Monitoring [A Doll’s House]

by

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Abstract

Monitoring [A Doll’s House] is a performance-installation that sits somewhere between theatre and visual art. The project consists of three scheduled theatrical performances (based on Henrik Ibsen’s play A Doll’s House) and an installation with performances transmitted through Skype. It testifies to a continued interest in notions of distance and privacy as well as everyday surveillance. As defined in the context of my research on presence in theater performances, it investigated the interrelation between presence and absence, by exploring the distances that exist between various elements of the performance: the distances between the actors and their characters, the actors and the audience and the time of the play and the time of the performance. Using Gilbert Simmondon's idea of individuation and milieu, the project explored liminality in the presence of the performance. Featuring seven actors who were performing four main characters from Ibsen’s play, the project examines the construction of character through the audience’s perception and actors’ embodiment.

Keywords: postdramatic theatre; performative installation; performativity; character; individuation and milieu; presence
Dedicated to Bazi Theater Company

and my father Jamal Tabassinejad
who always encouraged me to study
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1. Monitoring [A Doll’s House]

1.1. Artist Statement

My MFA thesis project Monitoring [A Doll’s House] sits somewhere between theatre and visual art. The project consisted of three scheduled theatrical performances (based on Henrik Ibsen’s play A Doll’s House), which took place between 8PM and 9PM on Oct. 19-21, 2012, and a live installation (through Skype) that ran between performances. Monitoring [A Doll’s House], including the performances and live installation, featured seven actors who were performing four main characters from Ibsen’s A Doll’s House live on stage during the scheduled performances. They were also performing these characters virtually as well as being under the surveillance camera on Skype in the hours in between the performances. This project was almost a 50-hour durational piece that had repeated a structure of a virtual and a theatrical performance through 3 days. Audiences had the freedom to move around, use several different seats that had been placed for them and get as close or as far away from the piece as they wished. The performance was not happening on a delineated stage, as the space suggested a kind of gallery viewing.

Figure 1. Monitoring [A Doll's House], Video Documentation Still, Oct. 21st 2012
1.2. Distance

Monitoring [A Doll's House] testifies to a continued interest in notions of distance and privacy within interiors as well as everyday surveillance. One might say traditional concept of theatre might be defined as a group of people gathering together, at a certain time, in a certain location, to look through the imaginary 4th wall to the private life of others. Outsiders (the public) look at the private moment of the insiders (fictional individuals). At this time, the time of the performance, this group of people will agree to imagine to be at the time of the play, where (as John Searle is suggesting) actors pretend to be fictional characters. The relation between the time of the play and the time of the performance is at the heart of the discourse for post-modern theatre. Inevitably the notion of time suggests presence: one is suggesting the presence of the fiction, including the characters and the play; whereas the other implies the presence of the performance, including the performers and the audience. The latter values the now of the performance. The performance (or according to Guy Debord Spectacle) is all about exteriority and separation. This separation requires understanding the distance that separates the audience from the performers; the performers from their characters; the performance from the play; the time of the performance from the time of the play. One could say the performance is mediated within these distances and plays with the arrival and departure of presence. In Monitoring [A Doll’s House] my attempt was to explore these ideas of presence. I was aiming to create a performance that would be mediated within these distances. The practices of artists working in experimental theater such as

1 “A fictional story is a pretended representation of a state of affairs; but a play, that is, a play as performed, is not a pretended representation of a state of affairs but the pretended state of affairs itself, the actors pretend to be the characters.” (Presence in Play: A Critique of Theories of Presence in the Theatre 11)

2 “The “Now” of the dramatic fiction has often stood in a problematic relation to the “Now” of the dramatic medium- the stage and its physical properties.” (Presence in Play: A Critique of Theories of Presence in the Theatre 16)

3 “The spectacle is the reign of vision, and vision is exteriority – that is, self-dispossession. The malady of spectating man can be summed up in a brief formula: ‘the more he contemplates, the less he lives’ [...] The ‘contemplation’ denounced by Debord is contemplation of the appearance separated from its truth; it is the spectacle of the suffering produced by that separation: ‘Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle’.” (The Emancipated Spectator 10)

4 For Gumbrecht, Presence refers to a spatial relationship to the world and its objects.
The Wooster Group, The Forced Entertainment along with visual artists such as Dan Graham and Cindy Sherman, have influenced my conception of exploring presence through performance. My focus through this project was on the performers, the characters they are playing and its perception by their viewers (audience). My attempt was to make these three, performer - character - viewer, closer to the time of the performance. Where the performer and the viewer are physically present at this time, the character is the one that is missing as it belongs to the time of the play. In Monitoring [A Doll’s House] my attempt was to push the character towards the time of the performance and play with its presence and absence. And as far as the characters could be embodied by the performers and would be perceived by the viewers, both actors and the audience became part of this research of transforming between these two phases. Monitoring [A Doll’s House] as defined in the context of my research on presence in theater performances, investigated the play between presence and absence. Using Gilbert Simmondon’s idea of individuation⁵ and milieu⁶; and Deleuze’s original and simulacra⁷ as my tools, I explored the spatio-temporal relation between the positive image of the performance (the presence, the individual and the original) and its negative image (the absence, the milieu and the simulacra).

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⁵ “The living being is also the being that results from an initial individuation and amplifies this individuation. In the living being, individuation is brought about by the individual itself, and is not simply a functioning object that results from an individuation previously accomplished. […] The living individual is a system of individuation, an individuating system and also a system that individuates itself.” (The Genesis of the Individual 305)

⁶ “A milieu is what the fly inhabits, an indeterminable but limited space highlighted through significant elements or qualities- cues to prey, rivals, love objects, and so on.”(Chaos, Territory and art 46)

⁷ Brian Massumi defines Simulacrum, as it is “a copy of a copy whose relation to the model has become so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy. It stands on its own as a copy without a model.” And according to Deleuze he mentions that “the simulacrum is less a copy twice removed than a phenomenon of a different nature altogether: it undermines the very distinction between copy and model.” (Realer than Real)
For the purpose of my research and this paper, I have called the spatio-temporal relation between these two aspects: *distance*, which is what I have been exploring in depth in my final thesis project. Accordingly, I have employed methodologies in order to explore this relationship: the *distance* between *being* the performers and *becoming* the characters as well as the audience and the performers.

### 1.2.1. *Distance in Acting: Performing the Stars*

*Presence* in theatre has mostly been defined as the *presence* of the actors in the performance\(^8\). According to Peggy Phelan, there is a division that happens between two states of *being*: *being* the performer and *being* the character\(^9\), (or perhaps even more accurately *becoming* the character). Focusing on Simmondon’s idea of *individuation* and

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\(^8\) Elizabeth LeCompte, the artistic director of The Wooster Group, has noted that: “‘Presence’ is something that I think is…always in conversation with the formal pattern. The formal pattern will tend to allow the performer to get lulled into feeling safe…the constant battle for me as a director is to find ways that an actor can be always present, always alive, always thinking this is the first and last moment that she’s there-doing this thing.” (*Performing Presence* 239)

\(^9\) According to Peggy Phelan “Since Stanislavski, when actors are observed carefully and perform well, they are said to have ‘presence’. The actor achieves ‘presence’ through performing as if another” (*Unmarked: the Politics of Performance* 17). This argument is quite consistent with how Phelan divides the figure of a performer from the figure of the character he or she enacts.
how an individual is shaped within a *milieu* that surrounds it, I have tried to explore how the audience might perceive the character’s creation on stage and its existence within the space between *being* and *becoming*, between the *individual* and the *milieu*, between what it is and what it is not (*presence* and *absence*). My aim was to explore the *distance* between what might be perceived as *being* the performer and/or *becoming* the character and to see how the *presence* of the fictional individuals (characters) might be liminal in the audience’s view and seems to occur somewhere between these two zones.

Simmondon argues that there is no *individual* in advance. The *individual* has to be produced or come into *being* within an ongoing process of *becoming*. So the individual is filled with the potentials of further *individuations*, as it is not final. On the other hand, the *milieu* can be “the environment, the ecological niche or a territory”\(^{10}\) that encompasses the individual. It is the space that surrounds the living being. It is the negative image that becomes visible through each process of *individuation*. Following Simmondon’s argument in *Monitoring [A Doll’s House]*, we accepted the fictional character as individuals and attempted to research and constructed the *milieu* of the character in order to see how a performer could individuate her character. Our exploration of the *milieu* of the character included strategies such as using video clips of movies and dance performances as source materials fed to the performers\(^{11}\). The performers themselves chose various scenes of film stars, TV stars, dancers or video art performers in order to copy their gestures. The sources were based on actors’ interest in certain *stars* or performers, no matter if the *star* was female or male. The goal for the actors was not just representing the *stars* but (as I was using this phrase during the rehearsals) to *eat* the source actors, own them, embody them, translate them to their characters’ gestural needs, mix them together and create something *new*, something *original* out of all the copies! By doing so, they created a *new* character, a *simulacrum*, which no longer belonged to their source models.


\(^{11}\) This is mainly the discovery of The Wooster Group that I had become familiar after a month long of residency at the *Performing Garage*, although our approach in using the source materials were quiet different from theirs.
For me the *milieu* of Ibsen’s characters such as *Nora* could be the space that surrounds our expectations of who *Nora* is. We have tried to use any possibility from the sources to create the character’s habitual gestures. Out of any particular reason, the performers of *Monitoring [A Doll’s House]* happened to sit down, walk around, yawn or do anything random as they had been copying their source stars from the screens around them. Then those particular gestures happened to be superimposed on the words of their characters uttering them.

The performers were functioning as live translators. They were translating those movements constantly as they were watching them. Our aim was to translate the gestural movements of the source material to the immediate gestural needs of their characters. For example, there was a moment that Victoria Lyons’s source star, Irene Jacob, was blowing bubble gum, which she translated immediately to yawning. The point was that they did not have much time to process the translation with their mind but what that had to work with their body. In my view, this process of constant translation within the immediacy of the scene encourages their *presence*. They could not memorize (or in other words *block*) their characters’ gestures as they had been occupied by copying so many movements. So, they had to rely on the *now*, the *present* moment of the performance as everything was happening as the first time. Like sports players, they had
been trained for doing techniques, but when the game starts it is pretty unpredictable and new.

Following the ideas of Michael Kirby\textsuperscript{12} and Hans Thies Lehmann,\textsuperscript{13} I was exploring creating characters that were mediated through the performer’s \textit{becoming} the character and the audience’ reception of that. The space between the performers and the audience was where the characters appear and disappear. They were not created in advance but constantly shaped within a process of \textit{becoming}.

\subsection*{1.2.2. Distance in Space: Glass Walls}

My first attempt to create this \textit{distance} was making a set for the performance out of glass walls that affected the \textit{distance} between the audience and the performers and how the performance would be perceived. My goal was to create a space that reproduced itself at \textit{the moment of the performance}. I wanted to create multiple Noras, Helmers, Christines and Krogstads as actual and virtual and to explore the \textit{distance} between their various appearances. Also I wanted to present the performance as an art object, put in the space and allow the audience to observe it from every corner and angle. Using the glass walls and surrounding the performers and the audience between them, was my tool to create such an environment. The inspiration for the set design of this piece was largely influenced by Christopher Frank’s novel \textit{Deadly (Mortelle)} (that reflects a society whose citizens are living in houses made of glass walls and are constantly under the surveillance camera.) In Monitoring \textit{[A Doll’s House]} I made four moveable platforms, each containing five glass walls that had been defined the space between performers and the audience.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Lehmann} Hens Thies Lehmann suggests that the actor of Post-dramatic Theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his or her ‘presence’ on stage for contemplation. \textit{(Postdramatic Theatre} 135)\end{thebibliography}
By separating the audience from the performers and the performers or the audience members from each other, these glass walls were not only exploring the actual distance between them, but also they affected their virtual distance. They were aiming to give the audience the freedom to be as close as they wanted to be to the performance, without feeling unsafe (as the glass walls were between them.) The audience could be in the middle of the performance, only one step away from a performer and watch the whole act through a glass wall. Being so close to the performers and watching them is the freedom that usually belongs to the audience of visual arts, when they are looking at an object. I was interested in creating a space where the audience of Monitoring [A Doll's House] could have the freedom to look at the piece as an object and adjust their distance and angles, as they wished. What complicates this is the potential gaze of the performers looking at the audience. It is in that potential moment that the agreement of the time of the play might break to the time of the performance. The power dynamic changes in that moment and the audience may feel the boundary is broken, and when there is no boundary, there might be no safety. The feeling could be analogous to finding a stranger looking through the windows of your home. I wanted to see if the actors could be seen as objects to balance this gaze and to see if I could create an environment
where the audience and performers, and their gaze, were close to each other, but still far.

Moreover, these glass walls created multiple views for the viewers. The audience could not only observe the actual actors, but they also had multiple views (if not thousands!) of their virtual reflected images. These virtual images had not been produced before as it was happening at the time of the performance (within the moment of now) and was disappearing as the performance moved on. They had been present and absent at the same time. They were somewhere between the actual performance and the gaze of their viewers and their existence had been in direct relationship with the distance of the audience to the glass. Above that, they had emphasized the distance between many Noras, Helmers, Krogstads and Christines that had been performed. They had been produced smaller and larger images of the characters, closer and further to the audience and the actual ones. They were superimposing the multiple virtual images on themselves and on the actual ones. I had no control on this function: of my virtual actors, of those other performances and other performers that had been appearing and disappearing. As a result they had produced multi narrative performances depending on the audience’ experience of watching the piece.

Figure 6. Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Video Documentation Still, Oct. 21st 2012
In some way the project is not so much about Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, but the ongoing *appearance* of the play. The event occurs between the actual performance and its reflected and multi viewed images. It happened between the actions that were getting enacted and their reflected appearance.

### 1.3. Privacy: The *Distance* of the Gaze!

Fascinated by the unseen lives of people within their interiors, I chose Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* to create a performance located within inside interiors. The difference between the life one leads outside, in public, and the life one leads inside, where one hides oneself and does not share that life with the public, has always been very striking to me. Walls create a *distance* within the public realm and separate the lives of individuals from the gaze of the *others*. On the other hand, *windows* open the view to the outside world and invite the others’ gaze inside. *Paul Virilio* defines *windows* as doors, actual windows, TV (what he calls the *third window*) and Internet. Without these *windows* he suggests there are no interiors.¹⁴ Through these *windows* one looks at the world outside. As soon as one of these *windows* would be open, the information would be exchanged and the border between the private and public would be blurred. We imagine we can watch without being watched, but are we really safe from being watched? By constantly absorbing the models/information/data from external sources, one’s privacy can be influenced by the public world. This can move to an extreme that even one’s identity could be affected and shaped by what one is constantly watching from the outside world. According to *Brian Massumi* “We do not act, but neither do we merely receive. We absorb through our open eyes and mouths. We neutralize the play of energized images in the mass entropy of the silent majority.”¹⁵

*Monitoring [A Doll’s House]*’s live installation was an attempt between the public and the private place. By exploring the *distance* between the performers and their viewers, I wanted to examine how actors would perform inside their private space for a

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gaze that was kilometers from them and how this distance might affect the audience view. Seven actors were online on Skype from 12am until 5pm on Oct. 20th and 21st; whether performing Ibsen’s characters or simply doing their everyday life activities (such as sleeping, cooking, watching TV etc). The viewers at the theatre were watching the actors’ private space and their performance: being themselves and becoming the characters. There was a single bed for the audience, surrounded by seven laptops, representing the actors. There was no light other than the light of the laptops and two projectors facing the floor, projecting the pre-recorded images of everyday lives of people within their interiors. This configuration shifted the public space to an intimate private one where the viewers were exposed to the private worlds of others that were revealed to the world. Walls of their private interiors had been removed and replaced by the windows of Skype. The space between the audience and the performers was at its maximum level and the gaze of the audience was mediated through the lens of the laptops’ cameras. The actors were performing for the camera of their laptop without being able to know who is watching them, as they had a very limited view of the theatre.

Figure 7, Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Video Documentation Still, Oct. 20th 2012

Monitoring [A Doll’s House]’s live installation was also questioning presence and its relation to their distance with their viewers. The actors had no physical entity at the place of the installation, but they were offering the presence of their images. Their virtual presence had even been reproduced and multiplied by the glass walls that were surrounding the laptops. The actors were not there, at the theatre, at the time of the installation; however their multiple live images were there, suggesting their presence.
References


Appendices
Appendix A.

The liminality of the presence of the performers: A research on character’s Individuation

*Presence* is a wide area of research in theatre. It is a fundamental aspect of a performance and in the theory and practice of theatre, “articulations of presence invariably hinge on the relationship between the live and mediated, on notions of immediacy, authenticity and originality, and the relationship between performer and witness” (Giannachi and Kaye 1). Mostly, the focus of much of theatrical discourse has been on the nature of the actor’s *presence*, particularly within the fields of avant-garde and postmodern performances. Many theatre theorists and practitioners such as Hans Thies Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre*; Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye in *Performing Presence*; Peggy Phelan in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*; and Laura Cull, Mathew Goulish, Phillip Zarrilli, Tim Etchells as well as others from *The Presence Project* conference¹ have touched on the *presence* of the performer as the most vital aspect of the presence of a theatre performance. According to Giannachi and Kaye in all modes of performance, the concept of *presence* has not much to do with regards to the spectator, but rather it is mostly limited to the *presence* of the performers and the relationship they create with their character and the dynamics they adopt to (re)present their character to the audience. Peggy Phelan argues, “Since Stanislavski, when actors are observed carefully and perform well, they are said to have *presence*. The actor achieves *presence* through performing as if another” (qtd. in Giannachi and Kaye 8). What Giannachi and Kaye take this to mean is that the figure of a performer becomes separate from the figure of the character he or she enacts. This reading of *presence* on

¹ The focus of ‘The Presence Project’, from October 2005 to June 2009, was ‘presence’ in performance. Happening mostly in England and the United States, and managed by Gabriella Giannachi (Exeter UK), Mick Kaye (Exeter UK), Mel Slater (University College London) and Michael Shanks (Stanford USA), the project included conferences, workshops, research and eventually published articles and papers. They were tracking six artistic and scientific engagements with ‘presence’ in collaboration with Blast Theory; The Builders Association; Gary Hill; Lynn Hershman Leeson; Tony Oursler and Paul Sermon. They also held some research-based performance workshops by contemporary theatre practitioners such as Tim Etchells; Phillip Zarrilli; Fiona Templeton; Bella Merlin; Vayu Naidu and Julian Maynard Smith.
stage suggests that the ‘dramatic action’ is created, to a significant extent, from the relationship between the ‘I am’ and what is ‘in front of’ or ‘before’.

‘Being present’ signifies a state, or condition, both in time and in space. It indicates ‘now’ but also ‘in the previous moment’. Indeed, although presence is ‘in front of I am’, and so close, it is also what is yet to come, that is far. In other words, presence relentlessly ties the ‘I am’ with its past and future, and that forces ‘I am’ to confront itself with what is ‘other’. In other words, presence is what appears before or in front of the ‘I’. Both temporally and spatially speaking, being present implies a relational network that constantly binds us to ‘before’ and ‘after’, moments that don’t exist at the moment of ‘now’. (Giannachi and Kaye 5)

What just happened ‘in the previous moment’ and the ‘I’ that is ‘in front of I am’ are both absent at the moment of ‘I am’. As Philip Zarrilli says in The Metaphysical Studio, presence can be characterized as the lack of it as it implies in the other: the absence (158). It could be said, presence in the theatre is physicality in the present that at the same time is grounded in a form of absence. It is something that has unfolded, is read against what has been seen, and presently observed in expectation as to what will be seen. Presence brings about an expectation, an anticipation, of what will be unfolded later. In other words, not only does the notion of presence in performance imply an absence, but that absence itself is the possibility of future movement. So paradoxically, presence is based not only in the present, but also in our expectation of the future. Hans Thies Lehmann explains:

Presence can be illustrated by the experience of being startled when we suddenly realize we are missing something or cannot remember something – we cannot say what – and this not-having or not-knowing ‘suddenly’ enters our consciousness as an experience of emptiness – a signal we cannot interpret but that nevertheless affects us. The present, which in this way is an experience that is not suspended or suspendable, is the experience of a lack or of having missed something. This experience of lack takes place at the seam of time. (143)

These arguments are quite consistent with the liminality of presence and how it is not something final, yet it is always in constant transformation and becoming. While it describes fundamental states of being and becoming, the term presence in theatre performances can be in a flow between the state of the performer and the state of the character. It suggests the liminality of the presence of the performers is between being
themselves and *becoming* the characters within the gaze of their audience. This argument is quite consistent with Gilbert Simmondon’s idea of individuation, which is one of the concepts that he uses to explore the individual’s *becoming*. Although the latter reflects scientifically on the existence of living beings, I found his discourse very relevant to avant-garde and postdramatic discourses surrounding the notion of character.

In this paper I will explore how the presence of the performer and her creation of her character lies somewhere between these two states of *being* and *becoming*. I will use Gilbert Simmondon’s argument on how an individual is getting shaped within a milieu and the process of individuation, to explore the character’s creation on stage and its existence within the transformation between *being* and *becoming*, between individual and milieu, between its *presence* and *absence*. I will argue how this constant transformation is a vital aspect of the nature of *presence* within character’s creation and that is why Simmondon’s argument is useful to study in character’s process of *becoming* in theatre performances. Later on I will argue how his *transductive* model within a meta-stable equilibrium is a suitable model for the performers and audience of a theatre performance to embody or perceive the liminality of the *presence* of the characters.

For doing so I will start my paper with giving a definition of the notion of time in regard to the *presence* and various time frames of theatre performances. Then I will explain Simmondon’s terms such as *becoming*, individuation and milieu in order to use them in a theatrical context. At the end I will finish my paper by elaborating on his *transductive* model and the meta-stable equilibrium and the necessity of this model within the context of theatre performances. I draw on the example of theatre practitioners such as Tim Etchells, Elizabethe LeCompte and Phillip Zarrilli, as well as performance theorists such as Hans Thies Lehmann as well as Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye. Mainly I will focus on postdramatic theatre tools suggested by Lehmann in order to elaborate on the notion of *presence* in theater to support Simmondon’s arguments.

*Presence* is in direct relationship to *now*. According to the Oxford Dictionary *now* is “the present point or moment of time, the time directly following on the present moment” (OED). According to this definition, *now* requires a potential of constant transformation. In this transformation one present moment is dying while another present moment is being born. Lehmann suggests that the present “cannot be grasped
conceptually but only as a perpetual self-division of the now into ever new splinters of ‘just now’ and ‘in an instant’. It has more to do with death than with the often-evoked ‘life’ of theatre” (144). If theatre is representing a moment that is already passed, a moment that is potentially dying and transforms to another moment, then how is it possible to stage that presence? How can an actor be present on stage? Also how fully can her/his presence be captured by the gaze of audience?

Theatre has two different time frames: the ‘historical time’ of the play (represented in the drama and the time of drama), as well as the ‘performance time’ (Lehmann 157). Characters would be presented at the time of the play within the drama and would be suggested by the performers through the performance at the time of the performance. So inevitably the character’s creation is in flow between these two different time frames. Considering the reliance of the now of the performance to the moment before and after, the now of the performance could only be defined as the meeting point between the time of the play and the time of the performance. While these two time frames are distant and very separate, the presence of the theatre performances requires the constant transformation of the time of the play to the time of the performance. Lehmann proposes time distortion as a phenomenon in the aesthetics of postdramatic theatre as a tool for the transformation of ‘historical time’ to the ‘performance time’. In his view, time distortion establishes “the intention of utilizing the specificity of theatre as a mode of presentation to turn time as such into an object of the aesthetic experience” (156). Within this view, Lehmann encourages theatre artists to create their performances as time-based objects or what he calls time-based images. Time-based images transform time to an object, so the perceiving of the images will change the audience’s perception. This, in effect, encourages the viewer to perceive not simply the temporality of the represented, but also the temporal aspects of the image itself.

Durational and temporal aesthetics are Lehmann’s suggestions to create time-based images on stage. For some theatre companies, the notion of durational or temporal aesthetics expands to the structure of the whole performance. Durational performances that include repetitions are an example of that. Forced Entertainment is a good example of a contemporary theatre company that staged many durational performances. They have created performances such as 12 am: Awake & Looking Down that happens over six and eleven hours, or Who Can Sing a Song to Unfrighten Me?
which lasts 24 hours, starting at midnight. Their audience was free to arrive, depart and return at any point. In *Who Can Sing a Song to Unfrighten Me?* there was one night where almost the entire audience went asleep except one person, and following their lead the performers fell asleep as well during the performance (Etchells). Time, in these kinds of performances, has a particular effect on how the performers embody the characters and how the audience perceives those characters. Inevitably the duration, say 24 hours, turns the performance into something that can be perceived as a time-based object. The performers and the audience therefore experience the now of the performance within a longer, and compressed, time frame. This quality suggests constant transformation of the time of the play to the time of the performance, which is a strong element of the presence of the performance.

Repetition would be also a good example of time distortion being used in performance. Pina Bausch is well known for using repetition in her choreography. Her dancers keep repeating certain phrases over and over and over to the point of exhaustion. Thus both the performers and the audience become trapped in time as the repetitions take place. The performers create (and the audience perceives) time-based images, where each repetition takes on its own existence, with its own unique set of characteristics. Therefore time-based images would be seen as means to constantly push the performance towards the now of the performance. According to Lehmann the repetitive movements make the performance “meaningless and redundant, as a seemingly unending, unsynthesizable, uncontrolled and uncontrollable course of events” (156). They are no longer part of a scenic design or structure of the performance, but something new and unrepeatable. The movements might have the same choreography, but through repetition and constant transformation they create something different, new, meaningless, and uncontrollable. Unrepeatability as Lehmann explains “become experience of time in a form of art that no longer restricts itself to presenting the final outcome of its secret creative process but instead valorizes the temporal process of becoming a picture as a ‘theatrical’ process” (134). By each repetition, the performance will born again, it might leave something behind and go forward, all the way to its death, to be reborn again.

By suggesting time distortion, Lehmann is also emphasizing the notion of becoming and its necessity within presence of theatre performances. Now of the
performance is constantly evolving to another moment and another and another, through the constant process of *becoming*. Having this understanding of time in theatre performances, performers’ *presence* can be defined within the same context. Their *presence* would be under the influence of constant transformation between two different time frames of a theatre performance within a process of *becoming*.

As mentioned before, Phelan divides the figure of a performer from the figure of the character. The division that she is suggesting between the figure of the performer and the embodied character happens between two states of *being*: *being* the performer and *being* the character, or even more accurately *becoming* the character. Gilbert Simmondon sees *becoming* more like a dimension of the *being* and not a framework of its own in which the *being* exists. In his view, *becoming* is a mode of resolving an initial incompatibility that was rife with potentials. He explains:

> The opposition holding between the *being* and its *becoming* can only be valid when it is seen in the context of a certain doctrine according to which substance is the very model of *being*; but it is equally possible to maintain that *becoming* exists as one of the dimensions of the *being*, that it corresponds to a capacity beings possess of falling out of step with themselves ..., of resolving themselves by the very act of falling out of step. (300-301)

This is a useful argument to elaborate on actors’ performing characters. According to Simmondon we can change Phelan’s concept of ‘*being* the character’ to ‘*becoming* the character’, knowing that this *becoming* is already a dimension of *being*. A performer needs to *fall out of step* to *become* the character. The character then is the result of this process of transformation. This is what Simmondon calls individuation as he is explaining the process of an individual’s *becoming*. In order to elaborate on character’s *becoming* in a theatre performance, first I need to elaborate some terms that Simmondon is using: individual, individuation and milieu as well as his argument on *being* and *becoming*.

Simmondon argues that there is no individual in advance. The individual has to be produced or come into *being* within an ongoing process of *becoming*. So the individual is filled with the potentials of further individuations, and is therefore not final. Individuation is also never a step or a stage of its own (314). According to Simmondon
“the living being is [...] the being that results from an initial individuation and amplifies this individuation. In the living being, individuation is brought about by the individual itself, and is not simply a functioning object that results from an individuation previously accomplished” (305). The individual and individuation are tied together. One implies the other, as being an individual is the outcome of constant becoming. So the living individual “is a system of individuation, an individuating system and also a system that individuates itself” (305).

On the other hand, this system is also in relationship with the environment that occupies the living being. In other words, individuation not only reveals the individual, but along with it the individual-milieu dyad. The milieu can be “the environment, the ecological niche or a territory” (Grosz 46) that encompasses the individual. It is the space that surrounds the living being. “In this way, the individual possesses only a relative existence in two senses: because it does not represent the totality of the being, and because it is merely the result of a phase in the being's development during which it existed neither in the form of an individual nor as the principle of individuation.” (Simmondon 300)

If we accept that a character is a fictional individual, then Simmondon’s argument of an individual’s individuating can shed light on the presence of the performers and how they could individuate their character. Within this view, the character is being individuated constantly, as it is not something final or in advance. Its being is tied to its process of becoming. Following this, the character does not belong to the ‘historical time’ or time of the play, but it is always under the process of individuation towards the time of the performance. This means the performer who is suggesting the character, and the viewer who is observing the character for contemplation, at the time of the performance, are confronting something that is always in emergence but not final, fixed or even arrived. In this view a character would be mediated between being and becoming. The character’s becoming (through the audience’ gaze or the performer’s embodiment) is always under falling out of step with him/herself. In other words, the character rejects its individuation constantly and falls out of itself. Falling out of step suggests the negative image of the character, the milieu.
Milieu is the negative image that according to Simmondon becomes visible through each process of individuation. It breathes around the living being. “A milieu is what the fly inhabits, an indeterminable but limited space highlighted through significant elements or qualities—cues to prey, rivals, love objects, and so on” (Grosz 46). The milieu is in constant relationship with the individual that is being shaped continuously through the process of individuation. Milieu is the environment that is re-shaping itself and is affected by the process of individuation. It is the immediate circumstance of the individual’s individuation. In theatre performances, it can be defined as absence, an absence that already exists within the presence of the performance or character. Philip Zarrilli mentions:

I view this relationship [between the performer and its character] as a constantly dialectical state of creative possibility. I will argue that only if the absent is constantly present (‘at-hand’) to the performer might presence emerge as a performative disposition—a place of possibility and readiness…Is it, perhaps, in this spatio-temporal realm between presence and absence, between ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’—this liminal realm between—that we might begin to explore the actor’s work, between, on the edge of absence? (Zarrilli, Toward a Dispositional State of Possibility—with a Touch of ‘madness’)

Within Zarrilli’s view, the actor needs to be in between, and on the threshold of, the positive and the negative image of her character. She is in a constant flow between what a character might be and might not be. It is within this liminal realm that the character takes shape. This liminal realm between presence and absence that, Zarrilli would argue, amplifies the presence of the actor (and the character she is performing), also resonates with Simmondon’s argument of the individual and milieu. The character is the imaginary individual whom the actor is willing to embody and the viewer wishes to perceive. The character then is being individuated constantly in order to be more present as it is being pushed towards the milieu. The character takes shape and disappears within the gaze of the audience in between these two zones: the individual and the milieu. It happens when it passes out of the zones. This view suggests that an actor might embody, or the audience perceive, the character as it always is, that is, continuously moving in and out of the milieu. The milieu of the character suggests all the possibilities that deviate from our expectations of what a character might be. It is the negative image of the character, and the outer zone, which generates the possibilities of
what the character might be. In this sense, the milieu of the character is as essential as its positive image. In other words, it is impossible to avoid the existence of the milieu, the absence, and the negative image of the character to perceive its individuality, its presence and its positive image. The character in this view is in constant transformation between its presence and absence. Therefore, both the performers and the audience experience both the negative image and the positive image of the performance, its presence along with its absence.

Various theatre practitioners have different approaches to lead their performers towards presence. Someone like Zarrilli invests deeply in eastern practices such as martial arts and uses physical training so that the actors can find their own presence within their absence. On the other hand, theatre companies such as The Wooster Group and Forced Entertainment have examined different approaches in performing to stage more presence. As Kermit Dunkelberg having studied The Wooster Group’s practical works, the new directors “often utilized flatter space and flatter, more distanced acting (even to the point of non-acting). They embraced technology. They explored the psychological subjectivity of the director and/or performers as subject matter, as in LeCompte and Spalding Gray’s trilogy-with-epilogue *Three Places in Rhode Island*" (44). Their presence happens in the negotiation between their characters and themselves. Elizabeth LeCompte, the artistic director of The Wooster Group, has noted that:

*Presence* is something that I think is...always in conversation with the formal pattern. The formal pattern will tend to allow the performer to get lulled into feeling safe...the constant battle for me as a director is to find ways that an actor can be always present, always alive, always thinking this is the first and last moment that she’s there-doing this thing. (Gianachi and Kaye 239)

Both LeCompt and Zarrilli are good examples of practitioners who attempt to push the performers towards absence, by occupying them physically and/or mentally. The performers of The Wooster Group, for example, are occupied during the time of the performance by being required to follow a variety of instructions. One of these is their continuous engagement with their source materials (TV monitors and in-ear sound tracks which provide real-time guidelines) so that they cannot hold on to any preconceived notions about their character. As a result, the characters they are creating
are constantly transforming into something else, something that might or might not be
the character. In other words, their performances become more distant. One might even
call them ‘non-acting’.

The terms ‘distanced acting or non-acting’ by themselves imply the idea of
absence. There are yet another approach that theatre theorists and practitioners have
been using to push performers towards presence. Performers move from ‘acting’ to
‘performing’, or as Lehmann elaborates on Michael Kirby’s ideas, from ‘acting’ to ‘non-
acting’:

Michael Kirby has coined the terms ‘acting’ and ‘non-acting’ for this,
including an interesting differentiation of the transitions from ‘full matrixed
acting’ to ‘non-matrixed acting’… ‘Non-acting’, the one extreme, refers to
a presence in which the performer does nothing to amplify the information
arising from his/her presence (for example, the stage servants in
Japanese theatre). Not being integrated into a play context, the performer
is here in a state of ‘non-matrixed acting’. (135)

Hens Thies Lehmann suggests that the actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer
the actor of a role but a performer offering his or her presence on stage for contemplation.(135) For Postdramatic Theatre, ‘liveness’ comes to the fore, highlighting
the provocative presence of the human being rather than the embodiment of a figure. In
other words, the performer forces the presence and the distance between being herself
and becoming her character. Forced Entertainment and Living Theatre are good
examples of theatre companies that have their performers emphasize on this distance.
For instance, Forced Entertainment’s signature is that the name of the characters are
written on boards or placards and are being carried by the performers while they are
performing that character. This is a very obvious sign to emphasize this distance. They
are also going further with this distance up to the point that even actors will write the
emotions or situations of their characters on the boards they are carrying in the space.
An example would be signs such as ‘liar’, ‘alive’, ‘dead’, ‘pleasure’ or even longer
phrases such as ‘man who never comes out of his room’ or ‘two modern white girls’.

One thing that is common to all these various approaches is the awareness of
the performers of the transductive characteristic of performing presence. They are not
staying in a stable state as they are constantly negotiating between what might be the
character and what might not be, between acting and non-acting, between being themselves and being/becoming the characters. They reveal this process of transformation to their audience and invite them to perceive their process of suggesting their characters at the time of the performance. This invitation requires the audience to contemplate what character might be at the now of the performance. As a result, the audience is also required to capture or perceive what might be the character, to lose it constantly to another image, concept or perception. What presence requires then from both performers and audience, has a transductive characteristic. The presence of the characters at the time of the performance requires the presence of the performers and the audience and their constant contemplation of being and becoming. The performer or the viewer of postdramatic theatre (or any avant-garde or experimental one at that) needs to be aware of this transductive aspect of character’s creation. Becoming transductive is what Simmondon sees as one of the primary characteristics of a living being.

[A] being has a transductive unity, that is, it can pass out of phase with itself, it can- in any area- break its own bounds in relation to its center. What one assumes to be a relation or a duality if principles is in fact the unfolding of the being, which is more than a unity and more than an identity; becoming is a dimension of the being, not something that happens to it following a succession of events that affect a being already and originally given and substantial. Individuation must be grasped as the becoming of the being and not as a model of the being, which would exhaust its signification. The individuated being is neither the whole being nor the primary being. (311)

This constant transformation happens within the interiority of individuals as individuation occurs within them. So Simmondon argues that the living individual is a system within a system that “is its own contemporary with regard to each one of its elements; … [and] can be considered to be a node of information that is being transmitted inside itself-it is … containing within itself mediation between two different orders” (305). So the living being contains an interior system of individuation for its constant becoming. However, it not only individuates itself constantly within its interiors, it is also being individuated by the exteriority that surrounds it: the milieu. So, the transductive aspect of the individual does not only occur inside itself but also between the individual and the milieu. The individual in this view is the result of constant
transformation within its interiority and exteriority. Its becoming is under the direct and indirect effect of the individuation and milieu. It is mediated between all these aspects.

This transductive model (if one can use the word ‘model’) constantly suggests the becoming of the living being. It is a perfect model for pushing various aspects of a performance towards the time of the performance, towards the now of the performance: towards its presence. This model has some similarities with what Deleuze and Guattari suggest with their rhizomatic structure (A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 3-26). Both models function as a machine. With the transductive model, the milieu and the process of individuation, affecting the individual’s becoming, they encompass each other and one’s transformation effects the whole unity. Its transductive unity is not stable, yet it is in constant movement. This is also the significance of the rhizomatic model as it works like a machine that can continually manufacture possibilities. The rhizomatic model questions the hierarchical model (or according to Deleuze and Guattari the tree model) (A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 3-26). It branches out its rhizomes everywhere and reproduces them and by doing so always suggests a new becoming. The transductive model also constantly creates a new individual. It does not reproduce thousands of individuals, however if one were to use this model in theatre, the appearance of the characters, being produced through individuation, might remain within the memory of the body of the performers or as Mathew Goulish argues within the mind of the audience who perceive them.

Memory exists in each perception, because each moment, however small, has duration. A change transpires in each moment. Memory in a sense coheres a moment as a moment, as we might remember its start a certain way at its end, in order to make it one thing, a moment. We perceive duration through change; we perceive change through movement. A moment, then, is moving. Because it is moving, it is always becoming. It will never become what it is becoming. (Goulish)

In such a case the viewer is confronted with thousands of possibilities (and thousands of characters) being produced at the time of the performance. These perceptions remain with the viewer, or the performer, without a hierarchical order, and one hopes that the notion of what a character is would be mediated within these thousands of becomings.
To sum up, it is important to address the difficulties that mediated or liminal characters might bring about in a theatre performance. Characters being mediated can be problematic for the performers who embody them and to the audience who perceive them, since not only would performers not be able to hold on to a stable equilibrium and embody a character that is final and completed, but the audience likewise would be deprived of the experience of observing a completed character. The presence requires the performers to constantly suggest the characters and the audience to perceive them in a meta-stable equilibrium. The character’s embodiment and perception is always in transformation between its positive and negative image and ties the ‘I am’ to the one before or after, and pushes the now of the performance forward. This meta-stability is not what has been common in conventional terms and expectations of a character in theatre performances. Both performers and audience are used to creating and observing characters in a stable equilibrium where for example there is no such a thing as becoming Hamlet. What the performers at a stable equilibrium are offering is being Hamlet. Simmondon explains the relationship between the stable equilibrium and the idea of becoming:

Stable equilibrium excludes the idea of becoming because it corresponds to the lowest level of potential energy possible; it is the sort of equilibrium that is attained in a system when all the possible transformations have been achieved and no other force remains to enact any further changes. With all the potentials actualized, and the system having reached its lowest energy level, it can no longer go through any more transformations. (301-302)

The stable equilibrium is where the process of rehearsals has been finished and there is no more change or discovery for the performers. Performers are embodying the characters who will not be transformed at the time of the performance. As a result, the audience of a stable equilibrium also perceives characters as the final product, something concluded and stable. According to Simmondon in order to define meta-stability, “it is necessary to introduce the notion of the potential energy residing in a given system” (301-302). The potential energy that exists in the meta-stable equilibrium can be used to force the performance towards presence. It is within a meta-stable equilibrium that characters can be under constant individuation and transformation. And as far as transformation is the vital aspect of presence, the meta-stable equilibrium might be the
only equilibrium that would serve performances that suggest *presence* (such as postdramatic theatre performances). The concept of metastable equilibrium has the potential to serve performances that foreground presence.

*Presence* admits temporal and spatial complexities into the effects and acts of performers to their audience. It is in the performativity of *presence*, too, that the inter-subjective and social implications of ‘being present’ to and before the other are foregrounded (Gianachi and Kaye 241). Such performative engagements with *presence* also bridge the gap between *absence* and *presence*; between a character and a performer; between the gaze(r) and the image seen. The works and investigations of contemporary and mostly postdramatic theatre practitioners, such as The Wooster Group, Forced Entertainment or Societas Raffaelo Sanzio unfold through varied dynamics and processes, whereby the production and reception of *presence* are performed over time, in operations between unobtainable moments of *absence* and *presence*, between *here* and *there*, between *now* and the moment before and so in the implication of the one in the other.

It can be helpful if we think of *presence* as a process of constant unfolding, of revealing, and of changes and accumulations over time. It provides further connections between these companies’ works and processes in their address to the performance of *presence*. *Presence* remains always in advance or before itself: always in emergence. It arises in processes of constant transformation and in the intrusion of one place, position and realm on another: in overlapping between *self* and *other*; in uncanny separations of and returns to a sense of where ‘I am’. Perhaps what we need in theatre is to emphasize this emergence by highlighting the temporal and spatial distance between *presence* and *absence*, between performer and character and between audience and performer.
Bibliography


Zarrilli, Phillip. "Toward a Dispositional State of Possibility—with a Touch of ‘madness’"
Appendix B.

Script: Monitoring [A Doll’s House]

Based on Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House
Abridged, Modified and Supplemented by Steve Neufeld

Dramatis Personae

Torvald Helmer
Nora, his wife
Mrs. Linde
Nils Krogstad

(The action takes place in Helmer's house.)
ACT I

NORA walks through the front door, humming. She has a Christmas tree and some parcels, which she sets down off to the side. She takes from her pocket a bag containing macaroons and eats a couple. Then, she tiptoes across and listens at her husband’s door.

HELMER: (from his room) Is that you?

NORA: (busy opening some of the parcels): Yes.

HELMER: When did you get back?

NORA: Just now. (Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.) Come see what I bought.

HELMER: (He opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.) Wasting more money?

NORA: Why not?

HELMER: We can’t be reckless.

NORA: We can be a little reckless.

HELMER: At the end of the first quarter, maybe.

NORA: You could borrow ‘til then.

HELMER: (Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear): Let’s say I did, and you spent it in a week, and then on New Year’s Eve I had a heart attack--

NORA: Don’t talk like that.

HELMER: Well?

NORA: I wouldn’t care about how much money I owed.

HELMER: What about the people who lent it?

NORA: Why would I care about them?

HELMER: There’s no peace in a home that depends on borrowing. We can hang on like this for a few more months.

NORA: If you want.
HELMER: (Taking out his purse): Here. (Gives her some money) I know how expensive Christmas can be.

NORA: That'll keep me going for a while.

HELMER: It better.

NORA: It will. But look what I bought for the kids. A new suit and a sword; a horse and a trumpet; and a doll.

HELMER: (grabbing a parcel): What's this?

NORA: (crying out): No! Not 'til tonight.

HELMER: Alright. But what about you?

NORA: Me? Oh, I don't want anything.

HELMER: You must want something.

NORA: I really can't think of anything--

HELMER: Come on--

NORA: (playing with his coat buttons, and without raising her eyes to his). If you really want, you could--

HELMER: What?

NORA: You could give me some money.

HELMER: Nora--

NORA: Please? I'll wrap it in gold paper and hang it on the tree.

HELMER: Maybe if you'd actually buy something for yourself. But you'll spend it all on household things. (Puts his arm round her waist.)

NORA: I save what I can.

HELMER: (laughing): Yes – which is nothing.

NORA: (smiling): I have a lot of expenses.

HELMER: You're just like your father. Any money you get evaporates.

NORA: I wish I was more like him.

HELMER: Well I like you just the way you are. You look nervous.
NORA: I do?

HELMER: Look at me.

_NORA looks at him._

HELMER: (wagging his finger at her): Has someone been breaking a few rules today?

NORA: What do you mean?

HELMER: A bite of candy, maybe?

NORA: No.

HELMER: Not even a cookie?

NORA: No, Torvald, I promise--

HELMER: I'm only joking.

NORA: I wouldn't--

HELMER: I know, you promise-- (Going up to her.) Keep your secrets to yourself. Remember last Christmas, when you hid yourself away making all those decorations? It was the most boring three weeks of my life.

NORA: Not to me.

HELMER: (smiling): Too bad nothing came of it.

NORA: It's not my fault the cat tore everything to shreds.

HELMER: You had good intentions -- that's the main thing. But now we're past those times.

NORA: Torvald, I've been thinking. When Christmas is over-- (A bell rings in the hall. She tidies the room a little.)

HELMER: I'm not here.

_HELMER goes to his study._

_NORA gets the door. It is MRS. LINDE._

MRS. LINDE: Hello, Nora.

NORA: [uncertain] Hello.

MRS. LINDE: You don't recognise me.
NORA: Christine?

MRS. LINDE: Yes.

NORA: You’ve changed.

MRS. LINDE: It’s been nine, ten years—

NORA: And suddenly you’re here.

MRS. LINDE: I arrived on the ferry this morning.

NORA: We’ll have so much fun. Can I take your coat? Sit down. *(Helps her; they sit.)* Now you look like the Christine I remember -- a little thinner, maybe.

MRS. LINDE: And a lot older.

NORA: Not much. Anyway, I shouldn’t sit here chatting away as if you — I’m sorry.

MRS. LINDE: What do you mean?

NORA: You’re a widow now.

MRS. LINDE: Three years ago.

NORA: I meant to write.

MRS. LINDE: I understand.

NORA: Did he leave you anything?

MRS. LINDE: No.

NORA: Any children?

MRS. LINDE: No.

NORA: Nothing?

MRS. LINDE: Not even grief.

NORA: That can’t be true.

MRS. LINDE: *(smiles sadly and strokes her hair)*: Yes it can.

NORA: I want to hear about everything.

MRS. LINDE: No. No, I’d rather hear about you.
NORA: I shouldn’t be selfish today; I should think about you. But there is one thing. We just had an amazing stroke of luck.

MRS. LINDE: What happened?

NORA: My husband has been made manager of the Bank!

MRS. LINDE: That is good luck!

NORA: He starts in the New Year. It’ll be wonderful to have endless money and nothing to worry about.

MRS. LINDE: I think it’d be wonderful just to have what you need.

NORA: No, not just what we need; an avalanche of money.

MRS. LINDE: *(smiling):* You haven’t changed a bit.

NORA: Actually, we’ve been very careful with our money. Up ‘til now. We’ve both had to work.

MRS. LINDE: You too?

NORA: Needlework, crotchet -- things like that. *(Dropping her voice.)* And other things. When we got married, Torvald decided he had to earn more money. He worked himself sick. The doctors said he should go somewhere warm for a while.

MRS. LINDE: Didn’t you spend a whole year travelling?

NORA: It saved Torvald’s life. But it was expensive.

MRS. LINDE: It’s nice to have enough money for emergencies.

NORA: Oh, we got it from Dad.

MRS. LINDE: I thought he died.

NORA: And I couldn’t take care of him. I was expecting my first son any day and I had Torvald to look after. I never saw him again. *(Pause.)*

NORA: I’m going on and on about myself. *(Sits on a stool near her, and rests her arms on her knees.)* *(Drops her voice.)* You really weren’t sad when your husband died? If you didn’t love him, why did you marry him?

MRS. LINDE: My mother was bedridden and I had to raise my two younger brothers; I didn’t see how I could say no.

NORA: So he was rich?
MRS. LINDE: He seemed comfortable enough. But when he died, there was nothing left.

NORA: Then what?--

MRS. LINDE: The last three years have been one long work-day. But now it’s over. My mother doesn’t need me anymore, and the boys have grown up.

NORA: That must be a relief.

MRS. LINDE: I only feel empty.

NORA: You look worn out, Christine. You should get away somewhere and relax.

MRS. LINDE: I have no father to pay for my holidays.

NORA: Don’t be angry.

MRS. LINDE: (going up to her): I should be asking you not to be angry, Nora. When you told me your good news -- I was more happy for myself than for you.

NORA: Are you hoping Torvald might give you a job?

MRS. LINDE: That’s what I was thinking.

NORA: Just leave it to me.

MRS. LINDE: It’s kind of you Nora, especially since you’ve never had any real problems.

NORA: No one thinks I’ve ever had to worry about anything.

MRS. LINDE: But you’ve just told me all your problems.

NORA: Those were nothing.

MRS. LINDE: What do you mean?

NORA: Aren’t you proud of how hard you worked for your mother and brothers?

MRS. LINDE: I have a right to be.

NORA: Well, I have something to be proud of, too.

NORA Pulls her down on the sofa beside her.

NORA: Torvald never would have recovered without that trip.
MRS. LINDE: Yes, but your father gave you the money.

NORA: (smiling). That’s what everyone thinks, but Dad didn’t give us a thing. I found the money myself.

MRS. LINDE: How? Did you win the lottery?

NORA: How could I be proud of winning the lottery?

MRS. LINDE: But a wife can’t borrow money.

NORA: (tossing her head): Unless she has a little business sense.

MRS. LINDE: I don’t understand.

NORA: When a woman is as attractive as I am--

MRS. LINDE: Nora, tell me you haven’t done something stupid.

NORA: Is it stupid to save your husband’s life?

MRS. LINDE: It is if you go behind his back and--

NORA: I told him that I wanted to travel abroad like other young wives; I cried and begged; I even hinted that he could take out a loan. That made him really angry. He said it was his duty as my husband not to indulge my “caprices” -- as he called them. Alright, I thought, you need to be saved -- so I found a way to save him—

MRS. LINDE: And your father never told Torvald that the money wasn’t from him?

NORA: I was going to ask him not to say anything. But he was so sick-- And then there was no need.

MRS. LINDE: And you didn’t tell Torvald?

NORA: He’d be devastated if he thought he owed me anything. It would ruin our relationship.

MRS. LINDE: You’re never going to tell him?

NORA: (meditatively, and with a half-smile): Yes -- someday, maybe, when I’m not as attractive as I am now.

MRS. LINDE: How are you paying it back?

NORA: Whenever Torvald gives me money for new dresses and things, I never spend more than half of it; I buy the cheapest things. Luckily, anything looks good on me, so Torvald’s never noticed. But it’s been hard -- it is nice to wear beautiful clothes, isn’t it?
MRS. LINDE: It is.

NORA: And last winter I got some copying to do; I locked myself up and wrote until late at night. I was exhausted all the time; but still it was fun, working and earning money. It was like being a man.

MRS. LINDE: How much have you paid off?

NORA: It’s hard to keep track. As much as I could. Sometimes I felt like I’d never make it. (Smiles.) Then I’d imagine that a rich old man had fallen in love with me--

MRS. LINDE: Who?

NORA: --that he’d died and left me everything.

MRS. LINDE: Who is he?

NORA: It was just something I imagined.

The Doorbell RINGS.

MRS. LINDE: (rising): I should go.

NORA: No, don’t.

Nora answers the door. It is Krogstad. Mrs. Linde starts, composes herself, and turns to the window.

NORA: (takes a step towards him, and speaks in a strained, low voice): You?

KROGSTAD: I need to talk to your husband.

NORA: (still whispering): About what?

KROGSTAD: He’s about to become the manager of the bank I work at.

NORA: Then it’s not--

KROGSTAD: No.

NORA: He’s in his study.

Nora walks Krogstad to the door to the hall, and points him towards the study.

MRS. LINDE: Who was that?

NORA: His name’s Krogstad.
MRS. LINDE: Then it was him.

NORA: You know him?

MRS. LINDE: I did-- years ago. He used to be a lawyer's clerk in my home town. He's changed.

NORA: He was in a very unhappy marriage.

MRS. LINDE: Is he single now?

NORA: He is, with a lot of kids to take care of.

NORA takes out the bag of macaroons.

NORA: If Torvald catches me eating these I have to listen to never-ending speech about nutrition. (*Puts a macaroon into Mrs. Linde’s mouth.* NORA eats a few and sighs with pleasure.)

NORA: That's it. Complete happiness.

MRS. LINDE: Here he comes.

NORA: *(hiding the packet)*. Shh!

HELMER enters from the hall. NORA goes to meet him.

NORA: Is he gone?

HELMER: Just now.

NORA: This is Christine; she came in this morning.

HELMER: A school friend?

MRS. LINDE: Yes.

NORA: And she's come all this way just to see you.

HELMER: Oh?

MRS. LINDE: Well--

NORA: Christine is incredibly good at office work, and she wants to work for an intelligent man who can teach her even more.

HELMER: That's very sensible.
NORA: And when she found out you were the new manager of the bank she came here right away. You’ll be able to find something for her, won’t you?

HELMER: Do you have any other commitments that would take priority over the bank?

MRS. LINDE: No, none.

HELMER: And you’ve had some experience with office work?

MRS. LINDE: Quite a lot.

HELMER: Then I’m sure I’ll find something--

NORA: (clapping her hands): You see?

HELMER: You’ve come at a lucky time, Mrs. Linde.

MRS. LINDE: How can I thank you?

HELMER: Don’t mention it. (Puts on his coat and heads for the door.) Excuse me--

NORA: Don’t be long, Torvald.

HELMER: Only an hour.

NORA: Are you going too, Christine?

MRS. LINDE: (putting on her cloak): I need to go and find a room.

HELMER: Then we can walk together.

NORA: (helping her): It’s so crowded here; otherwise we’d offer to--

MRS. LINDE: Don’t be silly. Goodbye, Nora, and thanks again.

NORA: Goodbye. We’ll see you tonight?

MRS. LINDE and HELMER go out together.

NORA begins to set up the Christmas tree.

The living room door opens to reveal KROGSTAD. He clears his throat and Nora wheels around.

NORA: Oh!
KROGSTAD: The door was open.
NORA: What do you want?
KROGSTAD: A word with you.
NORA: I can’t give you anything today.
KROGSTAD: This is about something else. I saw your husband walking down the street-
NORA: Yes?
KROGSTAD: With a woman.
NORA: Well?
KROGSTAD: Is her name Christine?
NORA: It is.
KROGSTAD: When did she get here?
NORA: Today.
KROGSTAD: She’s a good friend of yours, isn't she?
NORA: I don't see--
KROGSTAD: I knew her too, once.
NORA: I know.
KROGSTAD: Has she-been given a job at the Bank?
NORA: Yes. I arranged it.
KROGSTAD: Of course you did.
NORA: People in a position like yours, Mr. Krogstad, shouldn’t offend anyone who-- who--
KROGSTAD: Who has influence?
NORA: Exactly.
KROGSTAD: Mrs. Helmer, I came to ask if you would use your influence on my behalf.
NORA: What do you mean?
KROGSTAD: Make sure that I keep my job at the Bank.

NORA: Who wants to take it?

KROGSTAD: Don’t bother pretending.

NORA: But I’m--

KROGSTAD: I would advise you to use your influence to prevent it.

NORA: But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence.

KROGSTAD: You just said--

NORA: You think I have that kind of influence? Over my husband?

KROGSTAD: I've known your husband since we were students. I’m relatively confident that he has the same weaknesses other husbands have.

NORA: I think you should leave.

KROGSTAD: You’re a bold woman, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA: I’m not afraid of you anymore.

KROGSTAD: (controlling himself): Listen to me. I will fight for my little job as if it was my life.

NORA: I’m sure you will.

KROGSTAD: It’s not about money. Years ago, I made a mistake.

NORA: I heard something.

KROGSTAD: After that, every door was closed to me. Lending money was my only option. But now my sons are growing up, and for their sake I need to win back some respect. This position at the bank was my first step up the ladder -- and now your husband is trying to kick me back into the mud.

NORA: I can’t help you.

KROGSTAD: I can tell your husband what you owe.

NORA: (impetuously): Do it, then. My husband will see what kind of a man you are, and you’ll never keep your job.

KROGSTAD: Either you have a very bad memory or you know very little about business.
NORA: What are you talking about?

KROGSTAD: When your husband was sick, you came to me to borrow a lot of money.

NORA: I didn't know anyone else.

KROGSTAD: I promised to get you that money--

NORA: And you did.

KROGSTAD: On certain conditions. I promised to get the money on the security of a bond I drew up.

NORA: Which I signed.

KROGSTAD: But below your signature were a few lines naming your father as security for the debt; those lines were to be signed by him.

NORA: He did sign them.

KROGSTAD: I left the date blank for your father to fill in when he signed. Do you remember that?

NORA: I think so--

KROGSTAD: Then I gave you the bond to mail to your father. Is that right?

NORA: Yes.

KROGSTAD: And you must have mailed it right away, because five or six days later you brought me the bond with your father's signature. And then I gave you the money.

NORA: Well, haven't I been making my payments?

KROGSTAD: Your father was very sick; didn’t he die soon after that?

NORA: Yes.

KROGSTAD: Do you remember the date of your father’s death?

NORA: October nineteenth.

KROGSTAD: That's right. And that leaves us with a problem.

NORA: What problem?

KROGSTAD: Your father signed this bond three days after his death.
NORA: I don't understand--

KROGSTAD: Your father died on October nineteenth. But your father dated his signature October twenty-second. It's quite the discrepancy, don't you think? (NORA is silent.) Can you explain it to me? (NORA is still silent.) It's also worth noting that the words are not written in your father's handwriting, but in one I think I know. Your father could have forgotten to date his signature, and someone else might have dated it without thinking, before they knew of his death. There's no harm in that. It's the signature itself. The signature is genuine, isn't it, Mrs. Helmer? It was your father who signed his name here?

NORA: No. I wrote his name.

KROGSTAD: Do you know how dangerous a confession that is?

NORA: I couldn't tell him that my husband's life was in danger, not in his condition.

KROGSTAD: You should have given up your holiday.

NORA: That trip saved my husband's life.

KROGSTAD: Mrs. Helmer, I don't think you understand what you're guilty of. My one false step ruined my whole reputation, and it was no worse than this.

NORA: Are you asking me to believe that you took a risk like that to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD: The law isn't concerned with motives.

NORA: Then the law is stupid.

KROGSTAD: Stupid or not, if I show this paper to the court, you'll be judged by it.

NORA: I don't believe that. Isn't a daughter allowed to protect her dying father from worry? Isn't a wife allowed to save her husband's life?

KROGSTAD: Do what you want. But if I get thrown into the gutter again, I will take you with me. (He bows, and goes out through the hall.)

NORA busies herself decorating the tree.

HELMER enters with a bundle of papers under his arm.

NORA: Back already?

HELMER: Has anyone been here?
NORA: Here? No.

HELMER: I saw Krogstad going through the gate.

NORA: Oh. He came back in for a minute.

HELMER: He asked you to put in a good word for him.

NORA: Yes.

HELMER: And to pretend it was your idea?

NORA: Yes, but--

HELMER: Talking to a man like that, and making promises — and then, to lie to me.

NORA: Lie--?

HELMER: (Shakes his finger at her.): Never do that again. You’re my little songbird, Nora. And songbirds need clean beaks to sing with. (Puts his arm round her waist.) Don’t you think? (Lets her go. He takes a deep breath. He looks at his papers.)

NORA: (after a short pause, during which she busies herself with the Christmas Tree.): Torvald.

HELMER: What?

NORA: I can’t wait for Stenborgs’ party.

HELMER: And I can’t wait to see what you’re going to surprise me with.

NORA: I can’t think of anything to wear; the whole thing is ridiculous.

HELMER: Is it?

NORA: (standing behind his chair with her arms on the back of it). Are you really busy, Torvald?

HELMER: Well--

NORA: What are all those papers?

HELMER: Bank business.

NORA: Already?

HELMER: I have to get everything set up for the New Year.
NORA: So that’s why this Krogstad--

HELMER: Hm.

NORA: *(leans against the back of his chair and strokes his hair)*: If you weren’t so busy I’d ask you for a huge favour.

HELMER: What’s that?

NORA: Torvald, could you tell me what to wear for the party?

HELMER: Does my independent little woman need a man to rescue her?

NORA: I need your help.

HELMER: I’ll think it over.

NORA: Was it really that bad, what Krogstad did?

HELMER: He forged someone’s name.

NORA: What if it was some kind of emergency?

HELMER: He probably just didn’t think — that’s what usually happens. But I’d never judge someone for one mistake.

NORA: Of course not.

HELMER: Many men have managed to save their integrity by owning up to their mistake and living with the consequences.

NORA: Consequences--?

HELMER: But Krogstad tried to trick his way out of it; that’s what destroyed him.

NORA is speechless.

HELMER: A guilty man like that has to lie, and wear a mask for everyone, even his own wife and children -- that’s the real tragedy.

NORA: Why?

HELMER: Lies infect every corner of the home.

NORA: *(coming nearer him)*. How do you know that?

HELMER: Most mothers of young criminals are pathological liars.

NORA: Just the mothers?
HELMER: A dishonest father is the same. This Krogstad has been poisoning his own children; morally, he’s dead. *(Holds out his hands to her.)*

Promise you won't plead his case.

NORA hesitates; Helmer moves closer, being subtly intimidating. NORA backs away in silence.

HELMER: That's settled. I'll think about your costume. And I just might have something in gold paper to hang on the tree. *(Puts his hand on her head.)*

*(He goes into his study and shuts the door after him.)*

NORA: *(after a pause, whispers):* It's not possible.

**ACT II**

_The Christmas Tree is in the corner, stripped of its ornaments and with burnt-down candle-ends on its dishevelled branches. A cardboard box sits off to the side. NORA walks restlessly to and fro. She stops by the sofa and picks up her coat. She drops the coat again._

NORA: No one will come on Christmas day.

NORA goes to the front door and checks the letterbox. Finding nothing, she walks across the room.

NORA unpacks clothes from the box, but soon throws them down again.

The doorbell RINGS. NORA jumps up and goes to answer it; it is MRS. LINDE.

NORA: Christine. I’m glad you’re here. Is anyone else out there?

MRS. LINDE: I heard you were asking for me.

NORA: I was hoping you could help me. Tomorrow night our neighbours are having a dress ball and Torvald wants me to do the dance I learned on our trip.

MRS. LINDE: You’re going to perform?

NORA: Torvald said I should. Here’s the dress, but it’s torn--

MRS. LINDE: It’s just some loose stitching. Needle and thread?
NORA fetches needle and thread and gives them to MRS. LINDE, who starts to sew.

NORA: You’re so sweet.

MRS. LINDE: Tomorrow I’ll have to come by and see how you look.

MRS. LINDE notices Nora’s nervous pacing. MRS. LINDE goes to her and puts her hands on her shoulders. NORA is still.

NORA: I have to get out of this loan.

MRS. LINDE goes back to her sewing.

NORA: It’s a lot easier for a man to take care of these things.

MRS. LINDE: A man like your husband?

NORA: When you pay off a debt you get your bond back, don’t you?

MRS. LINDE: Of course.

NORA: And you can tear it into a thousand pieces.

MRS. LINDE: There’s something you’re not telling me.

A rustling sound from the hall. HELMER puts away some papers and goes to the study door.

NORA: That’s Torvald. Could you go in the nursery? He hates to see sewing lying around.

MRS. LINDE: I’m not leaving until we talk about this.

MRS. LINDE goes to the nursery as Torvald enters from the hall.

NORA: *(going up to HELMER)*: I’ve been waiting for you.

HELMER: Who was that?

NORA: Christine’s helping me fix my dress. I’m going to look just like I did on our trip.

HELMER: So you admit it was a great idea?

NORA: As long as you admit it was nice of me to do what you wanted.

HELMER: Nice —? to do what your husband wants?
NORA: What if I asked you for something very, very nicely — Would you do it?

HELMER: I’d like to know what it is first.

NORA: I’d do all my tricks for you.

HELMER: What is it?

NORA: I’d make all your worries disappear.

HELMER: You do that already.

NORA: I would dance for you, Torvald.

HELMER: I hope you’re not talking about what we discussed this morning?

NORA: Yes.

HELMER: How can you bring that up again?

NORA: You have to let Krogstad keep his job.

HELMER: I’m giving it to Christine.

NORA: Oh. Couldn’t you get rid of one of the other clerks instead?

HELMER: Just because you decided to make a promise--

NORA: He could hurt you.

HELMER: You’re afraid because of what happened to your father.

NORA: Don’t you remember how the newspapers slandered him? He would have lost his job if the Department hadn’t sent you to investigate.

HELMER: But your father did not have flawless reputation. I do.

NORA: Who knows what these people will dig up?

HELMER: People at the bank already know I’m letting him go. What if they heard that their new manager changed his mind because of his wife?

NORA: What if they did?

HELMER: They’d laugh. I’d feel the consequences. Besides, there’s something else.

NORA: What’s that?
HELMER: We were friends at school. We’re on first name terms, and he doesn’t try to hide it. All day long it’s “Torvald this” and “Torvald that”. It’d be unbearable.

NORA: You can’t mean that.

HELMER: Why not?

NORA: Because it’s so petty.

HELMER: You think I am petty?

NORA: No, I don’t. That’s why—

HELMER: I’m putting an end to this right now.

HELMER puts on his coat.

NORA: Where are you going?

HELMER: To finalize Krogstad’s dismissal.

NORA: You don’t know what he could do to us.

HELMER: I find it insulting that you think I should be afraid of him. Whatever happens, you can be sure I’m man enough to handle whatever he throws at either of us.

NORA: You would never have to do that.

HELMER: Alright, then we’ll face the attack together, as man and wife. Are you happy now? You’re letting your imagination run away with you. You’d better go and practice your dance.

HELMER leaves.

NORA: There must be some way out.

**Note: the story requires a sense of time passing here**

There is a KNOCK at the door. NORA lets KROGSTAD in.

NORA: What do you want?

KROGSTAD: I assume you know I’ve been fired.

NORA: I couldn’t stop it.

KROGSTAD: Does your husband know what I could do to you?
NORA: What do you want?

KROGSTAD: To see how you are, Mrs. Helmer. Even lowly cashiers and money-lenders have feelings.

NORA: Think about my children.

KROGSTAD: Have you and your husband thought about mine? But let’s not worry about that. I know we can resolve this as friends.

NORA: My husband can’t ever know.

KROGSTAD: How will you prevent that? Can you pay the balance you owe me?

NORA: Not right now.

KROGSTAD: It doesn’t matter anyway. If you had all the money in the world I wouldn’t give your bond back.

NORA: What are you going to do with it?

KROGSTAD: Keep it. No one else will ever hear about it. So if you’re thinking of doing anything desperate--

NORA: I am.

KROGSTAD: --like running away--

NORA: I said I am.

KROGSTAD: Or worse--

NORA: How did you--

KROGSTAD: Forget about it.

NORA: How did you know I’d thought of that?

KROGSTAD: Most people think of that at first. I did-- but I didn’t have the courage.

NORA: Neither do I.

KROGSTAD: It’s a ridiculous idea anyway. Once the first big fight is over-- I have a letter for your husband.

NORA: You’re telling him?

KROGSTAD: As delicately as possible.

NORA: Tear it up. I’ll find the money.
KROGSTAD: I don’t want money.

NORA: Then what?

KROGSTAD: I want to rebuild my life. I was happy to work my way up slowly. But now that I’ve been kicked off the ladder again, being hired back isn’t enough. Your husband will find a higher position for me—

NORA: He’ll never do that!

KROGSTAD: Within a year it will be Nils Krogstad running that Bank.

NORA: You’ve just given me enough courage to do anything.

KROGSTAD: Under the ice? Down in the cold, black water?

NORA: You can’t frighten me.

KROGSTAD: Don’t do anything stupid. Your reputation would be in my hands. When Torvald gets my letter, he’ll find me and I’ll explain everything. He’s forcing me to do this.

KROGSTAD lets himself out. NORA locks the door.

The letter falls into the letter-box.

NORA stifles a cry.

MRS. LINDE enters from the nursery with Nora’s costume.

MRS. LINDE: Would you like to try it on--?

NORA: Christine--

MRS. LINDE: What is it?

NORA indicates the letter-box.

NORA: There’s a letter there. From Krogstad

MRS. LINDE: Nils lent you the money?

NORA: And now Torvald’s going to find out.

MRS. LINDE: That’s the best thing for both of you.

NORA: I forged a name to get the money.

MRS. LINDE: Oh no!
NORA: Christine -- you have to be my witness.

MRS. LINDE: What do you mean?

NORA: If someone else wanted to take the blame for me -- you understand--?

MRS. LINDE: But what makes you think--?

NORA: Then you can tell everyone that I did it on my own.

MRS. LINDE: Alright. But I don't understand.

NORA: How could you understand? A miracle is going to happen!

MRS. LINDE: A miracle?

NORA: But I can't let it happen.

MRS. LINDE: I'll find Nils.

NORA: Don't--

MRS. LINDE: There was a time when he would do anything for me.

HELMER arrives home. He opens the front door and walks in.

NORA: No!

HELMER covers his eyes and comically moves across the room towards the door to his study.

HELMER: It's alright. I can't see a thing. Are you wearing your dress?

NORA: I'm going to look so beautiful, Torvald.

HELMER goes into his study and closes the door.

NORA: It's hopeless. The letter's already in the box.

MRS. LINDE: And Torvald has the key?

NORA: Always.

MRS. LINDE: What if Nils asked for his letter back unread?

NORA: But he'll open the box any minute.

MRS. LINDE: Go in and distract him. I'll come back.

MRS. LINDE hurries out.
HELMER: *(from the study)*: Well? Can I come into my own room again?

After a moment of silence, HELMER walks in.

HELMER: Nora, you look exhausted. Have you been practising too much?

NORA: I haven't practised at all.

HELMER: But you need to—

NORA: I can't get anywhere without you.

HELMER: We'll get it.

NORA: Help me, Torvald. Please? I'm so nervous -- all those people. I need you all to myself tonight. Can't you forget about the bank? Don't even pick up a pen. Promise?

HELMER: I promise. Tonight I will be devoted to my little wife. But first—

HELMER goes to open the letter-box.

NORA: What are you doing?

HELMER: Checking for letters.

NORA: No!

HELMER: Why?

NORA: There's nothing there.

HELMER: Just let me look.

HELMER moves towards the letter-box.

NORA runs to the piano and plays the first bars of the Tarantella.

HELMER turns toward her.

NORA: I can't dance tomorrow if we don't practise.

HELMER goes to her.

NORA: Play for me; direct me as you play.

HELMER sits down at the piano. NORA seizes the tambourine and a long multi-coloured shawl from the cardboard box, wraps it hastily around her, then takes a quick leap into the centre of the room.
HELMER plays and NORA dances.

NORA dances more and more wildly. HELMER tries to counteract this by playing more and more ploddingly, and then by beating a slower rhythm on the piano with his hand.

It is a tug of war between Nora’s wildness and Helmer’s control.

NORA does not notice Helmer’s correction, but dances more and more wildly. Her hair works loose and falls over her shoulders.

MRS. LINDE enters and stands in the doorway, tongue-tied. NORA notices her and stops dancing.

NORA: We’re having so much fun, Christine!

HELMER: You look like you’re dancing for your life.

NORA: I am.

HELMER: You’ve forgotten everything I taught you.

NORA: You see how much I need you? You have to lead me through the whole thing.

HELMER: Don’t worry.

NORA: I don’t want you to think of anything but me; don’t open a single letter - - not even the letter-box-

HELMER: You’re still afraid of that man--

NORA: Of course I am.

HELMER: There’s a letter from him, isn’t there?

NORA: Don’t read anything now. I don’t want anything to come between us until this is over.

HELMER: (taking her in his arms): Alright. But tomorrow night, after you’ve danced--

NORA: Then you’ll be free.

NORA opens a bottle of champagne and pours a glass. Then she puts some macaroons out on a plate. She gives both to HELMER.

NORA: You go and relax. Christine, would you help me put up my hair?

HELMER takes the champagne and macaroons into the dining room.
NORA: Well?

MRS. LINDE: He’s out of town.

NORA sighs in despair.

MRS. LINDE: He’ll be home tomorrow night. I left him a note.

NORA: You should have left it alone. I mean, it is exciting to be waiting for a miracle.

MRS. LINDE: What are you waiting for?

NORA: You wouldn’t understand. Go and sit with Torvald. I’ll be right there.

MRS. LINDE goes into the dining room.

NORA stands and collects herself. She looks at her watch.

NORA: (whispering): Seven hours until midnight; and then another twenty-four and the party will be over. Thirty-one hours to live.

ACT III

A lamp is burning on the table. The door into the hall stands open. Dance music is heard in the room above. MRS. LINDE is sitting at the table idly turning over the leaves of a book; she tries to read, but does not seem able to collect her thoughts. Every now and then she listens intently for a sound at the outer door.

There is a soft knock at the door. MRS. LINDE rises quickly and goes into the hall to answer it. She re-enters with KROGSTAD. KROGSTAD holds up Mrs. Linde’s letter.

KROGSTAD: What is this about?

MRS. LINDE: I have to talk to you.

KROGSTAD: Here?

MRS. LINDE: The Helmers are at a party upstairs.

KROGSTAD: Do we really have anything to talk about?

MRS. LINDE: You’ve never understood me.

KROGSTAD: What’s there to understand? — A woman trades in one man for a richer one.

MRS. LINDE: You didn’t think it broke my heart?
KROGSTAD: Not after what you wrote to me.

MRS. LINDE: I had to leave; I thought ruining your feelings for me would make it easier.

KROGSTAD: All that, for money!

MRS. LINDE: I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We couldn't wait for your prospects to come in, Nils.

KROGSTAD: You had no right to abandon me for someone else's sake.

MRS. LINDE: I've asked myself about that again and again.

KROGSTAD: I'm desperate.

MRS. LINDE: Help is closer than you think.

KROGSTAD: It was close; then you came.

MRS. LINDE: I didn't know I'd be taking your place.

KROGSTAD: But now that you know, you're not going to give it up?

MRS. LINDE: Life has taught me to be practical.

KROGSTAD: Life has taught me not to believe in speeches.

MRS. LINDE: Why do you think I came here?

KROGSTAD: You don't expect me to believe it was for me?

MRS. LINDE: You said that with me you could have been a different person.

KROGSTAD: That's true.

MRS. LINDE: Is it too late?

KROGSTAD: Do you really want to get involved with someone who--?

MRS. LINDE: I want to be a mother, and your children need one. We all need each other.

KROGSTAD grasps her hands.

MRS. LINDE: (listening): Shh! That must be Nora’s dance. Go!

KROGSTAD: But wait! You don’t know what I’ve done--

MRS. LINDE: Yes I do.
KROGSTAD: I’d take it back if I could.

MRS. LINDE: Your note is still in the letter-box.

KROGSTAD: I’ll ask for it back.

MRS. LINDE: No.

KROGSTAD: I thought that was why you wanted to see me.

MRS. LINDE: It was. Yesterday. But this secret needs to be told; they need to understand each other.

LINDE hears them coming down.

MRS. LINDE: Go!

KROGSTAD: I’ll wait for you.

MRS. LINDE: Good.

KROGSTAD leaves.

MRS. LINDE tidies the room and gets her hat and coat. She sighs happily.

Helmer’s and Nora’s struggle becomes audible. A key turns in the lock and HELMER leads NORA forcibly into the room.

NORA: (hanging back in the doorway, and struggling with him):

Please, Torvald — one more hour.

HELMER leads NORA [roughly], despite her efforts to resist him, into the room.

NORA: Christine!

Immediately HELMER adopts a playful tone with NORA.

MRS. LINDE: Yes, I’m sorry; I was so anxious to see Nora in her
dress.

NORA: Half an hour. Torvald!

HELMER: Listen to her, Mrs. Linde! Her dance brought the house down. Do you think I was going to let her stay and ruin the effect?

HELMER throws his cloak on a chair and goes to light a few candles.
MRS. LINDE: (in a low voice): We talked.
NORA: And?
MRS. LINDE: You have nothing to worry about from Nils; but you have to tell Torvald.
NORA: I can’t.
MRS. LINDE: Then the letter will.
HELMER: (coming in again). Well, Mrs. Linde, have you finished admiring her yet?
MRS. LINDE: Yes. Well, goodnight, Nora. And don’t be stubborn.
HELMER: That’s good advice.
MRS. LINDE: Goodnight, Mr. Helmer.
MRS. LINDE goes. HELMER closes the door behind her.
HELMER: Finally.
NORA: Aren’t you tired?
HELMER: Not at all.
NORA: I’m very tired.
HELMER: I was right not to let you stay.
NORA: You’re always right, Torvald.
HELMER: (kissing her on the forehead): Now my girl is talking like a grown-up.
NORA: Don’t look at me like that.
HELMER: Why shouldn’t I look at my own wife?
NORA goes around to the other side of the table.
HELMER follows her.
HELMER: When I watched you dance, my blood caught fire.

HELMER approaches NORA again.
HELMER advances; NORA retreats. HELMER gives up, takes his keys out of his pocket and goes to the letter-box.

Before he can get it open, NORA goes to him, a little seductively, to distract him. HELMER stops trying to get the letters and embraces her.

HELMER: Sometimes I wish that you were in some kind of danger, so that I could risk everything for you.

NORA tears herself loose.

NORA: Read your letters.

HELMER moves towards her.

NORA moves even further away.

HELMER: This trouble with Krogstad has upset both of us. Good night.

NORA: Read them.

HELMER opens the box, looks through the letters, finds Krogstad’s and reads it.

NORA, indecisive, starts for the door.

HELMER steps in front of her, forcing her back into the room.

HELMER: Do you know what’s in this letter?

NORA: Let me go.

HELMER: Where?

NORA: Don’t try to save me, Torvald.

HELMER: Is this true?

NORA: I won’t let you suffer for my sake.

HELMER: Do you understand what you’ve done?

NORA: Yes.

HELMER: For eight years -- my pride and joy: a liar — worse, a criminal.

NORA is silent and stares unblinkingly at him.
HELMER: I should have seen this coming. No morality, no sense of duty. I am in the power of a corrupt man; and all because of a thoughtless woman!

NORA: When I’m gone, you’ll be free.

HELMER: He can make the whole thing public any time. People will think I was behind it. Do you understand what you’ve done to me?

NORA: Yes.

HELMER: I have to keep this quiet, whatever it costs. You’ll stay in the house, but I won’t allow you to raise the children. I can’t trust you with them.

A letter falls into the letter-box.

NORA does not move.

HELMER goes to the box and gets the letter. He reads it quickly. He holds up a piece of paper that was enclosed in the letter.

HELMER: Nora, I am saved!

NORA: What about me?

HELMER: Both of us. Look, he sent your bond back. He’s sorry – some good thing has changed his life. (Tears up the bond) These past three days must have been awful for you.

NORA: I’ve fought hard.

HELMER: Let’s not think about it anymore. It’s all over. I’ve forgiven you, Nora. I have. I know that you did it out of love.

NORA: That’s true.

HELMER: You’ve loved me the way a wife should love her husband. You just didn’t know how to act on it. Your helplessness makes you even more beautiful. I can guide you. Forget about those things I said. I have forgiven you, Nora.

NORA: Thank you for your forgiveness.

NORA goes into her room and starts to change.

HELMER: What are you doing in there?

NORA: (from within): Taking off my dress.
HELMER: (standing at the open door): Yes, do that. Nora, it's so satisfying for a man to know that he has forgiven his wife. It makes you mine twice over because, in a way, I've given you a new life; so you've become my wife and my child. (He looks in on her.) You're not in bed. Have you changed?

NORA: (in everyday dress): Yes, Torvald.

HELMER: But why?

NORA: I have something to say.

HELMER: I don't understand.

NORA: And I have never understood you. Until tonight.

HELMER: What do you mean?

NORA: We've been married eight years, and this is our first serious conversation.

HELMER: But, why would we need to--

NORA: When I lived with Dad, he passed all his ideas down to me. He called me his little doll, and he played with me, just like I played with my dolls. And when I came here--

HELMER: How can you say that about our marriage?

NORA: I was simply passed from Dad's hands into yours. I perform tricks for you so I can eat and sleep in your bed.

HELMER: Haven't you been happy?

NORA: Only cheerful. I've been your doll-wife; and the children have been my dolls. It was always fun when you came in and played with me. That's what our marriage has been.

HELMER: But now it'll be different. The time has come for education.

NORA: Whose education?

HELMER: Yours and the children's.

NORA: But I'm not worthy to raise the children.

HELMER: I was upset.

NORA: You were right. First I have to educate myself. And you're not the man to help me with that. That's why I'm leaving you.
HELMER: You’re out of your mind! I won’t allow it!

NORA: There’s no point in not allowing it. I’ll only take what’s mine.

HELMER: You have no sense.

NORA: Then I’d better try to get some sense, Torvald.

HELMER: You’d really neglect your most sacred duties?

NORA: What are my most sacred duties?

HELMER: Your duties to your husband and children.

NORA: I have a duty to myself.

HELMER: First and foremost, you are a wife and a mother.

NORA: First and foremost, I am a human being. I need to think things through for myself.

HELMER: Listen to your own conscience. Don’t you have any sense of morality?

NORA: You and I look at these things differently. You think a woman has no right to protect her dying father, or to save her husband’s life. I can’t believe that.

HELMER: You’re out of your mind.

NORA: I’ve never been so sane.

HELMER: Then you must not love me anymore.

NORA: No. I don’t. The miracle didn’t happen.

HELMER: What are you talking about?

NORA: When Krogstad’s letter was sitting in the box, I knew that you would take responsibility for the whole thing.

HELMER: Nora!

NORA: That was the miracle I was hoping for, and dreading; and I was ready to kill myself to stop it.

HELMER: I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora. But no man would sacrifice his honour, even for the one he loves.

NORA: Millions of women have done it.
HELMER: You're talking like a child.

NORA: You weren't afraid for me. You were afraid of what would happen to you. For eight years I've been living with a stranger.

HELMER: Some distance has opened up between us, but don't you think we can cross it?

NORA: I'm no wife for you.

HELMER: I can change.

NORA: Maybe -- if your doll is taken away from you.

NORA goes into her room and comes back with a small travelling bag, which she sets down by the door.

HELMER: Wait 'til tomorrow.

NORA: (putting on her cloak): I can't spend the night in a strange man's house. I don't want to see the children. I know they're in better hands than mine.

HELMER: Think about this.

NORA takes off her wedding ring and offers it to HELMER. After a long hesitation, he reciprocates.

NORA goes out through the front door.

THE END
Appendix C.

DVD: Monitoring [A Doll’s House] Video Files

Credits
Concept and Direction: Pegah Tabassinejad
Project Counselor: Bojan Bodružić
Stage Manager: Cherry Song
Technical Director: Jonathan Kim
Performers: Angela Ferreira, Aryo Khakpour, Victoria Lyons, Daniel O’Shea, Gina Readman, Natalie Schneck, Benjamin Stone
Dramaturgue: Steve Neufeld
Assistant Director: Nazli Akhtari
Set: Emily Neufeld
Sound: Nancy Tam
New Media/ Projection: Sammy Chien
Video: Nima Soofi, Bahar Nourizadeh and Bojan Bodružić
Lighting: Jonathan Kim
Costume: Pardis Tabassinejad
Documentation: Bahar Nourizadeh and Bojan Bodružić

Description
This DVD contains the three video files of my thesis project Monitoring [A Doll’s House], shown as a 50 hours durational project, including three scheduled performances based on Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, and a live ongoing installation in between the scheduled performances at Studio T, Simon Fraser University. The first DVD is the documentation of the performance and the rest are the edited versions of couple of different hours of the installation. DVD#2 and DVD#3 shows the performers’ performance at home (on Skype) and DVD#4 shows the installation view at Studio T.

Filenames
- Video 01: Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Performance Video, Pegah Tabassinejad, 4 cameras, 01:00:49 hr., 2012.
- Video 02: Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Installation Video#1 (Actors), Pegah Tabassinejad, 03:52:07 hr., 2012.
- Video 03: Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Sample of Laptop Records, Pegah Tabassinejad, 01:45:44 hr., 2012.
- Video 04: Monitoring [A Doll’s House], Installation Video #2 (The Whole view), Pegah Tabassinejad, 01:07:09 hr., 2012.