# Encounter in a Secret Country: Thomas Merton and Jorge Carrera Andrade

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The purpose of my essay is to explore a kind of resonance between Thomas Merton's and Jorge Carrera Andrade's poetic visions. Since the bulk of my analysis is going to be based on Merton's English renditions of the Ecuadorian's poetry, I wish to start with a brief comment on Merton as a translator. It seems that the success of the monk's translating efforts lies in the fact that he did not merely read literature, but *meditated* on it until the deep truths contained in it became part of him, *connatural* with him—a term Merton the follower of Jacques Maritain applied to the experience of knowledge by identification, in art as much as in religion. Referring to the traditional definition of meditation as *inquisitio veritatis*, or the search for truth, Merton would repeatedly stress that it is not solely the function of intelligence, since meditation originates in love and leads to an affective identification with and a unitive knowing of ultimate reality. Contemplative meditation differs from its philosophical variety in engaging the whole person and all the faculties, speculative as well as affective. In *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* (1960) Merton specifies that meditation is a personal and intimate form of prayer, and as such it should integrate the mystery of one's own life with the mysteries of the Christian faith. In other words, in meditation we should try to see our life in the light of God's providential will for us and for humanity.[1] Merton's plea for spiritual realism in meditation makes it not only salutary but downright mandatory to see the mystery of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, which forms the very core of Christianity, reenacted in the sufferings and trials of individual human beings and whole communities. It is a contemplative's duty to confront the human condition in its entirety, even in its political actualization, for only a grasp of the inner sense of events and political pressures can provide a key to the liberation of the human being made in the image of God.[2]

Merton firmly believed that the contemplative experience should lead to dialogue and that the fruits of contemplation are to

be shared. His meditations on the literary works of others, therefore, resulted in the subsequent publication of numerous essays and highly praised translations, which, while remaining faithful to the original, reflect Merton's own lived and authentic experience as much as they do that of the authors. Merton's working definition of translation as "a new creation emerging from communion in the same silence"[3] enables us to approach his English renditions of poetry in general, and of Carrera Andrade in particular, as endowed with a life of their own, thanks to the translator's success in capturing what he calls a poem's "nativity or *natura*."[4] It bears stressing that, according to this definition, a translation, no matter how faithful to the original, will always be "a new creation" in so far as the translator, a unique individual with a unique perspective, first has to enter into another person's experience so deeply as to make it his own ("connatural" with him), and then, reemerging from this "communion in silence," has to transliterate this experience in his own idiom. Far from detracting from faithfulness to the original poem, the newness Merton speaks of is a necessary condition if a translation is to be alive.[5]

While a significant number of Merton's translations were first included in his 1963 volume of poetry *Emblems of a Season in Fury*, the posthumously published *Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (1977) contains all his translating efforts, and these range over an impressive spectrum of languages and cultures: from the Latin and Greek of the Church Fathers (St. Ambrose, Paulus Diaconicus, Sedulius, Clement of Alexandria),[6] through the Chinese of Chuang Tzu and Meng Tzu and the Persian of the anonymous poem "Tomb Cover of Imam Riza,"[7] to the contemporary French poetry of René Char and Raïssa Maritain. The core of the section, however, consists of translations from the Spanish and Portuguese of the works of such poets as the Spaniards Rafael Alberti and Miguel Hernandez; the Nicaraguans Ernesto Cardenal, Pablo Antonio Cuadra and Alfonso Cortés; the Ecuadorian Jorge Carrera Andrade; the Chilean antipoet Nicanor Parra; the Peru-born cosmopolitan avant-gardist César Vallejo; Fernando Pessoa, once hailed as a Portuguese Whitman; and the Brazilian modernist Carlos Drummond de Andrade. However impressive the entire list of contents, that Merton gives a privileged place to the Ibero-American continent in the arena of contemporary poetry is indisputable, especially in view of the fact that the list is incomplete, as Merton's premature death put an end to his larger-scale project of preparing a personal Latin American anthology.[8]

The leading Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier once defined Ibero America as the least Cartesian continent imaginable,[9] a view evidently shared by Thomas Merton, who praised the poets of the Southern continent for their natural openness to sapiential awareness. In contrast to a vast majority of their North American counterparts, they seemed "to be alive, to have something honest to say, to be sincerely concerned with life and with humanity."[10] In a letter to a literary scholar, the Gethsemani poet claimed: "There is some genuine hope left in them, or when they are bitter the bitterness has a maturity and content which make it respectable, and in any case I tend to share it in some ways."[11] To what extent he shared it becomes evident when we scrutinize the translations Merton originally included in *Emblems*, as if suggesting, by juxtaposing them with his own poetry, that his voice and the voices of the poets from the Southern continent echo one another; that they are participants in a conversation carried over ages and across distances in a kind of ceaseless musical harmony. Merton once said that "heart speaks to heart in the language of music" and "true friendship is a kind of singsong."[12] *Emblems of a Season of Fury*, consisting of original and translated poetry, gives the impression of having been intended by Merton as witness to such a heartfelt resonance between his entire being and "the entire being of the other," as he puts it in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966). "Resonances," his baffling 1963 volume seems to be saying: "here is a good choir."[13] And indeed, the parallelism between Merton's and the translated poets' themes and concerns, at the deepest heart of which is the spiritual destiny of man,[14] is exceptional. So, too, is the convergence of their poetic means and techniques. Thomas Merton's poetic idiom, which he characterized as "much more that of Latin America than that of the United States,"[15] was an asset in transcending the limitations of the Western mindset, dominated by discursive logic and Cartesian dualism, towards a reconciliation with another, though equally "American," order of perception: the Pilgrim Fathers' descriptions of the New World were as full of magical reality as Columbus's letters to the Catholic Monarchs.

A navigation of the country where the heart of Latin America was to speak directly to Merton's heart, and speak in the same key, might just as well start with the analysis of Merton's renditions of Carrera Andrade's poems in the hope that they will yield a rough map of this promised land of the poets, which, like in a

Zen koan, is everywhere and nowhere because it is within ourselves. It is in this nowhere land that the authorship of poetry seems to lose importance; poetry is self-less and universal again, an asset belonging to everyone and no one, as it used to be in premodern times. Here poets once more become who they have always been: listeners for harmonies hovering eternally in the air, their channels and transcribers.

Jorge Carrera Andrade (1902-1978) was born in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. He worked as a journalist at the age of fifteen, and published the first book of poems at twenty-three. Then, in 1928, he left his native country to study and travel in Europe. Throughout his life he was to shuttle between Europe, Asia, and the Americas in his capacity of diplomat and poet. The traveler's experience of solitude and rootlessness helped him, paradoxically, to achieve the planetary and cosmic awareness of communion with all being, as suggested by the title of his 1963 book of verse, *Hombre planetario*. His books of poetry came out in such diverse latitudes as, for example, Barcelona (*Boletines de mar y tierra*, 1930), Madrid (*El tiempo manual*, 1935), Paris (*Biografía para uso de los pájaros*, 1937), and Tokyo (*País secreto*, 1940). The titles of his later works sum up the poet's growing concern with indigenous peoples (*Crónica de las indias*, 1966) and the deepening consciousness of his own exile (*El libro del destierro*, 1970). Carrera Andrade first came to the United States in 1940 as Ecuadorian Consul General in San Francisco. While serving his country on the political front, he disseminated knowledge about the culture and literature of the entire Southern continent through poetry, essays, and extensive correspondence. In 1943 the Chicago *Poetry* magazine published his informative article "The New American and His Point of View toward Poetry." Three years later Macmillan brought out his *Secret Country*. In Muna Lee's translation, it became the Ecuadorian's first major book in English. Various other translations started to appear in anthologies, books, and magazines. In a recently published essay, Steven Ford Brown finds most of them faulty or unaccomplished, with one exception, however. He praises Thomas Merton for having "managed to capture the flavor and delicacy of Carrera Andrade's poems in a small collection of translations he included in *Emblems of a Season of Fury* (1963)."[16]

Carrera Andrade's tourist and diplomatic experience in Europe, Asia, and the Americas left the Ecuadorian poet skeptical about politics and the existent power structures. At the end of the

day he confessed his desire to embark "for the secret country, the country that is everywhere, the country that has no map because it is within ourselves."[17] In his inner journey there is something characteristic of the monastic spirituality of exile that Merton was to expound later in his writings on Albert Camus,[18] something that sets the pattern for Merton's other "monks" (in the sense of prophetic witnesses to truth and critics of existing power structures): they all have to travel light, in darkness and solitude, along a risky road often on the brink of infinite despair, with the determination to bring back to the world in crisis the seeds of hope out of which to grow "fruits able to calm the resentments and the rage of man." This was how Merton understood the role and responsibility of the poet, an understanding articulated in his "Message" for a congress of Latin American poetry, this "spontaneous explosion of hopes" and "a venture in prophetic poverty."[19]

Thomas Merton began to discover the poetry of Jorge Carrera Andrade in the late nineteen-fifties. Having obtained his address from the sculptor Jaime Andrade, he initiated correspondence with the "charming"[20] Ecuadorian poet. The admiration turned out to be mutual, and Andrade would soon call Merton "the world's conscience" and a "master of poets."[21]

Jorge Carrera Andrade inspired Merton with the idea of the secret country, even though, without knowing it, the author of *Emblems* had always been its citizen. For the Gethsemani monk this figurative place where "I have met Carrera Andrade, and [where] we have become good friends"[22] appeared to be, quite naturally, a distillation of all that was best about Ecuador—that "humble and delightful country."[23] Merton exalted Ecuador for being peripheral to the concerns of the industrialized world, and consequently unspoiled by aggressive greed and the will to power, and he saw the genius of this Central American republic fully incarnated in the poetry of Carrera Andrade. Little wonder that the author of *Hagia Sophia* would draw these irresistible comparisons:

> The voice of Ecuador (which sings in his verse) is a soft, humble voice: a voice, oppressed but without rancor, without unhappiness, like the voice of a child who does not get much to eat but lives in the sun. Ecuador is a hungry wise child, an ancient child, like the child in the Biblical proverbs who was always playing before the face of the Creator. An eternal child, a secret Christ, who knows how to smile at the folly of the great and to have no hope in any of the strong countries in the world.[24]

In 1961 Merton translated six of the Ecuadorian's poems for *Directions 17*. While only five of them appeared in *Emblems*, all six can be found in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (1977). It is this posthumous volume of verse that I will use as the basis of my analysis.[25] The translated pieces present diverse facets of Carrera Andrade's poetry, but all of them—from the worshipful "A Man from Ecuador Beneath the Eiffel Tower" and "Cocoa Tree," through the messianic "Notes of a Parachute Jumper," the humorous "Radicals," and the metaphysical "The Mirror's Mission," to the lighthearted conceit of "The Weathercock on the Cathedral of Quito"—testify to the "humanity, tenderness, and wit in the sense of *esprit*"[26] that Merton discovered in their author.

The first poem, "A Man from Ecuador beneath the Eiffel Tower," alludes to Carrera Andrade's experience of homelessness and travel. Since he was robbed in Panama and penniless upon his arrival in Europe, the only burden he carried was "his light burden of poetry and of Indian blood," as Merton puts it.[27] With this imponderable, even if at times burdensome, load the Latin American traveler stood before the technological wonder of the world, the Eiffel Tower, which seemed to sum up to him the daring spirit of the industrial age. Overwhelmed by its size and its new aesthetics, the man from Ecuador bursts into a spontaneous song of praise:

> You turn into a plant on the coasts of time
> With your goblet of round sky,
> Your opening for the tunnels of traffic.
> You are the biggest ceiba tree on earth.[28]

At once humbled and exultant, the poem's speaker tames the Tower's strangeness by describing it in terms of the only reality he knows—that of his Latin American homeland. The familiar irrupts in the strange when the proud steel construction is exulted as "the biggest ceiba tree on earth" or seen stretching its neck like "a llama of Peru" (8). By domesticating the unfamiliar, this perception technique allows the expatriate to shake off the sense of alienation and feel at home in the harsh European reality. It also bears witness to the poet's childlike innocence and his capacity for wonder. In this sense Carrera Andrade is a truer devotee of the much celebrated American religion of wonder than many of his North American counterparts. Born and bred in a culture where every aspect of daily life was permeated by the marvelous, where

magic and reality blended seamlessly into a paradigmatic epistemology of the mestizo world "to convey a mode of existence that is real enough, but strange to the rest of the world,"[29] he effortlessly picks up analogies between the seemingly incongruous, giving the tradition of the conceit a new lease of life. "A Man from Ecuador" is a prime example of the poet's metaphoricity.[30] Rather than describing, Carrera Andrade would frequently call an image into existence by referring to other, mediating images, with which the original would merge in interactive tension to yield a renewed vision of reality. In the poem in question the result is, firstly, the instantaneous annulment of distance between Latin America and Europe. Secondly, the vegetative, animal, and technological realms imperceptibly fuse into an organic view of reality, while the Eiffel Tower, acquiring the status of the *axis mundi*, stands as a visible symbol of the eternal marriage of heaven and earth.

The metaphor of the ceiba tree hints at the transcendental significance inscribed into the proud wrought-iron construction. The massive tropical tree, with its buttress-like ridges along the trunk, suggests associations with church architecture. A cathedral of the natural world, popularly referred to as God tree, it overlaps with the man-made "plant on the coasts of time" (1), vesting it with the same character of religious awe. But the Eiffel Tower is a temple of the new industrial age and of its optimistic spirit. As an "iron to brand the flock of clouds" (23), it anticipates man's imminent mastery over the world of nature, even as it continues its mediating function: the "first letter of a cosmic alphabet" (19), it spells "an adventure above time" (13), its mast "pointing in the direction of heaven" (20). In the middle of the highly civilized world stands the unrecognizable tree of life, its identity half-intuited only by the pure of heart.

In the poem's catalogue of images and descriptive terms, many are suggestive of the Tower's regal character. "Robed in folds of winds" (9), with "a comb of constellations in your hair" (10), the cosmic queen's towering presence commands the unruly elements, confronting single-handedly "the circus of horizons" (12). Though the poem seems to converge with futurist concerns, its eschatological overtones, vesting the "sentinel of the industrial age" (24) with implicit characteristics of the messianic monarch, suggest another, more theological reading. It is possible to see the commanding Eiffel Tower in terms of a global suzerain, a feminine-gendered cosmic Atlas,[31] who rules over the world without sub-

duding it; who protects, sustains hope, reawakens people to the sense of their transcendent destiny. The poem's persona feels overpowered and humbled but not threatened; confident and hopeful rather than scared—an attitude contrasting sharply with that exhibited in the presence of a usurper-dictator who rules by terror. Like the messianic king of the Bible, Carrera Andrade's metaphorical queen performs the function of welcoming strangers, uniting what has been divided, and proclaiming the advent of a new era, not unlike that of the eschatological Kingdom.

Far from being an apotheosis of the merely human power as an end in itself, the poem concentrates on the beauty of the impressive human achievement as expressive of the most beautiful of all human dreams—the dream of unity and peaceful coexistence. The builders of the Babel Tower also wanted to unite heaven and earth, and provoked a disastrous catastrophe instead, as Merton illustrated in his 1957 morality play "The Tower of Babel." Yet, the hubris of haughty pride is totally absent from Carrera Andrade's poem, which depicts a truly worshipful humility of the speaker overwhelmed by the new aesthetic of the man-made cosmic tree in which he senses an authentic presence of the transcendent. The closing lines, "The tides of heaven / Silently undermine your pillar" (25-26), do not leave any doubt that the object of the poet's adoration is definitely not the *gloria huius mundi.*

While the poem resonates profoundly with Merton's eschatological and epistemological concerns, it is doubtful whether Merton would ever have eulogized a technological construction, no matter how pioneering or transcendental in character, as he was particularly alert to the reverse side of so-called progress. Technology in its growing autonomy from humans was to be feared rather than revered. Carrera Andrade's "Cocoa Tree," on the other hand, would have fallen neatly into the Merton canon. Visualized as "archangel tutor of the green parrot" (2)[32] or genuflecting worshipper ecstatically tuned in to the hum of bees, the virgin tree, sharing in virgin nature's transparency for the divine, is a privileged *locus theologicus* ("On your knees, hands joined,/ Hearing the hum of secret hives of bees / You let your happiness grow" [8-10]).

Combining the simplicity and innocence of a child with the wisdom of a sage, Carrera Andrade's cocoa tree is the jungle's happy and wise feminine child. In its "fragrant lessons" (7) dictated "with a heavenly vocation" (6) and transcribed by the Latin

American poet, Merton's sensitive ear could not fail to hear the voice of Hagia Sophia—once celebrated by the monk from Kentucky in terms of "life as thanksgiving, life as praise, life as festival, life as glory."[33] Protective and maternal, hailed by Carrera Andrade as "cool doctrine in a tropic land" (3) and a benevolent silencer of distracting noises, the cocoa tree simply "lets" its happiness grow (10), and this consent is all that is needed to bring happiness to fruition. Like a woman, it receives and gives its consent to the "life as thanksgiving, life as praise, life as festival, life as glory" that is already present in the depth of its very being; this humble *fiat* actualizing the original consent given to life by virgin nature.

A wise teacher of a merciful doctrine, a natural born poet and philosopher "rich in almond-shaped thoughts" (11), the cocoa tree is perceived as writing

> . . . upon the pages of the air,
> The virgin jungle's novel
> Even to the sweet smell of grandmother's cups
> In dining rooms, with silent doors,
> Where the wall clock drips
> Like a half-orange.

Addressees of the "fragrant lessons" are reached across the natural and cultural divide, in the jungle as well as in the safety of established city life. Much as the human and the vegetal imperceptibly blend in the description of the cocoa tree, the natural and the cultural interpenetrate to uncover a net of interdependencies, a hidden wholeness that normally remains unseen. Glimpsed only by a few, it is the same "mysterious Unity and Integrity" that Merton calls the "Mother of all."[34]

Carrera Andrade belongs to the few twentieth-century poets who remained responsive to spiritual values hidden in the landscape. Unlike Thomas Merton, he was not a "professional," cloistered contemplative, yet his poems demonstrate an awareness of natural symbolism that leads to the attainment of a new level of being and a transfigurative reading of reality. It was poets like him Merton had in mind when writing in "Poetry and Contemplation: A Reappraisal" (1958) that in the midst of ordinary life they find a new and transcendent meaning, and by this meaning they transfigure the whole of life.[35] Theirs is a true eschatology, defined by Merton as "the vision of a totally new and final reality, a cosmic

reversal that brings ultimate meaning and salvation to the fallen world."[36] In Carrera Andrade's poetic universe vital symbols still abound and cosmic symbolism has not been "submerged under a tidal wave of trademarks, political party buttons, advertisements and propaganda slogans," which Merton once deplored as symptomatic of "an age of mass psychosis."[37] On account of the likes of Carrera Andrade, the world does not have to end in self-destruction yet. Merton once celebrated this innocence of vision in the following words: "O twenty poets, O ten poets, O five poets . . . the idol refuses to shine in us."[38]

In his essay on the Ecuadorian poet, Merton writes that during World War II Carrera Andrade "was silent, except for the quiet irony of his parachute jumper."[39] Silence seemed to be the only legitimate response to the barrage of words without content used on both sides of the conflict to legitimize death. When he finally spoke, he spoke of hope. His verse "Notes of a Parachute Jumper" depicts a paratrooper descending from heaven like a Messiah. In his "heavenly travel" (4), he traverses fantastic landscapes, vast and empty, save for "two birds and the wind" (1), occasionally dotted by flowers of condensed vapor and "rolled-up maps" of clouds (2).[40] The cloud-maps no doubt help him select the best way from among all "the roads of light and rain" (12) at his disposal, while the friendly steam-flowers, opening "to seek" him (3), neutralize the Messenger's fall. Before the expectant Earth can receive him into her "wet furrows" (14), like a caring mother would, the "friendly shrub" (13) further cushions the fall. Safe is the landing, warm is the welcome, all nature cooperates to shelter and protect the traveler from harm and from detection,

> For I come out of heaven
> As in prophecies and hymns,
> Messenger from on high with my uniform of leaves.

The "uniform of leaves" dissociates the wearer from any abstract nationalistic cause. Instead, it identifies him as a soldier of the earth who wears *its* colors and fights *its* cause—which is the cause of life—against the enemy death.[41] The son of Mother Earth, he returns home to liberate her from evil as ancient prophets have foretold. Inscribed within this mythic-eschatological framework, the jumper would almost from the start dissolve into the archetypal figure of the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, were it not for a few disquieting details. First of all, the title is the only place in the

entire poem that identifies the speaker as a parachute jumper; what follows is his monologue—his "notes"—and *self*-identification, which might as well be self-projection into the messianic framework, inspired by the exhilaration of "falling from the sky" and the unearthly beauty of the airscapes. The poem's double perspective constantly causes the existential and the eschatological dimensions to overlap. Consequently, when the Messenger proclaims his arrival with "my supply of deaths and lives" (8), the attentive Merton reader might feel uneasy. As we cannot completely put out of our minds the reality of World War II, which is the poem's frame of reference, whose claim do we hear: the self-proclaimed or the anointed Messenger's? Who has he been sent by: a secular or a Higher Power? And how does he actually feel about his mission: is he enjoying his power over life and death or does it weigh on him like a burden? Only the latter response would make the Messenger credible.

Merton himself had long been struggling with the same contorted problem, the problem of "mission," which touches the very core of all human history, whether in its religious or secular dimension. His most profound poetic meditation on this theme (prior to *Emblems of a Season of Fury*, at any rate) is probably "Elias—Variations on a Theme." Forced to rethink his life and his mission, Elias, the great Old Testament prophet, discovers with shame that while prophesying God's vengeance on the unrepentant he was communicating his own power and innocence rather than God's concern for the chosen people. The moment his *own* message turns out to be *no* message, the difference between the prophet and those to whom he is sent becomes obliterated, as does the demarcation line between holiness and sinfulness. The stigmatized city with its misery and divisiveness is finally recognized as his "own city" and Elias is ready to accept his membership in fallen humanity. The newly-acquired awareness of solidarity with others and complicity in wrongdoing ("I would be lost together with others," confesses Elias[42]) heightens the sense of responsibility attendant on his mission. The test of a mission's authenticity, Merton suggests, is the Messenger's readiness to serve rather than be served, and his capacity for affective identification even with the enemy. Has this criterion been met by Carrera Andrade's character?

The poem is literally flooded with the lucid joy of the Messenger's coming. The speaker's openness to the world's visual beauty and his perceptual innocence, his compassionate con-

cern for the suffering and his sincere desire to bring down the sky, momentarily dispel the readers' doubts. No trace of pride is detectable in him; in its place there is an unpretentious Franciscan lucidity. It is worth noticing that only a childlike, fresh, and innocent eye could have so de-familiarized and beautified the prosaic sight (at the height of the war frenzy) of the descending parachute. Now "swimming on air" (26) like a jellyfish, now drifting down like an umbel, it becomes a celestial umbrella protectively stretched over the earth, and a pledge of the traveler's heavenly mission. Images that fuse and metaphorical shortcuts are Carrera Andrade's signature.

Having happily descended on the continent troubled by atrocities, the speaker brings a potent message of hope, primarily to the destitute and the needy:

Here I am, farmers of Europe.
I come in the name of bread, of the mothers of the world,
In the name of all that is white and bare,
The heron, the lily, the lamb, the snow.

Earlier in the poem the jumper appealed to earth for help ("Earth, tell your wet furrows to receive me. / Tell that fallen tree to teach me / Color of a motionless form" [14-15]). He was the vulnerable one, the success of his mission dependant on her favorable response. The "motionless form" and the image of the Messenger buried like a seed in the wet soil hint at the necessity of patience for the success of his mission, a virtue he had yet to be instructed in by Mother nature. For him, covering the distance between heaven and earth, with the calculated risk of landing, was not unlike crossing the line separating life and death. On the other side of the "fall," however, is resurrection, and now, after what resembles the patient germination of a seed buried in the earth's furrows, roles can be reversed and the speaker can come out into the open to accomplish his mission of help-bringer sent to people impoverished by war, but continuing to care and "farm" the ravaged continent.

From "farmers of Europe" (stanza five) to "farmers of the world" (stanza seven), the span of the speaker's mission becomes all-embracing, his Messianic status confirmed by the Paschal imagery. Like Christ, he has been sent; like Christ, he comes *in the name* of the innocent and the pure who have been crucified by evil, and in the name of their grief-stricken mothers; he comes in

the name of countless unknown martyrs of "historical necessity" whose clothes have been bleached[43] in blood ("the heron, the lily, the lamb, the snow"), and in the name of the desperately poor who do not have anything, and so all can only be given to them. In the optics of the competitive world, these are all people of no account and, therefore, the chosen of the Bible (the *anawim*). Depending heavily on others for their very survival, they alone have enough humility to be open to unexpected gifts; they know for certain that they are not solipsistic, self-enclosed universes. The Messenger comes *in the name* of bread, but he also *is* bread. By virtue of his compassionate identification with all the members of Christ's tortured body he does become Christ, the Lamb of God, the Living Bread. "Descending like daylight" (9), the Messenger comes to put an end to the long night of evil, to announce the dawn of a new, innocent world. "Farmers of the world, I have brought down the sky" (25), he proclaims. In actual fact, the mission has *already* been accomplished. Has anyone noticed it? Has anyone believed it?

The "quiet irony" of the poem is that the event is destined to pass largely unnoticed. The only addressees of the good news are farmers. Translating this into the language of the Bible, they are the humble of the Gospel, descendants of the shepherds and the country folk to whom the First Coming was proclaimed. The industrial society, as Merton would tirelessly point out, believes in war, not peace, and seeks to impose on others the utopias of its own making, mistaking its "final solutions" for the eschatological Kingdom-to-Come. What these people no longer believe in, they are least likely to see when it unexpectedly appears before their eyes. All the engineers of doom and worshippers of power deafened by explosions of their own making have no ear attuned to the gentler tones of the good tidings. If they watch the sky at all, it is through a telescope, or, in time of war, to scour it for portents of death. Farmers, on the other hand, are compulsive sky-watchers; from sky-scapes, from the shape of clouds, they read their fortune. Tracing the "roads of light and rain" (12), they read their own "deaths and lives" (8) in the estimated harvest. It is from the sky, then, that comes the great joy addressed to them. The very appellation, "farmers," additionally alludes to the deepest identity of man as revealed in the Book of Genesis: the moment the world-garden was entrusted to the stewardship of man, he became responsible for cultivating or "farming" it.[44] However, not all re-

mained faithful to this hidden identity. The *Parousia* will inevitably reveal how well—or how badly—people have cultivated the garden of the world. Hence, having come "via the roads of light and rain," the Messenger brings "hidden lightnings," "a store of deaths, / But I also bring another year's harvests" (27-28). Death and life are two aspects of one reality, one depending on the other ("*but* I *also* bring"), complementing it, finally merging with it into a higher unity. As every farmer knows, perfectly sunny weather can be a curse if it is not interspersed with spells of rain and storm. This is the wisdom of the seed, which, received into the soil's "wet furrows" (14), by dying brings forth more abundant life. Yet, what life can abound on the debris of history? What crop can be harvested?

> I bring the quiet crop empty of soldiers,
> The window lighted again, driving out night.
> Routed forever. I am
> The new angel of our time.

Harvest is an explicitly apocalyptic image. It symbolizes the ripeness of time, the end of history. In "Notes of a Parachute Jumper" the consummation of history is announced by an angel-messenger, but, having traded wings for a parachute, he is even visually quite unlike his biblical counterparts. The new, uniform-clad angel speaks the language of his time and is firmly rooted in twentieth-century reality. His arrival is a hidden, almost marginal event, unaccompanied by any special signs. Or, to be more precise, the signs appear only to those who can still *see*, whose eyes are still open to natural symbolism, this preamble of supernatural faith. These signs are so "ordinary" and humble that people no longer heed them, expecting something more spectacular and violent as an announcement of the Messianic Kingdom. The aesthetic of escalation and noise has deafened the industrial society to the eloquence of the most elementary, most lucid symbols. Yet, through the quiet simplicity of his coming, the Messenger seems to be saying that there will not be another apocalypse. It is the present historical moment that contains the eschatological secret, the ripe crop of time. Interestingly enough, in the updated biblical parable of the wheat,[45] the subversive element in the harvested crop is not weeds but soldiers. This is another reminder that the eschatological Kingdom is to be the reverse of man-made utopias, in which peace is imposed and maintained by a well-trained army or militia.

Merton was deeply convinced that the tactic of war for the sake of (future) peace is self-defeating; that it only succeeds in feeding collective paranoia. After all, Hiroshima and Auschwitz were brain-children of the same mistaken retribution logic pushed to its limits, the same abstract categorizing ("we" versus "them") which reduces the unique, absolutely unrepeatable human person in his concrete existential situation to a one-dimensional label ("the enemy") and makes his or her liquidation a patriotic duty. In *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1961) Merton puts the following words into God's mouth: "I wish to make it impossible for anyone to be my enemy. Therefore I identify myself with my enemy's own secret self."[46] In the sixties the Merton credo is: solidarity with the world in crisis, divinization of the cosmos, transfiguration of *all* existential reality. The only war to end all wars is the war against illusion and the deceptions of facile propaganda that make us exiles from the truth and from ourselves, lost in the darkness of pseudo-knowledge, willfulness, and half-truths. Only if the house of our being can light up again will night be "routed forever" (31).

"Descending like daylight" (9) on the night-bound earth, the Messenger proclaims the dawn of a new world. His ontological status at this point is that of the light of the world coming to dispel the existential darkness forever. The Son of Man of the Hebrew prophets merges in the next image with the archetypal mythic hero, son of earth and sky, as an embodiment of the paradoxical conjunction of opposites, an integration of two realms of being divorced by the Fall:

> Citizen of air and clouds,
> I yet have earthly blood
> Which knows the way and enters every house,
> The road that flows beneath cars,
>
> The waters that pretend to be the same
> And that passed by before
> The earth of animals, of plants, with tears,
> Whither I go to light the day with my hands.

Having brought down the sky, the Messenger has, in consequence of his "fall" into the world, lifted up the fallen world back to heaven and restored to creation its original state of innocence, the second "fall" undoing the effects of the first. In the context of the poem's consistent Christological references, the metaphor of descent pre-

supposes a complementary movement of ascent, which, although not explicitly there, is nonetheless implied in the suggested union of heaven and earth. In this symmetrical movement of the world's fall and assumption, the latter would cancel out the former. In consequence, time itself would be cancelled, and history would come round to the "final beginning" of eschatology. Consistent with the logic of the new beginning is the requirement that the new creation be innocent of the law (which resulted from the knowledge of good and evil); it is, therefore, necessary that the ethical order be supplanted by *ordo caritatis:* where mercy fulfills the whole law, the speaker's "earthly blood" can truly "enter every house." Now that *every* house of being has been marked by the lamb's blood, there are no more "enemies" to be destroyed and all God's creation can be spared from retribution.

This joint Carrera Andrade-Merton poetic meditation reaffirms the value of universal hope for the world: the "inconsistent" logic of mercy breaks through the "consistency" of justice, much like in the mystical vision of the fourteenth-century English recluse, Lady Julian of Norwich, who was a major influence on the Trappist contemplative poet's thought in the nineteen-sixties.

Impersonating the genius of his "humble and delightful" country,[47] Carrera Andrade could not have reacted to the abyss of history otherwise than as an involved, compassionate, observer and an attentive listener who, over "the harsh chorus of the prisoners in despair . . . has listened, silently, to other voices and other harmonies."[48] These other voices, other harmonies transcribed by him, e. g., in "Notes of a Parachute Jumper," made Merton wonder: "Can prophecy be so humble, so unassuming? Can the voice of a new world be so quiet? Is this the voice of the gray-green Andes, of the long-hidden America, of the dim and cool twilight of the Sierra dawn out of which peace, perhaps, will one day be born?"[49]

If "Notes" is central to Merton's private canon of the Ecuadorian poet's verse, another poem, "The Mirror's Mission," coincides with his own passionate defense of the metaphysics of presence and constitutes an interesting gloss on his poetic interest in reflected images of spiritual reality, often expressed by the motif of the self as a window—of differing stages of ontological purity (e.g., "The Blessed Virgin Mary Compared to a Window"). Endlessly projecting his image onto innumerable pages of journals—and struggling to break free from self-reflexivity and self-projections—the Gethsemani poet tirelessly explored possible ways of seeing,

including non-seeing, in an effort to (re)educate his eyes. A sharp, penetrating glance of a bard, reaching to the depths of reality, is a prerequisite for prescribing corrective lenses for others.

"The Mirror's Mission" has an attractively regular pattern based on repetition and parallelism—the verbal analogue of the mirror's reflective power, of its "mission" to remember. The two opening lines introduced by the temporal conjunction "when" dramatize the advent of night:

> When all things forget color and shape,
> When walls, pressed by night, fold in
> And all else yields, or kneels, or blurs,
> You, O lucid presence, you alone stand![50]

First, darkness blurs the sharp outlines of reality, until finally all that is disappears in a seizure of universal amnesia, as if blotted out of existence. "All things forget color and shape," but, objectively, the color, the shape remain what they have always been, only the eye can no longer see them. Thus, absence would emerge as purely subjective, a matter of inadequate perception, of wrong epistemology, and, most importantly, of the loss of collective memory. Compressed to just one line is a penetrating diagnosis of the world's existential night. When—and the poet does not use the conditional "if," for he has no doubt that the metaphorical night falls as infallibly as the literal one—so when it comes, all seems to be lost. Blind, dissolving in the uniform nothingness, doubting its very existence, the besieged world experiences mounting panic; everything collapses, even the solid, mineral walls "fold in." Resistance is broken, the fortress of the self taken, its inhabitant enslaved, despairing, depicted in a supplicant position (kneeling). And since we have already ventured on the existential ground, hope and despair are naturally key concepts in the existential analysis. Despair can be defined, according to Gabriel Marcel, as an active denial of being, a form of spiritual suicide. The French philosopher clarifies the point, saying: "The soul which despairs shuts itself up against the central and mysterious assurance in which we believe we have found the principle of all positivity."[51] Void appears where fullness used to be, a void (non-being) that would engulf everything if it were not for the mirror and its "mission" of witnessing to what *is*, albeit at times what it witnesses to is invisible. "You, lucid presence," marvels Carrera Andrade, "you alone stand!" In obvious contrast to all else that "yields," the mirror has

withstood the siege of the absurd, and now, by a symmetrical but inverted process, it makes "the shadows yield" to its "bright will." The mirror restores the rule of reality by recognizing absence for what it is: a substanceless shadow, a ghost of reality that ensnares us in a web of illusions to which we ourselves give substance by our consent. The "lucid presence"—lucid in its double meaning: firstly, bright, therefore opposing darkness; secondly, unambiguous, clear to the understanding, hence dispelling doubts and confusion—remains faithful to memorized images. It recollects them and by doing so, re-collects reality dispersed by night. When dark hours come, this "transparent witness" (11) will "recite" its "lesson learned by heart," the "lesson of light" (12).

The principle of symmetrical reflection would require that the third and final stanza be a creative echo of the first. Not surprisingly, the final stanza does develop the metaphor of shadow reality in order to give it its full-blown gothic twist:

> Each chair opens out, waits in the night
> To seat some unreal guest before a dish of shadows.

One is instantaneously reminded of that Emily Dickinson classic, "One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted," or Edgar Allan Poe's disturbing projections of the same mental "Corridors—surpassing / Material Place."[52] The unnamed fear, the threat, the atmosphere of almost sinister anticipation culminate in a reversed image of the eschatological feast: the ghosts and dishes of shadows are markers of absence, substitutes for the promised revelation of the fullness of Presence. A "transparent witness" is desperately needed to break the fatal spell of unreality before we succumb to it for good. "You alone" (11), repeats the speaker addressing the mirror. Incidentally, the mirror's "lesson of light" is not unlike the "fragrant lessons" of the cocoa tree; both oppose the new code of consciousness that has proclaimed the death of God and reduced the human person to God's shadow, a self-enclosed object among other objects.

It is interesting to note how much the poem, in its metaphorical symbolism and even its linguistic suggestiveness, converges with Gabriel Marcel's metaphysics. For the author of "Outline of an Essay on the Position of the Ontological Mystery and the Concrete Approaches to It," the essential metaphysical step consists in what closely resembles Carrera Andrade's poetic reflection on (mirror) reflection. Marcel's "reflection squared" aims at a recov-

ery of our unconscious intuition of the mystery of being through the mediation of "the modes of experience in which its image is reflected, and which it lights up by being thus reflected in them." It is recollection, continues the philosopher, "the most revealing ontological index we possess," in which this intuition can be recovered.[53]

The mirror cannot deny the image it reflects. Its essence is faithfulness. Lacking the power of denial, it is immune to betrayal and despair. Gabriel Marcel asserts that the concrete approaches to the ontological mystery should be sought in the *elucidation* of such data—spiritual by nature—as *fidelity*, hope, and love. Assuming with the French existentialist that the essence of the world, when viewed merely as a problem to be solved, is betrayal, and that man is forever implicated in the struggle against denial and introversion, it is easier to understand the urgency of the "mirror's mission." As a "lucid presence" it e-lucid-ates, that is, makes the truth perceivable, by virtue of its *fidelity*, understood as "the recognition . . . of an ontological permanency; a permanency which endures and by reference to which we endure."[54] Since permanency, presence, and being are synonymous terms, the mirror emerges as a model embodiment of Marcel's idea of a creative witness who "asserts himself in so far as he asserts Being and opens himself to it."[55] Additionally, Carrera Andrade's appellation "transparent witness" brings associations with the classic theological concept of creation as a window. When the window is transparent, when its surface is clean, it does not attract attention to itself and is capable of giving an undisturbed image of Reality. The transparent window of the self, the self that has been made in the image—not as a shadow—of God, remains thus *faithful* to the Exemplar.

The middle stanza of the poem, however, is the true pivot on which the whole turns. It is an affirmation of positivity amidst shadows and negativity, and the fullest demonstration of the mirror's mission. In its entirety it reads as follows:

> You make the shadows yield to your bright will.
> Your mineral silence glows in the dark.
> Sweet messages to other objects
> Fly out of you (your sudden pigeons).

The second line contains two crucial words: "silence" and "glows." Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk under the vow of silence, de-

voted innumerable pages to the exploration of silence as the principle of distinguishing between the real and the illusory. The mirror's "mineral silence" seems to echo the silence of the stone, which was the instructor in wisdom and patience of the Elias of Merton's poem. It was in silence that prophets and messengers encountered Reality (I Am Who I Am) and were entrusted with their mission. Additionally, the "mineral silence" of Carrera Andrade's mirror is far from mineral coldness. It is modified by the verb "to glow," which brings associations with warmth and kindness, a certain coziness and safety. A glow is dimmed light and (creative) witness to an infinitely greater Light, which would be blinding were it not clouded over; to a burning and consuming Fire, which can only be known in "the cloud of unknowing." The humble glow of the "transparent witness" is another veil of "the Blinding One," who in Merton's *Hagia Sophia* "speaks to us gently in ten thousand things, in which His light is one fullness and one Wisdom. Thus He shines not on them but from within them."[56] No wonder that the mirror's glowing mineral silence dispels the fiction of solipsism, and messages, like pigeon-grams, "fly out" of it to reach the other in a confirmation of a metaphysic of "we are."[57]

Carrera Andrade's "Radicals," on the other hand, is a lightweight, humorous poem, although with a serious twist, and a display of wit and fine irony. Though the title signals a rather serious, politically engaged theme, the verse flippantly develops the analogy between two unexpected allies in political extremism: "comrade locust" (1) and the poet[58] At first the ground of likeness may be far from obvious, yet the easily recognizable sound made by a swarm of locusts is as subversive to "the dictator: Man" (4) as the most politically committed poetry. "Comrade" insect, just like a compassionate poet sensitive to the needs and oppression of the common people, sings an uneasy song, "with a splinter in his throat" (2). Possessing nothing but the light burden of his troubled poetry ("Locust goes no place, singing his song"[6]), the little musical pest of the natural world is a radical poet's alter ego. From the commonsensical point of view, both "radicals" are marginal to the preoccupations of the world, whose order and structures they reject; the songs of both are equally "useless" to the profit-oriented society, and equally threatening to (dictator) man's will to power. All in all, the locust emerges as a somewhat unorthodox *monachos* and an embodiment of the Camusian Rebel:

Worker locust, you are right
To undermine the state
With your sagacious song.
We have one same song to sing,
Comrade! We are the world's
Extreme left wing.

Like "Radicals," also the baroque conceit of Carrera Andrade's "The Weathercock on the Cathedral of Quito" lends itself to a surprising interpretation, an ironical—without ever losing its "glowing" warmth—comment, this time on life in the monastic enclosure. The tin cock perched on top of the cathedral spends his solitary life, a life of penitence and vigilance, on the world's frontier, like a true monk. But upon seeing Anna del Campo, a local beauty, "the cathedral ascetic" (22) turns into a blighted "tin Don Juan" (14), sentenced to keeping his burning passion to himself, unconsumed, even undeclared.[59] "The cock would like to crow" (13), but "stuck on his belfry" (15) he is under the double vows of silence and stability of place. "Paralyzed / In a desert of roofs" (20-21), the hermit weathercock feels constricted by the rules he is bound to obey—which are not unlike the Rule of St. Benedict, whose rigorous interpretation would at times apparently immobilize the spiritual growth of Merton and his fellow contemplatives. "The burning bird flashes" (18) desperate messages of passion to the vain girl, who remains quite ignorant of his existence. Finally flashing "sun signals / To his friend, the lightning rod" (26-27)—a stratagem resembling the Trappist practice of using sign language to circumvent the rule of silence—he wishes at least to find a confidant to share his secret with and, hopefully, an accomplice in passing the message on. Anna del Campo has caused a grave vocational crisis in the weathercock's life. A temptation appeared to abandon the post between heaven and earth, a temptation that in one form or another all prophets and prophetic witnesses to another reality have to experience as a test of faith. But the ascetic seems decided to sate his long, self-imposed thirst, to trade his noble mission for ordinary human happiness, and to turn into a comfy husband living in easy circumstances at the side of a beautiful wife:

Anna, take me to the door
Of your house of flowers
Where bliss never ends.

Give me your cool dew
For my throat of sand.
Give me your lily field!

These temptations would soon be well known to the poem's translator in his struggle to disengage himself from his relationship with the student nurse known as M.

The last two poems introduce a welcome break in the heavy poetic diet, a humorous touch, which in itself is a subversive gesture and an important contribution to solving a serious metaphysical problem facing the Western world. As has already been pointed out earlier the mid-twentieth century discourse was characterized by an almost dogmatic lack of a sense of humor, and this was to Merton a telltale sign of the erosion of traditional values, the triumph of naturalistic reductionism, and the loss of the human measure. One Merton poem from *Emblems of a Season of Fury* directly addresses this issue. "Elegy for James Thurber" is, in fact, a double elegy, mourning simultaneously humor and spirituality—those last bulwarks against doctrinaire matter-of-factness. With the death of the celebrated humorist, an epoch has ended. "Humor is now totally abolished," mourns the Trappist poet, "The great dogs of nineteen sixty-one / Are nothing to laugh at."[60] Having reached its high point, human madness was absolutely beyond parody or ridicule; from then on it could only be "solemnized." Not surprisingly, contrary to this depressing pronouncement, Merton continued to critique the world's madness through the subversive use of humor in his poetry and prose, remaining faithful to the declaration he made in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966): "I will keep laughing until they close my mouth with fallout."[61]

In the course of this analysis, two key terms have been found to determine the landscape of the secret country inhabited by Carrera Andrade and Merton alike: lucidity and humor. Reading the Merton of the sixties one cannot fail to notice how often these two terms (or such synonyms of lucidity as innocence and purity) appear in his critical essays and how regularly these concepts are applied in his poetic practice. Naturally, the enthusiasm he feels for poets of Ibero-America has much to do with what Albert Camus called "'lucidity' in the presence of the 'denseness and strangeness' of the world."[62] Such lucidity, which combines perceptual purity and transparency of style, clarifies man's awareness of his

true condition and, in doing so, enables him to transcend, in the affirmation of love and solidarity, the anguish that man experiences in consequence of his encounter with reality. In his brief sketches introducing Latin American poets to the North American reader, Merton cannot help but celebrate the Ibero-Americans' innocence and lucidity. He praises Carrera Andrade's innocent eye, which endows the Ecuadorian's verses with a vision of the underlying "is-ness" of daily reality in an analogue of the early Franciscan vision of God who simply "is." He appreciates the "lucidity" of Ernesto Cardenal's early poetry as encouraging "a profound renewal and change of perspective in which 'the world' is . . . seen in a clearer and less delusive light."[63] As for Ruben Darío, Merton hails his "limpid" "Sonnets to Cervantes" as harbingers of "the less rhetorical tastes of the later generation,"[64] of poetics that would see being in the concrete again and serve lucid consciousness to protect man rather than destroy him.

By that time, "Franciscan" for Merton had become a code name, synonymous with lucid consciousness, affirmation of all life in the concrete, unpretentious simplicity, poverty, and, in effect, revolt against the absurd. The idea of the early Franciscan as a paradigm of the Rebel—"poverty-loving, therefore liberated"[65]—was suggested to Merton by Camus. The French existentialist writer had an intuition that innocence, defined as the ability to live "without appeal" to systematic explanations, would be the end of the absurd. If this is so, there is another choice beyond the religious resignation of the yogi and the active revolutionary commitment of the commissar: *tertium datur*, and this third option is the "vocation to revolt."[66] What the author of *The Stranger* wrote in his *Notebooks 1942-1951* might have been written by Merton himself:

> The end of the absurd, rebellious etc. movement, the end of the contemporary world consequently, is compassion in the original sense: in other words ultimately love and poetry. But that calls for an innocence I no longer have. All I can do is recognize the way leading to it and be receptive to the time of the innocents.[67]

What else are Merton's translating efforts if not examples of such open-minded receptivity to the time of the innocents. Wherever he discovered innocence, he would want to make it known to the whole absurdity-infested Western world and, by the same token, annul the West's fatalistic legacy of violence. Compassionate love

was to herald the end of history and the advent of, however hidden, eschatological fulfillment.

## Notes

1. Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986), p. 88.

2. Merton, *Spiritual Direction*, p. 89.

3. Merton, letter to Esther de Cáceres, 9 Jan. 1965, *The Courage for Truth: Letters to Writers* (ed. Christine Bochen; New York: Farrar, Strauss & Gireaux, 1993), p. 166.

4. Merton, letter to Ernesto Cardenal, 11 Mar. 1961, *Courage for Truth*, p. 123.

5. While in his translations Merton happens to depart from the letter of the original poem, he manages to preserve its spirit. The task of comparing the Spanish versions with their English renditions, however, would require a separate study. I decided to abandon this, no doubt, intriguing task to a more specialized research, rather than attempting two ambitious topics simultaneously and not succeeding in either.

6. Merton's translations from Herakleitos ("The Legacy of Herakleitos") have been included in the "Uncollected Poems" section of *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1977).

7. As Merton did not know Chinese or Persian, he relied on philological translations and the help of John Wu, a friend and Oriental scholar.

8. See Merton, letter to Clayton Eshleman, June 1963, *Courage for Truth*, p. 255.

9. Roman Samsel, *Bunt i gwalt* [Rebellion and Violence] (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1978), p. 37.

10. Merton, letter to Stefan Baciu, 21 May 1965, *Courage for Truth*, p. 241.

11. Merton, *Courage for Truth*, p. 241.

12. Merton, *Conjectures*, p. 188.

13. Merton, *Conjectures*, p. 188.

14. I am retaining the existentialist terminology used by Merton. In order to avoid ambiguities, I wish to clarify that the word "man" will often be used here as an inclusive and gender-neutral term.

15. Merton, *Courage for Truth*, p. 241.

16. Steven Ford Brown, "http://jacketmagazine.com/andrade-intro-brown.html" "Jorge Carrera Andrade in America," *Jacket 12* (July 2000), online, *Jacket Magazine*, Internet, 26 Jan. 2003.

17. Qtd. in Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 319.

18. Merton, "The Plague of Albert Camus: A Commentary and Introduction," *Literary Essays*, p. 206.

19. Merton, "Message to Poets," *Literary Essays*, pp. 371-74.

20. Thomas Merton, *Search For Solitude: Pursuing the Monk's True Life* (ed. Lawrence S. Cunningham, journals, vol. 3, 1952-60; San Francisco: Harper, 1997), p. 357.

21. Merton received two autographed books from Carrera Andrade: *El fabuloso reino de Quito*, inscribed: "Para Thomas Merton, uno de los más altos representativos de la consciencia del mundo, con mi admiración y en amistad" [For Thomas Merton, an outstanding representative of the world's conscience, with admiration and friendship] and *Retrato cultural del Ecuador*, inscribed: "A Thomas Merton, maestro de poetas. Homenaje de admiración y amistad" [To Thomas Merton, master of poets. A homage of admiration and friendship]. Archives of the Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Ky.

22. Thomas Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *The Literary Essays of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1985), p. 319.

23. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 318.

24. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 318.

25. For the most part, I will also follow *The Collected Poems* arrangement of Carrera Andrade's verse, which is alphabetical. Originally, in *Emblems of the Season of Fury*, Merton's renditions appeared in the following order: "Cocoa Tree," "The Weathercock on the Cathedral at Quito," "A Man from Ecuador beneath the Eiffel Tower," "The Mirror's Mission," "Notes on a Parachute Jumper." "Radicals" was omitted from the 1963 book of verse.

26. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 318.

27. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 319.

28. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "A Man from Ecuador beneath the Eiffel Tower" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 841–42. Parenthetical references in the text will indicate line numbers for the quotations.

29. Arturo Uslar Pietri, "The World Discovers Latin America," *Américas* (Nov.-Dec. 1985): 47.

30. See H.R. Hays, "Jorge Carrera Andrade: Magician of Metaphors." In his 1970 Vassar lecture "The Decade of My Poetry," Carrera Andrade explained: "In my poetry the image consists in putting two realities face to face through a system of analogies. It is different from surrealist metaphor . . . My metaphor rejects all excessive remoteness from reality and takes pleasure in bringing things and men closer in an effort to achieve universal coherence and harmony" (tr. Steven Ford Brown, *Jacket 12* (July 2000), online, *Jacket Magazine*, Internet, 26 Jan. 2003).

31. The benign Titan sustaining the world was the subject of two poems written by Merton: "Atlas and the Fatman" and "Martin's Predicament or Atlas Watches Every Evening" (Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 679–91 and 728–36, respectively).

32. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "Cocoa Tree" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, p. 842.

33. Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 368-69.

34. Merton, "Hagia Sophia," *Collected Poems*, p. 363.

35. Thomas Merton, *A Thomas Merton Reader*, ed. T. P. McDonnell (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 402. Rpt. in Merton, *Literary Essays*, pp. 338–54.

36. Merton, "Blake and the New Theology," *Literary Essays*, p. 10.

37. Merton, "Poetry, Symbolism and Typology," *Literary Essays*, p. 333.

38. Merton, "Prólogo," *Collected Poems*, p. 744.

39. Merton, *Literary Essays*, p. 320.

40. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "Notes of a Parachute Jumper" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 843-44.

41. What is meant here is existential, rather than physical, death. The nationalistic war rhetoric always divides people into two hostile camps and consequently reduces "the enemy" to abstraction in order to justify their extermination and to legitimize contempt for "the other."

42. Merton, *Collected Poems*, p. 244.

43. See St. John's Apocalypse 7:12.

44. Gen. 2:15.

45. Matt. 13: 24–30.

46. *Thomas Merton Reader*, p. 502.

47. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 318.

48. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 320.

49. Merton, "Jorge Carrera Andrade," *Literary Essays*, p. 320.

50. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "The Mirror's Mission" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, p. 845.

51. Gabriel Marcel, "Outline of an Essay on the Position of the Ontological Mystery and the Concrete Approaches to It," *Reality, Man, Existence: Essential Works of Existentialism* (ed. H. J. Blackham; New York: Bantam, 1965), p. 168.

52. Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Faber, 1975), p. 333.

53. Marcel, "Outline of an Essay," p. 167.

54. Marcel, "Outline of an Essay," p. 168.

55. Marcel, "Outline of an Essay," p. 169.

56. Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 366-367.

57. See Merton's "Seven Essays on Camus," *Literary Essays*, pp. 181-301.

58. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "Radicals" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 844-45.

59. All quotations from Jorge Carrera Andrade's poem "The Weathercock on the Cathedral of Quito" come from Merton, *Collected Poems*, pp. 845-46.

60. Merton, *Collected Poems*, p. 316.

61. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image, 1968), p. 75.

62. Merton, "Three Saviors in Camus: Lucidity and the Absurd," *Literary Essays*, p. 275.

63. Merton, "Ernesto Cardenal, "*Literary Essays*, pp. 324-25.

64. Merton, "Ruben Darío" *Literary Essays*, p. 305.

65. Merton, "Terror and the Absurd," *Literary Essays*, p. 241.

66. Merton, "Terror and the Absurd," *Literary Essays*, p. 245.

67. Qtd. in Merton, "The Plague of Camus," *Literary Essays*, p. 199.