



Gender as Performance in Taylor Mac's *Hir*

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Abstract: The paper explores *Hir* (2014), a play written by Taylor Mac, using recent theories of gender. *Hir* is a family drama, an absurd realist play, which revolves around the Connors living in California. The paper uses Judith Butler's theory of gender as a performative act to analyze the play. The paper examines how gender is culturally constructed and dynamic. It explores how the characters of the play reverse gender roles, reassign gender and experiment with it. It further discusses how the play deals with the concepts of home as gendered, toxic masculinity, power, control and queerness. Finally, the paper looks at *Hir* as an experimental play which suggests a change in the old order expecting the emergence of a new one.

Index Terms - *Hir*, gender, performance, queer, masculinity, femininity, gender roles, gender reassignment

Gender plays a critical role in shaping the mundane realities of people in the contemporary world, along with class, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, caste, sexual orientation and ablism. But it is one of the most misunderstood and contested terms. Gender and sex have once been understood as interchangeable and correlated terms. But over the years there have been paradigm shifts in the way in which gender is perceived and interpreted. New perspectives keep emerging constantly and gender now has become a live wire. Gender studies is a burgeoning field of inquiry today. It cuts across disciplines to study the nature of gender and the significant role it plays in the everyday lives of people. Literature is one such discipline which combines social and scientific theories in its representation of gender. New developments in the study of gender frequently get represented in literature and this paper studies one such literary representation.

This paper uses Judith Butler's famous theory of gender as performative act to analyze Taylor Mac's play *Hir* (2014). This paper aims to examine the ways in which gender is perceived and represented in Mac's *Hir*. It attempts to study how the play portrays gender role reversals and gender reassignments and their impact on individuals and families. It examines the role of power within the personal space and the ramifications of drastic shifts in power within it. It explores how the play debunks and redefines myths and histories that are instrumental in constructing gender. Finally, it studies the role of language in constructing gendered identities.

Hir is a "kitchen sink dramedy", in Mac's own words, about the homecoming of the dishonourably discharged American soldier, Isaac Connor. He returns from Afghanistan expecting to enjoy the peace and comfort of his home. But he is disillusioned when he finds a home in disaster and a family in transition. The play portrays how Isaac and the remaining three characters, Max, Paige and Arnold Connor, cope up with trauma such as these. Mac himself, in his introductory note to the play, describes it as "absurd realism". For him, "Absurd realism is simply characters in a realistic circumstance that is so extreme, it is absurd" (X).

Gender and sex are two distinct terms which are frequently confused. Sex can be understood as the physiological attributes of a person. Feminist scholar Joan Acker notes, "Although the term {gender} is widely used, there is no common understanding of its meaning, even among feminist scholars" (qtd in Wharton 1). Gender roughly refers to the qualities or traits of a person. Amy S. Wharton views gender as the "characteristics taken on by males and females as they encountered social life and culture through socialization". It is the way "people see themselves, the way they behave and how they view others" (3). Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman view sex as something that "is ascribed by biology", by anatomy,

hormones and physiology of a person. For them, gender is “an achieved status” which is constructed through psychological, cultural and social means (126). For Judith Butler, sex is the “anatomically distinct, and factic aspects” of a body and gender is the “cultural meaning and form that a body acquires”. Butler writes, “All gender is, by definition, unnatural”. She further observes that it is merely an “imitation” of which no “original” exists. By this, she means that gender is given, acquired or achieved (*Gender* XI, 3; “Sex” 35). Feminist philosopher and theorist Monique Wittig believes that gender categories are politically constructed and are not “natural” occurrences. They are the products of an entire civilization (“One” 247; “Category”). She warns that naturalizing gender is dangerous as it would lead to biological determinism and the creation of gender hierarchies. Such hierarchies result in oppression and subjugation of one specific gender. Besides, it might make the present gender system immutable (“One” 247).

Gender is a process; it is dynamic unlike sex. This process occurs over a period of time. Simone de Beauvoir’s groundbreaking statement “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” in *The Second Sex* refers exactly to this aspect of gender (23). No one is a woman at birth, becoming a woman is a dynamic “active process by which one appropriates, interprets and reinterprets “received cultural possibilities” (Butler “Sex” 37). For Butler, gender is one of the “variable modes” of a body’s “acculturation”. If gender is culturally constructed or received, then it need not be the “causal result” of sex. These factors make gender “multiple interpretations” of sex. So, gender is “radically” independent of sex and is a kind of a “free-floating artifice” (*Gender* 8; “Sex” 35). Butler argues that the body is only an “arbitrary locus” for constructing a gender. For instance, the female body becomes a site for the construction of or interpretation of it as woman. So, if a body can act as a locus for the construction of one gender, it can as well serve as the base for the construction of other genders. This clearly illustrates the relationship between sex and gender. Butler writes, “... being female and being a woman are two very different sorts of being”. Female refers to “fixed and self-identical set of natural corporeal facts”, whereas woman is the “variety of modes through which those facts acquire cultural meaning” (“Sex” 35-36).

Theories on gender abound in recent times. Erving Goffman views gender as role play and display. Society constructs gender roles based on sexual differences, which are merely “situated” not “master” identities, that can be assumed and relinquished depending upon the circumstances. He observes that gender display is “socially situated”. It refers to “all of an individual’s behaviour and appearance {which} informs those who witness him, minimally telling them something about his social identity, about his mood, intent, and expectations, and about the state of his relation to them” (69). It is a performance or “alignment” towards culturally idealized masculine and feminine natures (70) Candace West and Don Zimmerman are of the view that people do genders, which include complex and socially guided “perceptual”, “interactional” and “micropolitical” acts that project certain activities as expressions of specific genders. It is the individuals who do genders, but they do them in the presence of others, as members of a society, and within institutions (127). Judith Butler revises some of these theories, while broadening the scope of some, using phenomenology. She observes that a body is gendered through acts which are revised, renewed and consolidated over time. This implies that the body is a “historical idea”, in Merleau-Ponty’s words, and gender a “historical situation” (“Performative” 520). Therefore, the body becomes an active cultural and historical process which both constitutes meaning and through which meaning is “performed” or “enacted”. The process of becoming/being a gender is similar to that of a performance in a theatre, as it is constructed through a specific set of “corporeal” acts. For Butler, establishing gender identity is a “performative accomplishment” (519). Though only an individual performs gender and has a unique way of executing it, one does not undertake it alone, as it is a collective experience and moreover, is done in compliance with certain prescriptions and sanctions. Even though one enters and exits a performance that is already underway at some point, the script survives the individual performers. So it becomes clear that gender performance is temporally contingent and historically conditioned. The script of this performance is well-rehearsed and oft repeated. Such repetitions lead to routinised and ritualized forms of enacting and experiencing socially established meanings. Thus, gender becomes, though enacted by individuals, a “public action” and “social drama” (526). However, the script of the performance can be interpreted and enacted in numerous ways which offers possibilities of subversive performances (527, 531). This aspect not only makes gender fluid but also opens up opportunities of reinterpreting and reconstructing already existing gender norms and innovating new ones. This paper employs some of these gender theories, specifically of Butler’s, to study Taylor Mac’s play *Hir*.

As Kate Hennesy in her *Guardian* article on *Hir* points out, the play circulates such highbrow gender theories as the above in intelligible forms to the masses. She remarks, “The New York playwright lightens the weight of gender theory, places it in a family home and then detonates it. Shrapnel flies everywhere”. True to this statement, gender roles are turned topsy turvy in the play and bold attempts are made to dismantle the existing gender system. It is the mother-daughter duo of Paige Connor and Max Connor who decide to take charge of

their destinies and to change their lives. They use their gender as a strategy to undermine patriarchal power, authority and privilege. For Butler, the performance of gender is a “strategy”, both for an individual’s cultural survival and to sustain gender binaries. However, it has to be noted that the strategy that is used to sustain a specific gender system can be used to pull it apart (“Performative” 522, 526). This is exactly what Paige and Max do in *Hir* and they use gender as a strategy to reclaim their selfhood.

Paige has brazenly relinquished her culturally assigned role as a woman, and in so doing, her duty to clean, cook and keep order at home. Discarded junk is piled up near the front door blocking access through it; clean laundry litter the floor; the kitchen is messy with dishes scattered about; the backyard lawn is overgrown; in short, chaos and confusion reign in the house. When Isaac questions her about it, she casually replies, “I don’t do laundry any more” or “I didn’t want to fold it” (7). Besides, Paige’s remark “Places and cupboards are what your father wanted, so now they’re your father’s job” poses the question why all these responsibilities are hers alone (8). Homes, families and marriages are institutions in which gender roles are most often specified and performed. Members of these institutions are expected to behave and act in certain ways and such behaviours and acts are naturalized and universalized as obligations of specific genders. They are perceived as expressions of the essence of femininity and masculinity. West and Zimmerman observe that men and women in the west are perceived as beings with specific psychological and behavioral attributes which are linked to their biology and can only perform activities suitable to their nature. This results in the gendered division of labour within and outside homes. However, since gender is “interactional”, constructed and is a cultural and historical residue and sedimentation, it is subject to interpretation and choice (128; Butler “Performative” 524). Perhaps, this is why Paige has the freedom to choose her gender role.

Paige’s decision to reverse her role is not merely a free choice, but a reactionary move. It is a reaction to her experience of Arnold’s toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is “a cultural pressure on men to behave in a certain way” (Azadi and Miremads 1). Men face the “intense pressure” to act in a way that often proves harmful to themselves, others and the society. Men are compelled to believe that masculinity is synonymous with dominance, violence, aggression, physical and emotional toughness, power and dismissal of feminine values as weak (Azadi and Miremads 1). Mac portrays Arnold as the perfect example of such a kind of masculinity. Arnold is an alcoholic who abuses his wife and children both physically and mentally. His violence escalates particularly after Isaac’s departure to join the army in Afghanistan as he realizes his privileges diminishing and his dominion shrinking. Paige recounts to Isaac how Max was getting beaten up by her father and had to be taken to the emergency thrice. Arnold calls Paige a “fucking whore” frequently and gives her and the children bruises, especially when they are loud (13, 44). He refuses to share the household chores, indulges in binge-watching and enjoys the stack of porn, nude pictures of his flings, he has secretly hoarded up in a jar in the garage. He has an affair with Dolores Shad Bolt, the hair stylist Paige frequents and confides in. Paige calls her an “unknown Nemesis wielding a curling iron and a bristle brush” (68). Besides, Arnold’s incompetency, his racist attitudes, the constant secretion of white saliva-like thing from his mouth and the changing labour market with the entry of “darkies”, spies and queers result in the loss of his job in Roto-Rooter (12). After working for thirty-three years there as a plumber, he loses his job to a Chinese American woman as customer complaints pour in. Paige observes that the world they are living in is not a place for such mediocre straight white men like him, who believe that they are the ones who are lifting the world, but in reality, cannot even lift their fingers. She becomes community coordinator at Rural Sprawl, a non-profit organization buying up property in the neighbourhood to clear it off landfill, while Arnold fails to find a new job. Even though Paige earns very little, she literally becomes the breadwinner of the family. Apart from this, her job, as Max describes it, a kind of “land trust Avon Lady” going door to door handing out brochures, wearing lipstick and panty hose and talking about “freedom” emancipates and empowers her (28). This upsets the power equation within the home. The frustrated Arnold, realizing his loosening grip on power, grows more violent and rapes Paige repeatedly. She calls him the “meanliest man” in the world who hoards up “patriarchal privileges” (38). When the raging storm within Arnold causes the stroke making him invalid, she reorganizes her home the way she prefers. She refuses to comply with even the smallest wish of her husband and decides to keep him in a vegetative state. However, in her attempts to undermine toxic masculinity, Paige herself imbibes some of its values, specifically violence and domination. Kate Hennessy calls her a “victim-turned-domestic vigilante”. She observes that it is possible for power to flip and karma to come a full circle. By performing some of the values of toxic masculinity, Paige herself, at some point, becomes an embodiment of it.

The concept of home itself is undermined in the play *Hir*. Sophie Bowlby, Susan Gregory and Linda McKie suggest that “home” is not just a physical structure, but it is a notion, a psychological concept. Home denotes warmth and security. It is believed to be the place of “origin”, the place to which one belongs to and returns to. It shelters people from external pressures, pressures in the public sphere. It is the place where families live and the drama of life unfolds. It is the location where social, economic, gender and sexual relationships are constructed (344). But such a site carries different meaning to different genders. For men, it is conventionally the place where they return to for rest and recuperation, after playing their role as breadwinners of their families, whereas for women, it is usually the place where their chores begin. For Bowlby et al. it is an “ideological” construct by which patriarchal power and authority define and demarcate gender boundaries and roles, and most often, strive to keep women under control (345). For women, home is the location where their subordination is assured as their work within it is unrecognized, unpaid and devalued. In *Hir*, when Isaac expresses his wish of just having a home to return to, Max observes that “Home is a mechanism of control” and so they do not want one (29). Paige destroys Isaac’s illusions about people’s control over homes by pointing out that many work three jobs a day, are unable to meet their children and struggle to make both ends meet for the sake of having just a home. Paige and Max attempt to challenge the patriarchal control that their starter-home has on them by demolishing the concepts it stands for, home as a place of comfort, responsibilities, order and cleanliness. For both of them, home has only been the site of domestic violence, abuse, cruelty and infidelity, instead of being a safe haven, a refuge from the outside world and a place of emotional stability and support. The walls of their home are themselves witnesses to Arnold’s cruelty. When Paige pulls off the pictures on the walls one by one at the end, they reveal indents and holes where fists and bodies have crashed against them. As mentioned earlier, Paige is beaten and raped repeatedly by her husband. His action could be normalized within marital relations, but she regards it as “legitimate rape” and for her, rape is rape whether it is within or outside marriage. (38). So for her, the home is a grim reminder of her married life and she remarks, “He married me and built this because he thought we were things he could control” (72). He simply wanted to be more powerful than the home. Paige repays his cruelty by consciously relinquishing her conventional roles as carer and nurturer, even when he becomes invalid. She administers sedatives and dumps him on the couch on her trips out with Max, makes him wear diapers and gauzy night gowns which are cleanable, hoses him down once a day to clean him. On Isaac’s objections to such a treatment, Max remarks, “She wants him to be humiliated” (39). Besides, financial responsibilities are also abandoned. Isaac still wants “a home to come home to” after spending years together in the army and restores at least partial order by the beginning of Act II (69). But Paige deliberately nullifies his progress and reimposes disorder. Furthermore, the house itself has been sold to Rural Sprawl for covering costs including Paige and Max’s trip to Paris. They could reside there only until Arnold dies, which might be soon enough. Paige and Max reject any kind of emotional association with that house, a “Middle Class” house made up of cheap plywood and glue. In fact, their attitude towards the house is one of apathy. The fact that it is constructed over a landfill emitting toxic gases suggests its emotional toxicity. Both Paige and Max prefer the Radical Fairy Commune in Wolf Creek, which Max has found on the internet, to such a house. After Arnold’s demise, they have decided to move to this Commune, which is a community of self-sufficient, anarchist gender queer intellectuals with sexual freedom, a place free from all kinds of responsibilities. All the characters in the play are traumatized in one way or the other. But Paige and Max have suffered trauma within their own home and family. Their efforts to deconstruct the concept of home is merely an expression of this trauma. Paige’s words at the end of the play explain it all: “I have to choose and I choose us” (74).

Judith Butler’s views of gender as a “project”, “construction”, “performance” and “cultural” and “social fiction” offers the prospect of reworking, reconstructing and reimagining genders. Her views further suggest that gender is fluid, is learnt and exists in a continuum. For her, gender binary and heterosexuality are punitively regulated cultural constructions too (“Performative” 523-24). Butler’s views are a part of the discourse on queerness as well. Queer theory is a collective term used to refer to conflicting and contesting theories which challenge dominant scientific assumptions and cultural beliefs about sex, gender, sexuality, sexual identity and orientation. It examines the cultural constructedness and political nature of gender, sexuality and binary oppositions, the power dynamics that drive these constructions and the conceptions of normal and deviance. It views sexuality as a continual process and a product of social relations. It is used as a critical tool for critiquing gender and sexual categorizations, the construction of bodies, the role of language and methods of representation. It offers the possibility of reexamining historical viewpoints and studying identities that exist at the margins of the society owing to their sexuality (Manning 917; Dilley 460). Taylor Mac presents some of these theories in simplified form to his audience in the play.

Discussions on gender reassignment using hormones, gender fluidity and gender socialization are some of the key features of *Hir*. The first character one meets in the play who is in the process of gender reconstruction is Arnold. But he is not the willing subject of this process. Paige has put him on a doze of estrogen along with the doctor's prescription for his stroke without his knowledge. She sprays him with it too whenever he acts manly. She has applied makeup and dressed him up in a night gown. He looks like an "effeminate" cross-dressing clown (1). The estrogen is meant to keep him docile and when Isaac suggests that he might grow breasts, Paige remarks that he could fondle himself. Her intentions are almost accomplished as Arnold exists in a state of oblivion. However, in Paige's absence, Isaac attempts to resocialize his father into manhood. He tells him, "You're a man" (42). He recounts his activities as a man in the past like getting red-faced, beating even a dog for barking too loud, sitting shirtless at the dinner table, taking up "space", sweating and leaving his marks of yellow stains everywhere, doling out allowances and punishments to his family, flicking at Paige to stop her talking, liking an orderly clean home, etc. (42-43). Isaac's accounts jog Arnold's memories and help to restore some of his previous masculine self. Isaac justifies and normalizes his father's past acts because he believes that that is what a man does. Arnold becomes a little assertive in the second Act and even flicks Paige and throws the shaky-shake at her. However, Paige's violent retaliation forces him to fall back into his invalid and effeminate self. Arnold stands as a good example for gender socialization and fluidity.

Another character who reassigns her gender in the play is Max. She takes testosterone purchased on the web to become a man by enlarging her clitoris as she believes being a man is power. Her conscious decision to use male hormones is a reaction to the violence she faced at home as a girl. She views her transition as a protection, an escape from it all because she feels that her feminine self is powerless and vulnerable. The audience is introduced to her transformation through Paige, when she informs Isaac on his arrival that Max is no longer his sister, but his brother. She is still in the process of transition. So Paige calls her ambiguous, "transsexual". Whereas, Max fashions herself as "trans-masculine", and at times, "fag" and "butch" (15, 61). Paige boasts to her son that Max is an "innovator in gender", a "revolutionary" and "the cusp of the new". She believes that she would be their future (16). On seeing his hairy, clammy, strangely-smelling sister-turned-brother for the first time, Isaac throws up. Max feels lonely and isolated as her transformation has not got her many friends. So when she meets Isaac, she alters her behaviour to bond with him. Paige notes this change and remarks that she is displaying "brooding masculinity" and is behaving like a "sissy" (53, 63). It is true that Max is still in a muddled state about her feelings and identity. As Patrick Dilley observes, the experiences of such people exceed the capacity of "naming" (460). Besides, Max is critical of her mother and feels that she is trying to appropriate her experiences. For her, her mother is a control-freak too and she expresses her wish to escape, to leave home, particularly when her mother orders Isaac to move out. She remarks, "There are places where it's easier. Where people aren't like this. ... I don't want to be here with you. ... It, you, it's all debris" (74-5). It has to be noted that both Paige and Max are futuristic and radical about gender. Though Paige has not reassigned her gender physically, she is performing a different gender as discussed earlier and calls herself hip. She remarks that they inhabit a world that is "beyond gender. – Beyond ... possessions. Beyond ... the past" (72). She notes that Arnold's old patriarchal world has exploded and they are the "new" (72). But their world is at the cross-roads, like Max's identity, as the new is still emerging.

Paige's remarks about gender when she explains their experiment with it to Isaac at the beginning of the play sums up some of its highlights: "Once I learned one thing, I could learn another. And pretty soon I could come up with my own theories, at least theories I hadn't heard from other people first" (16-17). Mac uses Max and Paige as his mouthpieces to expound his theories on gender in the play. Genesis in the Bible says that the first man was created from dust and the woman from man's rib: "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man" (2:22). Many naturalists in the nineteenth century, specifically, Charles Darwin, challenged this belief by putting forth the theory that man and anthropomorphous apes and orangs have common traits and must have descended from some common homo ancestors (Ch. I). But Paige rejects both the theories and conjectures that she, women, in fact all of humanity, must have evolved from "transgender fish" in coral reefs (17). she refers to the fish as the human ancestor because they have the capacity to switch sex. "Of all the animals, fish are sexually most fluid" writes Zoe Cormier in her article on the reproductive life of fish. Fish can switch sex at the embryonic stage depending on environmental factors like acidity and temperature of water because their sex is not determined by chromosomes, as in mammals, but by the enzyme aromatase. They have "gender bending" capabilities at a later stage too depending on the social circumstances of the species. Most of them are "protogynous sequential hermaphrodites", which start as females, but become males later, while a handful of them are "protoandrous", which transform from males to females. But, in the play, Paige refers to the "bidirectional" or "serial hermaphrodites" like the coral Gobies which can switch sex back and forth. Charles Tyler points out that fish

are highly evolved than mammals, which makes them more adaptable, diverse and varied. Besides, such a capability helps them to pass on their genes to posterity even under adverse environmental and social circumstances (qtd. in Cormier). Furthermore, both Max and Paige believe that there has never been only two genders, a mere “Y and X”, in this world, but there is a matrix of genders beginning with all the alphabets in English, or a “confluence” of them. (14-15). Paige explains that no individual could be defined by a single homogenous gender as it is multifaceted. She remarks, “Everyone is a little bit of everything, Isaac. We’re simply us” (17). She declares that she is both a father and a mother. The realization of this itself is like being born and baptized anew as it frees her from hegemonic patriarchal paradigms. Max feels that gender is neither radical nor progressive. So if one has to move forward, one should not waste time talking about it (14-15).

Max argues that myths, history and art ought to be revisited and questioned as all of them have been complicit in erasing or appropriating queer experiences. As Jimmie Manning notes, re-examining historical viewpoints and art forms is one of the agendas of queer theory (919). Max observes that the myth of Noah’s Arc in the *Bible* is transphobic because he took only a pair of animals (male and female) from each species. But he failed to consider trans animals like the African dog which transitions from male to female, or the snakes or squids which do not care about gender. Max further suggests that the enigmatic Mona Lisa in the famous renaissance painter Leonardo da Vinci’s painting of the same name is a transwoman. She argues that da Vinci himself was trans and *Mona Lisa* must have been a self-portrait. He created it to hide his queerness from the public as it might have cost him his life in those days. That is why Lisa is smiling to herself because no one knows she has got a “dick” (34). Besides, Max adds that history has hidden the truth about Martha Washington and Queen Elizabeth I: they were “transsexual”. That is why she wishes to be a “gender-reassignment hirstorian” (61). Adrienne Rich calls acts like Max’s “re-visioning” in women’s history. For Rich, re-visioning is “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (18). Re-visioning is essential for women and other marginalized groups because “it is an act of survival” (18).

Max invents a new language for defining herself. Dilley notes that there is an enormous gap between language (signifier) and the bodies and experiences of queers (signified). Investigating this gap, the presences and absences, is crucial to queer theory (461). Dale Spender, while writing about the need for a woman’s language in her seminal book *Manmade Language*, observes, “it is language which determines the limits of our world, which constructs our reality”. But language is not “neutral” and carries various implications. Most of all it is sexist and has been constructed from the vantage point of patriarchy in which man is the norm and others are deviance (“Introduction”). Therefore, it is necessary to construct a language that can accommodate all kinds of variations. In the play, Max invents the pronoun ze to refer to her transsexual identity, instead of he or she or even they. Ze is actually a combination of he and she. Further, she has combined him and her to create the pronoun hir, which is the title of the play too. She also coins the word hirstory as a replacement for history. She wants everyone to use ze and hir casually as if they are part of one’s regular vocabulary. Paige comments that Max is particular about it because she does not wish to be “treated as a sideshow oddity” (16). Paige is also fastidious about using proper language at home. She consciously rejects foul language and slang as they are reminders of Arnold’s old regime.

The shadow puppetry near the end of the play is an astute comment on Paige’s life as well as gender. All the characters except Isaac put on flashy coloured wigs and makeup and perform. The puppet show tells the story of Paige and Max’s transformation in Isaac’s absence. It appears to be a well-rehearsed and oft performed one. Mac has introduced this device to critique gender and highlight its performative nature.

Taylor Mac’s *Hir* makes hard to crack theories on gender accessible to the masses. With just four characters located within a starter-home in the central valley of California, Mac illustrates how gender is merely a performance, a social drama, regulated by circumstances. Mac further explores the implications of gender, patriarchy, power and control on the everyday lives of ordinary people like the characters in the play. Mac’s play is both Utopian and dystopian as it presents a world in which power flips, patriarchy is dismantled and the characters strive to create a genderless world. The play raises the question whether the ‘brave new world’ Paige envisions is possible in the near future. It is true that the play presents radical views about gender and in doing so, it is ahead of its times.

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