

THE TRANSPARENT POWER

The mountain has four peaks. And the first peak is gratitude. It is the gratitude for the world that is not the world of a daydream. Sean Scott is 2 1/2 years old. He is a different reality now than when he was two years old. He's a different little boy. He's got an angry red scar over his right eye that he didn't have 6 months ago. He's learned to say no. And he didn't say that, 6 months ago. He even refuses to be toilet trained, which wasn't even an issue, 6 months ago. Have you noticed that there is no life without passion?

And then another peak I think is the peak of responsibility. And that's like finding yourself in an ontological fall. There are no handholds. All of a sudden the totality of the world looms before you and all the responsibility that's there suddenly drops over you. While I was standing in a street in Calcutta, I saw a rubbish heap, composed of paper trash, cans and some food. A young boy came up to it and began to pilfer through the pile to find his lunch. He had not seen that a few seconds before a dog had come by and urinated on the pile he was looking through. Seeing him pick through that pile, the whole picture of India's health shot through my mind. The picture of world health, the picture of sanitation convenience, the picture of people living on a street and how in the world you would ever care for all that. All of this happened in a matter of seconds I fell ill for three days. My Fifth City models just crumbled, as I tried to get my mind around what I'd seen. This is the experience of falling. It is easy to jump into psychosis at that point. Silence marks this kind of happening. You don't talk about this. There is nothing to say, and if you try to talk, all you can do is babble, something like an idiot babbles. Every time you start down a path toward a solution you find a dead end. You start back and start down another path and there is another dead one. The weight of responsibility grasps you now. It's life and death standing there and vibrating in front of you. That's all there is. Just a life and a death, so much energy, and that energy focused is the power of ten men.

Now that peak of transparent power has on it a footpath, a wall face, a little slide and an avalanche point. Those four things are the peak of power.

The foot path is a place to stand where the mountain can be seen for what it is. It's like standing in the middle of life looking at it, seeing that it is a conflagration of contradiction. Its realizing that whatever birthed Siddharthas, Van Goghs and Gandhis, also birthed Adolph Hitlers and Charles Mansons. That's all in the world there is, a conflagration of contradiction. Perhaps if you saw "Starry Night" as a bunch of contradictions, you'd see what I mean. This happened one day when I was in New York, getting on a subway. I was angry that morning. Have you ever awakened angry, and you can't account for it, but you're just angry and anything that happens or doesn't happen makes you angry? It was one of those mornings and I had to go from 21st Street up to 96th Street. I managed to miss the rush hour traffic. I'd got down the subway tunnel, paid my thirty cents, got in the subway car and zoomed to the other end of the island. And as I stood boxed into that subway car under the earth, angry and snorting, I began to look around the car. There was a hard-hat there, and next to him was a long-haired student, and next to the long-haired student was a gal who looked like she must have been a buyer for Sak's Fifth Avenue whose car had broken down and was having to ride the subway. I was aware of being disgusted at them for being such contradictory beings to each other and to me. I couldn't understand how it was that that kind of contradiction could be sustained sealed in a subway car under the earth, trapped together. They were just riding along. They weren't fussing, they weren't fighting. Was it a conspiracy of silence? I was more angry.

All of a sudden I discovered the anger was not just that life was there, staring at me in the face with all its contradictions, but that I was standing there hating the only life I had. I stood in abject hatred of all the contradictions that were boxed in under the earth, streaming along to the other end of the island. And what that disclosed to me was that I had become the contradiction. I had become what I accused other people of being. That 1

was the embodiment of hatred in the train. And all of a sudden it got disclosed in a strange way. That life isn't going to be anything but a series of contradictions. And that in order to serve this world, you have to transcend the contradiction that you are yourself. You have to literally step outside your contradictionhood to get a perspective on the world.

That happens very quickly. I got out of the subway, and low and behold there was another conflagration of contradictions. Parading down the street was a women's liberation group, and right along behind came the age liberation front in a sympathy march. My God! It seemed to me that everything I stood for in life was somehow drowned out, everything I stood opposed to seemed to be winning. But what further amazed me was that being itself allowed all that to be. That being itself sustained in being all those dynamics of contradictions. That being itself didn't give a damn about my fight for humanness. That Being itself was going right on being. Being itself sustained me. And Being itself brought into being and sustained that strange parade I witnessed. The anger subsides and melts. You fade from being a character in the scene to being a compassionate father. You look at the people and ask, "How did my people get this way? How'd they get to this place in life?" I must have been asleep. What does the inheritor of the earth do about all its people? They don't even know they are suffering! That's a whole new perspective, on the mountain of care. And it's like all of a sudden a big ache begins to set in. You remember from Kazantzakis about the eagle claws, the talons set in your head. Ninety per cent of the pain we have has nothing to do with being sick. It has nothing to do with being deeply, deeply wounded. That life is the way it is. Those eagle claws become a reminder that life is pain. To live is to be in pain.

And there's a kind of leap that's irrational when you grasp hold of life's being a mat of contradiction. A kind of leap that goes far, far beyond rationality. Rationality here leads you only to a dead end. It's when you leap over that, you see that all that all those myriad little contradictions are one contradiction, and that's where my one life becomes the mountain of care. In the one contradiction. Not in several little ones. The several little bitty ones will just eat you up. You pick any one of them and you can be gone. You can even be something if you pick one of those little ones, knowing what you know. You know a lot. You could be something if you tried tackling one of those little contradictions, and maybe even generate a little humanness. What you know is, unless the whole thing gets changed, even that little chunk is not even gonna get changed. That comes to me as new. Up to that point in my life I was aware that all I'd been doing was getting things together. And everything now beckons to me, its contradiction. It's war. We're in a war here. Forever. Get your helmet. It's war. And so it is.

When you see that life is a series of contradictions, then you see if you 're standing at age 31 as I do, there's no way in the world for a youth to walk by, save you are affronted. Youth reminds me of my utter freedom. I'll never escape that. Oh, David Marshall just walks by and gets a little whirl going in me that reminds me, self-consciously or not, of my freedom. Or Paul Novosad, my seventy-year-old colleague, walks by, and reminds me of my contingency. Reminds me I'm gonna die. Reminds me that there's a long way to go. There are three other great lifetimes to live from where I stand. Life is just one contradiction after another. That male and female are gonna be in a death grip battle forever. Males create the being of females, and females create the being of males. Equally important is that my finitude allows infinity to know its infinity.

Do you know that being itself depends on my being, my finiteness for it to be? That's a little hold on being. At the same time the only way I know I'm finite is if I'm bumped over against the infinity of all that is. As I'm bumped over against my death, I know that I'm finite. I used to wonder how St. Teresa got to be a saint. I wondered, "Now did Teresa ask herself what it was to be a woman in her time?" And I discovered she didn't even raise that question. And then I asked if Teresa maybe raised the question of what it was to be a saint. And, lo, I discovered she didn't ask that question either. All she asked was, "What is necessary to serve the world I am in?" The someone else, years and years later, decided that that was the saintly question. And that her life was the saintly deed.

There's a kind of wildness, it seems to me, that accompanies catching onto the fact that life is contradiction. And that wildness has to be disciplined. And disciplining the wildness that is set loose in you is a horrible task. Have you

been aware of the kind of wild bubbling that go on within you sometimes? You're aware that the wildness is in you when you sit down and rest for five minutes and then you go get a cup of coffee and come back and sit down again and you go out to go to the bathroom and you come back and get another cup of coffee, and then you go out and get the paper or . . . You know, the wildness has got hold of you. You are after laying hold of that wildness to use it and not be used by it. You harness the energy until you find the breakthrough point in the contradiction that your life is going for. You wait for that point. And I don't know if any of you were around here for a thing we called the Teacher House in 1966 - six of us had this little timeline to renew the structures of education, and to that end we set about, going to every college campus in what has now come to be known as Area North. We covered a good bit of Area East - went to every university with a college of education and recruited and made speeches. We turned up with 40 souls, that we were going to train during the month of July, to get ready to be the troops who were going to renew the structures of education, in the fall. We had in mind North America, but we planned to start in Chicago, and eventually go to the globe. We worked, and had a training program that was excellent. We worked from early in the morning till late at night. Everyone was carrying a Teacher House brochure around in his notebook, waiting for the big moment when we were going to go to work on the education structures. We had a great July. And toward the end of the month we began to wonder about purchasing the Teachers House. Who was going to live there, how we were going to structure the internal life we were going to be thoroughly secular.

It began to get more and more complex and we began to lay out our plans to present to the collegium. We went in with our plans and there was only one remark: "We're not gonna have any Teacher House." There was a kind of wildness that broke out relative to that. And we suggested it was a little late to say that. . .if that hadn't been our plan. . . And my colleagues said: "You may renew the structures of education but you won't do it through a Teacher House. Unfortunately, nobody could see, back in January, that that wasn't going to work.

Now from the point of view of Summer 71, which is seven years of waiting for the answer to the Teacher House, it has become painfully clear that if we had had a Teacher House in 1966 we would have institutionalized one of the tyrants of society! We would have built a monument to it and been running teachers through it. It would have been meeting ourselves coming and going. You muster your power. And you wait, and wait, and wait, and wait, and wait. Only 7 years. And you wait, and wait, and literally crush in yourself the impulse to act. You sit on it. Every time it begins to rise out of you like a monster, you shoot it! Until the next time it begins to rise and you shoot it again. You ride with what you know until it's clear what you have to do.

There's an incredible kind of loneliness that accompanies that. Because your energies are going not only to work toward the future, but to still the monster in you that wants to rush out and do something, you've got two actions going. You've got enforced stillness, and at the same time your waiting is very busy. You're knocking the bottom out of everything you know. And crushing the impulse to move out too quickly. I'm told that is the way ITI's are recruited - while I was in Caracas, Joe Crocker was talking a little bit about the experience in SEAPAC. He said, you don't set a date for the ITI to begin, you set the plates spinning, one called recruitment, one called developing funds, one called staff nurture, and one called materials and one called practical enablement, and one called the permission of the historical church, all those plates spin at once. And you never determine, until all those plates are spinning, properly, when you're gonna move. When they are all spinning properly, then you set the date and the people come. I don't know what that does to your sense of waiting. That gives mine ants. When the time is right, then you move. And you move with what you've got. It's a very busy watch. You keep your own counsel. You start sharing your anxieties with anybody else and what you've got loose is a very large, anxious monster. When if you keep your own monster under control, you've got a much better situation. I think about those grade C movies where Charlie the diamond cutter gets flown in from somewhere in Africa to split a diamond. They rush him into Mexico or somewhere where he's going to break the diamond and then they're all going separate ways and make a fortune? It all depends on Charlie. He can tap around on the stone for a little while, but when he gets ready to make the final hit, it's got to be right. It's always very silent in those films at that point. And if you check yourself, you're not really

even breathing. And he takes up his little hammer, and his little chisel, and (tap). He's either won or lost the day with that one tap.

You find yourself living in silence in this state. You cannot talk. There is nothing to say. You cannot talk about imperatives, you know they are yours, so you can't chat abstractly. You cannot talk about what needs to be done, because if you see what needs to be done you know who's responsible. You cannot complain, because if you complained, you are reminded who's in charge. It is like being trapped. And you fall silent. And live on with what you know, waiting for the time to move effectively with all your power.

There's a slide on the peak of power. That slide is your awareness that you have the power to move men's lives. What you are standing on is so real that its reality itself, and everybody can see it. And you're able to point that out. It's the difference between teaching a discipline, teaching yourself and teaching life. Powerful teaching is that teaching in which the student sees transparently through his teacher to life itself. When we teach imaginal education courses, by Saturday afternoon people began to find out that the questions they came with are not being answered - or they are not being answered the way they expected them to be answered, so they start raising them. By this time, you are in a section called Pedagogy, and for them that means, "All my troubles solved here." People start asking questions like, "When are we going to deal with discipline?" "I have a student who always comes in late and no matter what I do, no matter how many punishments I give him, he keeps coming in late. I have another pupil who is always failing his tests. And then they begin to pour out question after question after question. You find that you hesitate. You cannot answer the question. Should you tell them they have the wrong question? Then whose is your volition? Will you tell them their question? Will you open their blinded eyes? Here all is carefully measured decision. You begin to spin a bit on who his student is. There are not such things as discipline problems, only love and hate relations to life. The student is not thirsty for facts, but needs meaning filled knowing. Facts come after knowing.

I suppose it is fortunate that books never get passed out at the beginning of a school year. I don't think you would ever start a mathematics class with "two and two equal four." You have to start with infinity, which every human being encounters. A person has to see where he stands in relation to all of life. Authority in teaching comes from seeing that life has had its way with you. That the reference point in the first instance isn't me, the reference point is life itself. And what it has done to me. And that is where I speak from. It is what life has done for me. And done to me. And with me. And all of a sudden you experience that you are utterly adequate for the situation. That you have come from a place that the teachers you have been talking to have visited but not lived. They have lived there all their lives and they have never known they lived there. And you spin a little bit with them, about where it is that they have always lived. And they recognize where they have always lived. And they say yes. They recognize this home in the other world. This state is like betting your life every moment that you know the way. That not only do you know the way, but you are the way. Sometimes I get the picture of being a hammer. Have you ever known a hammer that refused to be a hammer? A hammer is simply an instrument. Some carpenter picks ups and then begins to swing with it. And the hammer just goes on being a hammer, until it is not a hammer anymore. Until it is all used up. Just an instrument. There are all kinds of hammers. Claw hammers, ball hammers, little hammers, big hammers, mechanical hammers. They are all just hammers.

Finally, there is the avalanche point. When you are aware that what you know about life is what everyone knows. Then the one thing you are dealing with is effectiveness. It is knowing that you have the power to do the impossible. It takes only a simple (whistle) and a whole avalanche happens. One little whistle and the whole surface of the mountain is changed, forever. There is no small amount of terror in whistling. I think about it. Thomas, who, in the early life of the Church, got an assignment to India. He didn't particularly care to have that assignment and he told this brothers he wasn't going to take that assignment. His brothers, knowing the way of all flesh, helped him a little by putting him in a bag and tying him up and putting him on the first caravan to India. They instructed the caravan leaders to let him loose when they got to India. This they did. Now he had a good while to brood about his decision, by the time he got there. Thomas built a church. He was the power of ten men.

It's like you're standing on one of those lonely west Texas towns, and you see a figure walk into the street, then from a side street appears a rabid dog. You have one shot to free a creative future or loose a monster. There's only one shot. From that visit you understand that you would risk anything. And there is no price that is too great. You look at the mountain, and you know, to move a mountain takes a lot of wheelbarrows, and shovels, and picks. You look at the mountain, and you know, to move the mountain that has been moved, and you look at the rocks and the dirt and where you put them, and over your shoulder there is this mountain that you just moved. But it is still a mountain of care. And it is always there in the land of mystery.

Patricia Scott