

# A Tale of Two Teachers: Frank O'Malley and Thomas Merton

By John P. Collins

## Introduction

“All anyone could find in [Professor O'Malley's dorm room]: a bed lumpy with books, old essays by students, old books by former students, old checks from students repaying loans never cashed.”<sup>1</sup> And so it was: Frank O'Malley, the legendary professor at the University of Notre Dame, had many peculiarities, but his teaching prowess was unmatched by any professor on campus. He was, almost literally, a pied piper as students trailed behind him while he traversed the campus walkways. At course registration time, many of the students were hoping to get his approval for course admission or at least permission to audit his classes, sometimes accompanied by their girlfriends from nearby St. Mary's College.

One of the students hoping to gain admission to O'Malley's courses was Patrick Hart, who was a student and a brother of the Congregation of Holy Cross at Notre Dame from 1947 through 1951. He was majoring in Philosophy and also taking some courses in English. Because the sections were full, O'Malley allowed Hart to audit his courses. He states, “Frank was always very gracious about giving me permission.”<sup>2</sup> In an article published in the newsletter of the Congregation, Patrick Hart describes his four years as a Brother before going to the Abbey of Gethsemani to become a Cistercian monk. He explains that the years spent at Notre Dame helped him make a transition to the monastery:

So, in all truth, I am enormously indebted to Holy Cross to so many teachers at Notre Dame. Frank O'Malley, in particular, was for many of his Notre Dame students what Thomas Merton was to become for me and so many other monks at Gethsemani. It was O'Malley's and Merton's contemplative vision of the Gospel that became so much a part of them through their reading of the “French Prophets” – Bloy, Mauriac, Peguy, Claudel, etc. They were both born teachers, O'Malley even more than Merton, who was a minister of the written word.<sup>3</sup>

Even though Frank O'Malley included Thomas Merton books in his syllabus titled “Modern Catholic Writers,” Patrick Hart does not recall O'Malley “speaking very much about Merton, although [he] read some place where [O'Malley] considered Merton a good minor poet.”<sup>4</sup> Thomas Merton and Frank O'Malley never met, never corresponded, and



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there is no evidence that Merton knew anything about the famed Notre Dame professor. However, O'Malley was well aware of Merton's life and writings as his syllabus contained nine of the monk's books, as well as a thematic description of Merton's writings, and the Notre Dame Archives includes notes by the professor about *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

My vocation over the past 55 years has been in the field of education and I am, naturally, attracted to the traits and qualities of great teachers. The primary purpose of this essay is to present the life and educational practices of an outstanding teacher at the University of Notre Dame who, as noted above, included Thomas Merton in his course titled "Modern Catholic Writers." When I learned that Brother Patrick Hart, Thomas Merton's last secretary, had both Frank O'Malley and Thomas Merton as teachers, I was motivated to write an essay that included both men and their experiences as educators. Therefore, a secondary purpose of this essay is to briefly review Thomas Merton as a teacher, both from a philosophical point of view as well as through testimony from his former students. In this essay, I am not claiming that one teacher is better than the other, but rather, I am presenting the characteristics of two outstanding educators, who differed somewhat in their methodology, but embraced common values in helping students discover themselves in relation to the world. I am reminded of Parker Palmer, who queried young people about their great teachers. He writes:

The answers I get range all over the map in terms of technique – some great teachers lecture almost non-stop, some do little else but assign a lot of reading and ask a lot of questions, and others fall somewhere in between. The stories I have heard about great teaching have no discernible continuities in terms of technique – but what they do have in common is an emphasis on the qualities of selfhood that great teachers possess and reveal and offer to their students.<sup>5</sup>

Palmer goes on to say that while students assert that their great teachers were different from one another, bad teachers are all the same because "there is a gap between the stuff being taught and the self that is teaching it. Such a teacher is engaged in 'active self-impersonation,' to use Merton's phrase" (Palmer 35). My thesis, therefore, is that the characteristics of both Thomas Merton and Frank O'Malley, as consummate teachers, include the integration of their selves with the "stuff being taught."

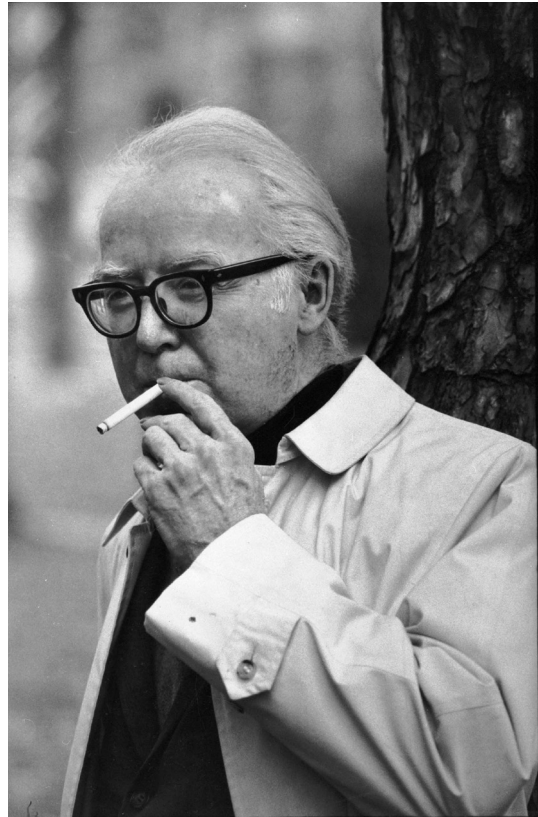
Francis J. (Frank) O'Malley was born in 1909 in the cotton mill town of Clinton, Massachusetts. His parents were Irish immigrants and his father worked in the local mill as a weaver, unlike the seafaring O'Malleys of County Mayo in Ireland. During his high school years, Frank O'Malley was known for his wit, especially during a monotonous class, and he was also acknowledged "as one to whom one could go for help in any subject."<sup>6</sup> Although O'Malley graduated at the top of his high school class, he could ill afford to attend college upon graduation and subsequently worked in the local drug store for two years before entering the University of Notre Dame in 1928.<sup>7</sup>

During his undergraduate years, O'Malley performed with the University Theatre and became associate editor of *Scrip*, a literary and criticism publication. As a member of the Scribbler's Club, O'Malley, along with other students, presented poems, short stories and essays that were critiqued by the group. He was also a member of the Patricians, who were students promoting and sustaining an interest in the classics and literature. O'Malley found himself again at the top of his class, graduating as valedictorian in 1932.<sup>8</sup> The following year he received a Master of Arts in English. In

1938 O'Malley was appointed University Scholar by the faculty of Princeton University, but he ultimately refused the offer, after agonizing over it, because he had just instituted a new program at Notre Dame, along with professor Rufus Rauch, entitled "Philosophy of English Literature," which was to be taught in two sections, Part I for juniors and Part II for seniors. O'Malley realized that if he went to Princeton, the new program would surely fail. As always with Frank O'Malley – Notre Dame came first (Meaney 44). Unknown to most people, in 1941-42 O'Malley "had tried desperately" to obtain a commission in all branches of the armed services including the Marine Corps, but was rejected because of very poor eyesight. He even tried to obtain a position as an instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy, but was rejected there as well (Meaney 203). He remained at Notre Dame for the rest of his life.

Father Theodore Hesburgh, former President of the University of Notre Dame, once remarked, "[Frank O'Malley] had a greater influence on more people in two generations of students at Notre Dame than anyone else on the faculty" (Woodward, "Lessons" 15). Although Hesburgh acknowledged that Notre Dame would no longer tolerate a professor without an earned doctorate, he was hopeful that someday there would be a

revival of O'Malley's "vision of Catholic humanism" which fueled his passionate care for students (Woodward, "Lessons" 21). At the 1972 Notre Dame commencement, O'Malley was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*. This honorary degree award marked the first time that the school administration invited the student body to nominate a recipient (Meaney 200). Near the end of his career, the effects of alcohol and smoking began to take their toll. In the early 1970s O'Malley was a permanent fixture at the bar of the Morris Inn on campus and for the first time he was missing some of his classes. On May 7, 1974, Frank O'Malley quietly passed away after being hospitalized at St. Joseph's Hospital for three weeks (Woodward, "Lessons" 21). Frank O'Malley was buried at the Community Cemetery on the Notre Dame campus. John Meaney states that O'Malley would have chosen "the little cemetery on the wooded hill in the Indiana snowbelt" and fittingly ends his work on O'Malley with a quotation from one of his teacher's favorite authors, James Joyce – the final sentence from the Irish author's short story "The Dead": "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (Meaney 264).



Frank O'Malley

### The Program of Studies

Frank O'Malley was the right person for the times because Catholic colleges were being influenced by the wave and currents of European Catholic intellectual revitalization between 1920 and 1950. Catholic college educators were hoping "that the European example would stimulate a similar revival of Catholic life and culture in the United States." O'Malley's courses and influence on the University of Notre Dame campus is "representative of a significant intellectual pattern operating within the American Catholic cultural community during the 1940's and early 1950's."<sup>9</sup> Ever the inspiring and dramatic teacher, distiller and synthesizer of the writings of great literary figures, Frank O'Malley, like most teachers, was not an original thinker, nor did he leave many writings other than a handful of monographs published in the Notre Dame journal, *The Review of Politics*.<sup>10</sup> Arnold Sparr describes Frank O'Malley's strength and contributions as an educator:

As a teacher at a major Catholic university, O'Malley worked to inspire his students with the vision of an "integrated Christian life" and the need to realize that vision "in the modern world." An essayist, lecturer, literary critic, and Catholic intellectual, O'Malley constantly informed his own work with the principles of his faith. All the while, O'Malley drew upon the ideas and figures of the French and German Catholic revivals for his models, inspiration, and direction. (Sparr 125)

He adds, "Few American Catholic college teachers during the 1940's and 1950's were more adept than O'Malley at bringing [a] sense of total Christian existence to life, or inspiring students to embrace the full consequences of their faith" (Sparr 138-39).

Frank O'Malley taught several courses over a period of 42 years at Notre Dame, including "Philosophy of English Literature," "Modern Catholic Writers," "Western Civilization and Culture," "Rhetoric and Composition" for freshmen, and a course about the French Prophets.<sup>11</sup> The most popular offering was titled "Modern Catholic Writers," an elective course designed to be "a comprehensive introduction to the general humanities, not simply an 'English course.'"<sup>12</sup> O'Malley's goal was to give the students an introduction to 65 nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic authors through an integrated approach transcending the academic disciplines. John A. Gueguen Jr., a Notre Dame graduate, described the course as a method of equipping young students "with a Catholic discernment by drawing them into a company of literate, humane, devout friends with whom they could spend their lives." Gueguen contends that a secret ambition of Frank O'Malley was to encourage students to follow him into teaching equipped with the learnings of Catholic authors, and indeed many did enter the teaching field representing every academic discipline (Gueguen 1).<sup>13</sup>

O'Malley encouraged many of his brighter freshmen students to declare English as their major, with the assurance that they would do great things together because the task was to draw greatness, a gift of God, out of each student (Woodward, "Lessons" 17). "The course lectures were always O'Malley's expression of truths lived and breathed" (Meaney 129). Although the "Modern Catholic Writers" course outline listed a number of American authors, the focus of the lectures and commentaries were mainly about European writers. O'Malley included Thomas Merton in his syllabus. He wrote: "The spiritual and intellectual character of Thomas Merton as revealed (*sic*) in *The Seven Storey Mountain*: his sense of spiritual crises, his attitudes to contemporary literature, his attitudes towards literature" (O'Malley, "Modern Catholic Writers" 6).<sup>14</sup> The Merton reading

list included: *Man in the Divided Sea*, *Figures for an Apocalypse*, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, *Seeds of Contemplation*, *The Waters of Siloe*, *The Ascent to Truth*, *The Sign of Jonas*, *Bread in the Wilderness* and *No Man Is an Island* (O'Malley, "Modern Catholic Writers" 15).<sup>15</sup>

The so called "Major Course" required of English majors was titled "Philosophy of English Literature"; Part I, offered in the junior year, was taught by Rufus Rauch and Part II, offered in the senior year, was taught by Frank O'Malley. The junior-year course comprised "works taken from English literature of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance." The subject matter of the senior year taught by O'Malley included English authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of the authors was the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (the subject of Thomas Merton's rejected doctoral proposal at Columbia University<sup>16</sup>). A favorite O'Malley classroom reading was Hopkins' poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and Brother Patrick Hart states, "I recall vividly [O'Malley's] recitation and commentary on [the poem] without a single note in front of him."<sup>17</sup>

William Pfaff describes O'Malley's influence as "moral and religious" rather than literary: "[O'Malley] gave people a vision of life, a religious vision, one even of sanctity. . . . He took [students] of the anti-intellectual and puritanical Catholicism of the time . . . and gave them a new, inspiring, intellectually satisfying Catholicism of Maritain, Bernanos [and] Bloy" (Meaney 249).

### Frank O'Malley, The Teacher

Perhaps a good starting point for understanding Frank O'Malley as a teacher is a description by a former student, Nass Cannon, who graduated from Notre Dame in 1965 as a pre-med major. Cannon, a current ITMS member, writes the following:

Professor O'Malley was not just another English Professor; he was a poetic portal through which one connected with modern Catholic writers. With a crisp thin voice aimed sometimes at his student audience but usually at the window, O'Malley lectured from his notes. For an hour, there were no questions or answers, just a soft voice speaking poetically about the writings of one or another of the authors in his Modern Catholic Writers course. Rapt students, usually seniors, attended almost all of his lectures even though there was no attendance requirement. I do recall one roll call, the first day of class when O'Malley read out the names of the attendees to match the names with faces. When he came to my name, he hesitated, looked puzzled and gently enquired if I were a sophomore – a very unusual occurrence in a class with limited enrollment highly sought by upper classmen. I mumbled yes and began fumbling for an explanation about how I came to be there. Noting my embarrassment about being identified as an underclassman, he stammers "oh, oh," and his face radiating compassion signaled to my surprise that he was honored to have me in his class. This I came to learn was the real O'Malley, a man who approached each student with profound respect and somehow communicated his awe for the dignity of the person he encountered. . . . [T]here is a short phrase that I associate with his class and it has stuck in my mind all of these years. I don't know if he said it or something he said sparked me to create the phrase but it is etched in my mind. For me, O'Malley's life and indeed the whole human condition can be summarized with these few words – "The Tears of Things."<sup>18</sup>

Frank O'Malley rarely sat down, even in social situations,<sup>19</sup> and especially not in the classroom. John Meaney further delineates some of O'Malley's teaching characteristics:

[O'Malley] always came to class with a set of note pages on which he had written out his entire lecture, and he delivered this in a mounting crescendo of sensitivity, the fingertips of his hands barely touching the papers. Sometimes as his rhythmic delivery continued and his voice rang like a bell on the sounds of the words his eyes would narrow to slits and his eyebrows would rise (Meaney 50).<sup>20</sup>

O'Malley never took attendance but knew the names of the rare missing students; his occasional exams were an essay based on some reading or poem. Practically every student received an A and on occasion he gave the registrar more grades than his class roster. Upon being questioned by the dean, he retorted, "Distribute the extras to others who need them" (Harnden 78).

Frank O'Malley did not dialogue with the students nor did he invite any questions as "he simply lectured at a steady pace, in a soft voice, seldom looking up" (Meaney 51).<sup>21</sup> O'Malley, the teacher, was a "wisp of a man, avoiding eye contact with his audience, gazing fixedly at his text, and reading with such a voice as if nothing else on earth that moment were of equal consequence" (Meaney 54). O'Malley was clearly intense as a lecturer, offering very little humor but, occasionally, when he realized he had indignantly denounced some author, he paused, blushed a little, "and then quietly [laughed] at himself before going on" (Meaney 91).



**O'Malley in the Classroom**

Since Frank O'Malley rarely talked about himself, even close friends or students knew very little about his personal, intellectual or spiritual development. However, it was apparent that he was deeply faithful, but not pious. "For him, the church was the corporate community of the faithful, saints and sinners alike, united in the Mystical Body of Christ, living in time and under the liberating shadow of the cross" (Woodward, "Lessons" 19). With the advent of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, Frank O'Malley became critical of the Church as he believed "the sacred mysteries" were being trivialized (Woodward, "Lessons" 21).<sup>22</sup>

At times, O'Malley would make commentaries affirming his strong religious convictions, "specifically his belief in Christ" (Meaney 51). Aristotle's metaphysics was an occasion for O'Malley to observe that man's nature has a tendency towards spiritualization, "a realization of the soul" (Meaney 56). It was not unusual for O'Malley to use the writings of a philosopher or a literary

figure to promulgate, in an indirect way, his own spiritual or religious message. Lecturing on the Oxford Movement, for example, Frank O'Malley was a little more explicit in revealing his personal religious views:

Humanism will succeed only when the true humanist realizes that Christ in the Church is the only power. . . . Most of the humanists of the nineteenth century saw before their lives' end that they had failed; because theirs was not the true humanism which is theocentric, not anthropocentric. . . . [John Henry] Newman's conversion marks the triumph and failure of Victorian humanism which only deserves to be called humanism because it tried to reconcile man with the divinity within himself and within nature. (Meaney 96)<sup>23</sup>

In the late 1940s, not happy with some of Notre Dame's administrative policies, O'Malley wrote a proposal for a "dream" Catholic College to be located perhaps in Ohio or California.<sup>24</sup> In describing the ideal classroom teacher of his "Christ College" he specifies that one of the traits was the ability to renew the contemplative attitude. He quotes Gabriel Marcel: "[A] civilization which . . . finally denies the place of contemplation and shuts out the very possibility of contemplation, such a civilization . . . sets us inevitably on the road to . . . misosophy." O'Malley's description of the quiet time or contemplation was a time when "Man's soul has to be rediscovered. . . . [and he] has to expose himself to a world of wisdom and *pietas*" (Meaney 162-63).<sup>25</sup> Man's relation to God was an important element proffered by O'Malley in his description of Christ College, as "*we must meditate seriously about the final relation of our existence, our relation to God*" (Meaney 166).<sup>26</sup> Strict adherence to the syllabus was not advisable and deviations from a strict course of study could be stifling and not serve the best interests of the students. Further, each teacher is entitled to his own styles and methodologies in the classroom; indeed, a variety of methodologies was encouraged according to the needs of the students at a given time. O'Malley recommended the personal conference as the best possible methodology for identifying the optimum pathway to learning, as "no two students grow towards perfection in exactly the same way" (Meaney 167). But in the end the "dream" Catholic College never came to fruition as Frank O'Malley could not tear himself away from his beloved Notre Dame.

William Pfaff, a writer for *The New Yorker*, describes O'Malley's influence: "Frank O'Malley gave people a vision of life – a religious vision, one even of sanctity – and a stance – uncompromising – of the highest possible intellectual standards" (Woodward, "Lessons" 15). Monsignor Anthony Brown '43, President of the College of Great Falls, Montana, writes: "[O'Malley] impressed upon us in his often shy way that only a person who can love can teach. I doubt if any of us ever forgot that lesson" (Meaney 231). In 1962, *Time* magazine published a cover story about the University of Notre Dame and Frank O'Malley was cited as "the university's most inspiring undergraduate teacher":

O'Malley plumbs life's most basic emotions, using Charles Peguy to examine the virtue of hope, Claudel to plumb suffering, Kierkegaard to emphasize the shallowness of religion without love. When he reaches students, O'Malley often changes their lives, teaching them to love learning and learn love. "The totality of life has hit me," said one of his students last week. "The act of knowing and the act of being are becoming one."<sup>27</sup>

O'Malley described, at one time, the essential attitude he considered the key to a teacher's success and it revealed his propensity to value and respect the "sacred interiority of each student." Indeed, this respect went hand-in-hand with O'Malley's love for his students. In the July, 1974 issue of *Review of Politics*, it was stated, "[O'Malley] loved his students and they returned his love with the shining radiance of their youthful idealism" (Meaney 213). O'Malley's dedication to his students apparently knew no boundaries as it was not uncommon for him to call fellow professors at night and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each student with an eye to developing strategies for improvement of individual performance (Woodward, "Lessons" 17). Kevin Reilly '71, later president of the University of Wisconsin, credits O'Malley with conveying to him the most profound understanding of the teaching process that he has ever encountered. Reilly quotes O'Malley: "Teaching belongs to the active life or rather, to that activity which is the overflow of thought and contemplation. It is the utterance of truth to people who will grow upon the utterance as mystery and rebel against it as formulation."<sup>28</sup> In a moving article about her professor, written on May 7, 1974, the day of his death, Patti Romano, a student at St. Mary's College, conveys O'Malley's deep respect for the interior life of his students. She explains that O'Malley asked the class to write a piece to be read to the class about someone who had changed them somehow during their lifetime. She writes: "There probably have been many people running around in my life; reaching to touch and somehow I missed them. I was doing a lot of passing up, letting a lot of people just ride on by. So, I wrote nothing. I couldn't. He said nothing. He understood. I felt that."<sup>29</sup>

In his final lecture to his Philosophy of Literature course Frank O'Malley, like T. S. Eliot, decried the decline of Western Civilization, and made his humble attempt to present and interpret Christian values through literature. He emphasized the writings of Paul Claudel, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Sigrid Undset as a means to salvation and recommended the reading of the poem "The Caged Skylark" by Hopkins for an understanding of man as both a "natural and supernatural being" (Meaney 105-15). John Meaney writes about the last class of his Major Course with O'Malley:

It was the end of the most sustained and intense intellectual performance that any of us had ever seen. We stood spontaneously and applauded as he stepped down from the podium, blushing, smiling, and bowing slightly on his way out of the room. . . . He had created and sustained for us over nine months a vision of how one man could confront the culture of our time and achieve his personal integration with validity and power. . . . We might later discover others who were perhaps greater scholars, as such; but they would all sadly lack that final integration of personality, that performance. (Meaney 116)

Arnold Sparr contends that O'Malley's strength was his ability to extract the core of a writer's thinking and "present it with passionate intensity" (Sparr 130). Though a shy man, once he was at the podium O'Malley became the consummate actor conveying wisdom to the "friends of the work."<sup>30</sup> According to Ralph McInerney, Frank O'Malley became the transcending symbol of many things on the South Bend campus, including "the vitality of the pre-conciliar Church . . . the primacy of teaching over research . . . [and] of Catholic literature as a unique fusion of the temporal and eternal" (McInerney 113). One student who apparently experienced the unique fusion of the temporal and eternal was Brother Patrick Hart, who attributes his initial attraction to the contemplative life to Frank O'Malley when he writes: "I owe him, under God, my vocation to the contemplative life. He was God's minister of the Word, and the seeds sown in those days later developed gradually and



continue to this day to influence me. In a word, thank God for Frank O'Malley and may something of his great spirit continue in the halls of Notre Dame."<sup>31</sup> O'Malley's students probably could not define the nature of great teaching but, declares John Meaney, "we felt that we knew it when we saw it." Perhaps it was because O'Malley cared deeply, he was serious, even ascetic and he had a flair for drama (Meaney 51). Clearly, Frank O'Malley, who lectured eloquently on his favorite theme – the spiritual values illuminated by literature – was recognized by his students as a great teacher.<sup>32</sup>

### Thomas Merton – The Teacher

In his 1990 book *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person*, Thomas Del Prete explains that very little had been written by Thomas Merton about education. Throughout the book, Del Prete carefully cultivates the "scattered kernels of insight" derived from the "personal narrative" of Merton's autobiographical writings. There are two fundamental ideas that emerge from studying Merton's writings, according to DelPrete – "the formation of the whole person" and "self-discovery."<sup>33</sup> One of the major sources for the development of Merton's ideas about education is his essay "Learning to Live," in which he states: "The purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to his world." To discover oneself is the function of a university, according to Merton, and through this discovery of self, one is able to save his soul and thereby save society from the ravages of evil.<sup>34</sup> In an essay about Merton's early teaching experiences, Del Prete explains that he was interested in helping students read and write, develop clear thinking in the formulation of ideas and the appreciation of art and literature.<sup>35</sup> Del Prete asserts that Merton, while teaching at Columbia University, "was concerned with linking learning how to write to the process of developing one's own ideas, and learning who one was and what matters in life" (Del Prete, "Candy" 155).

There are various accounts of Thomas Merton as a teacher at St. Bonaventure College in 1940-1941. One of the few female students at the college remembers him as sometimes remote and distant, but friendly. Marion Weis Horey recalls that Merton would "see so much more" in literature and poetry than she could and she recalls, "I realized from his class that I had a lot to learn. . . . He just did operate on another plane. I never felt that I could read poetry and get from it the thousand levels of meaning that he got" (Del Prete, "Candy" 163). Robert Fenzl remembers Merton as lively in class and he recalled a particular vivid reading of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: "He read [it] like [it] should have been read" (Del Prete, "Candy" 163). Class preparation was a hallmark of Merton's teaching and Del Prete draws upon his notebooks archived at the Friedsam Memorial Library at St. Bonaventure University. Del Prete states that: "[Merton's] extensive class notes, kept in a neat notebook, attest to his diligence in preparation and to his thorough background in the classics of English literature" (Del Prete, "Candy" 164). Students are perceptive and can easily detect if a teacher really likes his/her subject matter or is just going through the motions. Merton comments on his students at St. Bonaventure in one of his English Literature classes who were an odd mixture of seminarians and football players: "because they saw that I myself liked my own subject matter, they tolerated it, and even did a certain amount of work for me without too much complaint."<sup>36</sup> Rita Ballard, one of Merton's students at St. Bonaventure, describes him as "casual, laid back" and his classes were "very interesting, lively, not very formal." She comments that Merton had a way of motivating students to do the reading in "an easygoing way" and although he was not demanding

there was the expectation that you would do the assignments (Del Prete, “Candy” 165).

There were several teachers who influenced Thomas Merton during his student days. The most influential was Mark Van Doren, a professor at Columbia University, who had the ability to educe from his students their “‘own explicit ideas’ and ‘purifying and educating their perceptions’” (Del Prete, *Education* 152). Van Doren’s dialogic style of teaching and method of educement in the classroom evidently was a factor in shaping Merton’s views on teaching. Del Prete asserts that Merton’s credo of teaching might well be the “bond of charity created by communicating and sharing the truth.” This communal sharing of the truth is intrinsic to dialogue and is “vital to the formulation of the whole person” (Del Prete, *Education* 165-66).

I would like, now, to turn to Merton’s teaching experiences at Gethsemani between the years 1951-1965, while he was Master of Students and later Novice Master. A series of interviews by Gloria Kitto Lewis with Merton’s

monastic students is revealing as their testimony describes “the practical effects” of Merton’s teaching.<sup>37</sup> The interviews were conducted with monks who had diverse backgrounds and Lewis notes that the testimony was from their experiences in the classroom as well as private conferences. There was complete agreement that Merton had clear goals and was always well prepared.<sup>38</sup> Brother Patrick Hart gave a general outline of the goal, which was “to enable students to move through the four classic stages: from *lectio* (reading) to *meditatio* (meditation), to *oratio* (prayer) and, finally, to *contemplatio* (contemplation)” (Lewis 91). Brother Paul Quenon emphasized that Thomas Merton’s approach was “basically monastic and sapiential. Wisdom, *sapientia* in Latin, has the same root as ‘to taste,’ *sapere*. The purpose of education is to get a taste for truth and to taste it continuously, which in fact is meditation” (Lewis 91).<sup>39</sup>



Merton Giving a Conference

Some monks were disturbed that Merton seemed to contradict himself at times but Father Matthew Kelty observed that Merton, in fact, was not contradicting himself, but rather, he would look at problems from a different point of view: “It used to rattle people a little, but you needed to know that he was not to be taken literally, that you had to interpret what he had to say” (Lewis 93). Brother Paul Quenon noted that it was not unusual for Thomas Merton to change topic during mid-stream of his class if students seemed uninterested in the subject and he was able to diversify, keep the class lively and easily change pace. The students enjoyed Merton’s sense of humor, especially as he poked fun at “various things we did around the monastery in a way that we all could see the wisdom

of it” (Lewis 93). At times, however, Merton could be controlling and close-minded, especially if the humorous incident was not initiated by him: “If he wasn’t in charge of the thing, it would rattle him a little,” Fr. Matthew recalled (Lewis 94). There was evidence that Merton, at times, employed Socratic dialogue in his classes and that he was skilled “in asking thought-provoking questions and in encouraging students to discover their own answers to those questions,” much as he experienced in his classes with Mark Van Doren (Lewis 94). However, there is mixed testimony as to the overall effectiveness of Merton’s questioning techniques. Upon hearing some of Merton’s tapes, Gloria Kitto Lewis comments that she “felt that Merton often rushed through a host of questions and bombarded his students with too many questions” (Lewis 94). Conversely Brothers Harold Thibodeaux and Paul Quenon thought Merton was a successful questioner. Brother Paul states: “[Merton] was good at asking questions. He got us thinking. . . . He would ask questions as a preparation, and then at the end, we would be asking the questions” (Lewis 95). Father Timothy Kelly had a different view:

[Merton] could be very curt. He would answer your question very specifically and was clear in his body language that he wanted no more; that is, time’s up. Of course, our style was not open to much dialogue and questioning, so he really did not open classes up to questions. It was foreign to his style. He sometimes asked questions to get the answers he wanted. (Lewis 95)

Father Timothy also recalled an incident when a student was constantly raising his hand during a class; when Merton finally recognized him, the student paraphrased a statement about Jonah made by a visiting Scripture professor<sup>40</sup> that contradicted what Merton had just said. Father Timothy states that the student had poorly characterized the Scripture professor’s statement. “Well, Merton closed his book and did not give us another talk on Scripture for another year” (Lewis 96).

Brother Columban Weber also found Merton “short and sharp” and indicated that Merton was prone to play favorites, like many teachers, and would favorably maneuver a student’s response,



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“if he liked a particular person” (Lewis 95). Some of the student testimony about Merton and his apparent reluctance to question and dialogue may be in contradiction to Del Prete’s claims that Merton’s credo of teaching might well be a communal sharing of the truth intrinsic to dialogue. However, Lewis states that even though class discussions “were sometimes controlled, abrupt, even aborted, on balance it is fair to say that the monks agreed that Merton wanted all his students to question, to challenge, to probe – sometimes in class, always in their private study and meditation.” It

was through private conferences, however, that Merton excelled in engaging a student in “genuine dialogue.” Though Merton was an “eloquent lecturer, it was in his private encounters that he was probably the most charismatic,” Lewis suggests (Lewis 96). Brother Columban, who was rather critical of Thomas Merton in the classroom, declares that Merton was a great communicator in a private conference. He states, “On a one-to-one he was marvelous [and] . . . reminds me a lot of the great communicators of our time.” He continues that Merton made him feel in a conference that “you are the only person in the world” (Lewis 96-97). Again it was apparent that Merton loved his subject matter and was able to convey his love of learning to his novices. Lewis states: “The monks talked in poignant detail about [his] love for monastic and literary study” (Lewis 98). Father Michael Casagram affirms Merton’s love for literature: “The Sunday conferences reflected his love for the literary world. . . . He loved literature. He loved the mystery of our humanity” (Lewis 98-99). The monks also spoke about Merton’s interest in and love of art and music which led from artistic beauty to the spiritual, and his evident “Christ-centeredness” (Lewis 100-101).

Finally, Thomas Merton’s love for his students is probably expressed best in a passage from his book, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. Merton was on fire watch and he was musing while passing through the novices’ scriptorium. The novices were sleeping and the room was empty: “the sign of love is on these novices and they are precious forever in God’s eyes. Certainly, it has been a great gift of His Love to me, that I am their Novice Master. It is very good to have loved these people and been loved by them with such simplicity and sincerity.”<sup>41</sup>

### **The Last School Bell**

The last school bell sounded many years ago for Frank O’Malley and Thomas Merton and both are buried on the beloved grounds of their respective institutions, the University of Notre Dame and the Abbey of Gethsemani. O’Malley lived in the dormitories of Notre Dame all of his adult life, first as a student at Carroll Hall and later at Lyons Hall as a faculty member. Merton entered the monastery at age 26 and rarely left the grounds; ironically he died of an accidental death in the distant country of Thailand. By most accounts both O’Malley and Merton were “great” teachers. It was not my intent, in this essay, to portray the teaching abilities and methodologies of both men as ideal models for present-day teachers. Indeed, there are many outstanding or great teachers today who successfully engage students utilizing a plethora of techniques, including some enhanced by modern technology. I realize the limits of the lecture form of teaching and that encouraging questions, either within or outside the classroom, is not an unusual pedagogy. However, there are some values delineated in this essay that both O’Malley and Merton shared about their students that transcend educational methodology and should be considered when reflecting on the traits of the ideal teacher.<sup>42</sup>

Both O’Malley and Merton were, by many accounts, eloquent lecturers, perhaps O’Malley the more dramatic and Merton, unlike O’Malley, livening up his classes with a good sense of humor. While O’Malley did not entertain any questions in his classroom, Merton attempted, within the short time frame of his classes, to question students, perhaps even to encourage a limited dialogue but, evidently, not to the degree that he experienced as a student of Mark Van Doren.<sup>43</sup> However, outside of the classroom, both O’Malley and Merton successfully dialogued with students and encouraged questioning. While O’Malley successfully conferenced with students on the campus grounds, his forte was meeting with students in the informal settings of downtown restaurants and hotel bars. Merton,

of course, met with individual students within the confines of the monastery. Both teachers were well-organized with extensive prepared class notes, although O'Malley, evidently, was able to recite many poems from memory and, at times, gave spontaneous lectures with success. Regarding goals of their courses, Merton was preparing his students for the contemplative life, whereas O'Malley was preparing students for the active life, emphasizing his central theme of "spiritual values illuminated by literature." Merton loved and valued literature, as well, and at times utilized literary themes with his novices and quite often, the topic was literature in his Sunday afternoon lectures to the monastic community.<sup>44</sup> In a letter to his publisher, James Laughlin, Merton states: "Jacques Maritain and I both agreed that we thought perhaps the most living way to approach theological and philosophical problems now (that theology and philosophy are in such chaos) would be in the form of creative writing and lit. criticism."<sup>45</sup>

Although Thomas Merton wrote extensively about the contemplative life, we know very little about his own interior life of prayer.<sup>46</sup> So too, Frank O'Malley did not speak of his own spiritual life but he, at times, spoke of renewing the "contemplative attitude" which, in turn, would provide the quiet time when man could rediscover his soul. Indeed, we have the testimony of Brother Patrick Hart regarding both teachers who influenced him to embrace the contemplative life through their "contemplative vision of the Gospel." If we consider love as a natural ally of the contemplative attitude, it is evident that both Merton and O'Malley demonstrated their love for students and both had respect for their interior life which led, in turn, to an acknowledgement of the dignity of each person in their respective classrooms.

In closing, I submit that the students of Thomas Merton and Frank O'Malley knew that their teachers intensely loved their subject matter, loved their students and valued them as authentic human beings. Because both teachers respected "the sacred interiority" of each student, one could surmise that each teacher had embarked on his own journey of self-discovery. It is evident that with these two great teachers there was an integration of self and "the stuff being taught." These transcendent qualities cannot be measured by the overreach of modern psychometric methods,<sup>47</sup> but we can take some comfort in the veracity of student intuition when one of Frank O'Malley's students declared that although he and his classmates could not define great teaching "we felt we knew it when we saw it."

1. Philip Harnden, *Journeys of Simplicity: Traveling Light with Thomas Merton, Basho, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard & Others* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2003) 79; subsequent references will be cited as "Harnden" parenthetically in the text.
2. E-mail from Patrick Hart, OCSO to John Collins [6/29/2011].
3. *Congregation of the Holy Cross* (Midwest Province, Notre Dame, IN) 3 (Summer, 1996) 2.
4. E-mail from Patrick Hart, OCSO to John Collins [6/29/2011].
5. Parker J. Palmer, "Contemplation Reconsidered: The Human Way In," *The Merton Annual* 8 (1995) 34; subsequent references will be cited as "Palmer" parenthetically in the text..
6. John W. Meaney, *O'Malley of Notre Dame* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991) 15; subsequent references will be cited as "Meaney" parenthetically in the text.
7. Evidently O'Malley wanted to attend Notre Dame even though he was offered several scholarships elsewhere, including one to Harvard University. See Kenneth Woodward, "The Lessons of the Master," *Notre Dame Magazine* (Spring 1984) 19; subsequent references will be cited as "Woodward, 'Lessons'" parenthetically in the text.

8. “Frank O’Malley (1909-1974),” Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture (available online at: <http://ethicscenter.nd.edu/about/inspires/frank-o-malley>).
9. Arnold Sparr, *To Promote, Defend, and Redeem* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990) 124; subsequent references will be cited as “Sparr” parenthetically in the text. For influence of European intellectual life on American Catholics, see also John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom, A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003) 189-215 (chapter 7: “Democracy, Religious Freedom, and the Nouvelle Théologie”).
10. German political thinker Waldemar Gurian was assisted by Frank O’Malley and philosophy professor Leo Ward, CSC in founding the journal *The Review of Politics* in 1939. The deeply philosophical journal had as its purpose “to bring to bear upon the special problems raised by modern culture, the illumination of a valid spiritual and philosophical tradition, an illumination best described as the Christian world view.” O’Malley published eight articles in the journal between 1941 and 1963. His essays focused on the “spiritual decay of modern life. . . [and] the survival of culture [which] depended upon a new integration of religion and life” (Sparr 128-29).
11. The course about the French Prophets was not listed in the O’Malley source material but recalled by Brother Patrick Hart (e-mail from Patrick Hart, OCSO to John Collins [11/6/2011]).
12. John A. Gueguen Jr., introductory note to “Frank O’Malley’s ‘Modern Catholic Writers’ A Golden Anniversary Reprint” (available online at: <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jguegu/FRANKOMALLEY.pdf>); subsequent references to this introduction will be cited as “Gueguen” parenthetically in the text; subsequent references to the syllabus and reading list will be cited as “O’Malley, ‘Modern Catholic Writers’” parenthetically in the text.
13. Although he did not become a teacher, O’Malley’s most famous student was Edwin O’Connor, the celebrated novelist, who wrote *The Last Hurrah* and the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *The Edge of Sadness* (both of which O’Malley would include on his “Modern Catholic Writers” reading list). O’Connor would return to Notre Dame periodically and share his latest book drafts as well as guest lecturing in O’Malley’s classroom. O’Connor dedicated *The Edge of Sadness* to Frank O’Malley; see Ralph McNerny, *Some Catholic Writers* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2007), 105-108; subsequent references will be cited as “McInerny” parenthetically in the text.
14. O’Malley made notes while reading Thomas Merton’s *The Seven Storey Mountain*. There are 16 pages of notes on his 8.5 x 5.5 Review of Politics stationery, consisting primarily of names of authors and phrases with corresponding page references. While there is nothing unusual about his notes, I make the following brief observation. Under the topic “His Religious Formation,” O’Malley lists the following names (without page numbers): “His Father, Mark Van Doren, William Blake, Gilson, Bramachari, Maritain, Hopkins, Joyce, Dan Walsh.” O’Malley also notes page numbers related to the contemplative life and tradition. There is mention of Mark Van Doren in several places and one note that states, “Mark Van Doren as a teacher, P. 138.” There are also listings of William Blake and page numbers (Blake was also one of O’Malley’s favorite literary persons) (quoted with permission from “Francis J. O’Malley Papers,” box 6, folder 9, University of Notre Dame Archives).
15. Bold-face titles were books especially emphasized by Frank O’Malley in class (O’Malley, “Modern Catholic Writers” 9).
16. See Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984) 147.
17. E-mail from Brother Patrick Hart to John Collins [6/30/2011].
18. E-mail from Nass Cannon to John Collins [6/19/2011]. Currently Nass Cannon is a Clinical Professor at the University of Alabama School of Medicine. The phrase “the tears of things” is a common translation of a famous phrase from *The Aeneid* of Vergil: “*Sunt lacrimae rerum*” (I.462). Unfortunately, because of space limitations, I could not include all of Nass Cannon’s eloquent comments; I will be happy to e-mail the complete statement upon request (my e-mail is: [jpcoll@townisp.com](mailto:jpcoll@townisp.com)).
19. Frank O’Malley always stood at the back of Sacred Heart Church on campus during Sunday Mass (Meaney 34). When he visited the bars in downtown South Bend he would always stand (Woodward, “Lessons” 15).
20. However, at other times evidently O’Malley lectured without any notes, similar to Brother Patrick Hart’s testimony about the recitation of “The Wreck of the Deutschland.” Pat Sweeney ’55 states that he approached Frank O’Malley after a sterling lecture to steal a glance at his lecture notes and to his surprise found a blank sheet of paper with one short sentence as a brief reminder of a particular quotation the professor wanted to recall. Sweeney was shocked that such a brilliant lecture was delivered spontaneously without notes (“The Last Hurrah,” *Notre Dame Magazine* [October 1974] 32).
21. O’Malley would conference with individual students on occasion and he would expect them to ask questions (Meaney 50). John C. Collins ’63 sat in O’Malley’s office for his final exam. He recalls, “We discussed two things:

- the Old Testament and the Russian novelist, Fedor Dostoyevsky. If there were any doubts in my mind about wanting to enter the teaching profession, they were resolved in those critical 30 minutes” (Meaney 255). O’Malley did, in fact, dialogue with students, however, “over drinks at the downtown bars where [he] held his evening ‘informal colloquia’” (Kenneth Woodward, “The Abiding Presence of the Place,” *Notre Dame Magazine* [Summer 2007] 29 [available online at: <http://magazine.nd.edu/news/9812/>]). Michael Melody recalls that O’Malley spent large sums of money taking students out to dinner, “but the crucial thing was the communion that they shared and not the expense” (Meaney 213).
22. There is no evidence in his lectures or sparse writings that O’Malley followed carefully the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council.
  23. O’Malley’s religious views, particularly his liturgical views, were heavily influenced by Romano Guardini, the German thinker, priest, theologian, philosopher and literary critic. Catholics, according to Guardini, should “live their lives within the fullness of its liturgy. This meant an awareness of the theology of the Church and its fundamental mysteries” (Sparr 130).
  24. For a full account of this envisioned college see Meaney 142-217.
  25. The Age of Enlightenment lectures prompted this commentary about contemplation from O’Malley: “[F]rom the contemplation of the world and of God we must turn our eyes to the more rewarding and satisfying study of the inner self. Let every man examine the phenomena of life as they unfold themselves within the inner world of his consciousness” (Meaney 65).
  26. Thomas Del Prete’s article “The Contemplative as Teacher: Learning from Thomas Merton” (*Your Heart Is My Hermitage: Thomas Merton’s Vision of Solitude and Community* [London: Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1996] 170-76 [available online at: <http://www.thomasmertonsociety.org/prete.html>]) is relevant to Frank O’Malley’s views on the ideal teacher as a person who would renew the contemplative attitude in the classroom. In his opening paragraph, Del Prete states: “In this paper, I am concerned mainly with the question of what distinguishes and characterizes Merton’s teaching as a contemplative. In other words, in terms of content, purpose, and approach, how does Merton’s teaching reflect his contemplative view of life?” (170). I find it interesting that O’Malley evidently valued the contemplative life and its relationship to the “ideal teacher”; one of his former students, William Slavick ’49, recalls that O’Malley introduced the class to the Benedictine monastic tradition and comments, “the Holy Rule and monastic associations have stood me in good stead since” (Meaney 251).
  27. “Education: God & Man at Notre Dame,” *Time* 79.6 (9 February 1962) 54.
  28. “The Last Hurrah,” *Notre Dame Magazine* (October 1974) 33.
  29. *Notre Dame Magazine* (June 1974) 10.
  30. Reverend Charles E. Sheedy CSC in his eulogy referred to Frank O’Malley’s students as “friends of the work” (Meaney 209). (I proudly remember Fr. Sheedy as the prefect of my residence building, Farley Hall, during my freshman year at the University of Notre Dame, 1949-1950).
  31. “The Last Hurrah,” *Notre Dame Magazine* (October 1974) 32.
  32. O’Malley was not without his critics. He did not possess a Ph.D. and he had little appreciation for the technical skills of rigorous scholarship. John C. Meagher, a former student of O’Malley who went on to graduate school, earning three Ph.D.’s, and taught at Saint Michael’s in Toronto, writes: “[O’Malley] gave the vague impression that to get any degree beyond a master’s was superficial . . . Those of us who did go on found what he had given us dysfunctional in our next phases of study because O’Malley had no respect for the technical and scholarly sides of literary investigation, which dominated the graduate schools at that time.” Meagher, as a onetime professor at Notre Dame, found many of O’Malley’s students “had the phrases but didn’t know what they meant. It was a parody of education. I found I was concerned with teaching students good techniques in reading literature, not in making grand judgments.” Another former student, James E. Newman ’44, compared O’Malley to professors he had in graduate study at the University of Iowa. He contends that even though O’Malley was “too selective, too dogmatic, too romantic,” he was able to cut “through to the heart of each literary experience” (Meaney 234-35). The Neo-Thomist philosopher and Notre Dame colleague, Yves Simon, claimed in a 1947 letter to Jacques Maritain that O’Malley lacked “rigorous thought” and harbored a “romantic philosophical outlook” (Sparr 129).
  33. Thomas Del Prete, *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1990) 8-9; subsequent references will be cited as “Del Prete, *Education*” parenthetically in the text. For information related to the content of the courses taught by Merton see the five volumes of monastic conferences edited by Patrick F. O’Connell: *Thomas Merton, Cassian and the Fathers: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*

- (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005); Thomas Merton, *Pre-Benedictine Monasticism: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 2* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2006); Thomas Merton, *An Introduction to Christian Mysticism: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 3* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2008); Thomas Merton, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 4* (Collegetown, MN: Cistercian Publications, 2009); Thomas Merton, *Monastic Observances: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 5* (Collegetown, MN: Cistercian Publications, 2010). For an overview of Merton's teaching program for the scholastics and novices, see Patrick F. O'Connell, "Master of Students" and "Master of Novices" (William H. Shannon, Christine M. Bochen and Patrick F. O'Connell, *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002] 288-90). Many of Merton's recorded conferences are available commercially, previously through Credence Communications and now through NowYouKnowMedia.
34. Thomas Merton, *Love and Living*, ed. Naomi Burton Stone and Brother Patrick Hart (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979) 3-4.
  35. Thomas Del Prete, "'Teaching Is Candy': Merton as Teacher at Columbia and Bonaventure," *The Merton Annual* 9 (1996) 153; subsequent references will be cited as "Del Prete, 'Candy'" parenthetically in the text. Thomas Merton's earliest teaching experiences were at Columbia University and St. Bonaventure College.
  36. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948) 306.
  37. Gloria Kitto Lewis, "Learning to Live: Merton's Students Remember His Teaching," *The Merton Annual* 8 (1995) 88; subsequent references will be cited as "Lewis" parenthetically in the text.
  38. Merton comments on his novitiate classes and the need for preparation: "The noise and concern about the novitiate and all those who come to the classes, are having a deep effect on me. The work is hard, though I am doing more than I probably should, in my concern to be well prepared" (Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years. Journals, vol. 4: 1960-1963*, ed. Victor A. Kramer [San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996] 288 [1/15/63]).
  39. For a good description of the "sapiential teacher" see Del Prete, *Education* 151-52.
  40. The visiting professor was Father Barnabas Ahern, CP; see "'The Great Honesty': Remembering Thomas Merton, An Interview with Abbot Timothy Kelly, O.C.S.O." conducted by George Kilcourse, Jr., *The Merton Annual* 9 (1996) 198.
  41. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966) 194.
  42. My remarks about ideal teachers are not limited to college teachers but are applicable to teachers at all educational levels.
  43. Within the proper setting, Merton was a master at participating in dialogue: see Thomas Merton, *Preview of the Asian Journey*, ed. Walter H. Capps (New York: Crossroad, 1989).
  44. For a brief explanation by Merton of the need for "training in the humanities" regarding the spiritual formation of novices, see Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971) 201.
  45. Thomas Merton and James Laughlin, *Selected Letters*, ed. David D. Cooper (New York: Norton, 1997) 301; creative writing included poetry and although outside the scope of this essay, I note that both Thomas Merton and Frank O'Malley had a high regard for poetry and recognized its affinity to the spiritual life.
  46. In a letter to Abdul Aziz dated January 2, 1966, Merton explains his method of meditation (Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: Letters on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon [New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985] 63-64). In his homily at the funeral Mass of Thomas Merton, Abbot Flavian Burns mentions Thomas Merton's secret prayer: "The world knew him from his books, we knew him from his spoken word. Few, if any, knew him in his secret prayer. Still, he had a secret prayer and this is what gave the inner life to all he said and wrote. His secret was his secret to himself to a great extent, but he was a skillful reader of the secret of the souls that sought his help" (Patrick Hart, ed., *Thomas Merton/Monk: A Monastic Tribute* [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1974] 219).
  47. I am referring to the modern educational practice in some school districts to evaluate teachers according to student test scores. For a scholarly account detailing the abuses of the public education accountability era, see Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). One of the eminent historians of American public education, Ravitch has written ten books and edited fourteen others in the field. From 1991-1993 she was Assistant Secretary of Education under President George H. W. Bush. Once an advocate of the current reform idea of test-based accountability, she repudiates it in her latest book, claiming it has failed to create a positive impact on the quality of American education and may even be harmful.