The *Vagina Monologues* to me

The *Vagina Monologues* to me were truly an eye-opening experience. The *VMs* presented me with the opportunity to hear and see certain aspects of women and their bodies that I had yet to encounter in my life. Growing up I was always taught that a women’s body was a thing not openly discussed in public. I was under a perceived notion that certain things concerning a woman’s body, such as their period and orgasms, were just not talked about in communal places. At first I must admit I felt shocked in hearing women talk in a way that I had never heard before, especially not in public. Though, my uneasiness was quickly wiped away after the first piece on vaginas was performed. As soon as the play began, to my surprise I was greeted warmly with a piece on the word vagina, along with about thirty other names and references for the word. This really got my heart jump started, and I believe by opening up the play this way it made me realize that there was no reason to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about a part of the body. I was then ready to embrace the vagina whole heartily.

There is no doubt in my mind that my awareness of the male gender will forever be altered after experiencing the *Vagina Monologues*. The male gender to me lacks certain things such as compassion, respect, and knowledge of a woman’s body. In no way am I saying this is the mindset for all males, but rather I would proclaim this as the attitude of many males who I have acquainted myself with through the years. Guys are constantly acting or talking in way that is degrading to women, most of the time this talk is done around other males. I think many guys deem it necessary to impress their male friends at the expense of women. Whether it is at party
or just around the college campus, this is a practice that is exercised on a regular basis. Many men see women as just sex objects; it does not occur to these men that there is much more to a woman. All these factors I believe influenced my expectations I had of the *Vagina Monologues* before seeing it. I figured I was going to see a play that was completely devoted to bashing men. Also I presumed that I would not enjoy the play, that it was more of a “chick” kind of play and that I would not be able to relate to it on any kind of level. Let me tell you now, I could not have been anymore wrong. Throughout the play I felt emotions that I had never felt before, they were strong and at times I could even feel my eyes watering up. The women’s stories were passionate, they showed such great strength to let the world know they were here and they were not going to be silent any longer. Now I find myself at times getting agagrivated when I hear other males disrespect women, and I am not silent anymore. I tell them how I feel, and always encourage them to treat women with the utmost respect and decency.

The *Vagina Monologues* has forever changed my perspective on life and the way I live. The stories in the *VMs* are quite inspirational and made me think back on many different experiences. Just hearing women with such tremendous passion speak out about sexual and emotional violence committed against them, really touched me inside. I grew up in a compassionate household with a loving family, so I was never one to degrade women but I had been in many situations where other males were disrespecting women and I had sat back and did nothing. This is something that I am now very ashamed to admit. After hearing the heart wrenching stories of sexual violence against these women, it has led me to the realization that I want and need to make a difference. I finally realized that it was not good enough to just not partake in violence against women, but I have to speak out against other men who are violent abusers. The male gender needs to comprehend that violence against women is a real and a
ongoing problem that will never end unless actions and precautions are taken. A few years ago, I was in a situation where I witnessed a male co-worker physically abuse his girlfriend, and I did nothing to stop it. At the time I felt it was not my place to intervene, and since the other man was much larger than me I thought there was nothing really that I could do. I was honestly scared stiff, I could not even say a word. I now know that I handled the situation all wrong and there is always something you can do. If I would have just told someone, even the police, I could have made a difference in that women's life. Today I think I am a much stronger person and if I was ever put into a situation like that again, I would act the appropriate way and do everything in my power to help and make a difference.

Even though people everywhere including myself find the *Vagina Monologues* to be inspiring and an educational experience, there also some critics of the performance. Some of the biggest critics are leaders of the Catholic faith, who last year halted the production of the play at Loyola University. The play was vetoed by the Rev. William Bryon, who served as Loyola's interim president for eleven months, he stated that he objected the play's "frank language" and "there were more tasteful ways to raise awareness about violence against women" (Nolan 1). Though this year it was a different story, they play was put on under the permission of Rev. Kevin Wildes, Loyola's new president, even though he was under intense scrutiny of the Archbishop Alfred Hughes. The Archbishop proclaimed the play "contrary to sound Catholic teaching and does not advance important questions about women, human sexuality, and violence against women" (Nolan 1). Even facing this strong opposition the play went on and was a success, the play raised $2,500 for the Crescent City Shelter, a facility for battered women. This is another reason why the *Vagina Monologues* impressed me so much, Eve Ensler does not put on these plays for her own wealth but rather for charities and organizations aimed to helped
women. The 2005 beneficiaries for The College of New Jersey production were Womanspace Inc., New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA), and the Organization for Women’s Freedom in Iraq.

The *Vagina Monologues* to me were inspirational, they brought light to me how serious and common abuse to women actually is. It has completely changed the way I view women today, and it has led me to become an activist. I encourage all to experience the *Vagina Monologues*, for it is truly a life changing event. The *VMs* also inspired me to write my own monologue which I have included in my essay.
This monologue is about a man who seems to live two different lives. One life he lives in front of his male friends and the other life is how he really feels inside but was always too scared to show anyone. He feels if his male friends knew he felt these things inside, he would be ostracized and rejected from his male culture. This poem represents his feelings.

Penis
Confident Strong
Beer Broads Baseball
Demonstrate No Emotions Ever
Worry About Your Own Business
Women Are Here to Serve Our Needs

Women and Men Our Equals in This World
Help Others When They’re in Need
Express Yourself Freely Always
Wine Women Writing
Timid Weak
Penis
Work Cited
