

down Daniel Berrigan's criticism of the Vietnam War (11), and his own encounter with monks who declined to vow nonviolence as the first war on Iraq approached (12). Contemplative experience and nonviolence, it seems, invite simultaneous embrace in a dance of mutual reinforcement, rather than one leading directly to the other.

A strength of this book lies in bringing together diverse and extended Merton quotations – particularly those hidden in letters and journal entries – that illuminate the depth and breadth of his commitments to nonviolence. It also serves as a fine example of how sitting with Merton can elicit diverse and inspiring meditations if one has the patience and commitment to listen and learn from him, as Dear has. The author's injection of personal experiences and anecdotes of those who knew Merton add color and insight, as well.

As a series of reflections and commentary on Merton, though, distinctions between what primarily reflects Merton's thought, what reflects Dear's thought, and what reflects both sometimes blur. Specialists might quibble over certain historical or theological details noted about Merton and his spiritual pilgrimage. As Dear himself comments, his persistent and passionate mantra to cease war and violence may feel repetitive at times (see 79). But such distractions aside, *Thomas Merton, Peacemaker* offers a helpful collection of meditations that encourages and inspires us both to learn from Thomas Merton and to live out Christ's mission of reconciliation.

Gordon Oyer

COADY, Mary Frances, *Merton & Waugh: A Monk, A Crusty Old Man & The Seven Storey Mountain* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2015), pp. 155. ISBN: 978-1-61261-628-5 (cloth) \$22.

This is an engaging and attractive little book which is beautifully produced by Paraclete Press. Its focus is the surviving correspondence between Thomas Merton and Evelyn Waugh that took place between August 1948 and February 1952. This consists of 20 letters: thirteen from Merton and seven from Waugh. Unfortunately, as author/editor Mary Frances Coady explains, the Waugh Estate allowed no more than two-thirds of each letter from Waugh to Merton to be printed, although she advises how some of these letters can be read in their entirety on the relevant website.

The useful introduction explains how Waugh, an eminent English Catholic writer, received the manuscript of Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* with a request for an endorsement in the summer of 1948. By that time Waugh was famous in America for his novel *Brideshead Revis-*

ited and he gave positive affirmation of Merton's work – although he was also critical and thought that the book could do with some heavy editing. In the introduction Coady also covers Merton's history in a concise and helpful way including his early career as a published writer.

The book then comprises seven chapters, each of which explores a particular aspect of the relationship between the two men with the relevant correspondence. Coady frames the letters within a commentary that is both informative and lively, giving the reader an insightful sense of the characters of both men. Waugh emerges as a complex, somewhat curmudgeonly, complaining and often ill-humoured man – at times highly critical of all that is American. However he felt some excitement from reading Merton's autobiography and offered to edit an edition of *The Seven Storey Mountain* for publication in Britain; this seemed to mirror his optimism about American Catholics for the future of worldwide Catholicism and so he also agreed to write an article on the American Catholic Church for *Life* magazine. His interest in all this involved various trips to the US and the start of his correspondence with Merton.

Coady writes with a light and perceptive style and the account of the developing relationship is most entertaining. From the initial correspondence it is clear that Merton admires Waugh and encourages him to offer commentary on his writing. He states: "I am in a difficult spot here as a writer. . . . Therefore I need criticism the way a man dying of thirst needs water." Merton explains how his writing is out of his control – he is being told to write by Father Abbot but his work is often changed by censors and publishers and "half the time I haven't the faintest idea whether the thing is good or bad or what it is" (31). Merton's relationship at this point is, as Coady points out, as if to a father confessor and Waugh responds with gusto with a number of blunt criticisms. He admonishes Merton on his view of Cambridge and the Franciscans and asks for clarity about Merton's love affairs – were they "carnal and how far purely sentimental" (36) and then launches into an attack on Merton's style which he sees as typically American and therefore "long-winded." Waugh contrasts this with his own preference for "the laconic. . . . I fiddle away rewriting any sentence six times mostly out of vanity. I don't want anything to appear with my name that is not the best I am capable of. You have clearly adopted the opposite opinion . . . banging away at your typewriter on whatever turns up" (36-37). He warns Merton against what he calls mass-production (a situation explored in further detail later in the book) and sends Merton a book from which Merton copies a line: "Faults of style are largely faults of character" (39).

The roles seem reversed a couple of letters later when it seems that

Merton becomes Waugh's spiritual director and is seen as someone in whom he could confide some of his troubles. The descriptions of Waugh's trips to the United States to write an article for *Life* magazine are highly entertaining. Coady comments how he crossed the Atlantic "seeking religious enlightenment and spiritual renewal in the country he had, a year earlier, disparaged" (52). He demanded a huge amount for travel expenses, staying in the best hotels and being entertained at high-class clubs, cocktail parties and fashionable luncheons. He was a serious drinker, later an alcoholic. The account of his visit to Dorothy Day places him on the far end of a continuum of sensitivity: "The bread line was forming for the noon meal as Waugh's car, a Cadillac, pulled up at the Catholic Worker's House of Hospitality. He immediately earned Day's disapproval by suggesting he take her and her staff to lunch at Le Chambord, one of the most expensive restaurants in the city" (53-54).

It was on this US visit that Waugh and Merton met at the Abbey of Gethsemani where both were mildly surprised at how the other looked. In his journal Merton writes: "I expected him [Waugh] to be taller and more dashing, but he was very nice and friendly" (56). As Coady notes, this latter phrase is bland and perhaps includes an added irony as from all accounts of Waugh the phrase "very nice and friendly" is not one that remotely springs to mind. She allows herself some speculation in this section, wondering whether the famous English writer "dressed in his tailor-made three-piece suit, fresh from the worldly elegance of high-society parties featuring caviar and fine wines" (57) became aware as a serious Christian of his personal shortcomings in the light of the stark abbey church and the young monks embracing a life of contemplation and sacrifice.

An interesting aspect of the book for this reviewer were the details given of the editing that was made by Waugh both for *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which became *Elected Silence* for a British readership, and his later editing of *The Waters of Siloe*, with the changed title of *The Waters of Silence*. His editing technique was usually to cut rather than to rewrite – Merton's phrases "in other words" and "this means" presaged a Waugh edit. He also took out sentences involving Merton's excessive self-castigation and what followed the word "because" – signaling over-explanation. Whole swathes of "unnecessary piety" were cut and paragraphs describing Merton's bitterness towards Cambridge were taken out because, as Waugh had written to Merton, he thought the problem lay with the student and his recklessness rather than with the university itself (see 65-68). The task of editing *The Waters of Siloe/Silence* appears in the end to have defeated him; he rearranged part of the book and cut the whole

prologue but nearly half received little editing, with Waugh commenting: “I find I have bitten off more than my failing teeth can chew” (111).

As the relationship tapers off Coady offers an interesting Epilogue. She sees how Merton’s confidence in his writing grew in the 1950s although he continued to “ponder ambivalently on his life as a writer” (139) and how writing competed and contrasted with his desire for greater solitude and silence. Waugh struggled with ill health and associated depression and felt bitter about the changes the Catholic Church was making. Merton notes in his journal for August 1964 a letter from “a crusty old man called Evelyn Waugh” (142) to the magazine *Commonweal* supporting conservatism; Merton continued “I understand conservatism – he is one of the genuine conservatives: he wishes to conserve not what might be lost but what is not even threatened because it vanished long ago” (142). As Coady insightfully notes, the bohemian Merton would always have clashed at some point with the established order that was essential to Waugh’s world. Yet both men reflect through their writings their search for the absolute and in this they were united.

Fiona Gardner

MOSES, John, *Divine Discontent: The Prophetic Voice of Thomas Merton*, Foreword by Rowan Williams (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. xxiii + 242. ISBN 978-1-4411-8062-9 (cloth) \$32.95.

Certain authors possess a magnetism. Their mirroring of our own discontent, our own experience of the human predicament, entralls us. Thomas Merton is one of these authors. John Moses’ *Divine Discontent: The Prophetic Voice of Thomas Merton* is a notable addition to the list of volumes prepared for the centennial of his birth. Moses seeks to understand the fascination we have with Merton, to comprehend his paradoxes, and to perceive his prophetic voice in eight chapters, preceded by a Foreword by Rowan Williams. Moses argues that the all-too-human contradictions and tensions of Merton’s various vocations are forged into a prophetic voice replete with divine discontents.

The opening chapter explores the reasons for our enduring intrigue with Merton. His “compromised but compelling” (20) discipleship entices, drawing the reader to become invested in Merton’s own questions and contradictions. Moses uses this opening chapter to set up the following five, each of which examines one of Merton’s vocations: the call to monasticism, the urge to write, the necessity of contemplation, the responsibility to social criticism and the longing for ecumenical dialogue. While Moses understands these to compete in Merton for time and energy, they simultaneously fructify each other. Moses insists that Merton’s primary