Dana companion peice write up

**Companion Piece Write-Up (10 points)**

**Instructions:** Access the assigned companion piece of the week (or find your own companion piece) and listen to, read, or watch the entire piece. Then, respond to all of the items. Your responses to each should be at least 0.5 double-spaced pages in size 12 font. To help, I grade 0.5 pages as 11 lines of content. If you have less than 11 lines, you will lose points for not writing enough.

Week 9 - Dana (from Radiolab).mp3

**Section 1 (Summary):** Summarize the piece. Be sure to explain what the piece was about in enough detail that it is clear that you watched/read/listened to the entire piece. Also be sure to highlight aspects of the piece that show its relevance to race and/or gender.

Dana is intersex and sued the passport office to get a third option for sex on the passport. Father was queer and in the air force. Dana never felt like a boy and didn't fit in so they decided to join the military to get a purpose in life, and did multiple tours. People though Dana was gay because they did not go out with the men to bars. People tried to frame Dana as gay which would have meant they would be kicked out of the military. Dana got a brain injury and left the military and went back to school. Dana started exploring the arts and getting therapy and exploring their sexuality. They thought they must be a gay man, because that was the best of limited options. Dana joined the GLB alliance and was welcomed and started protesting and being an activist. Dana got married to a woman from art school but divorced after five years due to personal issues they were working out. Dana thought a lot about being a trans woman because of their feminine qualities, but nothing fit. Dana was confused at where all these feelings were coming from and memories were coming back from surgeries in childhood which lead them to find out about intersex people (and the surgeries that are often forced on them). Dana's parents chose to construct a penis when they were born. Despite Dana's parent's not being accepting, Dana was euphoric for a year because they finally had an answer. The question is who am I? not am I a boy or a girl. More and more states have legislation recognizing genders outside the binary.

**Section 2 (Reading Connection):** Discuss at least one **reading from this week** that relates to the piece. Be sure to explain which reading you are discussing, what the reading said about the topic, and how the reading is connected to the piece.

For some reason, chapter 10 does not talk about intersex people, despite being focused on biology and gender. Being intersex can be caused by a mutation that changes a person's sex chromosome to be different from XX or XY, but is always accompanied by some mismatch of physical characteristics (male and female genitals, or one sex's genitals and another sexes internal organs) (source <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex>). Nevertheless, many of Dana's symptoms of gender dysphoria were most likely related to hormones that their body was producing and the discrimination they experienced as a person who doesn't fit into the gender binary. Dana was under stereotype threat for most of their life, both externally by being forced into stereotypes and called out for not fitting masculine stereotypes, and internally from their assumption that they were the same as everybody as else and the differences, they knew existed, were wrong and unnatural.

**Section 3 (Personal Reflection):** Discuss how the piece relates to your own life experiences. Consider how the stories or information presented is similar to, or different from, what you've experienced. If the piece focuses on an identity very different from your own, you can think about how not having that identity has led to a different life. You can also discuss memories that the piece made you think of. You should not give your opinion or evaluation of the piece, and you should not just talk about how it made you feel (e.g. "this topic makes me sad").

I relate a lot to Dana's experience of feeling different and not knowing why. For most of my life I was in a very repressive environment and had to push down a lot of my feelings because I knew they were not acceptable, which lead to a lot of depression and a distinct lack of positive emotion. The constant questions of why am I the way that and why can't I just be like other people were constant in my life for many years, and despite being able to find some happiness in spite of these questions, I knew that I could not live my life without answers. Like Dana, I found so much euphoria in finding the answers to my questions, even though most of the material conditions that were causing so much stress in my life remained. Something that Dana did not talk about, but I am sure experienced was the work of reexamining one's life through the lense of this new understanding. While some of this can be abosolutely joyful, a lot of it can be sad aswell,l as you think how much easier or better things could have been if you had just had the support and love you needed.