

An Obscure Theology Misread

2003 Bibliographic Review

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All theology is a kind of birthday
Each one who is born
Comes into the world as a question
For which old answers
Are not sufficient.

Birth is question and revelation.
The ground of birth is paradise
Yet we are born a thousand miles
Away from our home.
Paradise weeps in us
And we wander further away.
This is the theology
Of our birthdays.

Obscure theology
On the steps of Cincinnati Station:
I am questioned by the cold December
Of 1941.

So begins the second poem of *Eighteen Poems* with the rather ambiguous title (not, presumably, given by Merton himself) of *Untitled Poem*.¹ This title, vague as it might at first appear, nonetheless aptly introduces a poem that glimpses the hidden work of God in the public life of Thomas Merton. Within these lines, Merton's biography unfolds as an obscure theology that draws the reader into the illuminating darkness of unknowing wherein the transcendent wholeness of our common life, the ground of our birth that is both question and revelation, the paradise from which we have wandered and for which we long, is experienced.

It is difficult to read this poem without thinking of George Steiner's book entitled *Real Presences*.² Here he argues that transcendent reality grounds all genuine art and human communica-

tion. Consequently, a poem, for example, may become an opportunity for a reader to return to the source of creation, not only of the poem but of his or her own life. Steiner describes this experience as a "wobble" in our consciousness of time, a sense of homecoming rooted in the fact that the arts are mimetic of the original act of creation so that the mystery of any authentic art form is the mystery of creation itself. Furthermore, he believes that there is an inherent human longing for this ineffable dimension of human experience that he identifies as the "real presence of God." I imagine, however, that he would have little difficulty talking about the experience along the lines of Rilke's "first world," Eliot's "still point of the turning world," or Merton's "paradise of question and revelation." However it may be named, all four writers would agree that works of art, whatever form they might take, are expressions of that longing. Perhaps, then, it could also be said that all art is a kind of birthday and each one who is born comes into the world as a form seeking expression for which old expressions are not sufficient. This variant reading of a few lines from "Untitled Poem" brings us to what is relevant for this bibliographic review.

Rather than a critical examination of a work that intentionally distances itself in order to view the work objectively, Steiner proposes a creative response that approaches a work with the intention of creating from it a new work that is simultaneously analytical and imaginative. His proposal is based on a belief that each "performance of a dramatic text or musical score is a critique in the most vital sense of the term; it is an act of penetrative response which makes sense sensible."³ Unlike an exclusively analytical response, a creative response "makes sense sensible" by carrying out the "potentialities of meaning" of the original work into a new work so that we once again may experience with all our senses and thereby more fully understand what was then and there but is here and now revealed anew. The evaluation of a book, for example, would take the form of new literary works, or, possibly, alternative forms provided by the visual or performing arts. In this way, the older work comes to live in and against the newer work. Steiner illustrates what he has in mind:

Virgil reads, guides our reading of Homer as no external critic can. The *Divine Comedy* is a reading of the *Aeneid*, technically and spiritually 'at home', 'authorized' in the several and interactive senses of the word, as no extrinsic commentary by one

who is himself not a poet can be. The presence, visibly solicited or exorcized, of Homer, Virgil and Dante in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in the epic satire of Pope and in the pilgrimage upstream of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, is a 'real presence', a critique in action. Successively, each poet sets into the urgent light of his own linguistic and compositional resources, the formal and substantive achievement of his predecessor(s). His own practice submits these antecedents to the most stringent analysis and estimate. What the *Aeneid* rejects, alters, omits altogether from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is as critically salient and instructive as that which it includes via variant, *imitatio* and modulation.⁴

Writers, therefore, begin as readers who eventually get around to arranging their dislocated reflections on texts to which they feel compelled to respond. Even though Steiner refers to this process as "misreading," he does so with something positive in mind. Misreadings, according to Steiner, provide glimpses into the transcendent dimension of the human experience that is, while always obscure, nonetheless present. Acknowledging that even a good reading will fall short of the text by a "perimeter of inadequacy," he sees that perimeter as the luminous "corona around the darkened sun."⁵ In other words, misreadings illuminate, not distort, the meaning of the original work. For a misreading to be illuminating, however, it must be accountable to the original work. As Steiner explains:

The authentic experience of understanding, when we are spoken to by another human being or by a poem, is one of responding responsibility. We are answerable to the text, to the work of art, to the musical offering, in a very specific sense, at once moral, spiritual and psychological.⁶

It should be noted, however, that even when we dare to respond to a text with body and soul, "there always will be a sense in which we do not know what it is we are experiencing and talking about" even while we are experiencing and talking "about that which is."⁷ Consequently, the conversation remains and must remain open-ended and allowed to unfold in unexpected ways as each new generation, while working with old insights and questions, continues the inquiry.

Real Presences provides us with a perspective from which to consider the books to be reviewed in this essay. Merton scholarship, these works in particular, are excellent examples of misreadings as misreading is defined by Steiner. Each author and editor has read texts earlier constructed by Merton that drew him or her into a conversation not only with Merton but with those with whom Merton had conversed, corresponded and/or read. They have responded responsibly to his work with creative weavings of their own. While different in perspective and design, they are all playful misreadings that provide a luminous corona around the obscure theology of Merton's life. Here we witness a postmodern monasticism without walls that continues Merton's interest in the contemplative life and its relation to the arts, the environment, and social justice, as well as his engagement of the world in a serious discussion of what it means to be authentically human, and all of this from diverse religious perspectives.

Cincinnati Station

Woven into the first part of the title of Paul Elie's book entitled *The Life You Save May Be Your Own, An American Pilgrimage: Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, Dorothy Day*⁸ is the title of a short story by Flannery O'Connor that refers to a sign forewarning Tom T. Shiftlet as he drove off in an old car that he had saved from the junkyard: DRIVE CAREFULLY—THE LIFE YOU SAVE MAY BE YOUR OWN. Shiftlet is a drifter who prefers the open road and desolate places. His "composed dissatisfaction" with the world and unusual "moral intelligence" provide him with the wherewithal to offer wry insights into the human predicament and to search for redemption in unforeseen byways. Even though Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton bear some resemblance to Shiftlet, the connection between the titles of these works by Elie and O'Connor is to be found elsewhere.

The story's title serves as a roadside sign indicating the direction in which Elie intends to take the reader. It is more than just a ride along an old road recalling past events and accomplishments in the lives of four American writers. Elie has woven the stories of O'Connor, Percy, Merton, and Day into the narrative of a pilgrimage. By framing the stories as a pilgrimage, Elie has defined the act of reading in a way that is reminiscent of Steiner:

A pilgrimage is a journey undertaken in light of a story. A great event has happened; the pilgrim hears the reports and goes in search of the evidence, aspiring to be an eyewitness. The pilgrim seeks not only to confirm the experience of others firsthand but to be changed by the experience. Pilgrims often make the journey in company, but each must be changed individually; they must see for themselves, each with his or her own eyes. And as they return to ordinary life the pilgrims must tell others what they saw, recasting the story in their own terms. In the story of these four writers, the pattern of pilgrimage is also a pattern of reading and writing.⁹

On the one hand, it is the pilgrimage of the author who grew up as a Roman Catholic trying to work out from his religious tradition and experiences how faith, belief and knowledge were integrated into and gave shape to his life. To do this, he turned to the literary works of Percy, O'Connor, Merton, and Day. On the other hand, it is a story of others who, like Elie, are curious and perplexed about religious experience, or, unlike Elie, indifferent or altogether hostile to the notion. Hearing of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, *The Last Gentleman*, *Wise Blood*, or *From Union Square to Rome*, they became readers in search of evidence, aspiring, according to Elie, to be eyewitnesses not only to confirm what they had heard but perhaps to be changed by the experience of integrating the stories of the four writers into their own lives. The literary works of these four writers provide a point of entrance and departure for this transformative experience. Each of the writers dramatizes his or her experiences in such a way that readers are able to enter into the narrative personally, testing the work against their own life experiences, and vice versa.¹⁰ It is writing that invites the reader into a process of questioning whereby abstract beliefs become lived experiences from which the "ground of our birth" is rediscovered. Elie sees these writers as having created texts that "reach us at the center of ourselves, and we come to them in fear and trembling, in hope and expectation— reading so as to change, and perhaps to save, our lives."¹¹ Consequently, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, *An American Pilgrimage* is more than an account of four writers. It is about the relationship that exists between writers and their readers. It is about how art, life, and religious faith converge and give shape to a person's life. It is about the way four indi-

viduals who glimpsed the transcendent in their reading and evoked it in their writing, have encouraged their readers to go and do likewise.

With regard to Merton, Elie sees him as a distinct religious type; a rebel, excitable and prone to anxiety, who threw himself at God headlong raging "against the contradictions within himself."¹² For Merton, the pilgrimage was not so much about finding himself but losing himself, which as Elie rightfully points out, was a lifelong endeavor:

Merton's sense of self is so strong that he is moved to rebel against it, to cast it off and start over. He will conclude that a false, modern self stands in the way of his true self, rooted in the old French Catholic tradition to which he is heir. To recover his true self, he must recover the lost world of the Catholic past—and then eventually renounce this, too, believing that he has begotten a false self which stands between him and the experience of God.¹³

Elie believes that Merton approached this task in a manner that was at once religious and literary. He traces the development of this approach to Merton's reading of the St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. Under the guidance of this spiritual master, Merton's way of reading was shaped by the practice of "composition of place." This meditative practice requires a person to develop his or her faculty of imagination to recollect sacred stories from the past. This hermeneutic allows the person to enter and thereby experience and be transformed by what was, then and there, but is here and now revealed. It was a meditative practice that he would eventually extend to Joyce, Blake, Hopkins, Rilke, Camus, and others. In doing so, as Elie points out, his meditation on sacred and secular texts became a meditation on his own personal history¹⁴ and the way in which the landscape of his interior life took shape. Consequently, we are here reminded that when reading Merton we enter a literary world composed of creative misreadings, complex and sometimes contradictory, but, as a consequence, more often than not rich and vibrant as a painting by Cézanne. The comparison with Cézanne is not without justification or importance for this essay. In *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton, before telling us that he had inherited his father's way of looking at things, describes the way in which his father saw the world:

My father painted like Cézanne and understood the southern French landscape the way Cézanne did. His vision of the world was sane, full of balance, full of veneration for structure, for the relations of masses and for all the circumstances that impress an individual identity on each created thing. His vision was religious and clean, and therefore his paintings were without decoration or superfluous comment, since a religious man respects the power of God's creation to bear witness for itself.¹⁵

Needless to say, this is not simply a childhood recollection but an early memory informed by later experiences, in particular, his education at Columbia where he was introduced to theories about Paul Cézanne.¹⁶ While this is not the place to fully explore this idea, it is important to note that the comparison of Merton with Cézanne suggests possibilities for not only understanding what Merton longed to express in his life and work but also the complex literary structures that resulted from his method of reading that was shaped by St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*.

As you may have imagined by now, Elie's story of Merton is the story of the coming together of monk and writer, monastic community and literary world, liturgical life and the life of literature. Even though Waugh's evaluation was that Merton was more monk than writer,¹⁷ Elie sees the publication of *The Seven Storey Mountain* as clear evidence of his vocation as monk and writer.

The Seven Storey Mountain is the best evidence, perhaps the only evidence necessary, that Merton was meant to be both a monk and a writer. His confidence in his religious calling has given his life "wholeness, harmony, and radiance," the Scholastic formula for an achieved work of art. It has given his life a story, one that imitates, which is to say participates in, the larger Christian story, that of the individual soul's peregrination to God. Through this story, he understood his life for the first time.¹⁸

Even though it can be said that Merton's vocation provided his life with "wholeness, harmony, and radiance," it was also, as acknowledged by Elie, "a quandary forever unfolding."¹⁹ Writing became the way in which he was able to find his way through these quandaries and discern patterns in the obscure theology of his own life. Gifted with an "extraordinary imagination" he was able to see the gray stones of Gethsemani "as the center of the universe, a stray shard of medi-

eval France, a Kentucky equivalent of an outpost of prayer in the Himalayas."²⁰ It was also this imagination that enabled him to create a coherent narrative of his experiences, obscure and incongruous as they might sometimes appear.

Elie offers an interesting perspective on Merton as a creative writer who captures the imaginations of his readers; so much so that he sometimes gives the impression that they are welcome anytime to drop by the hermitage, as more than a few have, and, later, walk with him "into the cloister or the woods or the ideal monastery of his imaginings, and to retreat there awhile in the company of a spiritual master." Because of this, however, Elie felt a need to sound a warning, as O'Connor does in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," of "narrow roads that drop off on either side." It is clearly a necessary warning. It attempts to waylay problems that may arise from a less than nuanced reading of his message "to read and do likewise." He raises this warning sign by telling Merton's story of an ex-Trappist monk who wrote to Merton explaining that the strength of Merton's faith was what made him become a monk and had kept him a monk all those years.²¹ Elie finds in Merton's angry response a message for his own readers:

This model religious never really believed in God—as he has at last discovered. And a good thing that he has, for he has now taken the first step towards believing. He entered the monastery on somebody else's faith and lived there on somebody else's faith and when he finally had to face the fact that what was required was his own faith he collapsed. As many others could, or will, collapse when they find out how they stand.

Merton's anger, however, was clearly rooted deeper than that which can be explained by one letter by one ex-monk. Merton was concerned that his old friend was only one of many such admirers and that his writing might likewise "legitimize other people's bad faith." Elie has identified one of the dangers of reading Merton, whose "gift of radical identification with others, and his way of inspiring others to identify with him, could lead his readers to see him as a surrogate believer—lead us to bury our unbelief in his belief, to remain religious novices sitting humbly in the presence of the master." I believe that this problem is seri-

ous enough to warrant the printing of this warning on the side of every Merton book or recitation of it at every gathering of the International Thomas Merton Society or the posting of it at his hermitage. If this is too much to expect, perhaps something needs to be published on how to read Merton, not unlike the interesting little book he wrote entitled *Opening the Bible*²² that addresses similar concerns with regard to the reading of this sacred text. Merton says the Bible "reads us."

Obscure Theology

Camera Obscura is a dark room or box with a hole in one end that allows sufficient light to cast an inverted image on paper laid out opposite the entrance of the light. Daniel Barbaro, a Venetian who lived at about the same time as Leonardo da Vinci, described the image as revealing "the whole view as it really is, with its distances, its colours and shadows and motion, the clouds, the water twinkling, the birds flying. By holding the paper steady you can trace the whole perspective with a pen, shade it and delicately colour it from nature." I mention this, of course, for a reason. After reading the following two books, three of Merton's interests converged in such a way that I remembered an old experience of entering a Camera Obscura while visiting the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Holding both thoughts together, I came to wonder whether entering the interior life is not unlike entering one of these dark rooms. The light that passes through the small opening of contemplation casts a shadow revealing a divine presence that tends always to surprise us, regardless of how many times we have traced its patterns in our lives. This unexpected reflection led to further thoughts on how Zen enlightenment and apophatic shadows might have been at work within Merton's monastic world. Is this too fanciful of a notion to be further considered? I will leave it to the reader to decide as we examine Merton's book on the inner experience of the contemplative life and a publication that introduced a recent exhibit of his photography. Before doing so, however, two further points should be made. First, Merton's life may not be fully understood, as suggested in "Untitled Poem," without reference to the apophatic tradition within and out of which he lived. Both books remind us of this. Second, both books are, for the most part, by Merton. That is to say, he wrote the drafts and notes that preceded the publication

of the first book and he took the photographs that are considered in the second. The two publications that are before us, however, are the works of others who selected, arranged, and contextualized the contents.

Because Merton had not given permission to his literary executors to publish an unfinished manuscript on the contemplative experience, it was some time before drafts and notes could be reconstructed into this complete and authorized edition of *The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation* by William Shannon.²³ Shannon provides an account of the changes undergone by the text from 1948 to its publication in 2003. He also provides critical apparatus of italics, footnotes and changes in typeface that assist the reader in observing subtle shifts in emphasis and interest that took place during the twenty years in which Merton worked on this manuscript.

Even with all the changes, one thing remained the same. According to Merton, while times have changed and man with them,

. . . he is always man, and as long as he has a human nature, human freedom, human personality, he is the image of God, and is consequently capable of using his love and freedom in the highest of all his activities—in contemplation. But, as I say, times have changed, and in the education of modern man the fact that he is the image of God does not carry much weight. Indeed, nothing could be treated with less concern *today* than man's innate capacity to be a contemplative.²⁴

In addition to this lack of interest in the contemplative dimension of the human experience, Merton believed that there was another contemporary problem that needed to be addressed.

There are in fact too many books which look at the spiritual life exclusively from the standpoint of a virginal or priestly life, and their needless multiplication is, in fact, the reason why there is so much sterile spiritual writing. At the same time, this sterile influence makes itself felt in the interior life of those married Christians who should have the greatest influence for good in keeping the Christian mind fully and sanely *incarnate*.²⁵

The modern world's lack of interest in the contemplative life and the barrenness of spiritual writing being published at this time, were two of the reasons, perhaps primary reasons, for Merton to

write *The Inner Experience*. He had come to realize that if people at the end of the twentieth-century were to rediscover the transcendent in their lives, spiritual writing would have to change. This manuscript represents one of his many attempts to offer to his generation what he perceived was very much needed at the time. While heading off in the right direction, however, it does not, in my estimation, reach its destination. Merton's holding back on its publication may suggest that he too thought something more was needed. But what?

To be sure, there is much about this book that is right. First, Merton judiciously shares with his readers what he had found of value in his own readings. He does so without confusing them with theological lines of thought that never seem to quite come together; as was the case for many who attempted to read through his *The Ascent to Truth*. Second, he is equally cautious when sharing insights from his own life experiences. Here he avoids as much as possible the mistake earlier pointed out by Elie. The focus is seldom on himself but rather on the reader who, unlike himself, is not monastic but domestic, with his or her own sacred vows to keep.

Merton's interests over the years had shifted from bringing the world into the monastery to taking the monastery out into the world; a shift in emphasis and interest that is more than apparent in this book that provides laypersons an opportunity to consider the contemplative life. Thirdly, even though he insists on the simplicity of this way of life, he does not do so at the expense of the tradition he represents. While emphasizing that the contemplative experience is something very real, he nonetheless forewarns that it is elusive and therefore difficult to define and fully grasp.

It takes place in the depths of the subject's own spiritual being, and yet it is an "experience" of the transcendent, personal presence of God. This experience has to be carefully qualified, because its paradoxical character makes it an *experiential awareness* of what cannot be experienced on earth. It is a knowledge of Him Who is beyond all knowledge. Hence, it knows Him as unknown. It knows "by unknowing."

This "dark knowledge," this "apophatic" grasp of Him Who Is, cannot be explained in a satisfactory way to anyone who has not come to experience something of the sort in his own inner life.²⁶

Because the way of unknowing requires experiential learning, Merton also offers practical guidelines for establishing a contemplative life. He suggests that the person desiring true spiritual poverty and detachment should move to the country or small town in order to reduce the conflict and frustration of coping with the world. It is also here that the needs for pleasure, comfort, recreation, prestige, and success may be more easily reduced. The person should find a job that is "off the beaten track" but pays well enough to provide for basic needs. Within this setting, the person should establish a practice of waking around at four or five a.m. to enjoy the silence and solitude of the small hours of the morning and if possible, attend mass during this time, pointing out that it is at this time the poor go to pray before work. The Sabbath, of course, should be a day for contemplation. In order to protect and foster contemplative spirituality, informal gatherings with others who share the same interest should be arranged. And, if married, recognize the sacramental nature of your relationship.

With so much done right, where does the book fall short? I believe it is with the last point. While laying out the above plan, Merton from time to time reminds the reader who may be seeking this "elementary" level of contemplative life that if he or she is one of the few who succeeds, it will only happen by a minor miracle. And, even then, it must be kept in mind that you are not a real monk and must accept that your prayer life will be correspondingly humble and poor.²⁷ While there can be no doubt that living the contemplative life outside a monastic community would be impossible for many and difficult for the few who endure, it seems odd to be saying this when one is trying to encourage people to rediscover the contemplative dimension of their lives. With that said, however, given Merton's understanding of the contemplative life, this was all that he could say and as far as he could go at that time. Peter Feuerherd recognized this shortcoming and in his review of *The Inner Experience*, he takes issue with Merton's suggestion that those seeking contemplation must move to small towns and farms since cities are nearly impossible places to live as a contemplative. Feuerherd counters by pointing out that anyone who has ridden New York's subways can spot commuters who are quietly reading their Bibles and prayer books and obviously contemplating something.²⁸ Feuerherd is correct with regard to what Merton is saying in *The Inner Experience*. It should be noted however, that during the latter part of Merton's life, Merton also

entertained thoughts of monastic communities that would live and work within urban and even large metropolitan settings. Perhaps more telling was his appreciation for "worldly" monks like Albert Camus whom he referred to as that "Algerian Cenobite" or the comedian Lenny Bruce that he called a "monk in reverse" or those strange Beats with whom he shared a common history and sense of community.²⁹ And, then, of course there are those references in *The Asian Journal* that record his admiration for Buddhists, monks and laypersons, praying in public places. So, it is clear, that while he was looking for a way to integrate the contemplative life into the public lives of ordinary people and that he did in fact have a few odd and end insights into how this might be done, he did not have the opportunity to work out such an idea nor sufficient experience of his own to see his way through the situation and to finish *The Inner Experience*.

The Paradox of Place: Photography of Thomas Merton, edited by Paul M. Pearson,³⁰ offers the reader four short but noteworthy essays that suggest ways in which Merton's photography may be appreciated and understood. "The Joyful Face Behind the Camera" by Paul Quenon, "The Paradox of Place: Thomas Merton's Photography" by Paul Pearson, "An Enduring Spirit: The Photography of Thomas Merton" by Anthony Bannon, and "With Eyes to See: Thomas Merton: Contemplative Photographer" by Marilyn Sunderman introduce an exhibition of thirty-one photographs at the McGrath Art Gallery, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky from October 10th to November 11th 2003 in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Thomas Merton Collection of thirteen hundred photographs that are preserved in the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. While different in perspective, each essay focuses on Merton's ability to create profoundly affecting images that reveal his rich interior vision of the world.

Merton's travels during the final year of his life, provided him with significant opportunities to photograph places far beyond the walls of Gethsemani and the knobs of Kentucky; thus the first part of the title, *The Paradox of Place*. Pearson explains:

The photographs in this exhibit reflect these paradoxical poles in Merton's life and writing. On the one hand, the images of the places associated with his monastic life, the minute things he observed around him everyday at the Abbey of Gethsemani in the rural Kentucky countryside, images which in his photo-

graphs became prayers. Then, in contrast, the images from his travels of 1968, images of California, New Mexico, Alaska and Asia—images of places very different to his monastery, yet still seen with the same eye that captured those images of Gethsemani.³¹

Is this not what we would expect? Is this not what makes his photographs so valuable to us who see through very different eyes; eyes trained by driving on expressways, scanning shelves for groceries, and staring at computer screens; eyes trained to see only what meets the eye from the surface of the object viewed? Merton's eyes were different. He saw the world as Gethsemani had taught him to see it. He saw the world in a deeper and more authentic way than we usually do. He saw the world through contemplative eyes and his photographs now allow us to see in the same way.

Quenon identifies Merton's photography as part of a "tradition of visual contemplation."³² As such, it is a different kind of language that provides us with an opportunity to do far more than simply think about the contemplative life. If Merton's writings inform us of the contemplative life, it is his photography that invites us into the experience of contemplation; an experience that, as Merton reminds us in *The Inner Experience*, is necessary if we are to understand the way of unknowing. Bannon, referring to several of the photographs in this exhibit, draws our attention to how the "variety of textures across a limited palette of black and white, the deep shadow and decisive light, these elements of his work call" us to "informed reflection"³³ where we discover a "language for contemplation"³⁴ that opens us to see the apophatic shadows that are cast by Zen enlightenment.

While this is not the place to sort out the relation between two traditions that shaped Merton's contemplative vision, the following may be sufficient to hint at what may be found here. Sunderman believes that Merton's contemplative photography

attests to the truth of the Zen insight that being fully awake or enlightened entails awareness of one's unity with all that exists, and, hence, the cherishing of each created thing. According to Zen, emptiness is fullness and vice versa. By giving himself over, as completely as possible, to the reality of what he saw through his camera lens, Merton sought to empty him-

self of self in order to become attuned to the fullness of each object that he contemplated. Merton's photographs capture some of his experiences of "transformed consciousness," that is, the state of Zen enlightenment that is utter awakensness to the *isness* of reality.³⁵

Bannon seems to be suggesting something more; a kind of symbiotic relation between Zen enlightenment and Apophatic shadows that is similar to the way in which a camera functions. Focused on the dialectic of the shadow in Merton's photography, he sees

the play of light against dark, the twinning of the thing and its thrown image, the notion of presence and absence, of self and other, the thing and its trace, the object and its abstraction, the drawing out an image. And these conceits find an echo in the thousands of quick-lined Zen-like drawings he also made during his lifetime. Interestingly, the implied transformation of the thrown image is one carried by photography itself, and is one of the medium's defining attributes. For photography, with its near magical qualities, is designed to carry the trace of light reflected from the represented thing and impress it upon the light sensitive emulsion of film negative, which, in turn, renders light as darkness, just like a shadow. The photograph as transformation, then, as a kind of shadow itself, fits Merton's work like a glove.³⁶

Whether there is anything to this notion of mine, it is nonetheless clear that Merton's photography has much to offer us. This publication and the exhibition that it introduced remind us that in addition to the many images of Merton that we have of him as a monk at prayer, a writer sitting at a desk, a hermit in the woods, and an ordinary man with friends, the image of him as photographer needs to be included to round off our understanding of him and his work. Fortunately, Quenon has preserved a story that does just that:

I was told by a nun at the Redwoods monastery in California that a neighbor of theirs saw Fr. Louis photographing on the empty beach nearby. He did so with such energy and enthusiasm that he thought that man must either be a madman or a saint.³⁷

Misreadings

Still other new books demonstrate how Merton's life and work continue to draw people together to think deeply and in new ways about contemplation and the implications of a contemplative life for the postmodern world. These publications also indicate the various ways in which other writers have responded to his work. Each in its own way, bears out much that was said by Steiner in *Real Presences* regarding the relation between writers and readers who write. The authors and editors of these books provide us with much more than a critical examination of the Merton corpus. While they respond responsibly to the texts, they do so with a freedom that Merton would have appreciated; an intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic freedom that has allowed them to continue the inquiry that was initiated by a monk interested in awakening his world to the obscure but nonetheless real presence of God.

The first three books, *Seeking Paradise: The Spirit of the Shakers* edited by Paul M. Pearson,³⁸ *When the Trees Say Nothing* edited by Kathleen Deignan,³⁹ and *Seeds* edited by Robert Inchausti,⁴⁰ are creative rearrangements of works and excerpts from works previously published by Merton. The first two of these three books include photographs or drawings that remind us of the "tradition of visual contemplation" and the significance of weaving text and image for comprehending the hidden presence to which his work witnesses. The second set of books, *Merton and Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart*⁴¹ edited by Bernadette Dieker and Jonathan Montaldo and *Judaism: Holiness in Words: Recognition, Repentance, and Renewal*⁴² compiled and edited by Beatrice Bruteau bring together papers previously published by Merton and articles by a new generation of scholars and contemplatives on subjects of mutual concern. The effect of such editing is a sense of the abiding presence of Merton at conferences where old questions unfold to reveal new questions and insights for which old answers are no longer sufficient. The third set of books, *The Vision of Thomas Merton*⁴³ edited by Patrick F. O'Connell and *Mystery Hidden Yet Revealed*⁴⁴ by Marie Theresa Coombs are, as the titles suggest, two very different approaches to clarifying Merton's contemplative vision. Equally interesting is the way in which these two books provide readers with new perspectives from which to view Merton. With *The Vision of Thomas Merton*, we see him through the eyes of Robert Daggy, first archivist and director of the Merton Center in

Louisville, Kentucky. With *Mystery Hidden Yet Revealed*, we see Merton as if sitting at dinner with Georgia O'Keeffe in her home in New Mexico. Having not heard of her dinner guest, she had difficulty remembering his name.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, we know both of their names. As a consequence of seeing them together, we come to know Merton and O'Keeffe in a new way. Something like a stage play entitled *After Dinner with O'Keeffe* would be both entertaining and revealing as Daggy tries to explain to the famous artist who the unknown monk was that she had invited to her home.

Seeking Paradise: The Spirit of the Shakers represents Merton's interest in Pleasant Hill, an abandoned site of a Shaker community located not far from Gethsemani, and the tradition to which it belonged. Pearson identifies three "foundations" for this interest.⁴⁶ First, there was Merton's interest in clarifying the "ideal of monasticism" and the Shakers provided an excellent example of one community's effort to realize such an ideal. Second, his "paradise consciousness" that is evident in his later poetry found expression not only in Shaker beliefs but in their way of life, the communities they formed, and the furniture and other things they made. Third, his "Blakean rebellion" against modern culture and prophetic witness to the reality of God's presence in the world was characteristic of the way the Shakers were present in the world of their day. These three interests form a unified theme for this publication of Merton's essays, conference talk, selected letters, and photographs brought together here for the first time. *Seeking Paradise: Thomas Merton and the Shakers* is not, as Walt Chura has pointed out, a critical study of the Shakers.

Readers of this collection, coming fresh to the Shakers, however, need to be cautioned. Thomas Merton was remarkable in his ability to extract gold from shallow pools. Nevertheless he had limited access to resources for his studies. Even for those resources he depended on the good offices of friends "in the world," as the Shakers say. Most of these friends were well versed in the subject area with which they aided him, and he was able to gain significant illumination from their material. Yet, Merton sometimes had no means to recognize, let alone critique, the bias, limitations or accuracy of his sources.⁴⁷

Chura is, of course, correct. A critical study of Merton's work on the Shakers along the lines indicated in Chura's review is still needed. But, as Chura himself points out, Merton was a "seeker" and not a historian.⁴⁸ Merton's primary concern was to explore

and discover what this lost tradition might have to offer contemporary contemplatives by creating misreadings of his own that were, as Chura writes, "meant not simply to inform but to help transform the reader."⁴⁹ Pearson's reworking of Merton's work on the Shakers contributes significantly to this objective. It is, therefore, more than just an account of that interest. Pearson's skillful editing and finely written introduction have created a work that evokes an awareness of the spirituality of a bygone tradition that is nonetheless relevant for our times. Here we discover how prayer may become an art form and work a form of prayer; how the deepest pleasures of life are simple and plentiful; how peace becomes a reality when people live charitably and kindly with one another, grounded in the love of God; how a community may be productive and prosperous without destroying the environment; and how a Christian community that is willing to risk and struggle to live out the Gospel in this way becomes a prophetic voice crying in the wilderness of our times that are marked by alienation, consumerism, and violence.

Seeking Paradise: The Spirit of the Shakers offers readers a vision of an alternative way of life. To become a Shaker is, of course, no longer a possibility. To once again, however, catch a glimpse of their vision, may be nonetheless beneficial. As Merton recognized, the Shakers apprehended something totally original about the spirit and vocation of America that has, unfortunately, remained hidden to most everyone else.⁵⁰ This book reveals what has been hidden. It does so in such a way that readers become aware of a religious vision that now haunts their imaginations to think deeply on old and forgotten questions that, if lived, may open them to a more authentic religious life.

When the Trees Say Nothing is a collection of over three hundred quotations gathered like wild flowers from Merton's writings on nature. This florilegium of selected texts is arranged to represent Merton's panoramic view of the natural world. The arrangement is illustrated with fine drawings by John Giuliani. Texts and images invoke a sacramental awareness of the divine presence that Merton witnessed in the changing seasons, the woods at Gethsemani, and the mountains of Asia. This format is, perhaps, the most appropriate genre for representing Merton's interest in the environment. Thomas Berry, in his foreword to this publication, reminds us that Merton's response to nature was "neither academic nor overly critical but spiritual in the most demanding

sense of the word."⁵¹ It is a spirituality that seeks to experience, not analyze, our relationship with nature. Such an experience is, as Berry points out, essential for finding a way out of the ecological quandary that the modern world has created for itself.⁵² And, because the sacramental awareness of nature is so lacking today, a book such as this one is needed. Deignan's introduction provides a different but nonetheless related perspective. Here she traces in Merton's biography the "rich and overlooked sub-theme" of his "marriage to the forest." This theme reveals how Merton came to understand his relation to nature and the importance of that relation to his spiritual formation.

When the Trees Say Nothing is not a book by Merton even though the quotations are his. Nor is the book about Merton even though Berry and Deignan provided valuable insights into Merton's life and work. It is a collaborative work that brings together the talent and insights of the above mentioned writers and artist. What kind of book is it? If this is determined by how it reads, I would say it is a kind of prayer book. I say "kind of prayer book" because it is not a book of prayers. Rather it is a book that, according to Deignan, may:

. . . awaken the naturalist in us, or the poet, or the creation mystic. Perhaps he will aid us in recovering our senses that were fashioned to behold the wonders all around us. Indeed these meditations will aid in healing the hurried, harried soul that has become divorced from the encompassing fullness in which divinity resides—at once concealed and revealed in the incarnate realm. In this as in those many other matters of the sacred, Merton is a spiritual master for us, offering a way to practice the art of natural contemplation by reading with delight and awe the scripture of creation unfolding moment by moment all about us. With him we enter into the liturgies of rain and autumn and dawn, discovering our own "thin places" where earth becomes diaphanous to Eden and finding there the sanity and refreshment that brings us true vitality.⁵³

While *When the Trees Say Nothing* is an appropriate misreading of Merton's thoughts on nature, a critical study is nonetheless in order. One place to begin would be the correspondence between Merton and Czeslaw Milosz.⁵⁴ Within this exchange of letters, Milosz criticizes Merton for writing about Nature as too idyllic,

rich in symbols, a veil of divine presence without paying sufficient attention to the ruthlessness of Nature that necessitates continuous rounds of suffering.⁵⁵ While Merton's immediate response to Milosz affirms much of what is said in *When the Trees Say Nothing*, it fails to respond to the questions that Milosz raises.⁵⁶ I imagine, however, that Merton may very well have kept those questions in mind and from time to time he addresses them with the hope of eventually working out a position that does take into consideration the violence that is inherent in the created order of things.

Seeds is a book of selected paragraphs from Merton edited by Robert Inchausti. The paragraphs are organized according to four dimensions of Merton's spiritual formation: Real and False Selves, The World We Live In, Antidotes to Illusion, and Love in Action. Together they present an image of Merton as "the harbinger of a still yet to be realized contemplative counterculture—offering us a vision of an interior life free from rigid philosophical categories, narrow political agendas, and trite religious truisms."⁵⁷ As this quotation from the introduction indicates, Inchausti is presenting something more here than just a selection of readings from Merton. While never directly said, it may have something to do with the "still yet to be realized contemplative counterculture." Perhaps Inchausti is the one planting seeds this time and the seeds are those ideas so carefully packaged into paragraphs by Merton. For this reason, Inchausti decided to work with paragraphs rather than essays believing that they are always "accessible, poignant, and revelatory" and thereby allow the reader to not only see Merton's ideas but the reflective thought processes by which single ideas grew "thematically, lyrically, and dialectically out of themselves, making unexpected connections, and then emerging into surprising new epiphanies."⁵⁸ Inchausti sets before us a compelling image of Merton who "combined the rigor of the New York intellectuals with the probity of the Desert Fathers—speaking directly to our solitude through a rigorous examination of his own." As a consequence, *Seeds* is a book that "undermines our illusory ambitions, questions our values, and assaults our complacency[;] he also gives solace to our impoverished souls by reminding us of a larger, more inclusive, transcendent reality of which we are all a part."⁵⁹

What Inchausti has identified with Merton, is true for himself. He too has created something new that hints at "unexpected connections" and "surprising epiphanies." Furthermore, he invites

the reader to do the same; that is to say, to make connections of their own. *Seeds* provides the reader with an opportunity to observe how Merton, "an explorer on the frontiers of human self-understanding," reflected on old truths in light of new experiences. As such, it is an excellent lesson on how to resolve ambiguities, refine ideas, and rediscover old truths in new contexts where they may be once again fully appreciated and understood.⁶⁰ There should be no confusion as to how Inchausti wants the reader to approach this collection of paragraphs. He sends the reader in the right direction with a quote printed at the outset from Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

The purpose of a book of meditations is to teach you how to think and not to do your thinking for you. Consequently if you pick up such a book and simply read it through, you are wasting your time. As soon as any thought stimulates your mind or your heart you can put the book down because your meditation has begun. To think that you are somehow obliged to follow the author of the book to his own particular conclusion would be a great mistake. It may happen that his conclusion does not apply to you. God may want you to end up somewhere else. He may have planned to give you quite a different grace than the one the author suggests you might be needing.⁶¹

Merton & Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart and *Merton & Judaism: Holiness in Words: Recognition/Repentance/Renewal* are new additions to the Fons Vitae Thomas Merton Series. Fons Vitae is committed to the publication of books that contribute to mutual understanding and respect among religious communities "by sharing matters of spiritual sustenance." Merton's contributions in this area are well known as recognized by the editors who note Ewert Cousins who:

... has called Merton an "axial figure" who bridges within his own experience and theological work the contemporary estrangements between religious and secular perspectives. Dr. Cousins has publicly shared his opinion that Thomas Merton means almost more today to many than he actually did in his lifetime. He is becoming an iconic figure who models inter-religious dialogue for those who are seeking a common ground

of respect for the varied ways in which human beings realize the sacred in their lives. Merton's life and writing, especially when it focuses on the contemplative practices common to the world's major religions, have indeed become a forum, or a "bridge" in Cousins' term, upon which those engaged in inter-religious dialogue can meet and engage one another.⁶²

Merton intentionally set out to become a forum for inter-religious dialogue by approaching his work as monk and writer in a particular way:

If I can unite *in myself*, in my own spiritual life, the thought of the East and the West, of the Greek and Latin Fathers, I will create in myself a reunion of the divided Church, and from that unity in myself can come the exterior and visible unity of the Church. For, if we want to bring together East and West, we cannot do it by imposing one upon the other. We must contain both in ourselves and transcend them both in Christ.⁶³

What is here said regarding the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, may also be said regarding nearly every other set of historical differences that divide and set humankind against itself. (Perhaps the distinction between humankind and nature should also be included.) Once again Merton explains how he reads and what he is about when writing. Having heard reports of traditions other than his own, he seeks not only confirming evidence but to be changed by what he discovers; changed into a more authentic human person.

Merton & Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart is the second in the series. The first, published in 1999, was entitled *Merton & Sufism: The Untold Story*. This book on Orthodox spirituality is divided into three parts. Part one, "Hesychasm: the Gift of Eastern Christianity to Spiritual Practice," is an introduction to "prayer of the heart" as present in the theology, liturgy, and practice of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Part two, "Thomas Merton and Eastern Christianity," presents essays that clarify what Merton found so attractive in this tradition. The *hesychast* method of prayer contributed significantly to his effort to connect the contemplative and active dimensions of his life. Here was a tradition that provided Merton a way to integrate contemplation and action by revealing the divine presence in the world and thereby suggesting ways for

being in the world that are more authentic and effective. Part three, "Hesychasm in the Writing of Thomas Merton," presents Merton's essays, lectures, correspondence in which he discusses the *Hesychast* tradition and the ways in which he incorporates it into his life of prayer and understanding of the mystical tradition. Reading the sayings of the Desert contemplatives and the writings of the Greek theologians opened for Merton a "balanced, humane, and liberating vision of authentic Christian life."

Merton's interest in the Eastern Orthodox Church, however, served more than just his spiritual formation. Albert J. Raboteau, in his review of the volume, states, from the perspective of a member of the Orthodox tradition, what Merton's interest and this collection of essays, means to him:

At a time when ecumenical relations between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism seem to have stalled, it is heartening to reflect on these words and to recall Merton's devotion to icons, to St. Seraphim of Sarov, and his personal observance, as early as 1960, of the anniversary of St. Silouan the Athonite. This volume, as the general editors hope, could serve as an inspiration to renewed dialogue between Eastern and Western Christians.⁶⁴

Merton & Judaism: Holiness in Words: Recognition/Repentance/Renewal is more than a book by or about Merton. It is collection of writings that represents an effort to engage Christians and Jews in an open and honest conversation about the past that has separated them and the future that may offer possibilities for mutual respect, appreciation, and cooperation. As such, it demonstrates, as pointed out by Victor A. Kramer in the foreword, "Merton's prophetic role in being able to pursue a particular line of interest which then shines as a beacon to guide others in the decades following."⁶⁵ The organization of writings is intended to show thematic unity and development. The editor, Beatrice Bruteau, explains:

It is launched with James Carroll's account of his and Merton's journey from innocence of the Christian/Jewish history to this strong call for Christian *teshuva*, a thorough **recognition** of the ill done and deep **repentance** for it. Then we move through several papers that examine this in some detail and approach

the central climax, Merton's interaction with Abraham Joshua Heschel and their common concern for the production of *Nostra Aetate* during Vatican II. It is in connection with this, Merton's most crucial relation to Judaism—and the hope and the challenge growing out of it—that the appendices are so important; they reveal the struggle within the Church, in the context of which Merton's intervention was significant.⁶⁶

Richard E. Sherwin, in his review of the book,⁶⁷ notes that Merton's understanding of Judaism is limited by two factors. First, Merton's reading was primarily limited to Martin Buber and Abraham Heschel, who were in many ways most like Merton himself, sharing as they did an interest in mysticism. Second, Merton tended to look for connections with his own tradition. As a consequence, that which is "foreign, indigestible but radiant" in Judaism becomes lost. While both have, as Sherwin says, their "up and down-sides," he recognizes that Merton does not present himself as a Jewish scholar but as a Christian monk interested in this tradition, as he was interested in all traditions, i.e., to initiate conversations that eventually allow us to see our own religious traditions "from an angle that freshens everything, and stretching our faith healthfully in the process."

The Vision of Thomas Merton is a new collection of essays similar to the two previous collections of essays entitled *The Message of Thomas Merton*⁶⁸ and *The Legacy of Thomas Merton*.⁶⁹ This collection was published in honor of the late Robert E. Daggy, curator of the Thomas Merton Collection and director of the Thomas Merton Studies Center at Bellarmine University. The impressive bibliography of articles and essays by Daggy on Merton printed as an appendix would be sufficient evidence for recognizing him as one of the "great authorities on the life and writings of Thomas Merton." Perhaps more importantly, however, is what he came to mean to those who study Merton. Patrick O'Connell explains from his own experience:

In the summer of 1998, when I came across some unpublished poems of Thomas Merton in the Columbia University Library archives, my spontaneous response was to think, 'Won't Bob Daggy be interested in this'! Of course I knew that the former director of the Bellarmine College (now University) Thomas Merton Center had died the previous December, but he had

been so much a part of my own study of Merton, as he had been for so many others, that it was difficult to realize that he was no longer there to offer insight and encouragement.⁷⁰

The relation that existed between Daggy and authors of the articles in *The Vision of Thomas Merton* is important to note for this essay. These were friends and colleagues of Daggy's. Their articles tell us one of two things. Either we learn something of the relationship they enjoyed with Bob, or something of an aspect of Thomas Merton that was often inspired by Daggy. In either case, it is important. While it is a collection of articles about Merton, it is in many ways about Merton with the assistance of Daggy. In other words, it is a collection of misreadings that illuminate like a corona around two darkened stars; an illumination that not only casts shadows of Daggy and Merton but of what both men glimpsed and we now behold. The articles, written by the editors of the recently published volumes of Merton's journals and letters, offer new insights into Merton's complex vision of life and faith. Their insights once again allow us to see the expansive geography of inquiry that was earlier explored by Merton and mapped out by Daggy.

Mystery Hidden Yet Revealed is a book on Merton and O'Keeffe and that concludes this essay and, by virtue of its thesis, brings us back to Steiner and the notion of the immanent transcendence of God. Coombs begins by exploring the theme of mystery hidden yet revealed from the perspective of the interrelationship of transcendence, self-actualization and creative expression and then proceeds to describe the interplay of those three elements in the lives and works of Thomas Merton and Georgia O'Keeffe. She believes that while Merton personified the contemplative as artist, O'Keeffe was the artist as contemplative. With regard to Merton, she concludes:

Up to a certain threshold in his life, Thomas Merton proceeded generally from wordless, imageless, loving encounter with God to awareness of the divine presence in nature and in the world around him. In other words, he went from communing with God in an apophatic way to a sense of God's presence in the created realities around him. As Merton matured spiritually, his manner of approaching the divine presence expanded. He continued to move from encounter with God in darkness and

emptiness to beholding the mystery of God within the created world. Yet, increasingly his involvement with creation became itself an opening for encounter with the transcendence of God. Moving back and forth in a rhythm between those two basic approaches to the divine, Merton developed a sense of God's immanent transcendence everywhere, in everything and in everyone. His whole life became a contemplation of God.⁷¹

The book has taken shape over the years from the author's ministry of spiritual direction and was later developed recently into a doctoral dissertation. As a consequence, it is a book that reflects critical attention to her subjects and pastoral concern for her readers. With regard to the critical aspect of the book, it is important to note that this is not a critical study of the works by Merton and O'Keeffe but rather a study of the process by which transcendence, self-actualization, and creative expression are at play in their lives and works. In some ways, it is a rather awkward book to read. Perhaps the author is trying to do too many things at the same time. Whatever may be the case, it represents another interesting misreading of Merton; one that is enriched not only by the writer's interests but by the addition of O'Keeffe who adds a certain erotic dimension to the spiritual life that is often times lacking.

Question and Revelation

Elie's focus on reading Merton as a pilgrimage in quest of confirming evidence and transforming experiences makes questioning an essential aspect of reading. Perhaps an adaptation of the Buddha's teaching to "believe nothing that you have not found to be true in your own experience" to "believe nothing you have read until you have found it to be true in your own experience," would be an appropriate way to summarize, at least in part, what Elie is saying in *The Life You Save May Be Your Own, An American Pilgrimage*. The other part of Elie's message is echoed in Rilke's advice to a young poet:

... be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to live the *questions themselves* like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live every-

thing. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.⁷²

Questions and readings that invoke questioning are to be lived. If lived, they become the way by which we live make unexpected connections, experience epiphanies, and discover answers. These answers, however, are not ones that may be printed on paper but must be, by their very nature, embodied within our lives. Reading a text in this way, requires readers to tend to the text, responding responsibly, to recall Steiner, to what is before them. It is both a critical and creative process that allows for misreadings that provide new insights about old questions.

Questioning of this sort is an important aspect of the apophatic tradition that was central to Merton's obscure theology. This is evident in "Untitled Poem." Finding the question that seeks us, is, as Merton narrates, the way back to the paradise where we were born, a paradise of question *and* revelation. In *Opening the Bible*, Merton suggests a way for understanding how question and revelation may be opposite sides of the same experience.

In the progress toward religious understanding, one does not go from answer to answer but from question to question. One's questions are answered, not by clear, definitive answers, but by more pertinent and more crucial questions.⁷³

New questions open a new horizon from which larger fields of vision emerge. Perhaps this is what Merton had in mind when he imagined paradise as question and revelation. If so, the books considered in this essay represent a returning to this paradise. Each of the authors and editors took up old questions raised by Merton decades ago. In so doing, they have made them their own, pressing out of the old questions, new insights that will in turn invoke new questions.

Notes

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4. Steiner, *Presences*, pp. 12-13.
5. Steiner, *Presences*, p. 175.
6. Steiner, *Presences*, p. 8.
7. Steiner, *Presences*, p. 215.
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9. Elie, *The Life You Save*, p. x.
10. Elie, *The Life You Save*, pp. x-xiii.
11. Elie, *The Life You Save*, p. xiv.
12. Elie, *The Life You Save*, p. 32.
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14. Elie, *The Life You Save*, pp. 103-105.
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18. Elie, *The Life You Save*, pp. 150-151.
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20. Elie, *The Life You Save*, p. 466.
21. Elie, *The Life You Save*, pp. 467-8.
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25. Merton, *Inner Experience*, p. 141.
26. Merton, *Inner Experience*, p. 115.
27. Merton, *Inner Experience*, p. 136.
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30. *The Paradox of Place: Thomas Merton's Photography* (ed. Paul M. Pearson; Louisville, Kentucky: Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, 2003).
31. Pearson, "The Paradox of Place: Thomas Merton's Photography," *Paradox of Place*, p. 8.
32. Quenon, "The Joyful Face Behind the Camera," *Paradox of Place*, p. 5.

33. Bannon, "An Enduring Spirit: The Photography of Thomas Merton," *Paradox of Place*, p. 15.
34. Bannon, "An Enduring Spirit: The Photography of Thomas Merton," *Paradox of Place*, p. 14.
35. Sunderman, "With Eyes to See: Merton: Contemplative Photographer," *Paradox of Place*, pp. 19-20.
36. Bannon, "An Enduring Spirit: The Photography of Thomas Merton," *Paradox of Place*, p. 11.
37. Quenon, "The Joyful Face Behind the Camera," *Paradox of Place*, p. 5.
38. *Seeking Paradise: The Spirit of the Shakers* (ed. Paul M. Pearson; New York: Orbis Books, 2003).
39. *When the Trees Say Nothing* (ed. Kathleen Deignan; Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2003).
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42. *Merton and Judaism; Holiness In Words: Recognition, Repentance, and Renewal* (ed. Beatrice Bruteau; Louisville, Kentucky: Fons Vitae, 2003).
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51. Merton, *When the Trees Say Nothing*, p. 14.
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56. *Striving Towards Being*, pp. 69f.
57. *Seeds*, p. xi.
58. *Seeds*, p. xvi.
59. *Seeds*, p. xvii.
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71. *Mystery Hidden Yet Revealed*, p. 298.
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