

## Student Reflections on the Group Performance Project: On Wildness

Here are excerpts from what students wrote in their reflections on the Group Performance Project during the "Humanities and Expressive Arts" course, Winter quarter 2002:

"I think that the bursting forth of creative ideas was one of the aspects of the process that I most enjoyed. It was quite an incredible and beautiful experience to witness the flowing out of ideas as they bounced around the group and inspired more visions. This was a constant theme in our group process."

"I'm terribly afraid of any sort of public display of my interpretations on a subject, so being on stage was the last thing I'd thought of doing with a group. . . . I'm very much leery of group work, even though I feel flexible enough to fit into anything that comes my way. So it was in this case, but it went so easy. . . . I came away super impressed with how things went, what with juggling other classes and judging from the other performances."

"I was surprised at how much fun this was! Our group worked together very well, and I think we represented wildness inside and outside of ourselves very well."

"The group process was very valuable even if the actual performance wasn't perfectly fluid or intense."

"When we were first forming the groups in class, I had a lot of concerns about the validity of the live performance idea. It just didn't seem like that many other people were interested in similar issues and means of expression. . . . Overall, I have rarely had a group experience that went this well. We all got along so well it felt almost like a social gathering, but we're all three also very task-oriented, so we always got things done when we were together. I'd work in this group again in a minute. Let's do another show!"

"This project is great! You should do it all of the time."

"I have never worked with a better group than this one. . . . This project took a lot of time. We searched the library for films, reviewed the films, recorded some of our own footage, and put the whole thing together. I feel that we all worked hard to produce the great outcome of this film. I worked with three great girls who made this project fun and entertaining."

"I can honestly say that the unity and cooperation present in this group was a wonderfully positive experience for me in terms of learning how to relate and work with others on common projects."

"The group project for In Wildness was and is the most fulfilling activity and accomplishment I've had in my entire college career. . . . This process and project was amazing. Individually, I put more creative work into it than any other project I've ever done. As for the group, I can say the same thing. When we finished on Tuesday with no glitches, I can't begin to tell you the relief and the release of energy that left all of our bodies. . . . God, what an amazing project and process, it feels so fulfilling to actualize exactly the vision we had for the project and for the emotions it invoked in our audience. Thank you for giving us the freedom to create such memorable performance. This, I will take with me forever."

"All in all I would say that the documentary was really popular with the class. Everyone seemed to enjoy the film and judging from people's reactions afterwards, I'd say the hard work my group members and I put into the film was really evident. The group met beforehand to set up the technology that we would incorporate into our presentation, and everyone came through with their portions of the project complete. This was definitely a group effort. Each and every member had their own talents that they brought to the final product, and I'm willing to say that without their unique personalities the documentary wouldn't have been half as good as it was."

"Overall, my group experience was pretty positive. We struggled a bit with personality clashes and decisions over some of the details, which I think had to do with our personal temperaments and possibly age differences. . . . I think these experiences are a lesson for me, learning tools to help me do what I know I am supposed to do;

that is empowering myself and other women to facilitate healing. Moving out of the victim role and dependency and into discovering the beauty, wonder and worth of the wild woman within us. That is the wildness that preserves life and that I want to know and explore fully. I was able to do a little of that with this play and with this class."

"This group performance assignment was not as horrible as I thought it would be. . . . Our group did great working around everyone else's schedules for times to meet, sometimes people would have to come late or leave early, but every time we met everyone came and no one forgot, which is sometimes an incredible occurrence for a group project. Probably because we were all equally dedicated to doing a good job on it, we all helped in the areas that we could be the best. When one person couldn't do something, someone else picked up the slack. The process we took to make the video worked really well."

"What an experience! Working with my group was wonderful. In the process of making our documentary, I was able to learn so much from and about all of them. I am happy that we got the opportunity to work in small groups because it made me much more comfortable in class. I felt more connected to everyone. . . . I am really proud of both my own and my group's accomplishments in this project. We all worked equally as hard to create a film, that I feel, really lived up to its reputation. I have never done anything like this before and it definitely taught me a lot about the struggles of film production. Lastly, this project forced me to push myself farther than I had planned."

"I was skeptical in the beginning, but I feel like our project was extremely successful, because we pushed WAY beyond the original assignment. By deciding to be free of, and go with the spirit of Wild Life, and not the literal book, I feel like we were able to explore much further into the crazy, uncomfortable side. As corny as it sounds, watching the other groups put me in a state of sheer awe. That we could all be given the identical assignment, and create such radically different pieces makes me feel so warm and fuzzy. It makes me believe in independence, free thought and the existence of creativity in all of us. I had forgotten the power of performance."

"A large factor that made it such a fun project to work on was the enthusiasm in the group. We were so excited about what we were doing, so anticipating the reactions to each part, so disbelieving that we were actually going to pull it off. . . . I'm so pleased that each member of my group was able to contribute a talent of theirs. I'm so glad that we were able to make something real, that people would remember. We wanted to do something crazy. I think we did."

"First, what a frickin' cool assignment. 'Read this book. Now perform something.' It's that kind of freedom, along with a wonderful amount of time we were given, that makes developing spontaneous impulses into a cohesive product possible. . . . It's wonderful to see the diversity of performances all growing from the same assignment. . . . My suggestion for future classes would be to give the option, for those crazy ones, to give additional performances that could be coordinated and advertised well in advance. Not for additional credit or in substitution of other assignments, but just for their own satisfaction in performing a piece that they are really proud of."

"This was such an intense experience, I think for all of us. . . . The issues we raised with our piece are important to all of us and I'm very happy with the way that it turned out."

"I am A Person Who Does Not Perform. . . . To some extent it is the presence of an audience which unnerves me, to some extent the necessity to act, to pretend, to take on, in some respect, another personality. . . . It is one of life's central mysteries: that some gain strength from performing in front of an audience of any sort, while others like myself are paralyzed with fear. . . . There is too much risk in the attempt, too much at stake in the inevitable failure to say as much as must needs be said. I do not dare, and the opportunity always passes."

"In many ways this performance challenged me, being on stage and reading out loud were both things that I am just becoming to be more comfortable doing. I enjoy how this project allowed for the presentation of images and emotions in the style of a performance that engaged the viewer."

"I had a lot of fun putting together our dance performance and there was a lot of laughter at our rehearsals making our time together something to look forward to. The process was a lot more difficult than I originally thought for the idea of dancing is much different than actually doing it, especially in front of other people. . . . It was so amazing to watch the ideas bounce off of each other and hear the excitement in my group's voices when something really made sense. It made me even more fascinated

than I already am with the source of where creativity and ideas come from. . . .  
Overall, my group put in a lot of long hours and late nights into this performance. We  
had a lot of fun doing it but felt a time crunch."

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