

Editor's Response

First, I want to thank the three reviewers of *Run to the Mountain* for their careful reading and insightful critique of this first volume of the Merton Journals. All three are eminently qualified since they have steeped themselves in the writings of Thomas Merton and write from years of experience. It is clear to me that they have all read the book with serious attention and so I want to respond in like manner.

Patrick O'Connell's textual critique was wisely chosen to lead off the symposium since it sets the stage in depth for what follows. I agree with his conclusions for the most part. At one point he mentions in parenthesis that it would have been helpful to have more footnotes, especially in identifying passages like the poetic lines from Lorca or words from George Eliot or Merton's list of "snatches of verse I can remember." This is an understandable criticism, and ideally it should have been done. But in actual fact, the publisher, HarperSanFrancisco, made it clear to all the editors of the Merton Journals that in this trade edition there would be a minimum of footnotes allowed. What was asked of us was to provide a readable text much as Merton himself had done in publishing excerpts from the journals over the years, except in this case all the extant journals would be published in sequence.

It is pointed out in this review that several passages were omitted from the first edition, especially the four transcriptions from the so-called "Brown Journal." This was an unavoidable omission since I was unaware of the existence of these entries when I did my research at St. Bonaventure's Library. They only surfaced after the publication of *Run to the Mountain*. I am happy to say that they have been included in the paperback edition of the work, along with several more pages that were discovered by Patrick O'Connell during the year following publication. (See my article in this volume, "Editing the Journals of Thomas Merton.")

Fr. William Shannon brings up the question of the authenticity of some of the transcriptions of the Merton Journal, and he raises a valid point. Not having the actual holographic journal, it cannot be proven with absolute certainty that what we have is actually the original version Merton wrote. There is always a possibility that the transcriptions may have been rewritten or improved upon. That was the main reason for having Robert Lax go over the manuscript with me page by page. What we had left out among the transcriptions were

passages that we considered a second or even third redaction of the original text included in *Run to the Mountain*.

Again, this reviewer would like to see more footnotes and a more comprehensive index, to which I must agree. As mentioned above, the publisher set down some rather strict guidelines about footnotes, saying we should keep footnotes to a bare minimum: "We don't want these journals to resemble a German doctoral dissertation with more footnotes than text." Likewise, the publisher provided the index, over which the individual editors had little control. This is an area that should be corrected in the paperback editions that are projected for the entire series.

Finally, a word of thanks to David King for his thoughtful comments with which I am in total agreement. I am grateful for his reflections on Merton as a young convert, and how his writings were significantly influenced by the conversion experience. I feel very fortunate that this first volume of the Merton Journals is reviewed by such distinguished and qualified Merton scholars.

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