

“WHAT THEY SAY”:
1990 in Merton Scholarship
& Publication

by **Robert E. Daggy**

“It is not what people say that counts,
but what they say.”
(*Percival Hitchmouse*)

Thomas Merton, using one of his many *noms de plume*, scribbled this piece of badinage in a calendar called *The 1967 Western Datebook*. It is written in the block for Monday, 26 December 1966 and is one of several statements he playfully wrote down on various days in the calendar, only a few pages of which survive. Nonsensical at first glance — and second and third glances — the phrase nevertheless expresses my own thoughts as I look back on Merton scholarship and publication in 1990. I could, in fact, probably extend it to include *all* Merton scholarship and publications. A great deal has been *said*, not the least of it by Merton himself. There have been virtual avalanches (or *tsunamis* as I said in last year's *Merton Annual*) of “saying.” But with Percy Hitchmouse, I cannot think that that is what counts. Does all this “saying” say anything? Or to put it another way, have studies of Merton moved away from repeating or recasting what Merton himself said and which, in most cases, he said better? Are words, at times, put in his mouth so he seems to say (or might have said) what his interpreters wish to say? As I look at 1990, not a banner year by any means in Merton studies, these are questions which I feel deserve to be asked, need to be asked.

There was a lull in the tidal wave of Mertoniana in 1990. Following the *tsunami* of papers and addresses from the many symposiums, festivals,

and gatherings in 1988 attendant on the twentieth anniversary of his death and from the First General Meeting of *The International Thomas Merton Society* in 1989 (though some of these papers were published in 1990), this lull was probably inevitable and to be expected. The lull extended, in a sense, to what Merton "said" himself.

A staggering number of Merton's books, however, remained in print with glossy new paperback editions from Doubleday Image Books of *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, *Contemplative Prayer*, and *Life and Holiness*. The major "new" publication drawn from Merton's writings was the third volume of the Merton letters, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in the fall of 1990. Titled *The School of Charity: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Renewal and Spiritual Direction*, edited appropriately by Brother Patrick Hart, this third volume presented selections from Merton's letters to religious figures, both within and without his Cistercian Order. One letter from the collection — written to Dom Andre Louf on 26 April 1965 a few months before Merton "officially" entered the hermitage — appeared under the title "A Letter on Solitude and Community" in the first 1990 issue of *Cistercian Studies*. *The School of Charity* is reviewed in this volume by Jonathan Montaldo.

Merton excerpts continued to be included in books and periodicals. The appearance of such poems as "For My Brother, Missing in Action" and "Prayer for Peace," in both English and in Dutch translations, was occasioned no doubt by the growing tension created by "Desert Storm." The major reprint of an article was "The Ascent to Truth" in the September 1990 issue of *Thought*, an issue commemorating the sesquicentennial of Fordham University. This reprint indicates that even Merton did not always have much new or fresh to say. The editor points out in his introduction:

In this article Merton covers ground which Catholic theologians and philosophers, e.g., Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain, had already covered, the relation of St. John's mystical experience of God to Catholic theology and to the conceptual content of that act of faith. His exposition reveals his dependence on their work. Nevertheless, although the article is not highly original, it is expertly written ["what people say that counts...?"]. It gives a lucid account of the relation between St. John's mysticism and his Catholic faith and provides as well a good example of Merton's spiritual writing in the early part of his career.

The last sentence underscores the fact that much publication is for scholars, for students of Merton's "career," for those placing what he said at any given time in the total context of what he said. Along these same lines — and also concerning St. John of the Cross — was the rare appearance of some of Merton's conference notes, interesting in the context of his

thought and career but hardly of general interest. I edited these notes, “Thomas Merton’s Practical Norms of Sanctity in St. John of the Cross” for the Winter 1990 issue of *Spiritual Life*, an issue more or less devoted to Thomas Merton (with essays by Kathy Coffey, Patrick F. O’Connell, and Kenneth Voiles, but more on them later). Victor Kramer already had written an essay on some of Merton’s notes which was published in the fourth number of *Cistercian Studies* in 1989 and titled “Patterns in Thomas Merton’s Introduction to Ascetical and Mystical Theology.” He points out that considerable space in these notes is given to St. John of the Cross and it is interesting that his concluding paragraph underscores what has been said above, namely that even in as sparse a form as notes Merton says something that counts:

Merton’s “Introduction” to Christian mysticism is just that, notes for a start for someone to absorb the classics, and then continue his or her own journey. Merton’s notes reveal him as a teacher in community. While the notes are sometimes sketchy, they have value both as they illuminate the moment of Merton’s developing career and because they provide basic insights for teaching a course about ascetical and mystical theology — aspects of the study of God never to be separated.

For those who want to hear Merton actually “saying” things, Crendence Cassettes ground out five more *Merton Tapes* in 1990, making a total of sixty-four tapes and more than twice as many talks available commercially. These tapes contained talks on the Virgin Mary, the poetry of Blake and Auden, and Greek tragedy. As usual the tapes were presented “as is,” without editing, cuts, or comment. The listener is required to listen, particularly in these tapes, quite closely in order to hear — and to understand — exactly what Merton had to “say.” As guides to Merton’s developing thought the tapes, with the notes discussed above, are invaluable. Taken separately or in groups, they present, as both Dewey and Victor Kramer have pointed out, an arduous and difficult task in sorting out that development though the results may profit the careful listener.

Outside the United States and in English there was some activity. *Honorable Reader* was published in London under its U. S. subtitle, *Reflections on My Work* and SPCK brought out the first paperback edition in England of *The Seven Storey Mountain*. An interesting English language publication in South Africa, though disappointing in some ways, was called *Religion in Action: A Selection from the Writings of M. K. Gandhi and Thomas Merton*. Compiled by Christina Steyn, who wrote her dissertation on Merton (in Afrikaans) and who is an adviser to the International Thomas Merton Society, it is the first major Merton publication in South Africa. It was published by the University of South Africa Press (UNISA) at Pretoria.

Significantly, and as one might expect, it includes among other excerpted writings Merton's essay "Toward a Theology of Resistance" from *Faith and Violence*. What is disappointing about the book — from the standpoint of what both Gandhi and Merton said — is that there is no editorial apparatus, such as introduction, preface, notes, or comments, to lead readers into what they said (and perhaps why and when — no reason is offered as to why the selections were placed in the order they are, but it isn't chronological). I can't but think that such apparatus would have been helpful to South African readers who may know something about Gandhi, but who, I suspect, know little about Merton. Instead, what they said is simply presented and allowed to stand on its own. In this case what they say is what counts.

A number of Merton works in translation came to my attention in 1990. The most active group outside the United States is in Belgium. After visiting there in 1990, I wrote "Thomas Merton in Belgium: A Report to the ITMS for *The Merton Seasonal*. I said in part:

The "Merton Vrienden" — Merton friends. So the vital and active group in Belgium call themselves. Centered primarily in Flanders, the group was formed before *The International Thomas Merton Society*. They held their first meeting — they call them "Merton Weekends" — in the fall of 1986, over six months before the ITMS was founded at the Thomas Merton Studies Center in May, 1987 The group meets to discuss Merton and his concerns (many of which are their concerns), but, like Merton himself, they remember the "stuff of life" and combine serious moments with times of enjoyment [They] approach Merton with great respect but . . . never seem to turn him into a cult figure or into something he was not.

The group publishes a modest, but interesting, quarterly called *Contactblad Merton-Vrienden*. It features schedules for their weekends, translated excerpts from Merton's writings, and short articles about Merton. They have negotiated translations of some works into Dutch, such as *New Seeds of Contemplation*, translated by Edward Buysse, and published as *Zaadkorrels van Contemplatie* (Antwerp: Unistad Uitgaven, 1988). Constant Broos, long the unofficial leader of the group, edited and translated a sort of Merton reader called *Verwondering in Andere Dimension* (i.e., *Wandering in Another Dimension*). Privately printed and distributed, it includes texts from Merton; articles by Broos, Brother Theofiel, and Phil Bosmans (one of the most popular writers in Belgium); and interviews with John Eudes Bamberger, Ernesto Cardenal, Timothy Kelly, and Robert Lax. Three members of the group — Franklin De Vrieze (prayer), Peter Doll (*The New Man*), and Myriam Kaerts (racism) — completed theses on Merton at the Catholic University of Leuven in 1989 and 1990.

Merton has been translated into twenty-seven languages with Finnish added to the list in 1990. The first major work published in Finland

arrived at the Merton Center during the year. *Thoughts in Solitude* — Finnish title *Ajatuksia Yksinäisydestä*, translated by Pia Koskimen-Launonen — was released by Kirjanelio in Helsinki. Soon after the book arrived I received an interesting letter from Bjorn Dahla of the Donner Institute/ Steiner Memorial Library in Helsinki. He said:

Would you please send information about the International Thomas Merton Society. Our library is specialized in Comparative Religion, especially mysticism in all of its expressions. Because Thomas Merton is receiving even here in Finland more scholarly attention, we are hoping to build up a collection of primary and secondary material about Merton at our library.

Merton's renderings of some of the “sayings” of the Desert Fathers — *The Wisdom of the Desert* — appeared in two new translations, both published in 1989 but not received at the Merton Center until 1990. *Sha Mo De Chih Hui*, a Chinese translation, was published by the Catholic Truth Society in Hong Kong. Uga Guand Editore in Parma published an Italian version, *La Sagessa del Deserto*, translated by Caterina Licciardi. A composite edition of two Merton books appeared for the first time in Polish translation. *Posiew Kontemplacji/ Nikt nie jest Samotna Wyspa* combined *Seeds of Contemplation* and *No Man is an Island*, both translated by Maria Morstingorska and published in Cracow by Wydawnictwo Znak. The former had been published previously only in serial form in *Znak* magazine. On the audio side, a German cassette tape from Verlag Hermann Bauer in Freiburg presented three essays from *No Man is an Island* (excerpted from *Keiner ist eine Insel* translated by Annemarie von Putkamer). The three essays — “Love can be kept only by being given away,” “The wind blows where it pleases,” and “The measure of charity” — are read by Horst Warning. They are punctuated by musical interludes, giving opportunity for immediate reflection on what Merton had to say in these essays.

When we turn to look at work and writing about Merton, it is clear that what people can find to say about what Merton said covers an astounding range of topics and concerns. Work in 1990, though not so voluminous as in other years, reflected that range. In *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person*, the only major book devoted to Merton published during the year, Thomas Del Prete examined Merton's thoughts on a barely touched topic. Despite the fact that Merton was a practicing teacher through most of his adult life, little attention has been paid to how he taught or what he said about education. Del Prete attempts to remedy this though he was, as he states himself, hampered because Merton said little about education as such. Nevertheless, he uses the few direct statements and extrapolates from Merton's other writings to analyze his thinking

about teaching and education. The book is reviewed in this volume by Patrick F. O'Connell. Some excerpts from Del Prete's book appeared as a short article — "Sincerity in Teaching" — in the October 1990 issue of *PACE*, i.e., Professional Approaches for Christian Educators. He has also written a short study, "Thomas Merton on Mark Van Doren: A Portrait of Teaching and Spiritual Growth," which is scheduled for publication in the Winter 1991 *Merton Seasonal*.

Two discussions about Merton and the *enneagram* demonstrated that one can say something about Merton with almost any subject or topic. The *enneagram* — described as "a mysterious model of the psyche that is not originally Christian but probably derives from the Eastern tradition of Sufi wisdom" — has enjoyed a certain vogue in some quarters. It seems to me to be just another way of categorizing people and assigning them traits and attributes, similar to classification by the signs of the zodiac, but its adherents obviously see more than that in it. It was probably inevitable that Merton would be analyzed in terms of the *enneagram* and two studies appeared during 1990. Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert discuss Merton in *Discovering the Enneagram: An Ancient Tool for a New Spiritual Journey*, published originally in Germany and in English translation in the United States by Crossroad. According to Rohr and/ or Ebert, Merton was a "Type Four," identified as "The Need to be Special." They say: "The life program of FOURs could be described as an eternal quest for the Holy Grail." Other famous fours, according to Rohr, were Soren Kierkegaard, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Merton's friend, Daniel Berrigan. Hollywood is "an El Dorado of FOURs," including Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, and James Dean. Joseph, his coat of many colors, and his need to rule in Egypt typifies a Biblical four. Animals symbolic of fours are the mourning dove and the bassett hound, though "redeemed fours" (and they think Merton saved himself from the need to be too special) are often symbolized by the oyster: "Writing is like the pearl of a sickness." Fours' color is bright violet or mauve and they tend to be Francophiles, loving anything French or French-like.

The March-April 1990 issue of *Review for Religious* carried Sister Suzanne Zuercher's essay, "Redemption and Romantic Melancholy: Thomas Merton and the Enneagram." She begins:

One wonders whether there is anything new to be said about Thomas Merton. More personally, I can wonder what reflections I might offer around already known sources and resources. I nevertheless venture to offer an hypothesis regarding Merton's character drawn from my own years of reading and reflecting on Merton and working with and teaching

the enneagram, a personality description which has come to us from the Sufis and is a part of their philosophy of creation.

Sister Suzanne also categorizes Merton as a "4," which she describes as "ego-melancholic," "ego-romantic," or "over-dramatizer." She also feels that the "4," whether male or female, evidences more of the traits of character that are traditionally viewed as feminine and takes this to mean that Merton was particularly open to the feminine.

These explorations of Merton and the *enneagram* point up two areas of emphasis in Merton studies in 1990: Sufism and the feminine. The *enneagram* is, of course, an ancient Sufi mechanism for analyzing people. Two papers from the First General Meeting of the *ITMS* were published during the year which dealt with Merton and Sufism (or Islam in a broader sense). "Merton's Reflections on Sufism," by the late Burton B. Thurston, appeared in the Summer 1990 issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. Thurston concluded that "Merton's knowledge of Sufism had reached a point where a non-Muslim could go no further than he had gone." The second study — Sidney H. Griffith's "Thomas Merton, Louis Massignon, and the Challenge of Islam" in *The Merton Annual 3* — discusses the beginnings of Merton's interest in Islam. William H. Shannon uses a Sufi story as the framework for his discussion in "The Spirituality of Thomas Merton" (published in the third 1990 number of *Cistercian Studies*). He also relates another Sufi story in the body of his essay.

The feminine was explored by a number of writers. Sister Helen Wall discussed "Merton and Women Religious" in the January 1990 issue of *Sisters Today*. Robert Nugent's expanded paper from the First General Meeting examined Merton's attitude toward sexuality, and hence females. Somewhat sensationally titled "Merton and the Fairies," it was published in *The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement Journal*. In the issue of *Spiritual Life* mentioned above, Kenneth M. Voiles discussed another little touched area of Merton's interest — his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Voiles' essay was titled "The Importance of Mary in the Spirituality of Thomas Merton." The Winter 1990 issue of *The Merton Seasonal* was devoted to women and Merton. James R. Lauridson's "Merton and the Feminine: A Reflection" was a brief overview of Merton's relationships with real and imaginary women which enabled him to reconcile the masculine and feminine in himself. Sister Clarita Felthoelter, O.S.U., was inspired "After Reading Merton" to write two poems about Biblical women: Martha and Salome. J. T. Ledbetter's "The Woman Thing" offered a transcript of a classroom discussion on Merton and his relationship with the nurse. Most seem to

agree that Merton was a significant figure, even in the 1960s, in the movement toward a less androcentric world. Other 1990 publications indicate that what Merton *said* over twenty years ago can be profitably examined, interpreted and used in the 1990s. The following list bears this out:

1. **Family crisis:** Little has been done on Merton's own family situation though many, including myself, feel that we might well use the term dysfunctional to describe the Merton-Jenkins family complex. Kathy Coffey attempts to analyze Merton's relationship with his brother, his only sibling, in "Patterns of Peace: John Paul and Thomas Merton" which appeared in the Merton issue of *Spiritual Life*.
2. **Spirituality:** Merton's contributions to the development of a twentieth century spirituality continued to be examined, as in William H. Shannon's essay mentioned above. Patrick F. O'Connell also examined this significant area of Merton's thought in the Merton issue of *Spiritual Life*, "Thomas Merton's Spiritual Teaching: Tradition and Innovation." One interesting suggestion that O'Connell makes is that Merton, in his search for and conception of wholeness, may be seen as a vanguard figure in what we now call "Creation Spirituality." Merton's method of prayer continued to be scrutinized as well: Mary Luke Tobin's "Merton on Prayer: Start Where You Are" in the Summer 1990 issue of *Vision Quest* and Wayne Simsic's "Praying in the Silence of Nature with Thomas Merton" in the November-December 1990 issue of *Living Prayer* (Simsic's essay, basically inspired by the visit to Merton's hermitage during the First General Meeting, also suggests Merton's spirituality embraced a creation wholeness).
3. **The Persian Gulf Crisis:** Hal Crowther states, in "The Case for Sanity" in Durham, North Carolina's *Independent Weekly* (19 December 1990), that Merton's writings on peace in general and Vietnam in particular could just as well have been written about the crisis in the Middle East which developed into "Desert Storm." Franklin De Vrieze read a paper at the November 1990 "Merton Weekend" of the Belgian group on the ways what Merton said could be applied to the Gulf situation. His remarks were later published in the December *Contactblad Merton-Vrienden* as

“Over Thomas Merton en de Golfcrisis.” Though not specifically on the Gulf crisis, John Dear emphasized the prophetic nature of Merton’s writings on peace and nonviolence in a chapter of his book *Our God is Nonviolent: Witnesses in the Struggle for Peace and Justice* (Pilgrim Press). The Merton chapter was titled “The God of peace is never glorified by human violence.”

4. **Judaism:** William Shannon’s paper from the First General Meeting was published in the 6 October 1990 issue of *America* as “Merton and Judaism.” He began:

More and more scholars are discovering fresh indications of Thomas Merton’s versatility, his breadth of vision and the creative ability he had to engage himself in so many different areas of thought. One of these areas that needs more attention is his relationship to Judaism, in terms of both his contact with Jewish thinkers and his appreciation of Jewish thought.

Shannon goes on to give a good overview of Merton’s reverence for the Jewish scriptures and his appreciation for Jewish scholars and writers. Other items in 1990 touched on Merton and two Jewish writers though he had no contact with either. Karl A. Plank’s paper from the General Meeting appeared in *The Merton Annual* 3 as “Thomas Merton and Hannah Arendt: Contemplation after Eichmann.” Plank describes in detail how Merton used Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as a direct source, often using Arendt’s exact words, for his poem “Epitaph for a Public Servant.” Interest in Merton and Etty Hillesum, who died during the Holocaust, surfaced in 1990. Kathy Coffey was perhaps the first to publish a piece which incorporated both Merton and Hillesum. Her “Three Words, Three Souls, and Holiness: Spiritual Treasures can be Found in the Writings of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Etty Hillesum” appeared in the October 1990 *Catholic Digest*. In an eight cassette tape series, Bishop Robert Morneau discussed both Merton and Hillesum, among others, in *The Impact of Divine Love: An Examination of Eight Life-Changing Autobiographies* (Alba House). Two other scholars have begun work on Merton and Hillesum: Elena Malits, C.S.C., who projects an extended comparison, and Michael Downey, whose essay appears in this volume.

5. **The East:** Merton’s encounter with Eastern thought and religion is among the best known of his concerns. However, there were

indications that his own Roman Catholic Church was drawing back from such encounter as the 1990s began. In "Drinking from Eastern Sources" in the 3 February issue of *America*, David Toolan found Merton's "inquiring spirit and joy" in turning to the East "to learn in depth" a more compelling response than Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's letter "Some Aspects of Christian Meditation." Toolan felt that the letter "speaks as if the Roman church had nothing to learn from the East" and regrets that more of Merton's spirit was not in evidence. In "Thomas Merton's Search for Wisdom as Revealed in *The Asian Journal* (*Cistercian Studies* no. 2), Sister Ruth M. Fox, O.S.B., uses what Merton said about drinking "from the ancient sources of monastic vision and experience" as a springboard for her positive analysis of Merton's Asian pilgrimage itself. She feels that the Eastern encounter contributed to fullness and understanding for Merton before he died. In the East itself and from the vantage of an Eastern person, Japanese scholar Yasuo Kikama found Merton's encounter with the East a positive statement for both East and West ["Tomas Merton to Touyou no Reisei" in *Eichi Daigaku Journal* (February 1990)]. The Summer 1990 issue of *The Merton Seasonal* was devoted to Merton and the East with the article by Burton Thurston plus Bonnie Thurston's helpful "Thomas Merton and Eastern Religions: A Bibliography;" Basil Pennington's "Merton's Bell Rings Out in Thailand;" "Merton's Words in China" (a report on the posting of a Merton quote in a college during the Tiananmen Square incident); J. T. Ledbetter's "Six Haiku;" and Paul M. Pearson's account of his trip retracing Merton's steps, "Journey to Sri Lanka."

6. **Renewal:** Thomas F. McKenna, C.P., discussed renewal in his paper, "Thomas Merton and the Renewal of Religious Life" (*Merton Annual* 3). Dealing primarily with the question of vocations to the religious life, McKenna finds what Merton says of continuing importance. He says: "Our contention is that from his pre-pragmatic 1960s view of renewal, he laid out a number of constants which paradoxically enough serve all the more usefully as beacons to see through the present murkiness." Thomas McLaughlin, O.S.B., felt that Merton's own life experience contributed to renewal in the religious life in "The Experience of Solitude: Hermitage Writings of Thomas Merton." The essay appeared in the May 1990

issue of *Tjurunga: An Australasian Benedictine Review*. Though McLaughlin stresses that Merton rejects the idea that others should view his life as a “road map” for religious life, his hermitage experience nevertheless offers guides to those seeking to live apart from the world. From the broader view of renewal in the church, George Weigel commented decisively in the 18 March 1990 *National Catholic Register* about an advertisement called “A Call for Reform” which appeared in *The New York Times*. It was signed by 4,500 Roman Catholics. Weigel did not find it a genuine call for reform and felt it lacked the spirit of renewal which Merton has come to represent. His title summed up his feeling: “Merton’s Rolling in His Grave.” An even broader look at Merton’s influence in renewal was taken by Douglas R. Letson in the paper he delivered at the First General Meeting. Titled “Foundations for Renewal: An Analysis of the Shared Reflections of Thomas Merton and Ernesto Cardenal” (*Merton Annual* 3), it examines Merton’s contributions, not only to religious renewal, but to cultural and political renewal. In “Thomas Merton: The Monk as a Critic of Culture” (also *Merton Annual* 3), Lawrence S. Cunningham attempts to assess this broader influence of Merton’s. He says in part:

Once I began to take note of [his influence] I began to see that it was Thomas Merton as a *person* — the person, to be sure, who spoke through his writings (and the vast bulk of his writing was autobiographical but often disguised under other genres) — who exercised such a profound influence on people. Thomas Merton, in short, strikes me as a paradigmatic person not in the sense that everyone could see him as a model to emulate but because, in his life, there are clues as to how we might live and how we might view the world even when we find ourselves in circumstances quite different from his own.

7. **Merton’s Life:** This interest in Merton’s life and his experience inspires much of what is written about him. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., for instance, also views Merton as a paradigmatic figure as he outlined in “Thomas Merton’s Flight toward Freedom” in the 9 December 1990 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*. His subtitle sums up his feeling: “He chronicled the life of a monastic ‘everyman’.” Brother John Albert, O.C.S.O., examines whether Merton’s life as a Trappist led him to “the true path to himself as artist.” This essay, “Merton’s Life as Monastic Narrative” appeared in the Autumn issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. The extensive oral histories done by

Victor Kramer provide insights into his life. In one interview — “Merton’s Contributions as Teacher, Writer and Community Member” — Flavian Burns talks about Merton as an educator and as a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani. James Conner, O.C.S.O., provides a basic reminiscence about Merton and Gethsemani in his essay “The Tension between Solitude and Sharing in the Monastic Life.” Both appeared in *The Merton Annual 3*. In “The Significance of the Firewatcher Quilt” (*The Merton Seasonal*), Richard Sisto interviewed Fred Hicks, employee at Gethsemani about an incident in Merton’s life when he almost burned the hermitage down — and came close to setting himself on fire. Merton’s life inspires work in other genres and media. The quilt mentioned above is a portrait of Merton in fiber art done by Penny Sisto and acquired by the Merton Center in 1990. Poems are written to and about Merton. Two plays about him appeared in 1990 though neither, to my knowledge, has been published or actually performed. The first, written by Edward R. Heidt, C.S.B., titled “Holding a Mirror to the Mountain: Thomas Merton, a Dramatization,” is a short multi-media production about Merton. The second, “Un Pas de Deux, un Pas de Dieu” by Christine Hogan, is a dialogue between Merton and Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet.

8. **Merton’s Writings:** Interest in the way Merton developed what he said was shown in essays dealing with his writings. In “Thomas Merton: Firewatcher” in the Summer issue of *The Merton Seasonal*, Lawrence S. Cunningham discussed the Epilogue to *The Sign of Jonas* — “Fire Watch, July 4, 1952.” He says: “. . . rarely did Thomas Merton ever write more powerfully than in those pages which make up the epilogue of *The Sign of Jonas* (1953) and that would include those massive pages which make up *The Collected Poems*.” Michael Higgins explored Merton’s interest in other poets — specifically Louis Zukofsky, David Jones, and Basil Bunting — in his paper from the First General Meeting. It was published in *The Merton Annual 3* as “Merton and the Real Poets: Paradise Re-Bugged.”

In short, much was said about Merton and what he had to say in 1990 though there was a “lull” in the sheer quantity of articles and essays. With less said, it may have been easier during the year to see if what was said

"counted." In general, in my opinion, it did. Significant work on Merton was published in 1990. And there is no doubt that people will continue to read Merton and continue to "say" a great deal about him. As Lawrence Cunningham puts it in "Firewatcher": "[His] is the kind of writing that demands, simultaneously, attention and response."