

A piece of my heart



Name: Course: Instructor: Date: Lauro, Shirley. A Piece of My Heart (a play) (1991) The play A Piece of My Heart by Shirley Lauro focuses on the events of the Vietnamese war and the role of women in the war as well as the overall effects of the war on the women. It is estimated that 265, 000 women were involved in the war both civilian and military women. As much as 10, 000 women served in the combat zones alongside their male counterparts. Women who served for this great cause were drawn from all regions in the United States, races, backgrounds, religions and educational levels. They helped in the war by assuming roles such as physicians, nurses, air traffic controllers, transport and supply workers, and emergency and relief workers for organizations such as Red Cross and as news reporters (Lauro, 12).

Shirley Lauro bases her female characters in the play on the experiences of Female veterans in the Vietnamese War. Vignettes are predominant in the play to highlight the various stories of different women who were present in the Vietnamese battlefield. The six women in the play are the focus of the play and are derived from varied backgrounds (Murray, 29).

The varied backgrounds are used to give diversity in the play with the aim of representing the various societal attitudes present in the Vietnamese war. The play conveys to the audience of the bravery, victory and the tribulations experienced by the women in the battlefield, which is considered as a predominantly male role. The three women comprise of three nurses, an officer, a country-western singer and a Red Cross volunteer. The six women represent the roles, which were availed to the women in the war. The need to join the war was prompted by the need by women such as widows to fend for and feed their families (Lauro, 59). The women sought to provide the

wounded in war with the much-needed aid for their injuries. However, it is assumed that the Vietnamese war surpassed the expectations of some women because of the devastating experiences of soldiers dying and the agony experienced in the forefronts of the battlefield.

The women were drawn from varied backgrounds; hence, their view of war was different from one another in entirety. However, they all had similarities in that they had not experienced the fangs of war. Before they left for Vietnam, it is evident that they had sanity and control over their lives.

However, after the war, given the experiences of sight of people dying and living in agony changed their views about life and the associated psychological disorders such as PTSD. Essentially the war changed their views about life as they focused on their roles in the society to better the lives of others. Additionally, the war was psychologically devastating as it brought about hostility due to the sight of the ugly face of death and agony of soldiers in the battlefield. The play emphasizes that women can easily assume roles, which are traditionally associated with men and perform tasks in such positions with precision and professionalism. In essence, the high rates of fatality and injuries in the war brought about the dire need for involvement of additional people in the service to ensure that there was adequate labor for various tasks to win the war (Murray, 34). The women in the play cope with numerous issues such as use of drugs, immorality and infidelity. They experience laughter and sorrow, which is usually associated with war during the loss of loved ones, and close friends.

They have similarities to the male counterparts in the war who experience issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The experiences drawn from the war usually result in the reliance of drugs and other addictive habit with the aim of dealing with the stress (Lauro, 63). The women in the play volunteered to dedicate their lives to win the war. Hence, it was an act aimed at ensuring that the United States had access of individuals such as the women with the much needed skills and knowledge from winning the Vietnamese war. The women faced numerous challenges, which revolved around the lack of support by their peers, families and the society.

This was due to the existent notions that women were unfit to assume roles in the war because war is traditionally meant for men (Murray, 47). The interactive ability of the script is essential as it provides the audience with a fair view from the women about the war and its effects on their lives. In addition, it is an indication of the presence of a fair view, which is uncorrupted for the audience to understand the experiences and effects of the Vietnamese war on the women who were involved. In conclusion, the role of women in war is assumed and ignored by the society. This is because of the notion that women are unfit to assume traditionally male roles. The traditional belief that women are set out to assume domestic roles is inadequate. It could be termed as a fallacy because they can equally perform the same tasks with precision and professionalism as their male counterparts.

The women identified in that play provide that they experience equal challenges in the battlefield. The threat of death is real to both men and women in any given battlefield. Hence, they risk their lives for the growth of

the nation and free from the possibility of external aggression by hostile nations and their forces. Work Cited Dir. Shirley Lauro. A Piece of My Heart. Manhattan Theatre Club: New York, 1995. Play.

Murray, Stuart. Vietnam War. New York: DK Pub, 2005.

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