Standard Deviation

VAGINA!!! This should be funny. Some light entertainment. These, please forgive me, were my thoughts prior to viewing the Vagina Monologues. I expected a bunch of women up on the stage telling various stories somehow relating to theirs physical centers of sexuality. A pretty bland description you might say, and that is exactly true. I had no anticipation at all! I did not expect to be moved in any way. To be brutally honest, I was worried I might fall asleep, as I had done during my previous sojourn to Kendal to attend a jazz concert. I act apathetic when I truly don’t care, and when I am nervous. I was nervous that I would not fit in, that I might not be able to understand. I guess my logic (or lack thereof) was that I don’t have avagina, I therefore can’t understand. It’s rather disconcerting to actually make that verbal.

Now, I have two vehicles for perception. One is my analysis of what I see and hear. My unmodified thoughts, if you will. My only other mode of perception is discussion with others. I will never be able to place myself in somebody else’s head, and truly see what they see, but it is possible to acquire valuable information about other modes of thought through communication.

Maybe it’s the fledgling scientist in me, but I felt that a knowledge base centered solely on the former vehicle of perception would be an unstable foundation for the construction of an analysis. So I went around and asked some people about the VMs. My friend Conor had expressed apprehension. He feared it would be ‘weird’ to sit there
and listen to people talk about their private parts. This was compounded by the fact that he was going with his girlfriend and a group of girls. Another friend of mine said he ‘felt kinda out of place.’

A masculine gender would naturally feel as Conor did prior to attending such an event. This gender feels excluded by default of the topic. The reaction to such ‘exclusion’ is to initiate self-exclusion. Playground politics dictate: if a group alienates you, alienate the group. This is faulty logic. The fact that I was not part of the group should be impetus for me to reach out to the group, learn about it and how it works. Also, many instances of perceived exclusion are not intended to be so. It is not until the excluded releases fear of rejection that one can see intention.

This is all a very general analysis. The VMs are designed to educate and inspire. They are far, far, far from alienating. Some might say their purpose is to unite two groups, but I disagree. Males and females do not need to be united, they are already one. The VMs are designed to disassemble barriers built by society to keep two halves of one thing from mixing together. To truly ‘unite’ the two, all that needs to be done is to stop spending so much time and effort separating them.

This is what the VMs accomplish. They nonchalantly present female sexuality in a very natural manner for all to view. This is what I have realized. In analyzing my reaction to the event, I can already see the purpose. This is simply to have people like me realize that said reaction is not only demeaning, but ignorant. As we say in chemistry, it is energetically unfavorable (energy referring to the force needed to counter oppositional forces like ridicule and other social pressures). So...why do we do it?
Yet again, this can be deciphered solely by analysis of my apprehension. I felt nervous about the VMs because I felt alienated. I was alienated from female sexuality not by women, but by the society in which I live. It is bad for a woman to express her sexuality in my society. If a woman does so, she is considered slutty. The most important aspect of this example is that ‘slut’ is perceived as derogatory. Shakespeare once said “Nothing is either good or bad, thinking makes it so.” Our society is hardwired to think that female sexuality is bad for various reasons, most likely deeply routed in its past.

The energy required to deviate from this convention is greater than the energy required to uphold convention. Even though the alternative would require less effort to maintain, we keep barriers between genders because it would require some starting energy to remove them. This is complexed with the fact that many of us know nothing different than the current state of convention. It therefore doesn’t feel logical to spend extra energy to change.

Sometimes, when other are willing to expend that little energy necessary to stray from the beaten path, others are able to piggyback onto their motion and get a taste for this ‘other place,’ I speak of. This is what the VMs did for me. Here were these people, fellow humans, showing a side of humanity I had never really been exposed to. They were sharing feelings I never knew existed. I was never alienated, I was simply blind.

The performance was meant to inspire and provoke. There were monologues that were funny, and monologues that were highly emotional. It started off light and humorous, but expressed some very important points about the evolution of sexuality over time. In “My Village,” we saw a more solemn and shocking side of female
sexuality. It concluded with another lighter funny piece about various orgasms. All facets of sexuality were effectively expressed in such a short time.

I'm a strong believer in the saying 'everyone is a teacher.' I tend to say everything is a teacher to be a little more concise. I am the student, and it is my duty to dig the lessons out of even the most abstract lecture. I find the lessons that one has to dig a little deeper to find to be the most precious of the gems.

Sometimes lessons are hidden within lessons. One may feel enlightened at first glance, but glean more and more insight upon each subsequent digestion of the material. This is how I feel about the Vagina Monologues. During the actual performance, my eyes were opened. This essay is my second or third dissection, and I continue to unearth new, fascinating points. This is exactly what they were designed to do for both men and women. To inspire thought and analysis, as well as to simply deviate from the norm to express sexuality that has every right in the world to be expressed.