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Scandal (2003). The war of flowers (2006). Miindo (2008). Thirst (2009). Do you have any idea what these movies have in common? These movies are the ones that were in the news a lot for the nudity of the actor or actress. As you've probably noticed, nudity has always attracted public's attention. However, this is not the case only in the film world. It's also happening in the theatrical world. Not many of you might have heard about the play "La Dispute" (left). This play explores the question of which sex betrays the other first. For children (two boys and two girls) who were each raised in isolation from the world are invited to the experimental place. Each of them falls in love with one member of the other sex, naturally and without any doubts. When they meet the other member of the opposite sex, however, they experience new feelings of love and they are all confused about it. In this play, two actors and two actresses are on the stage for about an hour wearing absolutely nothing. This part of this play has been a point of dispute. Many people said that nudity was unnecessary. To answer this question, Hyungtaek Im (director of this play) strongly asserted that nudity *WAS* necessary. Also he added that he had no doubt about nudity at first but had to choose one from two versions. One was to make performers continue to play in nude during the whole drama and the other was to make them wear clothes after awhile. What he chose was the latter one which he thought explains the theme of the play better.



This made me start to wonder what normal students think about nudity in stage plays. Therefore, I asked three students whose majors are all different a basic question: How do you feel about nudity in drama? Inchul Jo (majoring in industrial and organizational psychology in Hoseo Graduate School, 08, male) said “I don’t think nudity is a necessary factor in drama. It’s just a play which is not real, isn’t it? Besides, audiences would concentrate on performers’ body more than on the play itself.” While Hyunseok Moon (majoring in Mathematical Sciences in KAIST Graduate School, 08, male) said “I think nudity is ok if it’s really needed. Taking off clothes itself could represent something like purity and it couldn’t be expressed in another way” and Doosung Won (majoring in American Study in Catholic University, 05, male) said “I think nudity is ok because the director’s intentions were not indecent. If it helps the story and circumstances, it has to be done. Furthermore, as people are looking for stronger stimulation, make-up and costumes can’t satisfy audiences’ desire and can’t move them.” Students’ opinions varied. However, what they commonly mentioned when asked a question was “I’ve never thought about this.” So, I interviewed Chaeyeon Yoon who is one of the four main performers in the play “La Dispute”. I met her at the Dongsoong Art Center Theater on the 27th September after her 3.p.m. play was over. She shared with us her opinions about nudity in stage play as a woman.



From the interview with Chaeyeon Yoon, the actress,

First, I watched the play very well. I was moved by your acting. I guess it's not easy for a woman to be on the stage naked, was there any mention about nudity ahead when you got the script? If so, what made you to make up your mind to do this play in spite of the nudity?

As director wanted to do this play, he told us about nudity ahead of time. When I first heard about that, I had doubts about nudity. I even told the director that I couldn't be in this play the day before workshop. However, as I became more involved in this play and this character through workshop, I started to think about the main point of nudity. Then, I didn't want to lean on clothes or props and wanted to show real me. That's when I got courage to do this play. Another reason to take this play was that I thought this could be the only chance to experience the very first moment of human being and it's not something that everybody can experience.

What do you think about the debate of nudity? It's used to show human purity but accepted in different way and even it is often raised as an issue.

Human have been wearing clothes for a very long time so I think it is a natural reaction. When we meet people for the first time, we have many kinds of prejudices. I think director wanted to show the moment when people meet each other without any prejudices and biases. Through this play, I really hope that audiences will understand the director's intention.

How did you practice this play?

At first, we wore clothes and imagined we were naked. However, imagining you are naked and being naked are totally different. When I practiced my lines with nothing on, I felt feeling of freedom and realized nudity is right for this play. However, on the actual day of performing nude, I was so ashamed that I asked director to make the light little dimmer. haha

I guess it wouldn't be easy for you to tell your friends or family members about the play. Who was the first one who knew about it? What were their reactions?

I told some of my best friends about this play when I was doing workshop. They were worried about me a lot at first. After having watched this play, however, they told me it was beautiful and they could understand how I could do this and why I was doing this. I told my parents about this play because once

the performance starts, they will know anyway. First, my mother said that if I had to do this as an actress then I should just do it. However, after having seen the poster, they were shocked so my parents haven't seen the play yet. That makes me sad but I don't think I am doing something wrong as a daughter.

The play "La Dispute" is gaining more and more popularity. On the other hand, there's a criticism that the contents of the play is not substantial enough. Do you think nudity played a part in its popularity? What do you think the play would be like if there was no nudity?

I also think that if there's no nudity, it wouldn't be like this. Because there's nudity, people come with curiosity. I think it is a natural phenomenon.

This interview will be published in University Magazines. If you have something you want to say to students, please do.

I just want them to feel it as it is. Natural human beings without any biases and prejudices.

Nudity is a kind of old-fashioned subject to dispute in modern times as more people start accept art as it is. However, there is still a social tendency to consider nudity as something that is always wrong and should be prohibited, without questioning the meaning or motives. According to director Hyingtaek Im, it is media that makes nudity controversial. Also, he added that he thinks the level of Korean audiences is high enough so if the play is not good, this play wouldn't be famous like this. What is more interesting and irony is in this play "La Dispute" is nudity which was used to present purity of human beings was seen as obscene. Maybe that is because it's not about the generous attitude of audiences but about the meaning of purity in these days which is different from that in the past. After watching this drama, some people make mistakes to understand that this drama is about physical love because of the nude scenes but it's not. What we shouldn't forget here is that there was no self-knowledge about being naked in the times of Adam and Eve and people accepted it as natural. Therefore, the fact that nudity is a big controversy could also mean that people in industry societies are tainted. This is what we should really think about.

Stage play is one way to express our lives and nudity is and has been a part of our lives. As long as human beings exist, drama will last forever and so will the argument on nudity issue. It could be less but will not disappear at all. If it will like that, it is not a bad idea to have some time to think about this subject. A lot of people might say that nudity was the best way to express the nature and purity of human beings in this play "La Dispute". Stop thoughtlessly having negative-feelings about nudity in play, go to theater and see how actors and actresses perform. After a while, you will find yourself nodding and totally into it.