

been powerfully illustrated by a description from a tape recording of Merton's discussion with the novices of Faulkner's "The Bear." In fairness to Del Prete, the question of how much emphasis to give to essential concepts and how much to Merton the teacher, is a matter of judgment. And yet, more about Merton as teacher would have been consistent with the subject, would have been congruent with Merton's approach to education and would have strengthened the overall impact of the book.

A methodological problem for the author must have been how to treat the various quotations from Merton given the fact that his views on several issues changed over the years. In other words, one ought to be hesitant to give all of his statements equal weight because his earlier views may not have been what he continued to believe many years later. Del Prete does not reveal how he resolved this problem.

The only other concern about the book is that the same quotations by Merton seem to be repeated too frequently. Perhaps this was a function of the few direct comments from Merton about education. At the same time, repetition is an effective pedagogical tool.

All in all, the book will certainly provide a much needed contribution to understanding an important aspect of Merton's thought. In addition, it should fuel the current debate about education and will provide support for what is clearly a minority viewpoint. Merton's voice is one which needs to be heard on this crucial subject and the timing seems just right. We owe Del Prete our thanks.

MERTON IN CAPSULE FORM

A Capsule Review of

THOMAS MERTON: A Selection from his Writings

Edited by Aileen Taylor with an Introduction by Monica Furlong
Springfield, Illinois: Templegate Publishers (Modern Spirituality Series), 1990
94 pages / \$4.95 paperback

Reviewed by **Barbara Sonnenberg**

Originally published in England in 1988, this attractive paperback in The Modern Spirituality Series highlights capsule thoughts from thirteen works of the mature Thomas Merton. Renowned biographer Monica Furlong introduces the selections with a cogent portrayal of the exterior and interior events which influenced Merton's life and thought. Understanding what Furlong terms the "Paradox and contradiction . . . built into Merton's family background," the reader can more readily identify his quest for peace, stability, and concern for all living things.

All the selections chosen by Aileen Taylor are from mimeographs prepared at Gethsemani and are upbeat, optimistic, "new" Merton. Wisely, no comments are made on the texts. A bibliography is provided at the end. Readers familiar with these writings will find their old favorites and perhaps add some new gems, but the work is best suited to those unfamiliar with Thomas Merton's later works. Format and price make this an excellent gift item.

□ **Barbara Sonnenberg** lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, and is a librarian at the Cincinnati Public Library's main branch. She is a frequent reviewer of books ("mostly fiction," she says) and has reviewed for *The Merton Seasonal*.