The Vagina Monologues and Myself

The *Vagina Monologues* was one of the most eye opening experiences of my life. It was not just a play, it was a collection of real people’s stories, a social research project, an awareness raising event, and an event that supports and celebrates the people and organizations who are working to end sexual violence and heal its wounds. The whole experience changed my awareness of how I view my male gender in general. I had certain expectations about how the *Vagina Monologues* would play out and what it would be like but I never expected these works to be the way they were. I now look at myself differently in regards to who I am and how I view particular social and cultural issues pertaining to sexual violence and gender roles in society.

Going into the play and before reading the *Vagina Monologues* I was expecting to be hearing about the same kind of struggles women encounter day in and day out, I was completely misinformed. I thought that the collection of stories would all focus around one central theme pertaining to acts of sexual violence, but what I found was that it was sexual violence in general. The stories which Eve Ensler used all had their own unique way to portray some kind of sexual violence, whether it was physical violence or emotional violence it was violence towards women. I did not expect these women to completely divulge such personal information and details about something as private as
their vagina, but they did. The facts that these women did tell and are still spreading their words are why people like me and my peers have begun to become aware of these critical issues. I expected the play to bring about the negatives of the issues relating to sexual violence but it did just the opposite. Instead of focusing on the negatives, the play appeared to be a liberating experience, not just for women but for myself too. The stories were told with such energy and emotion that you almost thought that the actual person who the monologue was about was sitting right in front of you. In particular, I thought that the “Angry Vagina” monologue was the most exhilarating story. This woman was basically speaking through her vagina, simply passing information from one person to another. Her vagina was venting her feelings about the way she was treated. She was not mad because she had been raped or because she had been sexually abused but just because of the ways that society has developed around the issue of the delicacy of a woman’s vagina. “She complains about tampons being uncomfortable and dry, asking why they can’t find a way to subtly lubricate the tampon (Ensler 70).” This was an instance of indirect abuse on women. “She goes on to say that you need to work the vagina, introduce it to things, prepare the way (Ensler 70).” This goes to the heart of the issue at hand; we must prepare the way for generations to come by educating and making people aware that sexual violence is everywhere and that it should not be ignored.

Men play a very important role when it comes to the issue of sexual violence because they are the ones usually committing these acts. I realized that women are constantly struggling to make progress because men have been in the way. Men have stood at the top since beginning and have always had the upper hand on everything, from politics to sexuality. They have the ability to control all aspects of life because the
principles of hegemony have kept them there. As individuals who possess the power to change, I think it is not only the responsibility but an obligation for men to make a difference. It has to start at the top and trickle down to the bottom. By making people aware of the struggles, women are gaining power themselves and are making a difference in our society. Hearing stories about how men have helped women boost their own self confidence by simply complementing them on how beautiful their vagina looks is something that the normal man would not think about. I know that feeling good about yourself is one of the greatest feelings a person can have and if you can make someone feel good about themselves then you have a done a wonderful deed. Men have the power to implement change; the real task is getting people to adapt to that change.

Coming out of this whole experience I have been able to look into myself and see that there is a person who wants positive change and thinks that everybody deserves to be treated equally, no matter who they are. I believe that the Vagina Monologues does the same thing. “I came away from these stories not only feeling more free within myself and about others around me but about the alternatives to the old patriarchal dualism of feminine/masculine, body/mind, and sexual/spiritual that is rooted in our physical selves into “the part we talk about” and “the part we don’t” (Ensler Foreward XVI).” Our society needs to find a way to keep those who possess the characteristics of a person with power in the correct places, such as women with voices. Women are not allowed to participate and share their thoughts in many arenas which are male dominated because men have made it this way. Well now as men we must change this so that men and women alike are able to collaborate and blend ideas which will ultimately strengthen the bonds between all people.
The *Vagina Monologues* is an experience in which everyone should partake. It not only raises one’s consciousness about critical issues dealing with sexuality and sexual violence but it teaches to respect. Respecting women and not taking them for granted in all aspects would be highly conducive in rendering change within our misinformed society. This experience has inspired me to be an activist and to go against the path of least resistance in a fight against sexual violence in general. As each individual starts to become aware of their role, we will begin to witness change. These changes will not only benefit women but our entire society as a whole.
Works Cited