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**The evolution of Sweet Corn : self education
through play: a poetic account of participational
workshops that used drama and yogic disciplines.**

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THE EVOLUTION OF SWEET CORN:
SELF EDUCATION THROUGH PLAY.
A POETIC ACCOUNT OF PARTICIPATIONAL WORKSHOPS
THAT USED DRAMA AND YOGIC DISCIPLINES

A Dissertation Presented

By
DEMIAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1973

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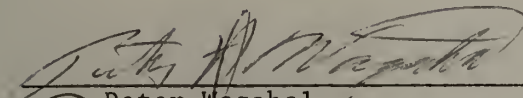
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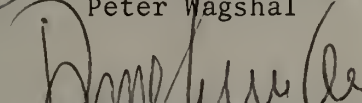
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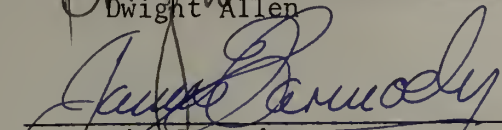
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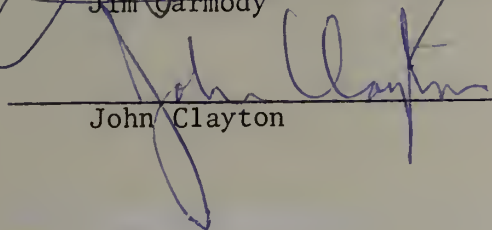
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May 1973

DEDICATION

I want this to be a holy document of my attempts to grow, my approach to self-fulfillment and helping others. If you copy what I've done, you are a fool. Just be counseled by this, that's all folks.

This writing is dedicated to my very first two teachers and guiding spirits, my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Improvisation material for the show was gleaned from Unwrinkling Plays by Paul Repts, an unpublished play by David Rimmer, a poem by Jeffrey Greene, writings by Joyce Hinckley, Adam Sacks, and Dave Smilow, and the National Inquirer.

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Thank heaven for purchase orders, patch cords, splicing tape, the I Ching, miso soup and the universal life force.

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The Evolution of Sweet Corn:
Self Education Through Play.
A Poetic Account of Participational Workshops
That Used Drama and Yogic Disciplines
(May 1973)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation consists of one hour of videotape documentation and a written descriptive analysis of an educational theatre project comprised of workshops for non-performers and a production company. It chronicles the development of the Sweet Corn workshops and outlines the process involved.

These processes included theatre games, Yoga, T'ai Chi and Aikido. Using the above techniques in an emotional setting, promoting play and exploration, the goals of the workshops were to develop whole body/mind integrated persons.

The workshops used play in the sense of fun and also in the sense of freedom for action. Individuals were encouraged to develop creativeness and to integrate the intellect and the body. This integration was expressed by the oriental concept of centering, or the consolidation and focus of energy within the body. Once this was achieved, individuals became more able to accurately project or communicate emotional attitudes to others.

The Sweet Corn workshops, which ran three per week for six months,

metamorphosized into a performance troupe. This troupe took the workshop methods and techniques and used them to create a production. The theme of the production was violence and all material for the production evolved from group process.

The Sweet Corn Troupe, working three months to produce "Assorted Shelters - Or - Do You Have Nightmares When You Sleep On Your Back?", performed nine shows over a two month period.

The written documentation of the development of Sweet Corn includes both objective and highly subjective material, and draws upon the author's personal and professional experience. The videotape documentation includes workshop and rehearsal sessions and is also a blend of subjective/objective material.

INTRODUCTION

A workshop of children - a workshop of nuns
Age makes no difference, nor smarts, nor dunce

Ungrateful arrogance is the force that binds
Disconnection and fear transcend all kinds

What we should do is play - be silly somehow
Be complete and happy, be here now

The following "project" dissertation consists of a one hour videotape documentation and a written descriptive analysis of an educational theatre project which I undertook to explore the possibilities of putting people back in harmony with themselves, unifying their bodies with their minds, their selves with others through theatre games, various yogic disciplines and play. In both the development and implementation of the project I drew upon both my personal and professional experiences. Because the project dealt with me as a whole, body-mind/professional/persons, this paper deals with me as a person and professional in relation to the three streams -- art, theatre; yoga, which include T'ai Chi, Aikido and macrobiotics. While macrobiotics did not appear directly as a heavy ingredient in the actual workshops, it was partly responsible for my approach to them and, as an oriental study, was directly responsible for my interest in the other yogic disciplines.

The Problem

"Make your will one. Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but the spirit is empty and waits

on all things, The Way gathers in emptiness and
 waits on all things, The Way is emptiness alone.
Emptiness is the fasting of the mind. It is easy to keep
 from walking; the hard thing is to walk without touch-
 ing the ground."¹

Chuang Tzu

I believe that we are living in a society that overemphasizes the capabilities of man's mind. Now the mind, or intellect, is a wondrous thing. In America it has created a technological society the likes of which have never before been witnessed on this planet. But alas, the Supertechnology bypasses nature's channels, encourages peoplekind to divorce themselves from their environment, from others, from themselves!

Sweet Corn, the name of my educational theatre project, was created as an anthesis to the loss of freedom which I saw generated by people's loss of contact with the physical reality of themselves and their environment. It was designed as a reaction to:

1. the lack of trust people have in their emotions -- and hence in each other.
2. the disconnection of people from their own bodies -- and hence from each other.
3. the difficulty of finding a place to let loose, to be expressive and playful (without having to get drunk or stoned first).
4. the difficulty in finding people to be supportive of such activities.

These are symptoms of intellectualism, of the compartmentalization of human capability and experience.

With the loss of personal experience, "we lose the ability

to be organically involved in a problem, and in a disconnected way, we function with only parts of ourselves. We do not know our own substance, and in the attempt to live through (or avoid living thru) the eyes of others, self-identity is obscured, our bodies become misshapened, natural grace is gone, and learning is affected."²

Viola Spolin

Sweet Corn was designed to find methods that allowed integration of a whole person. A whole person is one who maintains a balance among all his/her parts: intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual. To be balanced is to be at peace. To be at peace means to view and react to things, not with passion, but with compassion; so that:

"With the body and mind consolidated, focused and energized, the emotions respond with increased sensitivity and purity, and volition exerts itself with greater strength of purpose.

No longer are we dominated by intellect at the expense of feeling, nor driven by the emotions unchecked by reason or will.... Dryness, rigidity, and self-centeredness give way to flowing warmth, resiliency, and compassion, while self-indulgence and fear are transmuted into self-mastery and courage."³

Philip Kapleau

The consolidation and focus of energy was part of the Sweet Corn workshop design. It is termed centering and is a process of concentration and absorption by which the mind is tranquillized and brought to one-pointedness. It is finding the source of all creative action -- to center is to simplify.

onion peeling down to the middle of
the inside of the center
start by relaxing
not talking
it is so

simple
yes

Within the Sweet Corn workshops centering was seen as essential to the process of developing a whole, integrated person. Centering was facilitated in several ways: by relaxation exercises, creation of an atmosphere that encouraged non-verbal encounter, and an on-going inspection of communication, motivation, and the self, but most importantly by the use of techniques from those of theatre games and yoga, overlaid with a sense of play.

The sense of play was important to Sweet Corn because it helped reduce intellectual imbalance and contributed to the development of whole, body-mind persons. The sense of play at work in Sweet Corn may be defined in two ways: first, having fun (joking, playfulness) which would include being silly (lacking good sense, foolish); second, freedom for action, or scope for activity (as in free play of the mind.)

On the level of having fun and being silly, play allows people to get the steam out, to relax and balance the serious parts of their lives. One of the major ingredients of silly play is spontaneity. Spontaneity is the quality of being here now, reacting with freedom, with natural, personal impulse and not with prearrangements or prejudgements. The first step to learning new things or to developing freedom for action is to empty one's self of opinions and speculations.

Thus, using play as a means of learning can be a very serious business. The sense of play (being silly, having fun, acting freely) permeated all of Sweet Corn. It stood at times in contrast with the seriousness of the streams of Yogic disciplines and at other times blended

with the creativeness of the theatre games, but play was always at work in Sweet Corn transposing and transporting the participants from the sublime to the ridiculous. The sense of play also gave the developmental idea of theatre and yoga a consistent emotional tone and allowed participants, as well as myself as participant/director/teacher, to jump back and forth between them without difficulty.

Play's brother is discipline, the one growing into and out of the other. My personal orientation, out of which my own discipline flowed, was macrobiotics. Because it is such a profound influence in my personal life, it colored my pursuits and perceptions.

Macrobiotics is a means of centering the body/mind focus through balancing what one eats and also by viewing the world as composed of yin/yang polarities. Although we did talk about how foods affect a person both mentally and physically (and I admit to occasional proselytizing about what people should eat) the main function of macrobiotics was to help me eat well to keep healthy for whatever work I choose to do, and also to apply my understanding of the dynamic, complementary forces of yin/yang to my explorations and evaluations within the workshops.

From this perspective I learned that opposites attract. The yin (soft and free) quality of the Sweet Corn workshops attracted people who were yang (hard and uptight). Yin and yang became the balancing forces of the workshops, the underlying principle of the group dynamics involved. I was able to relate to myself in terms of these dynamic principles and to watch them at work in other individuals and in the group processes. For example, when one participant came on strong (yang) and demanded the uptight, yang participants follow his lead, the forces of yang with yang were too antagonistic to last for long.

Looking at play as a yin force and at the seriousness of a skill to be learned from a theatre game or yogic discipline as a yang force, one can see how, as opposites attract, a good match has been found.

Viola Spolin describes this process as follows:

"The game is a natural group form providing the involvement and personal freedom necessary for experiencing. Games develop personal techniques and skills necessary for the game itself, through playing. Skills are developed at the very moment a person is having all the fun and excitement playing a game has to offer.

Growth will occur without difficulty...because the very game he plays will aid him. The objective upon which the player must constantly focus and toward which every action must be directed provokes spontaneity. In this spontaneity, personal freedom is released, and the total person, physically, intellectually, and intuitively, is awakened. This causes enough excitation for the student to transcend himself -- he is freed to go out into the environment, to explore, adventure, and faces all dangers he meets unafraid."⁴

Along with theatre games, which are more fully described in the essay, Sweet Corn used the techniques of yoga, including the disciplines of T'ai Chi and Aikido. Yoga, T'ai Chi, and Aikido all focus on the tranquil mind controlling or balancing the body, but each is slightly different.

Yoga, for example, means achieving unity with Universal Consciousness. In its fullest sense the Sanskrit term embraces the whole complex of spiritual disciplines, including doctrines, bodily postures, and breathing exercises. All yogic methods point in one direction. That direction is movement toward familiarity with the deepest, most peaceful core of one's existence. The essence of one's being can be found by stripping away the veils of illusion, of ego gratification. It is a procedure of constantly remembering one's source. It is letting go of

attachments, of prearrangements and prejudgements, and of centering by clinging steadfastly to the path of self-realization.

Hatha Yoga asanas, or postures, were used primarily during the warming up period of the workshops. In Be Here Now, the Lama Foundation writes: "The word 'asana' is sometimes translated as 'easy, comfortable' and sometimes as 'seat.' It concerns a comfortable seat in which one can remain for long periods of time."⁵

The use of Hatha Yoga was especially important during the warming up periods of Sweet Corn, because most of the participants came there from an environment where the mind's intellect was stressed. A means of getting them into their bodies was needed and Hatha Yoga provided one.

We were working with the body for obvious reasons. First, it is the environment in which the participants dwelt in the physical plane. Second, unless they could control their bodies, their bodies would keep capturing attention over and over again and thus distract them from achieving the one-pointedness of mind we were all seeking. Third, to work with the body energies and to be able to move such energies up and down the spine required the participants be sensitized to the nerves in their body of which most were unaware. Until they could hear their bodies, they could not bring it under voluntary control in such a way that it would help rather than hinder their sadhana (spiritual way, work or exercise). Finally, Yogis tell us that the message of one's being is reflected in all his manifestations and he seeks the power of one-pointedness that comes from having his body as well as his thoughts directed toward the state of realization.

Sweet Corn also used Aikido techniques and exercises as a means of getting people into their bodies. Aikido was founded in Japan about forty-five years ago by Professor Morinei Uyeshiba, and it is a self-defense art that does not focus on defeating the enemy but being in harmony with him physically and spiritually. During the Aikido session the participants learned to yield, not to resist, not to create conflict.

Uyeshiba says:

"The way of budo (martial arts) is to make the heart of the Universe our own and perform our mission of loving and protecting all things with a grand spirit. The techniques of budo are only a means to reach that end.

The martial arts should not be concerned with brute force to knock opponents down, nor with lethal weapons that lead the world into destruction. The training of one's self in the martial arts is not concerned with defeating others, but with practicing God's love within ourselves."⁶

T'ai Chi was also one of the techniques used during the warming up sessions. I used it as part of my own warming up exercises and often others would follow. Occasionally I would lead the whole group in T'ai Chi as a means of gathering everyone's scattered attentions or simply to relax after an exercise of theatre games.

T'ai Chi is thought to have originated seven to thirteen hundred years ago by Taoist monks in China. T'ai Chi cannot be literally translated; the words relate to energy within the body, to life, to air, and to the mind.

"The value of T'ai Chi lies in the fact that it is a thoroughly balanced movement, works your internal organs as well as your external body, and lifts your entire system to an optimized peak efficiency, bodily as well as mentally. Its beauty is implied in its softness and profoundness."⁷

Professor Chang Man-Ch'ing
Grand Master of T'ai Chi

The Chinese say that whoever practices T'ai Chi will gain the pliability of a child, the health of a lumber jack, and the peace of mind of a sage. T'ai Chi stresses slow respiration, relaxed postures -- it promotes deep breathing, digestion, the functioning of the internal organs and the circulation of the blood.

T'ai Chi, Aikido, and Hatha Yoga were all used in an effort to get people into their bodies, to provide a balance to the intellect so that whole, integrated, body/mind persons could develop. While these techniques were used primarily during the warming up periods of the workshops, their philosophies -- particularly that of centering -- permeated all of Sweet Corn's activities. In fact, this stream formed the physical base from which exercises or events in the Sweet Corn workshops were created.

Performance As a Goal

In addition to the workshops for non-performers, Sweet Corn also metamorphosized into a performance troupe. As the troupe developed from the workshops, it had a similar philosophy and goals. Neither the workshop's nor the troupe's production developed from cerebral processing -- prearranging and prejudging. Instead, the goals of both the troupe and the workshops were to work toward the development of whole, integrated body/mind persons. We were all experimenting with forms that had been used before -- for personal, not public knowledge.

The workshops were happy occasions, permeated by a sense of play. I designed the Sweet Corn Troupe to use the methods developed in the workshops and produce a performance that would originate from within, from the free play of an individual's mind. I desired folks for the troupe who would be in touch with themselves, would be able to work in

an extremely close unit, and would be able to create a vehicle for communicating their innermost emotions to others.

The troupe used the methodologies of the workshops and expanded personal and inter-personal communication to include the concept of an audience. We workshopped for two weeks to self-select a troupe. An initial group was formed but dissolved because of ideological differences. A second troupe was formed and worked extremely well together.

We met five times a week for three months, creating a play as we went. The troupe demanded and got a definite time and energy commitment from the participants, which was different from the non-performance workshops where attendance was often irregular. Also, the production required a special sort of person/actor, while the non-performance workshops were open to anyone who came. The troupe needed the sort of person/actor who does not need constant direction, but individuals who could create their own material and style in harmony with others.

Violence became the theme for the troupe to work with. It put us in touch with a very basic emotion, and it contained great dramatic potential. I felt this theme would be useful in shocking an audience, getting through their protective armour, and helping them come to grips with their own sense of violence. The audience would participate in a heightened, larger-than-life experience: an experience that could not be dismissed as easily as a newspaper, or as callously as TV.

The Sweet Corn Troupe gave nine successful performances over a period of a month and a half. The performances, created out of a workshop format, contained many of the workshop's important elements --

centeredness, spontaneity, play, and intense communication of emotion. They were the culmination of the Sweet Corn process and to a great extent validated it.

Final Note

The creation of this dissertation is like the sorting-out period that I learned was necessary at the end of a heavily emotional workshop. The workshops were an experiment, using the experiences and creative intuitions of the participants and myself. The troupe involved heavy emotional interaction with three other individuals. All in all, the Sweet Corn process was one of heavy emotional involvement for me and this dissertation is my attempt to sort it out.

I, as a professional/person, have documented the development of Sweet Corn in two ways: videotape and writing. Each expresses myself as an integrated, body/mind person.

Videotape is the media which I see as most adept at documenting and promoting an understanding of what truly transpired during the workshops, rehearsals and productions. So much of what happened during the Sweet Corn process was silent, that to relate this process in standard dissertation form would be a piece of superficial hypocrisy. Thus, I am including the videotapes so that one may see for one's self the Sweet Corn process.

The written dissertation chronicles more than the development of Sweet Corn. It chronicles me and my development as a professional/person. The written portion is chronological but non-linear. It creeps around

and is bumpy, like personal growth. Underneath it all, the drama of the forces of play and discipline flow and you can observe them come together and create me and the Sweet Corn process if you so desire.

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C H A P T E R I

BACKGROUND

The best thing to do
Is to glance thru this quickly
And start
Your own
Play-time

* * * * *

marionettes dancing to "Peter and the Wolf"
an underwater scene with a mermaid
blue-green lights, seran wrap water and a bubble machine
the piercing sound of a metal triangle
25 rows back on the left and an hour past bedtime
the best thing that ever happened to me at elementary school
me, running away from a wolf and then swimming and
breathing underwater
i was six

* * * * *

I collected rocks, comic books, glass lenses and all kinds of
junk. I used to daydream a lot. Drew pictures on my homework papers.
One school teacher was extremely upset because I had drawn a witch on
a surprise exam she gave.

* * * * *

When I was ten I had a kind of minor revelation that my knowledge
of the world, its affairs, and of existence, was available to me in the
form of a cosmic jig-saw puzzle. Once in a while a new piece would come
before me. If I was able to place it, find where it fit, another part
would become clear and I would be the wiser for it.

I can't remember exactly what revelation it was that came into focus

for me when I was ten, only that the experience was kind of like a "deja vu." It was an experience that made me feel, "Ah yes, this is real, true," and that I already knew about it, but had recently forgotten.

* * * * *

land a part in the high school senior class play
 mechanics of theatre production from mr spink
 seven times an hour
 he'd yell, "don't break character"
 "concentrate" "stage talk loud -- but don't get hoarse"
 "stand 3/4" "concentrate" "don't laugh at your own jokes"
 "concentrate"

I had no idea what I was getting into. I don't really know why I tried out for the show. The experience exhilarated me. I learned that it was a time to try out new behavior, enjoy the company of others, and learn a discipline.

My daydreaming turned inside out.

now i whisper to hundreds of people.....
 "mr. DaPina, do you have the rockets?"

* * * * *

Halfway through attending college in Boston, majoring in painting, years of smother love caught up with me. I was feeling stifled and controlled. An appreciation for personal freedom had developed in me and my family was unable to let me be.

Being the eldest of three boys, the burden of apronstring cutting fell solidly on me. I did it in style. I waited for a day when no one

was home, packed all my clothes and art supplies, and moved all the way across town.

I might as well have moved to China, however, as the gap between my parents and myself now appeared like a firewall. The love ties, the compassion, were never disrupted. A little boy needed to grow up, and to do that the safety and protection of home life had to be shattered.

* * * * *

Besides college work, and working intensively on my own in photography and film, I directed a few and acted in many plays. Most of these were college, children's summer camp, and amateur theatre companies that provided me with stage practice.

* * * * *

During the course of a year after college I had the good fortune to work with the Caravan Theater. They were, at that time, the only full-time experimental theatre in Boston. We played with techniques: in the round, in 3/4, audience participation, multi-media, minimal sets and costumes, and actors becoming the content of the production.

dear stanislovski: do you have to become a homicidal maniac to play one?

Because the actors were oft the content, the show was a community construction, a most vibrant and dynamic means of creation, and a profound social activity.

Everyone joined in the conceptual sessions, developed ideas, improvised

and explored them. One of the directors developed the themes further by tying everything together with his own writing, sometimes lifting right from the improvs.

The time a play was being conceived was both exciting and devastatingly frustrating. The elation came from the generation of ideas and the close director/actor theatre game format. The process was full of lots of "whys" and "how could this be expressed more fully or more clearly." The thwarting was a result of constant reworking, continually seeking out refinements and chucking bits that didn't hold up. The largest element responsible for the frustration was the fact that everyone tried not to hold any strong preconceptions as to what the show would eventually look like. Indeed, no one could recognize whether a segment or idea that appeared would eventually be used. This lack of bias meant a greater than average amount of patience and faith in the process, and in each other, than was normally exacted in theatre.

Occasionally we travelled with the show. Touring in theatre is a very different experience than touring to see the sights. The amount of work done for a show is doubled. It's easy to bomb, not knowing the local clientele. The new people and playing area, if not at least the change of location, make for a more intense professional seasoning.

in one show, i am a beggar
 a smart alec business
 i sell apples, cookies and balloons before the performance
 and bust up the show from time to time
 i could wear the most sloppy stuff i owned, could be loud,
 obnoxious, tell everyone i thought the show stunk, tell jokes,
 puns, and be personal with audience of total strangers
 while the actors tried desperately and futilely to develop
 rituals by which they might commune with each other,
 i, in my humble bumbling way, was often able to do just
 what they couldn't, by dropping animal crackers in someone's lap

* * * * *

Macrobiotic study encourages one to be in harmony with the order of the universe, which is endless change between the alternating, complimentary and dynamic opposites. The Chinese call them yin and yang. When relating to food it is as individual interpretation of what might be a harmonious diet for any one given climate and geographical area.

George Ohsawa wrote that your body is your temple, be grateful to all that happens to you and become one with the universe. He rediscovered Macrobiotic understanding when he studied the seven thousand year old Yellow Emperor's Book of Medicine. He applied it to himself and to all who listened.

He taught the Unique Principle that everything was the differentiated manifestation of one infinity, and that everything changes. During the forty years he taught, he found that people could regain their health by being grateful for their condition, and trying to change it by attempting to understand themselves and the order of the universe; flowing with the Tao. He also gave recommendations for people to eat whole, unrefined, naturally grown, traditional, simple foods.

Ohsawa taught this to his disciple Michio Kushi. Michio taught this to Gretchen and Michael, and they kindly taught this to me. They talked of the study of macrobiotics as a possible path to enlightenment.

visitation from angels
 gretchen priest and michael rayson feed me holy food of
 meditation
 take care of my body with the science of macrobiotics, or
 you are what you can digest

* * * * *

When I went to visit my folks now and then, they saw that I had changed my eating patterns and refused food they gave me. They naturally associated the food with their love, and were deeply hurt by my now compounded rejection of them.

It wasn't enough to tell my folks that I had found a large part of the universe game life puzzle; parts that would help me grow whole or enlightened. They just couldn't understand that, nor that I couldn't let it go until I had experimented with it and had proved it one way or another, by adopting the new lifestyle.

* * * * *

One year after college I moved to New York in search of a film career. As in Boston, I worked on a huge assortment of short-term jobs; i.e., audio-visual man in a hospital, projectionist, florist's assistant, restaurant worker, warehouse foreman, blood seller, puppeteer, and children's summer camp counselor.

I sold little photo work, my pics were considered either too creative for the general demands, or not technically proficient enough.

* * * * *

While in New York I came into contact with a travelling swami (forgive me, I could never pronounce his name and never wrote it down), who was teaching Hatha Yoga exercises at a friend's apartment. Ha-sun; tha-moon. Hatha means work with the body. With his teaching my body's breathing and muscular ability began to catch up with what my eating was

preparing me for. I noticed that the natural foods I ate were making me healthier, less tired, more able to resist disease and more clear-thinking. The Yogic asanas, or postures, were making me limber and physically strong.

Another friend, Fred Lehrman, was learning a meditation/self-defense exercise/dance called T'ai Chi Ch'uan from Master Chang Man-Ching. I learned from them both the rudiments of this exquisite exercise. Three years later I learned a more extensive long form from Master T. T. Liang. T'ai Chi presented a unique means of catching on to the consciousness of continuous awareness. I found this valuable because at that time I was only occasionally able to do sitting meditation. I didn't have to be still. I could meditate while in motion.

The slow-motion action of T'ai Chi teaches you to become aware of, and then harness your chi, which is your vital life force. Chi is non-muscle power, which is strengthened by constant 1) meditation, 2) physical exercise (i.e., T'ai Chi, Yoga, Aikido and others), and by 3) eating good food.

Chi keeps you healthy, happy and holy, and is largely connected to the control of the breath. Breath is the major factor that is basic to all living entities, and makes us all brothers. Chi is produced when mind, breath and sexual energy are brought together. The process of concentration and circulation of chi produces another substance which may be called spirit, or in Taoist terminology, shen. The shen is further refined to become emptiness, or shu. In this manner the inner vital force is changed from one state to another.

The idea of transmuting energies is very similar to Kundalini Yoga where reference is made to the image of a coiled snake rising up the spine to awaken the chakras (spiritual energy centers). The Sweet Corn workshops were only to deal with putting people in touch with the idea of chi as a vital life force and to use it in the exercises.

The nature of chi is such that it is possible to experience its effect, no way to describe or adequately write about it. Chi, sometimes described as aura, leaves no means by which it can be explained or even understood in terms of western science. (Information on Russian research by Semyon and Valentina Kirlian, started in 1939, became available in 1959 describing methods of capturing this unseen energy on film.)

After the idea of relaxation, a goal of T'ai Chi is to center a person, physically and mentally. Ah, ha, yes. Here is more of that great puzzle. First food, now exercise.

* * * * *

meditation on food.....
 where is it from?
 how did it grow?
 what will it become in me?
 who am me?

meditation on T'ai Chi.....
 to be relaxed
 loosed and thought free
 to conquer the hard and unyielding with the soft and yielding
 learn to lose
 to be balanced and firmly rooted

what you meditate on becomes your goal
 even if you never attain your ultimate goal,
 you become the process
 you become the action of becoming

* * * * *

Yvonne Rainer says that "the mind is a muscle." While I participated in her workshops, she taught me theatre and dance games. More importantly, she allowed me an opportunity to extend my awareness of my body and its actions within the space around it.

Yvonne was responsible for prodding me to correct my very stoop shouldered posture. She poked me along my spine and chest till I was standing straight. Of course it was uncomfortable as I had never stood that way. Because she impressed me with how important it is to stand straight, I made a concerted effort to be conscious of my posture at all times. In three weeks, using Yoga to realign my muscles, my back became straighter. With that improvement, be it from improved circulation and less fatigue, or from a sense of accomplishment, or from being better able to receive the higher vibrations (Yogis say that a straight spine is necessary during meditation to better receive spiritual energy), I found my self image had been elevated.

Carolee Schneeman's workshops were moving people toward becoming a troupe that would play within a multi-media enviroment. The kind of stuff she was doing was aimed at getting folks super tuned in to each other, so that communication would be by eye contact and sensing what was going on with the other players. We did mountains of theatre and trust games, most of which were nonverbal.

Carolee's workshops provided a very great opportunity to explore new means of relating to people. She created a warm, non-threatening atmosphere, encouraged people to love each other.

* * * * *

Being in New York gave me the great gifts of Yoga, T'ai Chi, dance workshops with Yvonne Rainer, theatre happening workshops with Carolee Schneeman, meetings with some very exciting people and a few good friendships. New York also parcelled out large quantities of noise, air and ground pollution, general all round bad vibes and a major municipal catastrophe every other week. After almost three years residence, I had it in mind to leave that city.

Jeanne Manzelli, an old friend from my art college days, invited me for a vacation in Amherst, Massachusetts. She and friends of hers were doing some very exciting things in the University's School of Education in Amherst. Classes designed to put yourself wise to yourself. I dug it, plus I was interested in getting my hands on the school's video equipment and learning some tv skills.

i swap some foto prints for a truck ride
 NY to Amherst
 mid summer, struck blind by green
 bitten black and blue by mosquitoes
 my own garden
 my own 3 x 7 foot garden

* * * * *

I found the School of Education to be a dizzy place. Humanistically designed courses and people within an anti-human factory-university. I functioned well because I knew what I wanted to do, what courses I would do, people I wanted to be near.

The school was going through its honeymoon stage in its romance

with a great experiment in education. I had marvelous opportunities to participate and teach many classes. Met many fine folks. These were people who were vital, dedicated, willing and hoping to work for an anticipated change in the field of education. A few were actually precipitating these changes.

About the time I finished the masters program and became a doctoral candidate, the School of Ed. had become too big too fast, and un-unified because of the diversity. I noticed too many other folks being uncoordinated and lost, I myself was feeling pressure from just being in the factory and pressure from the now hyper School of Ed. style. It was a good time to withdraw and do my own program.

I thought about using the best of what I had learned from T'ai Chi, Yoga and theatre; to design a program that concerned itself with getting people in touch with themselves and in touch with others. People are hardly ever given the freedom or the right to express the silly stuff, the experimental or their fancifulness. Working both in the suburbs as well as the ghettos, Jerry Weinstein, one of my teachers, said that, in this way, we're all disadvantaged.

A good deal of modern society's mode of operation seems to conspire against playfulness. The cities confine the parks and malls, perhaps the only architecturally free areas, to highly restricted locations, encasing them behind fences. People in this culture shake hands when they greet, never hug as they do in others. To be "uptight," a phrase now in common usage, refers to a physical, as well as a mental state.

now really, why do a yogic theatre project?
cause the uni-factory and people working here
were beginning to close in on me
not leaving ME room to be silly
experimental and fanciful

you become a teacher to learn, of course

* * * * *

C H A P T E R I I
ON THE SWEET CORN WORKSHOPS

The idea to engage in this project was almost a whim, perhaps a desperate one, and struck at an instant. The mechanics of dealing with the worldly affairs of arranging for space, advertising, and finding subsidies became three weeks of intensive hassle before anything could begin.

The oriental philosophies of T'ai Chi and Aikido served as basic guides for me throughout the workshops. Specific exercises from both disciplines served as warm ups to the theatre games.

T'ai Chi's first precept is to relax. The second is to be balanced and find equilibrium, to be centered. I would practice before each shop as part of my own warming up. Sometimes the others would join me. T'ai Chi talks about conquering the hard and unyielding with the soft and yielding, and learning how to lose. Utilizing these expressions gave me a very soft quality of leadership. When someone needed, or demanded, as sometimes did happen, to be leader, they could do so without stepping on my toes. I would retreat as far and as fast as they advanced. Sometimes this softness confused people, particularly if they were looking up to me as "the leader."

The Aikido philosophy says in combat to become one with your partner or opponent, and redirect their energies. Utilizing this ideal in a workshop situation could mean getting as close to someone as possible, and, without being at all antagonistic, allowing yourself to lead their interests and energies in accordance with your own. Having this idea in

mind, the leader can set up a warm and friendly atmosphere, so very vital for drawing people into the activities, which is the first step toward play.

Getting new people relaxed and comfortable can easily take up three-fourths to all of the time at a shop. I believe that no internal growth or expanded interpersonal relations, which are part of the dynamics of play, are possible without the individual first being relaxed and hence open and receptive.

Both T'ai Chi and Aikido say that the body and the mind are one. That is why I place such heavy emphasis on getting the body into shape. I know that you can begin that process of unity by, at least, putting people in contact with their physical being, with the warming up exercises of Hatha Yoga and Aikido, and by trying to show how their bodies' movement and reactions relate so directly toward what they feel about themselves and others.

The people themselves do their own exploring through the exercises and play. All that a leader does is set up a format, create as non-threatening an environment as possible, and be observant and supportive.

As Sweet Corn developed I saw that another important task to deal with was to provide the warmth and support for encouraging interdealings with folks. A good deal of my energy was spent trying out different formats, games and just plain bumbling to locate what would function best.

Workshop Theatre Games and Activities

On value of exercises. One can't count on workshop participants to

be socially mature, able to be warm or to welcome each other into their personal circle. The workshop meeting was an artificially created situation to begin with, so while people came with different expectations, maturity and energy levels, my first effort was often toward making a common ground.

The warming up exercises and theatre games provided, firstly, a very strong indicator as to where people were coming from; that is, the amount of suppleness they displayed, willingness to join, to follow or to lead, what parts they showed or hid, how much creative effort and energy they wished to exploit. The first few minutes of warming up showed me how much work was needed to get the folks to open up and come together with each other. This was evidenced through the participants' level of interaction with others, bodily posture, the amount of fear/pleasure in their eyes and the number of times they touched each other.

The exercises and games provided, secondly, an extremely important shared time experience that allowed people to get acquainted while undergoing tasks and routines. (This is very different from meeting people with a martini in hand, at least as a break in the socializing patterns people usually follow.) This time also let folks experience where others were coming from. I, as the facilitator, needed to know this. The participants needed to experience this if they were going to work well together.

Thirdly,,the exercises imparted certain health supporting skills. I selected the Yogic exercises that I found had helped me the most. The games encouraged playfulness, human interaction and expansion of one's

personal communicative repertoire. In the following pages I list our workshop procedures and a selection of the games which we found worked well. Some were gleaned from other peoples' workshops by me and others were brought in by participants.

Procedures. After describing briefly the purpose and nature of the workshop, I would suggest that the first thing we do is loosen up. I'd ask everyone to take off belts, watches and shoes, and do any kind of exercises that they liked. Sometimes some bouncy music helped folks relax and get to be less self-conscious.

When people stood by the side, they would be encouraged by me, or experienced workshoppers, to join in. When someone in the same room just watched and didn't participate, the other newcomers, who were attempting to join, became nervous. The longer they stood aside, the harder it was for them to join.

If no one felt like moving, I would lead in:

- 1) bending and stretching
- 2) Aikido warm ups (could be described as fast Yoga)
- 3) various Yoga postures, such as deep breathing, greet the sun, head and back stands
- 4) mime exercises, concentration on one small part of the body, often to create illusions of space or obstacles.

The individual exercises often gradually and spontaneously would lead to small groups gravitating together to work out an exercise or game. Sometimes the warm up period would turn into follow-the-leader tag or everyone becoming animals, growling away at each other. Once

everyone is warmed up and actively participating, there are exercises calling for part of the group to be an audience. Group support must be assured before this is undertaken.

If everyone is warmed by the group spirit and we wish to keep to the group format, we use:

- 1) sculpture (silently adding parts -- can be symmetric)
- 2) machine (a moving sculpture -- add noise)
- 3) roll over (all on their backs on the floor, shoulders together, with hands by their sides, the one on the end rolls over and over everyone else)
- 4) pass the gesture (in two lines facing each other, or in a circle. quick tempo repeatable action. use of eye contact to generate interior connection from one person to the next)
- 5) variety show (just what it sounds like. a real goof)
- 6) act out someone's dream (everyone becomes a person, object, sound or feeling in a dream as it is being told)
- 7) puppy dog circle (eyes closed, on all fours. catching and then passing on the breathe. wiggle out of circle and it closes up. wiggle back in and it warmly accepts you)
- 8) snake pile (a touchy-feely par excellence!)

If group relations are shakey, I'd perhaps try some trust exercises:

- 1) mill and pick a partner (walk silently or buzzing. Later sit back-to-back with the randomly picked mate. talk about what you like about each other)
- 2) blind walk (one partner blindfolded, silently led by the other)

- 3) catch me (standing in a circle, pushing back and forth, around someone whose eyes are closed and legs are standing straight)
- 4) body lift (this time the person, with eyes closed, is lifted horizontally, carried or floated about like a wave)
- 5) yes/no & ha ha's (one line says yes, the other line facing them says no. swap words. laugh at each other. whisper, shout, then quietly again. strong energy raiser)
- 6) circle back rub (do something nice to the person's back in front of you, and ten minutes later the person in back of you is doing the same to you)

The following are really good for concentration, often taken directly from mime studies:

- 1) mirror (imitate exactly as your partner moves)
- 2) statue (partner molds you into shape, perhaps ties you in a knot, then unties)
- 3) putty face (partner concentrates on the face. the face as a mask)
- 4) parts of body leading (let your nose take you from one end of the room to the other. now your elbow. then your ass)
- 5) imaginary obstacle course (describe the path and invisible barriers. could be dramatized by suggesting that they are a group of villagers, forced to leave their homeland, some don't want to and the others have to encourage them to leave)

Telling a story in mime can be done by individuals, couples, or more, but becomes increasingly more difficult with more folks joining, unless they know each other well:

- 1) suggest a simple action or story to mime
- 2) occupations (written notes in a hat. chance picking of which is to be done. everyone else tries to guess what you are doing)
- 3) ages (numbers in a hat. often a group will mime many different years of age at once, having decided to do one activity all together)

There are all kinds of variations on story telling:

- 1) silent (mime)
- 2) gibberish (a noise non-language)
- 3) plain ol' everyday talking (affectionately known as an improvisation)

One variation that takes much work and can be very rewarding is to have:

- 4) two mimes, only one in the know (one person mimes a character, a second enters the scene not knowing what is on the first person's mind. it is up to the second person to quickly understand: one, their relationship and what they both should be doing, and two, to join in and help communicate this to the rest of the workshop audience)

Relating to the story telling, but not really quite fitting into any category on this list, is the phenomenon of

- 5) masks (turns people into monsters and raving lunatics. folks will, almost invariably, dance and create rituals)

Two exercises that can clearly reveal how people work for, or against each other:

- 1) circle wrestle (everyone on knees in a circle. eye contact an opponent. keeping on knees, arms on shoulders, wrestle till one

loses balance and the other holds him down. note -- it is very important that they hug each other immediately following the tumble, or the antagonistic feelings will stay)

- 2) call partner to you (just say, "you go to that corner, and you to the other." then instruct one to ask the other to come to their side. give no further advice. observe)

Exercises geared toward oneself only:

- 1) any of the warm ups
- 2) feel yourself (hands on)
- 3) smell and taste yourself
- 4) individual improvs and mimes
- 5) problems

be over or under something

be invisible

be a door (describe and play out)

design a one minute dance

use bodies and space to describe

a box

hot or coldness

the seven deadly sins

being born

Toward the end of every workshop I felt it was important to sit in a circle and discuss what went on. Find out if any feelings were hurt or people were greatly moved. This gave an outlet to feelings, and provided necessary feedback for the group to act upon. Also explained games, leadership actions, possible uses in classrooms, the

participants' lives and the great outdoors.

If energies were still high, we'd do another exercise. Usually, however, by this time backrubs were in order. Particularly if the workshoppers had sedentary work-a-days, they needed to give their muscles a:

massage

Massage is both a vitally important health technique, and a means of communicating love through your hands, directly from body to body.

Usually ending the shops with massage, we stood in a circle with our arms around each other. Following a good space of silence, we filled up with a chant of "may the long time sun shine..." haphazardly sung with spontaneous harmonies, or pursued a simple "om."

* * * * *

The turn out and response of the workshop participants was most encouraging. The time felt right, the need present. I advertised personally, in the modular course description and in articles placed in the town's paper, the Amherst Record, and the now defunct underground rag Pulp. Participants would be able to meet three times a week to do exercises, theatre games, and have contact with one's own body and with others. They were also to be great fun.

Part of the energy was directed toward finding people interested in becoming an actual troupe. Those who were desirous of these goals met on extra occasions to work more intensively at specific exercises, and more importantly to get to know each other better.

The workshops themselves were, each one, vastly different one from the other because the number of people was constantly changing, and the range of the participants' experience incredibly wide. Many people came to just sample one workshop. There was a group of about twenty that came often, but on an irregular basis. Another ten came very steadily.

Judy Kimberly, who had quite a bit of previous theatre and Yoga experience, became an assistant, and helped enormously, as she usually came twice and sometimes three times a week. Frank Murray, bright-eyed and energetic, was always friendly and did lots toward encouraging new people to join in. He was outstanding when we had chances to work with children. Paul Nietupski, who had some Yoga experience and absolutely none in theatre, attended regularly, eventually to become my number one assistant. He also later joined the troupe and worked on the show. Bill Simmons and Mary Lea were responsible for giving me excellent feedback that changed the shape and scope of the workshops.

Sandy Whitcombe, Frank, Judy and I were the distillate of four months of designs toward being a troupe. Sandy and Frank were still in school programs that took up much time, and eventually they had to drop out of the troupe part of the workshops.

* * * * *

As the number of shops increased, the format had to change. I learned that most folks needed to know what was expected of them from the onset. To walk in out of street reality into a nonverbal dream

world could be upsetting and possibly frightening. I had to develop a short introductory rap.

Relating closely to the idea of an intro, is that of making a contract, in terms of time/energy participation, to clarify precisely what is expected of the participants. The sporadic attendance pattern would have been greatly cleared up if I had instituted, or bargained for time commitments from people as part of that contract.

I eventually learned that a talk time, toward the end of a session, was vital to find out what had really gone down. Without this verbalization, much of the participants' actions could be grossly misunderstood. It was really important to ask what exercises and games were liked or disliked.

Very often I was surprised by what people had to say about their emotions. I felt that their descriptions about their emotions were always correct. The reasons for the emotions that they gave often sounded false to me. I also felt that just to express these feelings was extremely important. It gave outlet to the feelings, and provided necessary feedback for the group to act upon.

I learned that someone taking photos at a workshop was a pain in the ass; just as was someone hanging by the side, watching and not participating. Someone with a video machine could stupify the whole group. No one, not even veteran workshoppers, could be truly spontaneous in front of that machinery. The material shown on the tapes was edited down from more than seven times the length of the final version, much of it being just too self-conscious.

I also learned that a one-shot workshop barely got going. A series of three was only a fair introduction. A whole bunch of shops created a high energy and high mutual trust levels, and enabled the building up of a repertoire of exercises and skill.

as soon as fear is gone
love
and all other lesser forms of communication
flow easily

* * * * *

C H A P T E R I I I
ON THE SWEET CORN TROUPE

The troupe first started with the idea of meeting more often than the open workshops. This time commitment was needed to get to know each other better, and to develop a plan of action for ourselves.

It was made clear that we would be creating a play based on our own ideas and improvisations. Through the shops and various media, I let it be known that what was needed was a group dedicated to exploring honest, and perhaps untried, communication paths with one another and an audience, using theatre as the format. I also wanted the group to investigate that peculiar type of ego need characteristic of working in theatre.

Previous to working on the Sweet Corn program, I got a supporting role in a show done by the university's drama department. I became very quickly bummed out by their kind of theatre. Why did the director tell everyone what to do and how to do it? Why didn't everyone exercise and get their bodies in shape, or at least warm up before acting? Why didn't the cast talk with each other about what they were really doing, not just the weather? Why was the damn cast party more important than the show?

I was bummed out because most commercial and traditional theatre formats are worked like any other nine to five kind of job. My expectation is that theatre is an art and demands more intense exchange between its company members, as well as between the company and the audience.

The only good drama in the Connecticut Valley was provided by shows that were on tour, like the Performance Group, The Manhattan Project,

Open Theatre or the Theatre of the Absurd. These groups were full of sparkle and could communicate well.

i want to see the strong, communicative kind of theatre
participate in a deeply committed kind of action
i want to commune with people

While the workshops were running, it seemed impossible to get the troupe off the ground. It demanded full time and attention. Once the open workshops were cancelled, we could proceed beyond the shop stage. I believe this was because of one, my being able to give more physical time to the troupe, and two, an attitude change on my part toward the troupe. After playing footsie with the troupe idea during the first five months of workshops, I finally decided that it was now or never.

The for-real plunge was taken with flyers advertising the troupe's tryout/rehearsal workshop. Both the shops and the troupe were enrolled by self-selection. I knew that the number of people wishing to pursue the troupe idea would be a lot smaller, as I now utilized a contract that made it clear that consistent attendance and personal commitment to a very heavy involvement would be necessary.

The first tryout/shop brought many folks who were curious about the project. I had previously arbitrarily selected themes of violence to deal with. It was very broad and held great theatrical possibilities.

The very first tryout/shop was like a huge explosion of ideas and physical activities. We found ourselves yelling, being thrown around the room. It was a superficial, obvious type of violence; the type that

was also frightening. We had no control, no trust. The next few shops accelerated these feelings. How could we build a show on our fears? How the hell could we simply deal with each other?

I don't think I designed enough of a gradual buildup to the violence theme. Not enough time spent getting everyone's toes wet, before becoming inundated. Some folks didn't want to talk about their feelings, other couldn't. After three and one half weeks, it was clear that rather than becoming closer, which would allow for a more intense, positive exchange and building, we were antagonistic and tearing each other down.

Emotions came to a climax and two people decided to leave the group. By this time we had become a group of five, and now to lose two, seemed disastrous. Precisely at this point we gained one other who, fortunately never having experienced the antagonistic shops, helped us build all over again.

The troupe, now being Paul Neutupski, Martha Murphy, Adam Sacks and myself, got along really well. Material to build upon poured in, our improvs became calmer, purposeful.

violent workshops changed to satire on violence
 less hostile energy means
 more production
 move others more quickly with comedy than with fear tensions
 less threatening
 now we trusted each other
 could go deeper and further into the paths and meanings
 of all our relationships

we were free to create

In three weeks we had enough script and improvisational resources to put on a play. Because the scripts were transcriptions of our own improvised words, we learned them in one week. During the next two weeks we tried out different ways of presenting the material, shuffling parts and segments about, swapping roles.

We used no scenery, few props, dressed simply, and spent the most time and energy on creating and reworking the shape and content of the production. It had to be meaningful and entertaining, i.e., well presented.

If we liked a bit, even if it didn't fit in with the rest of the show, we tried to find a way of designing it in. If even only one of us didn't like a bit, an action, or a piece of dialogue, we changed it or threw it out. What was important was that we all felt as close and as comfortable to our work as was possible.

We firstly owed our comfortableness and aesthetic standards to ourselves. Part of that standard was to please an audience.

Audiences played a very vital role in that their reactions to what we presented altered our immediate performing. We also asked them to express their feelings at the end of every show.

After the first few performances, listening to their reactions led us to eliminate two small bits as well as moving a very loud aggressive action that we had as the opening piece. We drew the audience into the show faster with the heavy stuff now following a light comedy scene.

We'd had visitors see parts of the show throughout our rehearsing, but not until a regular complete performance could anyone really see how

the thing hung together. Only by doing many performances, with constant reworking, can a play truly get in shape. We proceeded for a two and one-half month period to perform eight more shows.

The production had become a huge investment of energy. We met at least five times a week. We talked, ate and shat around the show. The intensity of this work, plus school work and holding down odd jobs, made us all ill just before the first performance.

Drawing the play's material from our own lives and experiences made us all very pensive. We wished every stage action to be an honest reflection of some personal part of ourselves.

The texture of the play was a patchwork of ourselves. Some audiences saw us playing with our fantasies, joined us and were amused. Other audiences were confused by the scattered, quick character changes and stylistic mixes. They all said, however, that it was the most "real" acting they had ever seen. It was more than real for us.

sharing each other's flu
 Paul enjoys the knife too much
 we don't know why we are birds so often
 Martha gives us Burdoon's, her mind, her body
 and loses her eyes in the nightmare
 my love life on the stage
 scenes from the play around the dinner table
 we eat the audience
 they cut us in two
 singing "Hi ya babe" long after we're thru
 long after running out of energy
 just because we like it so much
 Adam's behind the wheel driving us in the safe Saab bone
 weary home

C H A P T E R I V

SUMMARY

Let there be no mistake about this. What I am talking about is love. The only thing that is important is people. I strive to make all the activities I do relate to this compassion, to encourage my growth while encouraging others.

One possible way of communicating these goals to people is to embody them in all one does. I chose to use the vehicle of theatre games, which are merely a means of sanctioning the pastime of having fun. And Yogic disciplines, which are vehicles for centering.

The way I express my love is to share and to continue to explore what I feel has helped make me a more whole person.

Most of the workshops took place in a university environment. Workshops were given occasionally for post-college, inner city high school, and elementary school ages. (I feel that most children under seven years don't need workshops in play -- they already know how.)

I believe the best place for the workshops to occur is at higher than elementary places of education because they are resource centers for people. The clichés have it that schools sport captive audiences and are the factories of culturization. I believe they are microcosmic representations of society, and I see this society as being hard, inflexible, crowded, conforming, politically conservative, uncaring, and partly responsible for disintegration of family life and moral laxness. One way I see people growing toward flexibility and integrating themselves is to offer attractive and stimulating experimental experiences,

such as Sweet Corn.

The workshops never stressed specific theatre skills because members never got to apply, as did the troupe, the skills directly into a practical show and test their relevance over a period of time. Technique without practical application is just so much useless mind clutter. The workshops did, however, provide solid grounds for some people to get themselves in physical and mental shape for working with others.

The workshops gave me, and others, a chance to experiment. They gave me an opportunity to flex my leadership muscles in organizing this program. They put me face to face with chores I usually dislike; such as, negotiating for money and space, as well as having to be up front with people I don't necessarily get off on. They put me in contact with other folks' methods and manners. Sometimes we would gain insights into each others' deepest pleasures and fears.

The personal feedback I got was that the workshops were a good thing. Many told me that they were paying more attention to their own and other persons' postures, that they were able to cure head aches without resorting to aspirin by using the Yogic postures learned at workshops, and that they found the Sweet Corn time a beautiful opportunity to let their creative, child-like parts run free. The workshops were often a very righteous way of getting organically, spiritually high together.

The troupe's production was an intensive extension of the workshop's investigations, and displayed the practical application of its skills

within the performance format.

During the year that has passed since the run of workshops and the troupe's production, I have had occasional opportunities to give a few more workshops. I found that I had gained a greater ease in handling them.

I find I now direct more energy toward making as comfortable an atmosphere as possible by being warm and open, talking in soothing tones, and encouraging the playful attitude. I find that attitude is far more important than specific exercises.

Many participants have asked if Sweet Corn will again run workshops on a regular basis. I miss them myself. I miss the excitement and warmth and the learning experience. For example, nonperformers often come up with more dynamic and "real" improvisations than the professionals. This is perhaps because they haven't been filled with the clichés that traditional theatre imparts.

I also miss the troupe and the intensity of the close working relationships that we shared. Since the show I took to learning to play a few of the show's songs on the piano, and bits of the show's dialogue appear in my conversations occasionally. The program director of WFCR has repeatedly asked me for more troupe's work on radio programs.

Working on the show clarified many of the professional methods I would now use in working on another show, as well as clarifying what approaches would be reasonable for intensive performance-group style theatre. The vision of the troupe's goals must be clearly defined for all who wish to work together -- no one has to be like everyone else, but

they must have a common target and agree on some methods of attainment.

I am presently running massage workshops: a direct result of my working on Sweet Corn. I saw how important the health-giving and human contact elements of massage were to participants. I've also continued to investigate the concept of "chi" (vital life force) within the massage workshops, as well as in the T'ai Chi classes I teach now. We do various exercises designed to strengthen the chi. In the massage shops, we endeavor to muster up the chi in ourselves and pass it on to the one being massaged.

I begin the massage workshops with warming up exercises, as we did in Sweet Corn, and the advice that one must be in shape and relaxed before undertaking a health-giving massage. I also attribute having stepped up my own daily program of Yogic exercise to the Sweet Corn workshops.

I would like to be able to say where and how a Sweet Corn program could be utilized, but I feel I haven't had enough experience with as wide a range of people as I think would be necessary to deal with that question.

I see a danger in people wanting to use the techniques for "behavior modification," or what I would call, manipulation. It is curious, though, to think of a straight-laced business providing a silly fun time or a "goof zone," jungle jims for assembly line workers, punching bags for department store salespersons, and destructo rooms for schoolchildren.

If one sees the need, I would suspect, then one designs a program into the curriculum, or into their own being. If a "goof zone" attitude

is part of someone's personal repertoire, then I think he or she would make a good facilitator. If not, no matter what exercises someone learned, he or she would never allow others to grow. For fun, like love, can never be coerced. It must spring spontaneously from within, and is communicated by catching it from someone who already has it.

Sweet Corn called for and utilized many of my abilities and talents. The perfunctory ones; just to get the practical time/space/advertisement/money needs in order. The behavioral talents; to encourage a relaxed group to play, learn games, and to listen to their needs and feedback. The creative talents; designing posters, directing, writing and acting. The holy talents; attempting to touch all activities with patience, fresh insight and love.

I am still seeking. Not yet totally integrated. My body/mind wishes to be a completely actualized spirit. This is the path I am seeking, and I am enjoying the playing out of my life's drama.

A P P E N D I C E S

A P P E N D I X A

DIARY FOR SWEET CORN THEATRE WORKSHOP

BY BILL SIMMONS / JANUARY 14, 1972

For the past semester I have participated in a theatre workshop in improvisation. "Sweet Corn" was a combination of theatre and mime, games, Yoga, role playing and simple play led by Demian. This diary is an attempt to describe the experience for me, a complete novice to the realm of improvisational theatre.

The experience of describing the workshop was, for me, valuable beyond the experience of the workshop itself, for in a sense, I was able to put myself into the writing of it to a greater extent and with less painful effort than I was ever able to put myself into the experience itself. This diary should be evidence that both the experience of the workshop and the writing of it provide me with some very useful opportunities to learn about myself and the world I live in.

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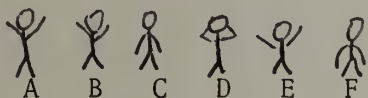
9/14/71. At the first session of the workshop I felt painfully self-conscious and inhibited as if everybody knew what to do but me. At the same time I was fascinated by the truly playful nature of things. Having spent the greater part of the past five years with kids and only being allowed to play on rare occasions, and having spent the greater part of my childhood out in the country, I realized how much I yearned to play, to make play a part of my life. I felt misgivings: I am too old. Lots of things we do here seem false, people bring their same old

hangups here too, there is a tremendous pressure from the group to ... to PERFORM. Hmm. Maybe it's not all that bad. There is too that "guru" aspect of Demian.

Demian. My feelings toward D. have evolved a good deal since this began. My first feelings were rather negative -- he has too much cool for me. He seems calculating, he has the aloofness of a self-appointed guru. Well all this may be so, and more, I find myself falling under the spell of the group, the spirit of the play, and yes, Demian's spell too. I accept his authority, I want to learn from him. He gives a lot. Those who give a lot can demand more.

* * * * *

Play. All lie in a line tightly together side by side



A rolls up onto B and continues to roll until F. Then B follows, etc., till everyone has done it or until you get all you want from it. Works better if everyone is tightly together and if all concerned are into it and relaxed. If you are tight (like I am/was) it is all bone and toenails. Much sighing and giggling.

* * * * *

On my writing about it. It is probably just as hard for me to rediscover myself in writing as in play. Years of writing in school

have sapped and stunted my spirit for it. Too many essays and papers, too much "creative writing." Too much about style, too much analysis, questioning. Too many other peoples' standards for success. Too much fear in me, too many great writers. Too much else to do. I love to write, I hate to do it under the burden of other peoples' scrutiny. Maybe I won't let people read this. Maybe I'll regain that desire to write for myself. Maybe I even want to write to be read again. This is much to write about. The group, the play, the growth, Demian, Skip, Frank, 3 Judy's, Carol, me.

* * * * *

Play -- 9/18/71. One person decides on a situation involving himself and another person. He is onstage and the second person (unaware of what has been decided, joins him. The object is for A to impart the relationship to B onstage. A demanding and difficult exercise. Hard but rewarding work.

* * * * *

Thursday's class was a wipeout for me. I was thoroughly tensed and unstrung by last week's scheduling ordeal. Normally class has served to relax me and make me feel warm inside, at one with my body. This time I was too far gone to be helped. Demian showed me some Yoga for my back & neck. Back worked fine. It all seemed to go to my neck. Back to the ice pack, Excedrin & sleep cure. I think that learning about my body and what to do for it will be the best thing to come

out of all this.

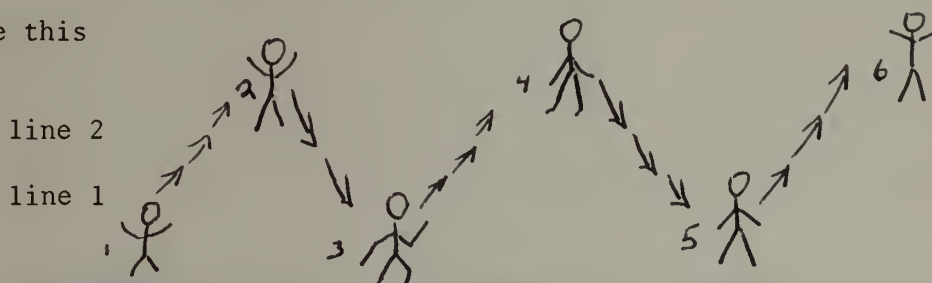
Before I can get all my feelings about Demian sorted out, along comes this guy Ken who looks to taking over the class, either deliberately or unconsciously. It's clear to me that this would be a bad thing. He's just not the kind of person Demian is. He's not as perceptive or as wise. It's like a new kid came into your homeroom and started taking it over by the sheer power of his come-on. Ken is too goodlooking, too stuck on himself, too much of a "star." Demian may be too much the "guru," but he's more my style of "guru" than Ken.

It's clear that Ken's taking the joy out of it for D. But D.'s too cool to be easily shot down. What will happen next is anybody's guess. I wonder what I can do to help it work out.

Beth came to class in a dress prepared to watch. The same lack of readiness that I felt, tense, brittle, fear written all over her uneasy composure. D. told her to join in or leave. That really did her in. She left quite turned off and shot down. I have been wondering what I should say to her about it. Maybe I'll give her a call, I can understand her feelings. I was somewhat surprised that she came in a dress... left her no choice but to observe. I can see D's reluctance to have "observers" -- "You're either loving or you're dead. Watching someone else love is dead." But I can't quite dig his abruptness. I felt trapped between his shortness and her brittleness. I know she must be missing Eric and hassled at MAT, and she must be feeling the effects of too many new people dropping in & out and Ken's power plays ... ∞ ...

Play. Sit in a circle. First person by using his hands, expression, etc., creates an invisible object. When he has finished playing with it, he passes it on to the next person who changes it however he wishes, drastically or slightly. Pass it around till it is over.

Nonverbal Communication Chain. Two lines of even number. First person starts a movement, a simple thing. Makes eye contact with first person in other line thereby passing the motion on. 2nd person picks it up (1st person keeps it up until 2nd has it). Then 2nd person changes motion as he sees fit and passes it to next. Chain should go on like this



Thought: Nonverbal communication is more easily described nonverbally.

Demian has gone out of his way to be nice to me, being helpful and encouraging. That makes a really big difference. It's good to realize that so much more good could be shared if people could find it in themselves to do stuff like that.

* * * * *

9/23/71. Tuesday left me feeling pretty discouraged about the group and about myself as a member. Things began (in the absence of Ken) on a positive riff with people beginning to loosen up and play like little kids. One guy who looked altogether like a Hobbit had us running and and creeping and finally crawling on the floor clutching at the mats and

calling them "mine," fighting over them like possessive children and stingy old hoarders at the same time. Just when D. was about to get us into the nonverbal communication thing, in burst Ken to applause and cheers like he was "our man" and just simply took over as if we had all been twiddling our thumbs waiting for him. The sad thing is that Ken is truly unaware of and maybe (I say maybe for I would not like to believe it) just uncaringly callous enough not to give a damn about the fact that some of us (me in particular) just can't respond to his kind of leadership. Ken got rather quickly and without subtlety to his specialty, the dialogue in which A knows the situation, B doesn't and they are to share it and project it (Play, mentioned in the 9/18/71 entry). It's good stuff but it gets to me mainly because K. finds the whole scene so easy to dominate. He has not spoken (or otherwise communicated) to me nor I to him since the start.

One nice scene came of this, nonetheless. Ken was a company president. He accused the Hobbit of embezzlement. They played out a very convincing scene.

Thursday was much better. Ken came but did not stay. D. ran the whole show by choosing not to run it. Judy returned. We played almost all evening like little kids. I felt reinspired.

I'm having a tough time with the group, have since the beginning and maybe I should begin to formulate some of my thoughts about this. I also want to write about Judy, warm Judy. So which? I'm a little too low key to be able to do Judy justice so I do the heavy part.

Ever since I was a little kid I've felt alone in certain kinds of groups. Basketball teams. Recess. I lacked "physical ability."

Clumsy -- nearsighted. Scared of baseballs. Always looking the wrong way. Intimidated by stronger personalities, physical prowess, the coolness and flow of energy that most other people seemed to share -- I recall feeling so much that I got their vibes, how come they didn't get mine? Didn't I give any? Were they bad ones, more than these guys could or would handle? Was I too heavy, simple, dull, or just incapable of projecting myself? Was this asking too much?

This feeling is here now as I sit here remembering the sessions with the group.

The other feeling is the beginning of a strong reaction to the whole idea of expecting a group to try to deal with this kind of individual. Or put another way, I am revolted by the idea that I am what the group says I am. I can be no one but whom they see for all the time I am with them. It's a prison. Last year as a teacher I spent so much time "building groups," trying to get the group to be responsible to individual needs, and to get individuals committed to "group goals."

I need to examine my role as a "leader/teacher" as I have played it. I want to think about D's and Ken's and Judy's roles as "leaders."

Maybe one of the problems here for me is that I am clearly not a leader here. I don't have the experience or the vision; the creativity for this, if I have it, is buried somewhere in my childhood. It may never come out. It could. Still I may have it in me. Sometimes I feel like I do. More often I don't feel much except emptiness.

Maybe in acquiring some of the skills of this stuff, I can begin to release some of whatever there is in me that wants to touch people in

that nonverbal, physical, almost magic way and be touched in return by them.

It is uncomfortable for me to think of myself as acquiring the "skills" that will enable me to touch people. Or, restated: Can one "learn" how to "play?" Is this all a huge joke: an ego-trip for the "beautiful people " who can "groove" on it?

(Maybe I should think about performing and see where it leads me.)

* * * * *

10/15/71. Much has happened since I wrote last. Lots of ups and downs, more than I can straighten out in my head. Ken left the group apparently for good one night three weeks ago.

Last week I brought a video recorder and playback for us to play with. The session was a good one for everyone else and although the machine barely functioned, we were able to get a couple of fair tapes. Demian and Mary acting mirrors were exciting. Both of them were on the same wavelength or something, for it was obvious that they really knew what they were doing. To describe it would not do it justice. Maybe I'll include the tape in this account. All I can say about it is that they were doing a lot of ass-bumping and growling and groaning at each other, but the total effect was absorbing to watch.

Mirrors is just about the toughest of all exercises for me. I start to feel the freeze whenever we do it right from the beginning. I look into my partner's eyes and he/she never fails to "mirror" my terror and apprehension. While the other pairs (of whom I'm always keenly aware

and with whom I'm always comparing myself) dance and sigh, shout and chatter about, I'm feeling like a witless klutz. Half the things I do, my partner can't imitate. The things he/she can imitate are trite, clumsy, painful to see. More clearly stated -- whenever my partner can imitate me, he shows me the ugliest, most painful-to-face facet of me. Whenever I feel inspired to do something imaginative, it never fails to confuse my partner to the point that he gives up trying to do it. Often I hit upon things that are gymnastically contortionistic and it really puts my partner through the mill trying to be my mirror.

The painfully self-conscious conclusion:

How difficult it must be to be around me there; how much I force people, just by being who I am, to feel my pain.

Yet I do not feel that all this suffering is necessarily a bad thing. Some pretty fine things have come of all this. Outside "class" I have begun to feel freer about my body and spirit, especially at home. My wife (Gaile) and I have a number of games we play with our dog. Lately I have taken to parodying my dog a bit. The other day I was eating a cold bunch of cauliflower that Jenny (dog) wanted. She started following me around the house with that gimme gleam in her eye. Gaile helped chase me down and held me (helplessly giggling) while Jenny snatched the prize. Later that same evening, I stole up on Jenny and snatched away her bone, growling and snapping. This led to a long series of imitations of Jenny (in her company) -- begging -- having bad dreams -- etc. I really felt good doing this -- I felt I was good at it. Gaile liked it and it really blows Jenny's mind. She accepts it but

every once in a while she seems to understand I'm making fun of her and she starts nipping at me and barking indignantly. She's a fine animal to parody, she's pretty complex for a dog.

* * * * *

Last Thursday, our group saw the Claude Kipnes Mime Troupe. It was a truly professional troupe and I came away with some new ideas. We need music. Kipnes' troupe performed to some really interesting stuff. Sometimes Moog Synthesizer stuff, all zaps, crackles, pops and metallic fugues. Sometimes some really silly children's stuff. Au Clair de la Lune in flutes. Sometimes really heavy drama stuff. Very well suited to the moods and scenes they evoked.

Kipnes' people were very serious. Every set they did had been worked out down to the last tiny detail. They were serious about even the silliest sets and they paid powerful attention to each other.

* * * * *

Nov. 3/Dec. 16, 1971. By the beginning of November I had stopped writing in the journal. Things were catching up with me. Too much to do, too many different kinds of things, too painful to write about class and other excuses for not doing something I had at first found hard, now found the thought of it disgusting.

Now there is time to reflect and write about it, it would not be a bad idea.

I would like, at this point, to write about Demian's workshop as it

was part of a larger process of development for me last semester.

Coming to UMass for me meant facing a basic decision of whether to drop farther out into more poverty, more drugs, more anti-intellectualism, less activism, etc., or to take the idea of my "career" more seriously.

Demian's class was one aspect of this problem which for me was fast dissolving into a dilemma -- an either/or situation. (To balance out this dilemma I worked part-time at the jail with drug addicts.)

I was turned off by many things that happened in the course of the class. Perhaps I should begin by talking more about these things.

The idea of improvisational theatre as personal therapy for alienated spirits -- deny your head, embrace your body -- has a phoniness about it -- a faddishness that smacks of plastic California. Many people came to the experience feeling that what they were doing was "in" or "far out" as it is these days. They had that same blind faith that characterizes much of the mindless madness we often attribute to middle America. Since what they were doing was supposed to be "far-out" they got that "far-out" look in their eyes and everything became "outsight" for them. I never could relate to that. I felt old and stiff, but pissed too for obviously these were children, still nursing their parents' bank accounts and not yet weaned to the harsher realities of feeding oneself.

Locked to this was a casualness I was not used to in people. People treated the class casually -- "come when you feel like it." There was virtually no one who felt responsibility to the others to the extent of coming on a regular basis. This had the effect of destroying, to a certain extent, Demian's idea of developing a performance group. I was saddened

for him for he was putting so much into it. People who treat life so casually always become the takers, for they only come when they feel like it, when they can "take it." Those of us trapped by a sense of responsibility, duty, get stuck being the givers, although in my case, I had very little to give. All I could do consistently was to provide an audience. But I was always there to be a foil for whatever caper those guys were up to. I was reminded of the nucleus of builders, stay-at-homes who till the garden, feed the goats and build the sauna for the nomads who hitch-hike to Mexico and Arizona and return to use the sauna and eat the food and drink the milk when they run out of bread or get tired of taking care of themselves.

It is as much a sickness in us, those who stick around, to be used by those guys as it is in the "takers" themselves. We are the foster parents of these kids. We provide the same support their parents must have; as long as we are here, these people never have to face themselves.

A more philosophical aspect of all this has to do with the body/mind conflict that has been central to the experience. Very little time was spent intellectualizing our experience, even to considering things in their historical or philosophical context. Reducing the experience to a purely sensual one, nonverbal and essentially nonintellectual, is to rely too heavily on the gestalt. For to assume that the mind is bad because the body is good is to deny as much as, if not more than, one affirms.

One question still perplexes me. Why wasn't Demian able to attract more people interested in committing themselves to developing a repertoire

and performing. Aside from the superficial reasons, that he wasn't in the dramatics department, wasn't a "professor" and wasn't able to offer anyone "official university status" as an "actor" -- why didn't some of those people get interested? I've already mentioned that many of the people he attracted weren't the committed sort. He certainly put himself into it. He worked hard for it, was always at the class early, kept up the publicity, offered a variety of experiences. Is the student body so timid or so casual or so turned off that they never gave it a chance? If I were a dramatics major I'd be a hell of a lot more interested in what he's doing than what's happening in the five colleges, particularly if I were interested in myself as an actor. Maybe they haven't had enough experience to understand the value of improvisation. Maybe they're afraid that anything not officially sanctioned by their department is of no value.

Which leads me to examine Demian as a teacher. One of the reasons I looked forward to this year was that it was to give me a chance to have teachers of my own, to be a subject of the teaching process and to examine myself (in retrospect) as a teacher. Demian has the two most important characteristics I think necessary for a good teacher -- genuine love and respect for other people as human beings. He went out of his way to encourage me and others who were uptight or who had other problems. He seems to enjoy working with me as much as with some of the "better" people. He gave me thoughtful serious criticism when he thought I could take it. He tried very hard to be sensitive to other peoples' needs and vulnerabilities.

One thing he might have done -- something I myself find hard to do and have suffered from not doing -- he might have told some of those people, who came when they felt like it, exactly what effect they were having on the group. He might have said "we like having you, we need you, we want you, etc. -- but we need a commitment -- we can't go on coming here, always regular, always punctual, if you aren't going to do the same."

I have given up on the idea of "seducing" people into commitments. I feel that one must demand as much from one's students as one would from oneself. If one's gonna be there, they should. Demian tried having open workshops and closed ones, but he never really enforced either. Eventually we were down to being glad to help anyone who came. But this put us in a giving role and them in a taking one. This kind of situation is not very much unlike the traditional classroom teacher role. Students have no responsibilities, they have only tasks to perform. All the responsibilities, all the initiative, all the commitment rest on the teacher. The students are Locke's "tabula rasae" waiting to be filled from the teacher's endless supply. One is doing a disservice to one's students to allow them this sort of liberty, and one is doing a disservice to the learning process to do so, for it is clear that people working together committed to common goals are learning more than in a traditional setup.

No one has learned his lesson any better than I, for last year this was my fatal flaw. I became a doormat for other teachers' kids and their parents. People didn't have enough respect for me as a result and took

advantage of me. I didn't really get angry about this until it was too late. Fuck those people. I surely learned a lot about integrity -- if you've got it you really have to protect it. People (the way the world runs) are constantly attacking it. You are at war with the world to keep it.

Demian protects his by not getting too disappointed if things don't work out, I guess.

As for the happy side of the class, I really feel as if I began to understand what "acting" is all about -- what the skills are, how one goes about focusing one's powers, whatever they might be, or becoming an actor. I really became aware of the possibilities of using one's body to express oneself -- to play -- to touch other people -- to dance -- to feel the grace that is in everyone's movement, to feel as much from peoples' movement as from their talk. It's as if I had learned a new language. I can watch someone walk down the street and know as much about him as a conversation might tell. I am constantly watching people and animals move -- more sensitive to such descriptions in novels.

* * * * *

Now on this day, two months after the last class, it is almost difficult to believe that all that happened. It seems like a not too weird dream, one in which I was never really participating -- part actor, part audience and one part the part that is essential before one can feel oneself fully engaged somewhere else. Restricted by embarrassment,

distracted by inner voices, and on this day unspeakably disquieted by those voices.

Bill Simmons

A P P E N D I X B

RESPONDING TO BILL'S DIARY

Reading Bill's diary account of Sweet Corn workshops puts a clear light on the process we were investigating.

This kind of theatre/Yoga process is not something for everybody. The idea of improvisation terrifies many people, most particularly actors schooled in formal traditional theatre. It scares people because there are no standards for behaving; no known paths or safe endings.

It liberates people because of the very same factors. The experiment of improv allows them to create new patterns of behavior. For example, to be asked to find a new solution to a problem -- without time to think or without voice or hands, etc. I believe that it is a process of great value because it, at least, gives people a chance to sample a different vocabulary. Whether one chooses to use the new forms or not is up to them. To be able to pick and choose is of great importance.

Bill asks if doing the workshop skills would lead to releasing the magic in people; allowing them to learn to play. I say yes. As Yoga has shown me that people have to be taught how to breathe, and T'ai Chi that people have to be taught how to walk, so it follows that another fundamental human ability, that of play, should be taught, or more accurately, allowed to continue into adulthood. Play allows us to relax, have fun learning new skills, and see ourselves and our relations with others in an often revealing way.

Instruction in these skills of theatre/Yoga must be provided for

on a volunteer basis. In no way should it be designed into a business or curriculum, unless it be optional. We are talking about dealing with forces that are very personal. First, there would be great danger in parties wishing to modify other folks' psyches, and second, unless the people wished to come on their own to workshops with a sense of freedom and trust, the results could be quite negative.

People come to workshops with all kinds of different expectations, all kinds of background and experience. I learned that talking about what was going to happen, what was expected of them in terms of commitment (making a contract in effect), and going through various exercises, would provide a much needed common experience. The commonality was needed before trust could happen. Trust was needed before anyone could drop their protective covers and get into playing and having fun.

The physical exercises build up their fluidity of movement and stamina. Continued exposure to the nonverbal games and other theatre stuff gives more poise. Teachers of the Yogic disciplines say that the Yogas give great inner strength, both in terms of the chi (vital life force) and in terms of self-faith.

Bill's diary mentioned the need to protect one's integrity. This is truly one of the heavy battles people go through before they allow themselves to be silly (at least at a workshop). Sometimes folks feel that people actually attack their integrity, and that they are at war with the world to keep it intact. I believe that most of the world doesn't give a shit. It's these internal dialogues of world battles that need to be silenced, channeled or, at least, understood to allow

someone to relax. Somewhere along the line the dealing is with raising consciousness of their state of peace of mind.

The elements of "phoney plastic faddishness of improv theatre as personal therapy for alienated spirits" I'm sure is present; just as it is fashionable to be analysed and to support a psychiatrist. Our first stated goal in the workshops was to have fun -- the shops were loose enough to change goals from time to time, occasionally shifting into therapeutic confrontation; never claiming to heal people. We only tried to get folks to relax.

The rituals created by some of the games we played are reminiscent of liturgical plays; the use of masks of "primitive" cultures' rituals. Perhaps a "fad" has emerged in an area that other structures have been unable to fulfill in this culture. The "fad" may have brought people to the workshops; what they encountered once there was much more sincere and in no way a faddish endeavor.

I agree with Bill that we spent too little time intellectualizing (sorting out) our experience. I learned through him and others of this need, and worked in the workshops' circle discussions after the series that he attended.

Bill's account also put me in touch with my own teaching methods. His calling me a guru both pleases me and disturbs me because it is a very high thing to call someone, and it is also a very grave responsibility. A guru is a spiritual teacher. I never called myself that and I certainly wasn't self-styled as I have had a great many teachers (whom I've tried to list in the essay). Being a guru implies a large amount

of selflessness. My behavior in the workshops ran, I'm sure, from the utterly selfless to the sublimely self-indulgent.

I was also very short with people who came only to watch. It was made very clear through all the advertising that these were participational workshops. When they came saying that they didn't want to participate, this indicated to me that they were afraid to join, even though they had come to do just that. Many times I would use the sink or swim approach, that is, get into it or leave. Sometimes this works, but it is not successful with everyone, as some need a long time to warm up to things. What is necessary is to get everyone involved as fast as possible, the longer the wait the harder to enter. While they are waiting, efforts must be made to make the joiners comfortable while someone watches.

One facet that I didn't realize at that time was that there is sometimes great value in nonparticipation. The nonaction can lead to some very positive dynamics, such as, allowing them time to gain the courage to enter the next time around.

When someone like Ken entered the workshops and wanted to take over, I responded with a graceful retreat; as my T'ai Chi had taught me. I didn't want to make the encounter one of a battle for control of the group. As Ken played out his hand, not getting enough positive reinforcement from the group, he eventually left. What I wasn't aware of, until after he had gone, was that the group was very pissed at me for allowing him to run things as he did. I later asked them if he was filling gaps that I had left open, and why it was that the group had allowed his takeover. I told them that I considered his being there all part of the experiment of Sweet Corn.

Finally, a factor that disturbed me about the workshops was not being able to continue giving them. I never got any support from the university and was unable to get further grants. To be really effective, deal with the problems and individual questions raised, the workshops should have been available over a period of years. Seven months is simply not enough time to make a baby.

A P P E N D I X C

SELECTED NOTATIONS ON THE SWEET CORN PROCESS
FROM DEMIAN'S DAILY DIARY

- aug 22 - great, really great, first theatre workshop -- 4 hours --
12 people, mostly a whole other group than i invited -- good
folks, worked hard and well
- sep 14 - theatre workshop, about the best yet -- 2 people left in be-
ginning, the rest of the 20 took off and stayed high for 3
hours -- good things + warm group support -- circle hug +
chant outside in the rain
- sep 19 - really fantastic workshop -- put one girl on the spot for
constantly not joining and being hung up on rehearsing -- we
had a free flowing sort of circus with little kids, who happened
to be passing through the cc, joining in -- a joyous exercise
- sep 21 - neat workshop session -- good person, ralph lee, used to be
w/open theatre and genesis, now teaching at smith, came and
gave us a good exercise
- sep 28 - real calm and open workshop -- time flew -- unintimidated talk
as to what was happening and some crit about me -- learning time
-- many of us went over to the cc to watch judy and some guy do
a pie-in-the-face cafeteria piece -- expected no reaction from
the people around
- sep 30 - troupe over to work out name, still no decision -- to workshop,
not many show up -- we decide on name: "SWEET CORN" -- i got
thinking about how much my hung up side of my ego gets into the

way, and, about half way through the eve, i think lots about how i use the time to act out all my sexual fantasies -- as usual, these workshops keep me learning.

oct 9 - judy and frank never came to the gym, so i exercised + meditated

oct 24 - workshop real nice + spontaneous -- we all donned masks + played all over the cc -- a person named herman liked our games + joined us

oct 28 - slow workshop tonight

.... much internal dialogue this past week or 2... i feel hurt as long as i maintain a bad ego head about things, and flow if i remember my center --

· trying to maintain balance -- food, energies, desires --

· trying to economically survive -- feel well a lot of the time

-- it's the disturbed moments that both me -- i would rather not have them -- be well balanced through grief as through elation -- and give to people -- they're the only thing that matters

oct 31 - absolutely incredible workshop -- we started folding mailing pieces -- an hour or so of usual warm up + unfocused nonsense -- then after cathy + i necked for awhile, we did some body rolls and everybody became increasingly erotic -- back to back, feeling up each other -- 3 hours of clinging bodies, lucky voyeurs to see our erections + hands on each others' breasts

nov 4 - workshop in eve ok - bill brought Bob + video and we got some good stuff on tape -- new person, george from canada, does

Kundalini Yoga

- nov 8 - extra ordinary energy from the children in mary lee's class at marks meadow -- judy, frank and i tried a workshop there -- instead of trying to draw people out, were trying to stuff them back in, and then mostly did the right thing, which was to give up -- good talking and playing w/many of the kids -- mary suggested more of a contract to keep more focus -- judy looked quite lost through most of the chaos -- i enjoyed the very high energy level -- frank was real good with many kids
- dec 5 - only 4 people at workshop, but very high intensity -- 5 hours
- dec 20 - to wfcr to produce tardieu's one way for another and cocteau's the wedding on the eiffel tower -- both came out, but for small errors, real well -- very very well, matter of fact -- judy + i did most voices, w/chris on drum and steve on assorted noises
- jan 11 - to hampshire -- sort of uptight workshop, till the video was put away -- then a real, very fine improvisational singing thing at end
- jan 19 - to see tom v at amherst c for the \$250 the 70 players are giving to co-sponsor our sweet corn production -- got dave r's script for possible use
- jan 20 - bought a cassette recorder with the a.c. money, to tape improvs -- auditions tonight for the production -- only 7 came, but it was the most intensive workshop we've ever had -- extremely personally moving -- some deep fears and mental states uncovered, and attempts to deal with them
- jan 26 - another most intense workshop/rehearsal -- good things happened,

- dynamic violence -- much on tape -- rick screwed up the machine
- feb 1 - martha comes over to say she has to work + can't do show w/us
-- i talk her into supper and coming to the workshop this eve
to tell others -- things get off the ground late, but they do,
and everyone is quite insane -- stronger group trust -- martha
will hang on for awhile -- production is named: "ASSORTED
SHELTERS - OR - DO YOU HAVE NIGHTMARES WHEN YOU SLEEP ON YOUR
BACK?"
- feb 7 - literally knockout workshop -- judy said she wanted to leave the
group -- for 4 hours we had the most honest + revealing exchange
ever -- many deep feelings about our work and about each other
-- draining -- valuable experience -- new directions spring
forth -- bad feelings, i hope, are repairing -- strong group of
people
- feb 9 - racing like mad to finish flyer -- adam comes home just in time
to help me + listen to how distraught i am about the sweet corn
crisis -- now i am sure that judy doesn't want to stay, or trust
me, even if we get a "good" director to suit her -- i think i may
ask her to leave as she wanted to do in the first place 3 days
ago -- adam is interested in helping w/our show and may even be
the director
- feb 12 - chris was depressed + putting out bad vibes like crazy -- after
talking with ad and martha, i told chris that it was probably
best if he didn't work on the production -- he sounded relieved
-- then judy finally decided also not to continue -- best results

for everyone -- they'll still come to wfcr to do our goof
show taping

feb 15 - martha over early for taping at wfcr -- dave, paul, judy,
chris and herman came -- we did 2 versions of a takeoff on
divorce court , called the end a marriage program -- also did
a nice flowing betting show with everyone over 85 years old

feb 17 - late for hampshire video taping -- enough people for a crew
-- we do violence improvs for 40 minutes -- paul being super
aggressive + we all will be black and blue tomorrow -- some
good stuff here and there -- told the tech to be wild on the
effects -- then martha structured an unwrinkling play -- sim-
ple tech, ad + i danced out a samurai fight -- 3 takes, the last
one worked real well

mar 4 - paul + martha over for morning rehearsal -- learning songs --
everyone drags, too early -- still got work done -- i work for
6 hours on the sound mix for the dream sequence -- real nice
stuff

mar 12 - feverish all day -- cancelled rehearsal as paul was worse sick
than me

mar 14 -- the day is full of tape recorded sounds -- music running back-
wards + voices falling downstairs -- between periods of eyeball
hurting dizziness, i read of curing naturally, with loss of
arrogance and affirmation of faith -- but i think too much and
can't even run through a sat nam without 3 stray thoughts to
distract me -- every now and then i read or imagine some great

human tragedy + that i am alive -- i cry -- i have a fever --
paul real late for a so-so line rehearsal -- a lot of clari-
fication -- a lot of tape work done -- try taping kangaroo
song using a clarinet, lousy

- mar 16 - duping tapes -- posters up for performance -- best rehearsal
we've ever had -- in spite of paul still being sick -- with me
and martha feeling worse -- the thing actually flowed + charac-
ters emerged
- mar 23 - real good rehearsal -- jacquie came to see us -- she is a won-
derful audience -- a lot has to be worked out on the play
- mar 24 - incredible 3 1/2 hour drive to fall river + back -- bristol
community college, where we played tonight, grew out of a fac-
tory -- did a slow starting but good show -- i fucked over
opening lines but did a full energy job on rest -- maybe 5 out
of the fifty audience people would be interesting to have talked
with further, after the show, on deeper levels -- very positive
audience reaction by end of show -- long applause
- mar 25 - show tonight at stone basement, amherst c -- again slow warming
up, but an uneven show tonight, still, parts grabbed some
people -- far too cybernetic a crowd; 1/2 were Theatre Sophisti-
cates, the other 1/2 were pretending to be the same -- paul didn't
like the house -- there seemed to be an overbalance of negative
comments at the end when we asked for feedback -- martha had
trouble getting energy up -- ad + i did all right, i think
- apr 5 - taped ed's Theatre Talk radio show w/martha -- late to set up

for show at campus center -- they had verified the wrong dates to me on the phone, so when we got there, we were without a hall to perform in -- found another space, away out of the way -- only 6 people came to the show -- we had the smoothest, most enjoyable show we've ever done

apr 12 - to south college, u of m, tv studio, adam is impatient and nervous + doesn't want to do anything -- after much work bob + crew do a fine job an an abbreviated "loved to death" and the whole "dream sequence"

apr 18 - stupid power plays at the sch of ed, and the marathon, where we were going to do our show tonight, is closed down -- we have no workshop and no play -- no ticket money -- it was going to be a big show -- we have a rehearsal -- frank took pics all the way through -- ad is horribly moody -- upon seeing our troupe's closeness, bob was provoked into confiding in his + his wife's interpersonal relationships -- had a long talk w/him

may 5 - seemed like it wasn't going to happen, but we finally tape -- skeleton crew -- jacquie l on crutches while working one camera, bob m. on the other -- john learned the control board 10 minutes before we tape -- don m on audio -- finally it's done + looks passing fair

may 11 - people asked how adam was doing + i would do a lot of complaining -- martha came to get money from the last show -- i asked her why i was difficult to live with, as she said -- the thing that was most true, out of all she said, was my arrogance

over other life styles, or people who had no structure -- my
not accepting people on whatever level they happen to be on --
i realize my complaints were all about myself

jul 20 - after riding around, being too hot, we do the last workshop --
lively and really nice bunch of people -- they were teachers
mostly, and i think some were nuns -- 4 from montreal could speak
little english, very curious how much we depend on talking,
even in a primarily nonverbal setting -- excellent workshop that
left us all really high -- some very amazing pieces happened --
some very warm things too --

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"The more you talk about it, the more you think about it, the further from it you go: Stop talking, stop thinking, and there is nothing you will not understand."

Seng - Ts'an
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