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NORA'S TARANTELLA: DANCING ON THE EDGE OF GENDER NORMS

Abstract: *This article focuses on the tarantella scene in Henrik Ibsen's drama *A Doll's House*. Based on a close reading of the text, it discusses whether this scene can be interpreted as the moment of Nora's famous disillusionment in the patriarchal bourgeois ideology. The aim of this paper is to present arguments against such conclusion. In contrast to the interpretations of Nora's tarantella as a successful ritual performance during which the play's protagonist undergoes a full cognitive transformation, this article argues that the tarantella scene from the Act Two can rather be seen as a moment which symbolizes the (melo-)dramatic peak of the protagonist's devotion to the strictly defined bourgeois norms of "proper behaviour".*

Key words: *drama, Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, tarantella, gender, dramatic structure*

Ever since its publication (1879), Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* has been arousing tumultuous reactions. This provocative play gave Ibsen the reputation of a controversial, even immoral author. The rising feminist movement of Norway hailed Ibsen, finding Nora, the protagonist of the play, a literary mouthpiece for its struggle against the nineteenth-century gender inequality. Ironically enough, one leading German actress categorically refused to play the role of Nora unless Ibsen changed the drama's "immoral" ending. Burdened by economic difficulties, Ibsen complied, and on the première of *A Doll's House* in Germany, in 1880, the disillusioned Nora succumbs and stays with her

husband Torvald and the children instead of slamming the door shut to her puppet-like marriage whose inauthenticity she has come to disclose.¹

Ibsen's Nora was a character whom Ibsen's female contemporaries could strongly relate to. Therefore, it is no wonder why particularly women could react so passionately to this dramatic work, some praising, others denouncing the morality of Nora's decision to leave her married life in search for a truer identity as a human being, which she has never developed in her roles of a wife and mother. Of course, the focus of the discussions concerning her character has changed in time. One does no longer argue about Nora's morality. Critics are now more interested in Ibsen's method: in the credibility of the protagonist's actions, in the dramatic structure and contextual, cultural cross-references recognizable in *A Doll's House*.

One particular motif has been the object of a number of recent studies: the motif of *masquerade* which is explicit in a scene from the Act Two, the so-called *tarantella scene*. During this scene, Nora literally assumes a different identity dressing up as an Italian fisher-girl. This scene is usually said to emphasize the overall conflation of role-playing and natural behavior of the play's characters. The central question of my work is, however, the following: is Nora's famous insight into the hollowness of life already marked by this scene, as some authors would interpret it,² or is the tarantella rather her final "willing capitulation to the social and sexual roles imposed on her"?³ Arguing for the latter, my analysis will support the works by Toril Moi and Errol Durbach by referring primarily to the socio-cultural context into which Ibsen's drama is set.

The tarantella scene is, along with the final scene, often considered emblematic for the play. Critics such as Erik Østerud, Daniel Haakonsen and Frode Helland propose that Nora's dance serves to stress the overall conflation of natural behaviour and masquerade which underlies the play.⁴ Others,

1 Ibsen H., *A Doll House. The Complete Major Prose Plays*. New York 1978, 119-196.

2 Most notably Langås U., 'What did Nora do? Thinking gender with 'A Doll's House''. *Ibsen Studies* nr. 5: 2, Oslo 2005, 148-71., and Rekdal A. M., *Frihetens dilemma, Ibsen lest med Lacan*. Oslo 2000.

3 See: Durbach E., *A Doll's House; Ibsen's Myth of Transformation*. Boston 1991., and Moi T., 'First and Foremost a Human Being: Idealism, Theatre and Gender in 'A Doll's House''. *Modern Drama* nr. XLIX. 3: Special Issue One-Hundred Years after Ibsen, Toronto 2006, 256-84.

4 Haakonsen D., 'Tarantellamotivet i 'Et dukkehjem''. *Edda* nr. 48:18, Oslo 1948, 263-75.; Haakonsen D., 'The Play-Within-the-Play' in Ibsen's realistic drama. *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*, Oslo 1970/1971, 101-17.;

most prominently Arve Nordland, have taken Nora's tarantella as a key to interpreting the play through the Italian folk tradition of tarantism.⁵ Nordland suggests that the entire dramatic action, that is, all the stages in the rising protagonist's anguish and despair to the final disillusionment and denouement, could be said to correspond to the stages in the Medieval Italian ritual of tarantism, according to which the victim of a tarantula spider performs an enraptured dance as the only cure against the lethal bite of the tarantula spider.

Concerning importance of this scene within the dramatic structure, it is usually agreed that the scene represents a dramatic climax, the moment where the dramatic plot reaches its peak. I will, in what follows, briefly account for the plot of the play prior to the scene in focus. The initial standstill of the "sweet", complacent, bourgeois home of Nora and Torvald Helmer is threatened by Nils Krogstad, Helmer's employee, from whom Nora borrowed money several years prior to the moment of the dramatic action, in order to pay for her and her husband's trip to Italy, which presented the only cure for the latter's lethal illness. Unfortunately, Nora has acted on this without either her husband's or her father's consent. What is worse, she has forged her deceased father's signature on the contract. Faced, however, with an imminent notice from his position at the bank, Krogstad threatens to reveal Nora's crime.

Nora panics as she hears a light sound of Krogstad's "letter (falling) in the mailbox" revealing Nora's crime.⁶ Seriously contemplating suicide, Nora can see no way out of the situation which threatens to destroy her happy marriage, since she dares not confide in Helmer. On the verge of a psychological breakdown, Nora desperately attempts to preserve their status quo of her "sweet home" by keeping Torvald from checking his mail, and thus postponing the discovery of her crime. As the protagonist's possible helper appears Mrs. Linde, Nora's friend, who promises to influence Krogstad and make him draw back his attack. This can only succeed if Nora manages to keep her husband away from the mail-box: "MRS. LINDE. Stall him. Keep him in there. I'll be back as quick as I can".⁷ Suspense reaches its peak

Helland F., 'Play within the Play' – Meta-drama and Modernity in 'The Master Builder'. Proceedings from the International Ibsen Conference (7). Oslo 1994, 309-20.

5 Nordland A., 'A Doll's House': Southern Italian influence; An alternate key interpretation. *International Ibsen Conference: The Living Ibsen* nr. 11, Oslo 2007, 39-45.

6 Ibsen H., op. cit., 170.

7 Ibid., 172.

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as she tries to stall Helmer and avoid the inevitable discovery of her crime:

NORA. What are you looking for?

HELMER. Just to see if there is any mail.

NORA. No, no, don't do that, Torvald!

[...]

HELMER. Let me look, though. (*Starts out. NORA, at the piano, strikes the first notes of the tarantella. HELMER, at the door, stops.*) Aha! . . .

NORA. (*snatches the tambourine up from the box, then a long, varicolored shawl, which she throws around herself, whereupon she springs forward and cries out:*) Play for me now! Now I'll dance!

(*HELMER plays and NORA dances [...] NORA dances more and more wildly. HELMER has stationed himself by the stove and repeatedly gives her directions; she seems not to hear them; her hair loosens and falls over her shoulders; she does not notice, but goes on dancing.*)

[...]

HELMER. But Nora darling, you dance as if your life were at stake.

NORA. And it is.

HELMER. Rank, stop! This is pure madness. Stop it, I say!

(*RANK breaks off playing, and NORA halts abruptly.*)⁸

In Nora's dancing body during the tarantella scene, Moi finds that Ibsen is "giving a picture of her soul".⁹ Indeed, on the level of the drama as a whole it has a deep significance which was not perceived by some of the first critics who discarded this scene as "a last spasmodic effort in the (Gallic) art of keeping up the dramatic tension by means of external devices".¹⁰ As it is the climax of the drama, Nora's dance may be seen as her ultimate expression,¹¹ her (automatic) response to the crisis, created

8 Ibid., 173-4.

9 Moi T., op. cit., 257.

10 Archer W., Ibsen's Apprenticeship. *Fortnightly Review: New Series* 75, January 1904, 35.

11 Moi T., op. cit., 270.

both by external factors (Krogstad's threats, and real plans of suicide), and her inner split.

The inherent power of this scene inspired the English Victorian poet Arthur Symons (1865-1945) to write the poem *Nora on the Pavement* in 1895. Symons' *Nora* dances a liberating dance after slamming the door to her married life. For Symons, Nora's dance represents a mode of transcending her patterned life of a married woman. It is a moment of ecstasy, which Symons takes up again in a later essay:

[The dance in the drawing-room] takes us suddenly out of all that convention, away from those guardians of our order who sit against the walls, approvingly, unconsciously; in its winding motion it raises an invisible wall about us, shutting us off from the whole world, in with ourselves; in its fatal rhythm, never either beginning or ending [...] gathering impetus which must be held back, which must rise into the blood.¹²

Indeed, in *A Doll's House* Nora dances in her drawing-room. However, I find that Ibsen's text gives clues that make it hard to believe that her tarantella dance could be a similarly liberating process from the "guardians of order who sit around the walls" as Symons suggests. Is it really a liberating cognitive transmutation of life by an act of art as some Ibsen critics read this scene?

In her article entitled "What did Nora do? Thinking gender with *A Doll's House*", Langås uses Judith Butler's writing on gender to shed light on the character of Nora which Ibsen uses to "demonstrate how gender operates on the level of spoken and performed acts".¹³ The author refers to the tarantella as "Nora's pivotal performance"¹⁴ in which "Nora liberates herself from Helmer's inflexible choreography [...] signifying a break with the rigidly directed way of living that has been hers".¹⁵ Langås supports her argument by pointing out that in the dance, Nora seemingly ceases to obey Torvald's instructions, her hair loosening, her dance becoming more wild and unbounded.

From the psychoanalytical point of view, another Ibsen critic, Anne Marie Rekdal, relying on Jacques Lacan's works, comes to the same conclusion, taking it a step further. In her book entitled *Frihetens Dilemma; Ibsen lest med Lacan*, Rekdal finds that during the dance Nora undergoes "full transformation",

12 Symons A., *The World as Ballet. Studies in Seven Arts*. London 1907, 338-39.

13 Langås U., op. cit., 149.

14 Ibid., 163.

15 Ibid., 164.

both on the social and psychological levels.¹⁶ Moi, on the other hand, interprets this scene differently. She argues that Nora and Torvald “spend most of the play theatricalizing themselves by acting out their own cliché idealist scripts”.¹⁷ Although “Nora’s tarantella is a graphic representation of a woman’s struggle to make her existence *heard*, to make it *count*”,¹⁸ the critic finds it, however, to be yet another instance proving “Nora’s own unquestioned commitment to the traditional understanding of women’s place in the world”.¹⁹

I would like to continue, and supplement Moi’s line of argumentation by pointing out to some clues given in the text about “Nora’s unquestioned commitment” to the patriarchal bourgeois ideology which she never breaks up in the dance. I will first do so by referring to the works of the anthropologist Victor Turner. Nora’s inner state preceding the tarantella is nearly a case-study of what Turner calls “liminal occasions”.²⁰ In short, Turner defines “liminal occasions” as situations when a person is on a threshold between two phases or two stages in his life. Those “liminal occasions” most often give rise to ceremonial performances, which take the person from one state into another. Can Nora’s tarantella be interpreted as such transformation into a different social or cognitive state?

In order to answer this question, let us first consider Nora’s *status quo* which Ibsen stages as the drama opens. *A Doll’s House* is, like many other Ibsen’s dramas, a “contemporary tragedy” where the author focuses on a Norwegian bourgeois family from the second half of the nineteenth century. Ibsen presents Nora’s home almost as a tableau illustrating the nineteenth-century myth of the snug shelter of home. The ideology of “sweet home”, based on the idea of intimacy and privacy, was a key symbol of this social class and the bourgeoisie’s cultural distinction. As Richard Sennett points out in *The Conscience of the Eye*: “The coming of the Industrial Revolution aroused a great longing for sanctuary [...] Stated baldly, ‘home’ became the secular version of spiritual refuge”.²¹ Bourgeois home was, thus, also a moral project, aiming at protecting its inhabitants from all the external societal evils. The emphatic division between private

16 Rekdal A. M., op. cit., 44.

17 Moi T., op. cit., 263.

18 Ibid., 269.

19 Ibid., 274.

20 Turner V., *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York 1986, 24.

21 Sennett R., *The Conscience of the Eye; The Design and Social Life of Cities*. New York 1990, 21.

and public was also an invention of the nineteenth century.²² In spite of being a factually “feminine domain” the parlor, salon, or drawing-room, where the entire action of *A Doll’s House* takes place, was by no means a secluded space, rather what Rolf Fjelde figuratively calls Nora’s “prison” in his introduction to the translation of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*.²³ To this I would add: “a glass prison”.

The nineteenth-century woman, characterized by Nora, ought to stand as the guardian of home and its many virtues and seek to embody this bourgeois ideology. The woman, as well as the home she arranged for the visitors to see, and for the husband to enjoy, served somewhat as a representation of the husband’s respectability and wealth. Therefore, Nora must not behave in any “improper” way in her home, or her “glass prison”. In the drama, she is by every means careful not to: “NORA. Our beautiful, happy home would never be the same”.²⁴

It has already been observed that Ibsen constructs the character of Torvald Helmer as “a card-carrying idealist aesthete”.²⁵ Helmer figures as a representative of the ideology restraining Nora also in the tarantella scene. It is often suggested that Nora is a passive antagonist of this ideology, and that her protest is actively marked by the tarantella scene. However, in what follows, I will point to the clues in the dramatic text which repeatedly underline the protagonist’s dedication to the bourgeois way of life and patriarchal norms, and not her subversive or passive protest against them. Up until the very final conversation with Helmer (but not before), the text stresses that Nora has been, in fact, an active supporter of the very same ideology:

NORA. What do you think are my most sacred vows?

HELMER. And I have to tell you that! Aren’t they your duties to your husband and children? [...] Before all else, you’re a wife and a mother.

NORA. I don’t believe in that *anymore*.²⁶

With this replica Ibsen emphasizes Nora’s conscious acceptance of her role of a doll-wife until the very last conversation with Helmer. It is interesting that the reason for Nora’s dedication to the patriarchal rules lies precisely in the fact that she sees

22 Ibid.

23 Ibsen H., op. cit., 122.

24 Ibid., 136.

25 Moi T., op. cit., 257.

26 My emphasis, Ibsen H., op. cit., 192-93.

it as her biggest goal and call in life to keep the roles of each family member intact – that is to perpetuate their patriarchal identities. What are Nora’s roles as wife and mother that she will vehemently discard at the end of the play? Let us first briefly examine the latter role – the role of a mother.

In the text, one finds many examples of Ibsen’s insistence on the fact that Nora actually has no real obligations towards the maintenance of the house and bringing up of the children. It is clearly very unusual for Nora to be around children, which is most evident in the scene from the Act Two where her three children come home with the maid. Before they begin playing hide-and-seek, Nora takes off their clothes addressing them much to the surprise of the maid: “Oh, let me hold her a bit, Anne-Marie. My sweet little doll baby [...] No, don’t bother, Anne-Marie – I’ll undress them myself. Oh yes, let me. It’s such fun”.²⁷ Ibsen thereby points out that undressing the children and spending time with them are not commonplaces in Nora’s everyday life.

In other scenes in the play Ibsen emphasizes that Nora’s supposed role of a mother or homemaker is indeed negligible: in the conversation with Mrs. Linde in the beginning of the Act One Nora expresses her joy over the fact that she would soon repay the debt: “To know you’re carefree, utterly carefree; to be able to romp and play with the children, and to keep up a beautiful, charming home”.²⁸ To keep a home and be responsible of children involves, of course, much more than just to “romp and play” or to keep the home beautiful and charming. Ibsen carefully suggests to the reader all the nuances of Nora’s fostered doll-like character which she marvellously incarnates.

What role does Ibsen, then, leave to Nora, the wife in a bourgeois household employing a nurse and a maid to take care of the house and children? As Helge Rønning, another Ibsen critic concludes, “Hun skulle fungere seksuelt stimulerende for en mannlig drift, som ellers ville kanaliseres ut av hjemmet” – she presents a sexual stimulant for her husband, which would otherwise be channelled outside of the privacy of their home.²⁹ As shown above, the text clearly indicates that Nora is more than happy to behave in a way which pleases Helmer, her husband (thus also the ideology he represents), and is consciously using precisely her looks, charms and sexual appeal as her main attributes and sources of power over Helmer.

27 Ibid., 143.

28 Ibid., 138.

29 Rønning H., *Den Umulige Friheten*, Oslo 2006, 315.

It seems, therefore, rather improbable that Ibsen's Nora, as the author constructs her character prior to the tarantella scene would be prone to "challenge the fixed ideas" of her behaviour.³⁰ So what does she do in a situation when she needs to exert influence on Helmer, as in the situation preceding the tarantella? A blunt interference with Helmer's decisions is not acceptable conduct. Consequently, in order to influence her husband, Nora assumes different masks. According to the severity of the situation, she takes on the mask of "the little lark" or "the little squirrel" assuming the image of an innocent, helpless female. Nora actively practices this type of behaviour, knowing that it is the desired and accepted conduct in her bourgeois home. Nora has learned that beauty and childlike obedience seem to be her chief womanly attributes which Helmer finds agreeable. When behaving accordingly, Helmer shows affection and benevolence.

The mask of *an innocent woman*, "little squirrel" as Ibsen puts it, is the preferred form for feminine sexuality. Helmer expresses this notion towards the end of the drama: "I wouldn't be a man if this feminine helplessness didn't make you twice as attractive to me".³¹ However, when Nora almost out of her mind by fear has to captivate Helmer's attention and lure him away from the mail-box, playing the role of a childlike, innocent female would not be enough. The situation is too grave: her "life is at stake".³² Therefore, Nora assumes the most erotic mask she is allowed to resort to. Nora "[*strikes*] the first notes of the tarantella". Ibsen lets Nora dance the tarantella dance. Why not, for example, a waltz? Why is Nora taking an Italian varicolored shawl, and a tambourine which are strikingly misplaced in the scenography of a typical Norwegian nineteenth-century bourgeois home?

Traditionally, according to the unspoken etiquette summarized in the bourgeois credo, an "accomplished", smiling hostess gracefully playing soft melodies on the house's piano would be the everyday ideal. However, *this* occasion is far from being ordinary, hence the music Nora plays on the piano is not a soft nocturne or a waltz. She plays the beginning of a passionate South-Italian melody. The tarantella presupposes an enraptured, highly erotic female dancer. This is exactly why Nora plays it. "Ibsen's image of a dancing doll is a complex, many layered visual metaphor with a history that looks back to women as the sexual play-things of early nineteenth-century romanticism and forward to the postromantic automata of male

30 Langås U., op. cit., 156.

31 Ibsen H., op. cit., 189.

32 Ibid., 174.

erotic fantasies” says Durbach concerning the scene.³³ Indeed, through the tarantella, Nora gains power over Helmer by inviting him to the “customary sexual titillation that Torvald has come to expect of Nora’s performance”.³⁴

The tarantella is a wild, impassioned, sensual dance by which Nora seizes Helmer’s attention. The role that Nora assumes, “skal sees i sammenheng med den tids forestillinger om italiensk folkeliv, et yndet motiv blant nordiske kunstnere i Roma fra gullalderen og langt oppover på 1800-tallet” – it should be seen as part of the romanticised ideology of the “passionate” Italian folk tradition which was a favourite, romantic, motif among Norwegian artists of Ibsen’s time.³⁵ Although this is not the moment of Nora’s moral education and discovery of the self,³⁶ a transformation does occur, and it is initiated by “the first notes of the tarantella”. Nora, the “sweet wife”, Helmer’s “little lark” transforms into an erotic seductive dancer.

According to Turner, in moments when a person is wearing a mask, she is no longer bound by the same rules and norms that are otherwise in force, but it is observed in the context of her new identity. Hence, the person assuming the role of an “other”, is *expected* to act in the behaviour frames of that “other”. Similarly, the *masked* Nora steps away from her everyday identity and this behaviour is precisely therefore accepted. Such an erotic dance could not have been performed by Nora herself – only by Nora as the “other”. By wearing a costume or mask, Ibsen lets Nora step out of her everyday identity by presenting herself as “another”. Therefore, Nora does transform, however, not into a knowing person, but into a Neapolitan fisher-girl incarnating unbound sensuality, eroticism and chastity. This image of Nora is very much unlike her everyday “twittering” little-wife. As such, her transformation directly addresses Helmer’s sexual desire in a way which is socially accepted. It is important to note that her transformation does not represent a conscious denial or defiance to the Victorian patriarchal rules of conduct. Quite to the contrary, Nora’s sensual performance is, no matter how subversive, actually a willing acceptance of the patriarchal rules and codes of proper behaviour. Dancing the tarantella, Nora is resourcefully locating a small “loophole” that allows her to express her wild, troubled emotions without disturbing the socially established rules of conduct. Nora figuratively

33 Durbach E., op. cit., 52.

34 Ibid.

35 Osterud E., Henrik Ibsens italienske karneval: visualitet og teatralitet i ‘Et Dukkehjem’, in: *Agora* nr. 2-3, Oslo 1993, 164.

36 Durbach E., op. cit., 53.

abandons the bourgeois salon where her dance is set. She simply briefly steps out of it, without gaining a deeper insight into the inauthenticity of her life.

Also, during her erotic dance performance, Nora never transgresses the social conventions of good manners: her female sexuality and eroticism are not expressed freely and explicitly. As it is accepted in her patriarchal home, Nora's own sexuality, and sexual desire, are only implicit, camouflaged or masked. This stands in direct contrast to Helmer's freedom and right to feel and manifest erotic desire, which is verbalized very explicitly when the couple returns from the party in the Act Three: "HELMER. Hm – it's marvellous, though, to be back home again – to be completely alone with you. Oh, you bewitchingly lovely young woman [...] The tarantella is still in your blood, I can see – and it makes you even more enticing".³⁷

Nora's subversive luring of Helmer takes place through a masked display of her female sexuality which never transgress either the conventions of the social etiquette or the bourgeois gender norms. According to Turner, performances are "scenes of play and experimentation, as much as of solemnity and rules",³⁸ I believe that one should, therefore, not unquestionably interpret Nora's tarantella as her liberation "from Helmer's inflexible choreography [...] signifying a break with the rigidly directed way of living that has been hers".³⁹ On the contrary, as I hope to have shown in this paper, Nora's masks (the tarantella being the most distinct) are elements which express the protagonist's enrooted conformity with the social rules of proper behaviour. As we will remember, the real reason why she dances in the first place, is in fact in order to keep a "beautiful, happy home"⁴⁰ – and to perpetuate its established roles. Also, one should always bear in mind that it is Helmer, the mouth-piece of bourgeois norms who eventually stops the music and with it Nora's ritual-like dance.

Consequently, I find that Ibsen carefully stages Nora's tarantella so as that it seems on the borderline of what is considered tolerable behaviour for a woman of Nora's status, but so that it never tips over. This device builds up the suspense and the reader's sympathy for the character of Nora as it resorts to the most desperate measures in her struggle to maintain her "beautiful home". Therefore, I find that Nora's tarantella

37 Ibsen H., op. cit., 181.

38 Turner V., op. cit., 25.

39 Langas U., op. cit., 163-64.

40 Ibsen H., op. cit., 136.

can hardly be seen as her liberation from Helmer's inflexible choreography, as the scene might suggest.

Through the tarantella scene, Ibsen emphasizes how rigid the laws of proper behaviour the social class that the character of Nora represents were, and how subtle a woman is to act when she desperately needs to express her angst or try to interfere with her husband's will. The tarantella, as Ibsen stages it, is the only way to do so without crossing the line of appropriate conduct. Under any, even slightly altered circumstances, Nora's dance would not have been allowed. That is why I believe that Nora's masks and the tarantella, as the most prominent one, can be interpreted as "loopholes", or gaps, in the rigid behaviour codes of the bourgeois domesticity to which she is tied. The tarantella scene testifies of the mastery of Ibsen's dramatic method, as it, among other things, beautifully shows the multi-layered tragedy of a woman in a bourgeois marriage in the second part of the nineteenth-century. All the tragedy of Nora's character is condensed in the tarantella scene, as the protagonist performs her macabre dance struggling for bare existence, and an identity she desperately tries to perpetuate. The very same identity, or identities that she clings to in the tarantella scene, she will bitterly refuse in the last act when she will finally see through the falseness of the roles her and her husband's life have consisted of from the moment of their birth.

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NORINA TARANTELA: PLES PO RUBU
RODNIH NORMI

Sažetak

U radu se detaljno analizira scena iz drugog čina Ibsenove drame *Lutkina kuća* (1879) u kojoj glavna junakinja pleše tarantelu. Scena Norinog plesa je u dosadašnjim istraživanjima tumačena na mnoge načine, budući da predstavlja jedan od ključnih i najintenzivnijih trenutaka u drami. Najvažnije pitanje kojim se ovaj rad bavi jeste da li je scena u kojoj Nora pleše tarantelu u salonu ne samo dramski klimaks, već i prelomni trenutak, kada Nora konačno uviđa da su njen brak i njena uloga u patrijarhalnoj, građanskoj porodici zasnovani na neistini i iluziji. Ukazujući na brojne elemente u dramskom tekstu koji ne idu u prilog ovakvoj tvrdnji, zaključak rada jeste da je scena u kojoj Nora pleše tarantelu zapravo krajnja potvrda njene predanosti i vere u norme ponašanja koje su striktno definisane građanskom ideologijom, a koje će glavna junakinja tek na samom kraju drame odlučno odbaciti. U radu se Norina tarantela posmatra kao neka vrsta ritualne predstave, prilikom koje Nora ne krši pravila „lepog ponašanja”, jer nikada ne odustaje od utvrđenih uloga supruge i majke. Zaključak ovog rada jeste da Norina tarantela nije, kako je do sada često tumačeno, trenutak njene kognitivne transformacije i njenog ritualnog oslobađanja građanskih stega. Naprotiv, scena razuzdane igre je naročito iscenirani događaj na ivici strogih pravila građanskog dekora. Tarantela je, sa jedne strane, Norina skoro automatska reakcija u trenutku očajanja, ali je takode veoma proračunat, zavodljiv ples, kojim Nora uspeva da ostvari svoj prvobitni cilj - da zanese Helmera i produži iluziju „srećne porodice” makar i za nekoliko kratkih časova. Drugim rečima, ovaj rad tumači scenu Norine tarantele kao (melo)dramski vrhunac njene predanosti jasno određenim rodnim pravilima i kodeksu ponašanja žene u građanskoj porodici XIX veka.

Ključne reči: *drama, ples, Henrik Ibsen, Lutkina kuća, tarantela, studije roda*