

NORA AND GERTRUDE IN “THE SAME ROOM” IN THE MASTER’S HOUSE¹

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214 KEEPING WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE ACROSS CULTURES AND CENTURIES

The story line, structure and themes of Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (1879) and Françoise Loranger’s *Encore cinq minutes* (1967) are the same.² In both plays a married woman with children is portrayed as always being in “the same room” of a middle-class home where others come and go while she remains. In this room in the house established and maintained by her professional husband, the play’s events lead the woman in the end to a moment of clear understanding regarding her untenable situation, a moment that is so revelatory that she knows she must immediately put on her street clothes, pack a few things, and walk out the door of the room and the house. In the final scene of both plays, the woman pauses long enough before her departure to articulate her reasons for leaving to herself and her uncomprehending husband (and children in the case of *Encore cinq minutes*). These words of explanation provide important cues to readers and spectators who are left after the closing of the door with the challenge of grasping the meaning and significance of the woman’s determination to radically transform herself and her place in the world.³

The woman has come to understand that as long as she stays in the room, even though her authoritarian husband seldom does more than pass through it and pauses long enough for only brief exchanges, the lies that have constructed the house’s patriarchal foundation will continue to hold her in their unrelenting grasp. She must situate herself in an alternative place where she can be free to listen to her own inner voices and explore the landscapes of desire, thought, imagination, dream and social insertion where she might discover who she is. Nora and Gertrude have become so

alienated from themselves in *A Doll's House* and *Encore cinq minutes* that they do not hesitate to acknowledge just before they leave their lack of both self-knowledge and knowledge about social mores. Their vulnerability does not, however, suppress the sense of exhilaration produced by their firm stepping out on their voyage of discovery.

The critique of sexism sustained through both plays makes it clear that the women's situation is not the result of unreasonable behaviour on the part of an individual man, but rather the product of a dominant misogynist tradition transmitted from generation to generation. Nora recalls her experiences of conditioning by her father, ostensibly loving, for playing the doll in childhood, marriage and motherhood:

Daddy used to tell me what he thought, then I thought the same [...] He used to call me his baby doll [...] I passed out of Daddy's hands into yours. You arranged everything to your tastes, and I acquired the same tastes. Or I pretended to.... (80)

Gertrude's son Renaud shows in his words and actions that he is already launched on the path of assuming this role of aggressive patriarchal authority over his mother and sister.

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In their physical configuration the rooms of the plays reflect the social status of Nora and Gertrude and also reflect the women's state of mind. The realistic set of *A Doll's House* shows the more or less normal paraphernalia of bourgeois family living and suggests that, at least apparently, Nora's attention is directed exclusively to the many little details and demands that fill her days. The set of *Encore cinq minutes* has more immediately obvious symbolic significance. The room is the empty bedroom vacated six months earlier by daughter Geneviève. The room has a large and growing crack in one of the walls. Gertrude, who has withdrawn from her responsibilities of managing household and servants and of entertaining, is spending her time in the vacant room trying to clear her mind of clutter and to furnish the room in the right style for her. The privileged class to which she still belongs and the financial security she enjoys as long as she stays in the house are shown by the fine quality of the furniture she has movers bring into the room during Act One.

Despite her efforts to begin with a blank slate, it is soon revealed that the room's large closet contains a terrifying amount of things and stuff. This stuff stashed away in the otherwise empty room reflects the debris lying in her subconscious, with which she must deal before her departure at the end of the play.

NORA AND GERTRUDE: LEAVING LIVES OF LIES BEHIND THEM

The dramatic conflict of the plays develops between Nora's and Gertrude's search for respect and self-respect, knowledge and self-knowledge, autonomy, happiness, and agency and a sociocultural environment determined by patriarchal values, institu-

tions, traditions, and religious beliefs. The two women both show signs of discontent early in the play, but do not have a clear understanding of what is bothering them. Nora says to Mrs. Linde: "You're just like the rest of them. You all think I'm useless when it comes to anything really serious..." (12). A few minutes later she tosses off enigmatically to Mrs. Linde and Dr. Rank that she "would simply love to say 'Damn'" (20) to husband Torvald. The opening stage directions of *Encore cinq minutes* show Gertrude circling aimlessly in the empty room, moaning in oppressed anguish: "Quoi faire?" (7).⁴

Both Nora and Gertrude are portrayed as being caught in the spatial, ideological, emotional and epistemological grips of patriarchal systems, to the point of not only practising deception and creating illusions regularly in their daily relations with others, but also and much more seriously, living their lives on a basis of self-deception profoundly rooted in their distorted sense of identity and place. Their personal space as individuals in charge of their own integrity has been collapsed by the pressures that surround them in the room they occupy. Before they are able to slam the door behind them at the end of the play, they will have to see their way clear to surveying a panorama of their own personal space, unpolluted by sexist myths and stereotypes. This can only happen outside the confines of the master's house, as the dramatic action brings to light by carrying them toward the fresh air of an alternative ontology emerging from their nascent sense of self-respect, their attention to their own experiences, and their ideas. The episodes of confrontation with husbands and other characters generate within them the strength to see through and resist the lies they previously accepted. It is not just the lies and hypocrisy of others. These same episodes produce the need for lucid, however painful, acknowledgement of the self-delusion and lies they have been telling themselves for years.

Despite the similarities in the plot lines and themes of *A Doll's House* and *Encore cinq minutes*, the alienating impact of patriarchal space, discourse and values on each woman as a particular individual has been different. Nora is a young and attractive woman who leads a busy life as the mother of an active family and wife of a successful lawyer and bank manager. She plays with the children, provides supervision to the servants, and receives visitors. This high level of activity and the family's place in society's class hierarchy is represented on stage by an array of furniture and the room's many doors, one of which leads to husband Torvald's room of his own. In keeping with this place, Nora endeavours to show herself to be a good household manager, despite her secret of needing to squirrel away as much of her allowance as possible. In the opening scene she is excited and busy with gifts and decorations for their family Christmas. It soon becomes clear, however, that such superficial modification inside the house is simply ineffective in ensuring the house is a real home for all. By the beginning of Act Two, Nora's Christmas tree is "stripped, bedraggled and with its candles burnt out" (35).

Nora does not recognize this at first. She has skilfully developed feminine strategies to play at being a charming mother and to negotiate when she needs to manipulate

her husband. Her ability to alter instantaneously her persona as situations demand is striking. When she enters the room at the start of the play "happily humming," and when Torvald calls out to his "little sky-lark chirruping out there" (1), she establishes her identity for the audience as above all a performer. For most of the play, both Nora and Torvald sustain a belief that the feelings between them represent deep and abiding love, even though she is, figuratively speaking, caged into the image of the pretty doll who plays, sings and dances on demand. Her skill in performing and creating romantic fantasies of the presumed feelings she and Torvald share culminates in Act Three with her donning the costume designed by Torvald (which has grown tattered) and frenetically dancing the tarantella he choreographed. Like the tarantella, however, her beautiful performances are masquerades.

Nora's performances of fantasy and child-like happiness are convincing. Yet, she is never portrayed as believing entirely in them. Her actions and conversations with Dr. Rank and, particularly, Mrs. Linde show that she is capable of thinking and making decisions independently and of controlling what is going on in order to maintain the facade she needs to keep in place. While she alternates through the play among moments of self-delusion, despair, and lucidity, she progresses toward honesty with herself and an ability to view objectively the truth about her situation. The urging of Mrs. Linde and the harsh reality of Dr. Rank's imminent death are instrumental in Nora's emergence as a morally responsible individual.

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It is her newly developed clarity of vision that leads her in the final moments of the play to reject distracting performance as her usual mode of response to difficult confrontations. For the first time, she is determined that the truth will out. Thus, she refuses to be taken in by Torvald's domineering and superior attitude, hypocritical rationalizations, blatant insensitivity, and affirmation that she is incapable of surviving in the outside world without his protection. Nora has taken a clear decision that she will no longer dance around the truth. The table and chairs that had been moved from the left wall "to the centre of the room" at the beginning of Act Three (62) take on central thematic and symbolic importance at Nora's moment of truth. The remaining furniture in the room and its many doors have been rendered peripheral. Nora commands Torvald to sit down directly across from her and to listen to her. For the first time in eight years, the two of them "man and wife, have [...] a serious talk together" (79). She proves herself to be more than capable of explaining how she has come to see her situation in his house under his control and of refuting his arguments and objections. Nora is determined to find work in order to assume responsibility for her own needs. She is likely to relish this, in that an earlier taste of work as a copyist in order to clandestinely make the money she needed to pay her loan installment pleased her: "[...] it was tremendous fun all the same, sitting there working and earning money like that. It was almost like being a man" (16). Following her frank confrontation with Torvald, Nora says a firm and final "Goodbye!" (86).

Gertrude has navigated paths in *Encore cinq minutes* different from those navigated by Nora among patriarchy's pitfalls. Except for an early affair that ended badly,

she has never found romance along her path. There is no illusion of love between her and husband Henri, and there probably never was. In fact, they loathe each other, although neither will acknowledge this openly since appearances must be maintained. She is a middle-aged woman with adult children, who, for the past six months, has let her previously attractive physical appearance go, to the point where she dresses only in one of her husband's discarded housecoats. Unlike Nora, who chooses through most of *A Doll's House* to pander to Torvald's delusions and even to buy into them, Gertrude is trying to put space between herself and financier husband Henri. She suffers from no delusions they could patch up their differences. She has, however, so completely internalized patriarchal discourse and its underlying belief system that her own inner space is empty. The influence of her father, her parochial education, her husband and, now, son Renaud has ensured that she has no confidence in her ability to think or feel for herself. The stage directions state this explicitly: "*Des idées, bien sûr, il lui en est venu par centaines. Celles des autres!*"⁵ (7). Her cognitive

218 abilities have been so impaired by sexist ideologies and practices that she does not even know what question she is feeling the need to ask, leave alone finding an answer:

Je ne sais pas où elle est [la question] [...] (*D'une façon incohérente*) Je ne sais pas non plus ce qu'elle est, cette question, remarque, mais je sens...Oui! Qu'elle existe et que... Oui, si on arrivait à la poser correctement...Si [...] Je la cherche...Vous autres vous cherchez des réponses, moi c'est une question...Une seule! [...] (*Perdue*) Mais laquelle?... Quelle question?... (48)⁶

The psychic fragmentation besetting Gertrude is revealed several times through the play, as, for example, when she asks son Renaud: "Est-ce que j'ai des idées? Est-ce que j'ai déjà eu une seule idée à moi dans toute ma vie? D'abord j'ai eu celles de ma famille...Puis celles de ton père...Et maintenant j'ai les tiennes" (45).⁷ She has nonetheless awakened to the need for radical change. The action of *Encore cinq minutes* is driven by Gertrude's initially quite blind desire to escape the alienating pressures of house and family and to open "un coin à moi" (9).⁸

Gertrude has placed herself at the start of *Encore cinq minutes* in the paradoxical situation of seeking fresh material and conceptual spaces for herself, while absolutely distrusting her own feelings, tastes, and will to direct her quest and not even really believing she is entitled to find what she seeks. The unusual narrative voice of the stage directions (the unspoken voice of a suppressed subconscious) expresses the spiritual and corporeal dimensions of her quest:

Le style de cette pièce, il faudrait...Il faudrait qu'il jaillisse du plus creux de ses entrailles, du plus profond...du plus que profond d'elle-même! Qu'il naisse en quelque sorte du tissu même dont elle est faite. (7).⁹

But she has lost touch with her own inner tissue and landscapes. The first words she speaks after her initial anguished moans indicate that it is not herself she is seeking to please, but everyone else: "Il faudrait [...] que ça plaise à Boubou, à Geneviève [...] Et à leurs amis [...] Et aux miens également ... Et même à Henri [...] À tout le monde!" (7).¹⁰

The many styles of furniture that she has had delivered and that accumulate absurdly in the room—ranging all the way from folk art and primitive québécois to 18th century classical and radically contemporary—reveal that she has no idea of what she herself likes. She moves from one piece of furniture to the next, pushing it around, sitting in it, asking family members for opinions, showing shame when objects she has chosen fail to please them. Her place in the family has transformed her into a sort of sponge without an identity or tastes of her own.

On several occasions through the play, Renaud, treating her like a child, dismisses scornfully her search for herself and her place. In his eyes, her alienation is nothing more than egotism and snobbish bourgeois consumerism: "(*Excédé*) Merde! Veux-tu me faire le plaisir quand je te parle d'oublier un instant tes petites préoccupations personnelles et bourgeoises?" (12).¹¹ Renaud is the mouthpiece in the play for the widely held view in patriarchal society that women need only things and security for their complete happiness. On the basis of this complacent and insensitive assumption, he does not hesitate to come close to physical abuse at times and to dictate her emotional state to her: "(*Catégorique*) Toi, tu as tout ce qu'il te faut et tu es parfaitement heureuse!" (13).¹²

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Unlike the initial representation of the family in *A Doll's House*, Gertrude's family has long ago become dysfunctional. In effect, the door of the house has already been figuratively slammed more than once, in that all family members, with the exception of Gertrude, are living and enjoying their lives beyond its confines. Although Renaud and Geneviève have temporarily returned, they both earlier left the house for extended periods. They insist upon their right to chart their own course in life, "Pour...Pour apprendre à vivre" (70),¹³ as Geneviève explains to her mother. Husband Henri is stuck in the paternal, middle class rut so radically challenged by the young in the 1960s during Québec's Quiet Revolution: long hours of work during the week, Saturdays with his mistress, and Catholic mass on Sunday. Henri defiantly defends this boring and repetitive routine on the basis of its masculine normality: "(*Crispé*) Hé! oui, c'est la vie d'un homme!" (67).¹⁴ Interestingly, though, none of these departures have threatened to bring down the load-bearing columns of the family home. Philandering husbands and adult children leaving home represent no real threat to patriarchal structures. Dominant values consider their behaviour normal, desirable even. Only when the wife and mother turns her back on these structures and the institutions they support does an irreparable and potentially catastrophic crack develop. The crack in the wall of the room Gertrude is trying in vain to decorate provides visual evidence of her impending rebellion. The crack cannot be covered, repaired, nor stopped. It is growing inexorably. Stage directions emphasize its increasing salience: "*Sur la surface lisse d'un mur, une lézarde se creuse, s'allonge, pousse des rameaux, petites fissures quasi imperceptibles qui bientôt envahiront tout le mur...*" (7).¹⁵

Like Nora, Gertrude is living with lies about things she did in the past. And like Nora, she must work her way through these lies and the self-delusion they entail

before she can find the words to explain for herself and others why she is choosing to walk out the door of the master's house. In Gertrude's case, the suppressed lies involve a love affair with a married man who abandoned her, a pregnancy, and an abortion in squalid, clandestine circumstances. Of course, the powerful taboos of the time surrounding sexual relations and pregnancy outside marriage spurred her father to prompt action in arranging marriage with Henri. Abortion, a very real but completely unmentionable subject, was still illegal in Canada in 1967. Until the end of *Encore cinq minutes* Gertrude has swept memories of these experiences under the rug, telling no one about them while, at the same time, compensating by allowing herself to drift on sexual fantasies involving her children.

The acknowledgement of these painful truths and the setting aside of the guilt and regret she has carried for years is followed by Gertrude's moment of full insight when, during a bitter conversation with Geneviève and Renaud, she sees for the first time that Renaud, like her father and her husband, is determined to control her, change her, and make her think differently. She explodes in revolt:

(*Profondément ébranlée*) Oui!...Oui, c'est vrai! Oui, tu as fait ça...Toi aussi, tu as fait ça!... Comme les autres! Comme les autres! Et c'est de ça...Je le sais maintenant! Je le sais! (*Folle de rage*) C'est de ça que je crève! [...] (*Révolte grandissante*) Mais c'est fini! Ce n'est plus possible! Il faut que ce soit fini! [...] Jamais plus personne ne me dira ce que j'ai à faire! (73)¹⁶

Although all in the family insist scornfully that Gertrude is too old to leave home, she affirms powerfully and without hesitation that she has *encore cinq minutes / five minutes more*. Like Nora, she steps boldly into the unknown, without financial certainty, knowing that she is renouncing the privilege of class and financial security and will have to support herself as a working woman. Although it is not indicated that she *slams* the door, she does so figuratively: "Laissez-moi...Il faut que je le fasse!... Elle sort" (81).¹⁷

BEHIND PATRIARCHAL DOORS: THE PERVERSION OF HUMAN QUALITIES AND RELATIONS

Torvald and Henri both believe that the money they provide gives them the unchallengeable right to possess and control not only all the rooms in their houses but also the people in them. Torvald enunciates early in *A Doll's House* the inseparable links in his mind among the money he provides, the affection he feels for his wife, his natural superiority, and his proprietary entitlement, all of which serve to relegate Nora to the status of dependent child or even domestic animal: "My pretty little pet is very sweet, but it runs away with an awful lot of money. It's incredible how expensive it is for a man to keep such a pet" (4). In a final attempt to prevent Gertrude from walking out the door, Henri declares crassly: "L'argent...l'argent, c'est moi!" (79).¹⁸

Along with these proprietary rights, both husbands attach great importance to their place in society. For them, it is a matter of maintaining order for the family and honour for themselves. Appearances must be kept up so that the family exists in the eyes of the community as prosperous, honest, morally upright, well dressed and well educated, and that values associated with institutions such as motherhood and family integrity are upheld. Henri, learning that daughter Geneviève has decided to come home after a six-month escapade, declares with relief: "[...] comme nous avons laissé croire à tout le monde qu'elle était en voyage, personne ne saura jamais ce qui s'est passé. Enfin, tout va rentrer dans l'ordre" (22).¹⁹ Torvald's wild panic when he learns of Nora's fraudulent signature on a document that could be used for blackmail dramatizes his extreme concern for appearances:

The thing must be hushed up at all costs. And as far as you and I are concerned, things must appear to go on exactly as before [...] All we can do is save the bits and pieces from the wreck, preserve appearances. (76)

It is clear that Ibsen and Loranger placed a high priority on revealing the lies and hypocrisy hidden behind the facade of such deceptive appearances and moral regulation. These are the lies Nora and Gertrude are determined to leave behind. In response to Torvald's question, "Don't you care what people will say?" Nora answers simply, "That's no concern of mine" (82). When Henri calls Gertrude's planned departure ridiculous and tells her that she will be the laughing stock of everyone, she merely laughs: "c'est...c'est parfaitement ridicule! Je te préviens, tu feras rire de toi par tout le monde! *Gertrude se met à rire*" (78).²⁰ Nora and Gertrude no longer care at all about keeping up appearances or worrying about what others will say concerning their behaviour.

Ibsen and Loranger also dramatize the fact that behind the facade of deceptive appearances that pervade every room of the master's house there are many nasty and dangerous secrets. The delusions they inevitably produce render sincerity and honesty impossible. They distort genuine emotions such as love, compassion, and fear and so pervert the reality of what the family home is supposed to represent: honesty and integrity, affection and respect between spouses, love and caring for children, support and compassion for friends.

The perverting impact of patriarchal ideology is shown in both plays in the representation of motherhood. Nora and Torvald in *A Doll's House* have three small children. The children function to show how like an innocent child Nora behaves with her apparently spontaneous ability to play, laugh, and perform. They burst onto the stage in Act One, and although frequently mentioned, they do not subsequently appear. Nora initially appears as a warm and loving caregiver who enjoys the children. However, the stereotype of *woman* and *femininity* and the role of mother, as constructed culturally, are primary elements in the process that has served to alienate her as a fully functioning adult human being. Torvald distorts the notion of a mother's duty and plays on Nora's fear, insecurity and guilt to keep her in her place

and preserve his own sense of untouchable authority. However, in the end Nora sees clearly that her first obligation is to herself, before the children. When, at the end of the play, Torvald insists that Nora's "most sacred duty" is to her husband and children, that she is "First and foremost [...] a wife and mother," Nora retorts "I believe that first and foremost I am an individual" (82). She astutely observes that until she has her own sense of self and place in society, she, as a mother, has nothing to give to her children: "I don't want to see the children. [...] As I am now, I can never be anything to them" (85).

222 Gertrude's and Henri's two adult children, Renaud and Geneviève, provide no memories of a happy childhood. Instead, they are both deeply troubled by the incessant dissension that prevails in their home. This alienation is further complicated by the historical moment when their generation was widely and radically rejecting traditional values, such as capitalism, of which Henri is an integral part, family, religion, and Parisian French. Renaud deliberately antagonizes his father by speaking the *joual* that was fast becoming the language of nationalists in Québec. Gertrude's relations with her children, strongly influenced by her own alienation, are troubled and troubling. Her feelings, unacknowledged even to herself, have led her to project onto them her own suppressed desires, fantasies, and guilt. Her delusion that she still has a maternal role to play in Renaud's life evokes incestuous sexual fantasies, as when she grabs his legs while he is hanging a picture in the hope of covering the crack in the wall. The stage directions highlight the suggestion of ambiguous sexual desire on Gertrude's part: "*Elle s'appuie contre lui affectueusement. Comme une femme ou comme une mère? ou les deux?*" (11)²¹ There is a different kind of sexual innuendo in Gertrude's relation with Geneviève. Still carrying the deep wound from her abandonment by the man she loved who left her alone and pregnant, Gertrude imagines an entirely fictitious tale that parallels her own romantic experience but ends happily.

In the same way that the plays reveal less than ideal, even sordid, aspects of motherhood behind the veil of secrecy so rigorously maintained in the master's house, they bring to light many dirty secrets of so-called "love" and sexuality, the very sexuality that is unavoidable for women occupying a room in the patriarchal house. The power of the patriarch's overwhelming urge for sexual possession is shown in *A Doll's House* at the time of Torvald's lustful desire to carry Nora off to bed after she danced the tarantella so brilliantly. The scene has disturbing undertones of pedophilia, abuse, perhaps even rape:

Can't I look at my most treasured possession? At all this loveliness that's mine and mine alone, completely and utterly mine. [...] to be alone with you for the first time...quite alone with your young and trembling loveliness! [...] my blood was on fire [...] Am I not your husband...? (70)

Ibsen skilfully enhanced the troubling perspective on sick sensuality in a misogynist society by setting this scene of abuse in the context of Dr. Rank's imminent death caused by the sexually transmitted infection passed on to him prior to his

birth through his father's blatant promiscuity. Dr. Rank, an honest and honourable man, has the legitimate right to ask and to observe the extent of sexual abuse: "Why should I suffer for another man's sins? What justice is there in that? Somewhere, somehow, every single family must be suffering some such cruel retribution..." (45). Other dirty secrets on the theme line of sexual abuse include Henri's homophobia, illicit affairs, broken promises and abandonment of female lovers when they are pregnant. Nursemaid Anne Marie, who had to abandon her child born out of wedlock, states poignantly: "When a poor girl's been in trouble she must make the best of things. Because *he* didn't help, the rotter" (36). The extent of the abuse of sexuality and power has already been noted in *Encore cinq minutes*. I conclude with Gertrude's suggestion—reasonable?—that if Renaud's friend Corrine moves into Geneviève's room, she is likely to become the sexual prey of both Henri and Renaud.

THE RESONANCE OF BOLD DEPARTURES

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Françoise Loranger's *Encore cinq minutes*, a modern day version of *A Doll's House*, clearly reflects the powerful surge of feminist analysis and activism that began to appear in numbers in Québec in the 1960s. Both plays reveal the ways in which the systemic sexism of patriarchy proliferates into classism and other forms of social injustice, such as ageism in the case of *Encore cinq minutes*.

Françoise Loranger's other plays were similarly concerned with social injustice, and usually lent themselves to a nationalist, *indépendantiste* interpretation. She produced her dramatic oeuvre during the ebullient period of the Quiet Revolution and the Front de Libération du Québec. *Encore cinq minutes* pre-dated the War Measures Act (1970), the election of the Parti québécois (1976), and the adoption of Bill 101, La Charte de la Langue française (1977), declaring French the official language of Québec. It is possible to read and view *Encore cinq minutes* as an allegory of the situation of Québec in the 1960s and 1970s, when the independence movement was growing increasingly strong. Québec nationalists certainly viewed Canada as a dysfunctional family, ready to crack, based on lies and hypocrisy, dangerously crushing or perverting the best of Québec's aspirations. They also saw the traditions of their society, particularly the Church and its dreadful education system, as hindering young Québécois in their dreams of self-realization. Like Gertrude, these nationalists rejected the image of inferiority and lack of entitlement that others projected on them. They were eager to embark on their own independent voyage of discovery and productivity. Nora's cry "Let me go! Let me out!" (75) and Gertrude's "Laissez-moi" resonate with the *indépendantistes*' demands that they be allowed to leave a sociopolitical and linguistic situation they saw as untenable and irreparable.

The slogan of the *indépendantistes* was: "On est capable." Like Nora and Gertrude, they rejected the paternalistic federalist warning that they would be unable to survive

without the protection and security offered by Canada. I would translate their slogan, “On est capable,” using the expression of the day, as “Yes, we can!”

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NOTES

1. Act One of *A Doll's House* begins with the stage direction: “A pleasant room, [...]” (1). Both Acts Two and Three begin with: “The same room.” (35, 62). *Encore cinq minutes* begins with the direction: “NOTE—Une pièce blanche et vide [...]” (7) (“NOTE—A white, empty room [...]”). Act Two begins with: “Elle est toujours là dans cette pièce [...]” (52) (“She is still there in the same room [...]”). Despite its dramatic beauty and thematic importance, *Encore cinq minutes* has not been translated. Translations in this essay will be given in these notes. All are by LHF. Because English versions of *A Doll's House* are so widely available, the original Norwegian is not given.
2. Québécoise Françoise Loranger (1913-1995) is best known as an innovative and influential playwright in the 1960s. *Encore cinq minutes* was awarded the Canadian Governor General's Award for Theatre (1967). Loranger's career as a writer of fiction, dramas for radio and television, and dramatic literature spanned more than three decades. See Forsyth 2005.
3. James McFarlane quotes Ibsen from an unspecified source in his “Introduction” to *Henrik Ibsen: Four Major Plays* to highlight the playwright's acute awareness of urgent social issues and his predilection for open and ambiguous play endings that leave audiences forced to think their way through such issues, which they might otherwise prefer to overlook: “I do but ask; my call is not to answer” (vii).
4. “What's to be done?”
5. “Ideas, of course, she has had hundreds of them. Other people's ideas!”
6. “I don't know where the question is [...] (*In an incoherent manner*) I don't know what it is either, you know, but I feel...Yes! That it exists and that...Yes, if it were possible to ask it correctly...If [...] I'm looking for it...The rest of you are looking for answers; for me, it's a question...Just one! [...] (*Lost*) But which one?...What?...”
7. “Do I have ideas? Have I ever had one single idea of my own in my entire life? First I had those of my family...Then those of your father...And now I have yours!”
8. “a corner of my own”

9. *"The style of this room, it should...It should burst forth from the hollows of her profundity, from the deepest...from the more than deep within her! Should be born in some way from the very tissue she is made of."*
10. "It would have to please Boubou, Geneviève [...] And their friends [...] And mind equally... And even Henri [...] Everyone!"
11. *"(Exasperated)* Shit! Will you be good enough to give me the pleasure when I'm talking to you of forgetting for an instant your petty bourgeois and personal preoccupations?"
12. *"(Categorical)* You have everything you need, and you are perfectly happy!"
13. "To...To learn to live."
14. *"(Taut)* That's right! It's a man's life!"
15. *"On the smooth surface of a wall, a crack is developing, growing longer, extending branches, barely perceptible little fissures that will soon invade the entire wall."*
16. *"(Profoundly shaken)* Yes!...Yes, it's true! Yes, you did that...You too, you did that!...Like the others! Like the others! And that's ... Now I know! I know it! *(Mad with rage)* And that's what's killing me! [...] *(Growing revolt)* But it's come to an end! It's not possible any longer! It has to come to an end! [...] Never again will anyone tell me what I have to do!"
17. "Let me go...I must do it!...*She walks out the door.*"
18. "Money...money, that's me!"
19. "since we let it be thought by everyone that she was travelling, no one will ever know what happened. Finally, everything is going to return to order!"
20. "it's...it's perfectly ridiculous! I'm warning you, you will have everyone laughing at you! *Gertrude begins to laugh.*"
21. *"She leans affectionately against him. Like a woman or a mother? or both?"*