

(DALE and JEFF are onstage. JEFF stands center. DALE is down right. He moves about the stage as he speaks.)

(DALE silently removes his shoes and socks, then stands.)

DALE:

The epistemology of nude performance is fraught with vagueness no matter the angle of study.

(removes pants)

SUMMER:

Whoa, whoa, whoa! We're not really going to do this, are we?

DALE:

What do you mean? The audience picked it. Of course we're doing it.

(He picks up where he left off...)

Performers refer to the artistic "validity" or "integrity" of scenes requiring them to disrobe, but to those for whom the issue of nudity is a moral one, such shibboleths are meaningless. The very act of the actor's nakedness is such an overwhelming moral affront that any attempt by the artist to connect the audience to a greater understanding of themselves or of the universe is rendered null, void.

(He removes his shirt.)

SUMMER:

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

JEFF:

What is your problem?

SUMMER:

We're not doing this play!

MARC:

(enters with BRADY)

Why not?

SUMMER:

Dale takes his clothes off!

MARC:

Yeah—it's the point, isn't it? He talks about how we can't really see a nude performance...

DALE:

... because even if we think we're cool with it, we're still uncomfortable with an actor's body not being perfectly beautiful...

MARC:

... so we're being dishonest if we sneer at those who have *(yes, air quotes)* "moral issues" with nudity.

SUMMER:

Yeah, yeah, yeah—but he takes his clothes off—he gets naked onstage!

DALE:

That's the point!

SUMMER:

And I'm more than a little weirded out by that.

MARC & DALE:

That's the point!

BRADY:

OK, I gotta say I'm with Summer on this one. I get it: Dale goes full Monty while standing behind Jeff, so we don't really see him naked and we think we're safe, but then Jeff goes to pick up Dale's clothes so we're forced to see him, forced to acknowledge the truth of what he's said, yadda yadda yadda. Big deal— it's not profound, it's glib.

SUMMER:

It's not profound, it's *icky*.

JEFF:

And dude, you're standing naked *behind* me. What's *that* supposed to mean?

DALE:

You think maybe it's a little late to be registering your concerns? We've rehearsed it, and now the audience has picked it.

BRADY:

Oh, really?

(to audience)

Do you really want to see this?

(If the audience indicates YES:)

You know he's really going to do it, right?

*(If they still insist, skip to **TRANSITION**. If they're smart and decline:)*

There, see? They don't want to see your junk.

DALE:

OK, fine, we just won't do it.

MARC:

You know, it would still be pretty effective if you did it clothed and you forced the audience to imagine you stripping..

SUMMER:

Yeah, I'd go for that.

(OTHERS nod assent.)

DALE:

Forget it. I'm over it.

(grabs clothes, stalks off. MARC, BRADY, and JEFF follow him. SUMMER is left alone.)

SUMMER:

Um, curtain?

CURTAIN

TRANSITION

DALE:

There you go. These people know
artistic integrity when they see it.
OK, let's pick it up, "The very fact
of the actor's nakedness..."

*(Marc and Summer exit; Dale and Jeff
finish the piece.)*