveling to Rwanda helped me see the work of God and how He, through His children, has the power to heal a country stricken with so much terror. *Kuvugurura*, the title of this piece, means "renewal" in Kinyarwanda—the official language of Rwanda. I found this word written above doors of houses in Rwanda that needed to be "rebuilt." When seeing this word written over and over again, I felt like it was written above the doorway of my soul.

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The Henry J. Copeland Fund at the College of Wooster

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Terminus
Notes by Nina Takacs

When I tell people I'm an actress, I always get the same reaction: “Of course you are, you're so *theatrical”*. Afterwards, I’m never quite sure how to react (their tone always grates with a bit of unwitting condescension). Admittedly, I do have a tendency to be forward, outgoing and perhaps a bit over-the-top; but being called “theatrical” (when used in daily life) has a tendency to sound rather insulting, aligning itself with other belittling terms such as “fake”, “stagey”, or “drama-queen”.

The word theatricality exists in two realms of life: “real” life, and acting life. People often comment on the “truth” of a performance. “That was so *real*” they say. But how is that possible? It seems paradoxical that an actor can be called “real” onstage and “theatrical” in daily life. Through my Independent Study project, I seek an answer to this question, and more specifically: how do I, as an actor, define theatricality? How is it that this word can exist liminally between the spheres of reality and theatre, and how can I use my findings to make myself a better actor?

So far, I have found that in daily life, “theatricality” usually refers to a personality trait; while onstage, it typically refers to many specific, stylistic elements of theatre; symbolic set pieces, perhaps, non-literal blocking or even an obvious breach of the fourth wall. I chose three scenes to perform that are theatrical in various ways; whether they are inherent in the script or are capable of taking on many theatrical elements. Enjoy!

The Electric Current
Notes by George Myatt

On April 26th, 2003, Ramin Setoodeh’s article "Straight Jacket," in Newsweek argued that Sean Hayes (from "Will and Grace") could not play the role of the leading

straight male character in the Broadway musical "Promises, Promises" because he was gay. Setoodeh received a lot of criticism for insinuating that male actors who identified themselves as gay could not play straight roles. The controversy that was generated out of Setoodeh's article on Haye's sexuality prompted me to ask this question: why does prior knowledge of an actor's sexuality and personal life matter in accurately portraying a heterosexual performance?

I learned after studying Judith Butler's book "Gender Trouble," that due to the restrictive ideals of what it means to be male and female, our understanding of gender and sexuality limits the opportunities for different identities, such as gay men, to emerge in society and performance. In order to conceptualize and solve this problem through a performance, I studied semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and the meanings behind them. This lead me ask this critical question: "How can I as an actor negotiate the signifiers of gender and sexuality in performance and recognize the fluidity between both ends of the gender spectrum?" Tonight you will see a presentation of three scenes from three different plays that address issues of gender and sexuality in society with semiotics applied. My aim is to demonstrate how outward and hidden signifiers can introduce new identities outside our patriarchal ideals of identity.

Special Thanks to:

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Appendix F

Questions from Talk-Back Session

The following questions were posed to the audience after the opening performance of "The Electric Current" on Thursday, February 10th, 2011. Dr. Season Ellison, visiting assistant professor of theatre, ran the talk-back session.

1. Let's begin generally by posing the question, what about either of these pieces spoke to you?
2. What do you think of when you think of the idea theatricality?
3. What moments seemed particularly theatrical about either of these pieces to you?
4. What did the silhouetted changing area convey/connote to you?
5. How did either of these pieces challenge your ideas regarding gender or performance?