

WANDERING IN THE MERTON DIMENSION: A SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLICATION IN 1991

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Little new material by Thomas Merton himself appeared in 1991. Essays about Merton tended to "wander" through a wide dimension of Merton's interests, concerns, and acquaintances. There were, of course, the usual excerpts and quotations in anthologies and periodicals. *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, edited by Robert Finch and John Elder, which appeared late in 1990 included Merton's essay, "Rain and the Rhinoceros," and underscored once again his commitment to environmental issues. Four more or less new items did appear. The first publication of "The Neurotic Personality in the Monastic Life" (written in the 1950s) in *The Merton Annual 4* was interesting historically in demonstrating Merton's applications of psychology to the religious life. "Thomas Merton's Practical Norms of Sanctity in St. John of the Cross" (*Spiritual Life*), with introductory commentary by me, was the first publication taken from his lecture notes on "Monastic Orientation." Patrick Hart, OCSO, edited "A Memorandum on Monastic Theology" for *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*. This text was edited and reworked by Merton and published under the title "Renewal in Monastic Education" in *Cistercian Studies* (1968) and later as "The Need for a New Education" in *Contemplation in a World of Action* (1971). Merton's letters to photographer Gene Meatyard were included in *Father Louie: The Photographs of Thomas Merton* by Ralph Eugene Meatyard, edited by Barry Magid. This "picture book" was published in three editions: an adequate \$40 paperback, a nice \$200 boxed one, and an outrageously overpriced \$5,000 "deluxe edition." And, of course, Credence Cassettes continued to grind out unedited copies of the Merton tapes.

Three collections from outside the United States arrived at the Thomas Merton Studies Center in 1991: one from Belgium (1989), one from South Africa (1990), and one from Poland (1991). Constant Broos translated several Merton texts into Dutch and these were privately printed in Leuven, Belgium, under the title *Verwondering in Andre Dimension (Wandering in Another Dimension)*—hence the title of this essay). Broos's foreword makes clear that that "other" dimension takes us very much on a journey with Thomas Merton as our companion. Christina Steyn compiled a selection from the writings of Gandhi and Merton, published by the University of South Africa Press in Pretoria under the title *Religion in Action*. ZNAK Wysawnictwo in Cracow, Poland, published Maria Tarnowska's translation into Polish of the correspondence between Merton and Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz. It was called simply *Listy (Letters)*.

The Second General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society (ITMS) took place at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, from 13 to 16 June. The theme-title, taken from Merton's *The Sign of Jonas*, was "A Huge Chorus of Living Beings: The Voice of a New World" and the meeting was a celebration of Merton's concern for God's creation. My presidential address (I served as president of the ITMS from 1989 to 1991) was titled "Choirs of Millions: Thomas Merton and God's Creatures." Highlights of the meeting were M. Basil Pennington's Keynote Address ("A Huge Chorus of Living Beings: Synthetic Listening—Evolutionary Response") and three General Session addresses by A.M. Allchin ("The Worship of the Whole Creation: Merton and the Eastern Fathers"); Anne Carr ("Merton's East-West Reflections"); and Joan Chittister ("Thomas Merton and Social Justice"). Allchin's essay appears in this volume. The first ITMS recognitions for achievement were given at this meeting. The recognition is a bronze head of Merton done by sculptor David Kocka and affectionately dubbed the "Louie." William H. Shannon received the recognition for distinguished service to the ITMS and Constant Broos of Belgium for significant contributions on the international level. Broos has promoted Merton publication in Belgium and The Netherlands and has spearheaded the very active Belgian organization known as the "*Mertonvrienden*." The recognition for "an individual who has written and published in the period between the General Meetings a work on Merton and his concerns which has brought provocative insight and fresh direction to Merton studies" went to Thomas Del Prete for his groundbreaking book, *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person* (1990).

Peter Kountz's *Thomas Merton as Writer and Monk: A Cultural Study, 1915-1951* was published by Carlson Publishing in 1991. Originally Kountz's dissertation, the book version suffered from having been written fifteen years earlier, though it did offer a too short introduction which attempted unsuccessfully to update the body of the text. In late 1991, a revised and expanded version of Jim Forest's *Thomas Merton: A Pictorial Biography* was published by Orbis under the new title *Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton*. Several essays appeared, including:

1. Judith Anderholm, "Thomas Merton and Aldous Huxley: the springboard of *Ends and Means*." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Spring 1991): no. 2, pp. 8-10.

2. Stefan Baciú, "Merton en Panama: palabras en libertad." *La Prensa Jueves* [Panama City, Panama] (10 January 1991): no. 3.

3. Eoin de Bhaldraithe, O. Cist., "St. Bernard, Thomas Merton, and Catholic teaching on peace." *Word and Spirit: A Monastic Review* 12 (1990): pp. 54-79.

4. Devin Brown, "Thomas Merton and Joseph Campbell: conversion and the hero's departure." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Spring 1991): no. 2, pp. 11-14.

5. Kathy Coffey, "Patterns of peace: John Paul and Thomas Merton." *Spiritual Life* 36 (Winter 1990): no. 4, pp. 229-234.

6. Robert E. Daggy, "Choirs of millions: Thomas Merton and God's creatures." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Summer 1991): no. 3, pp. 11-17.

7. Robert E. Daggy, "A man of the whole hemisphere: Thomas Merton and Latin America." *American Benedictine Review* 42 (June 1991): no. 2, pp. 122-139.

8. Robert E. Daggy, "Reflections on Thomas Merton." *Earth Voices: Journal of Ecology and Spirituality* (Winter 1991): no. 3, pp. 6-9.

9. Thomas Del Prete, "Thomas Merton on Mark Van Doren: a portrait of teaching and spiritual growth." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Winter 1991): no. 1, pp. 16-18.

10. Thomas Del Prete, "Thomas Merton, sincerity in teaching." *PACE* (October 1990-1991): pp. 4-7.

11. Robert E. Doud, "Initial aims as seeds of contemplation: a Whiteheadian interpretation of Merton." *Horizons* 16 (Spring 1991): no. 1, pp. 33-47.

12. Charles Dumont, OCSO, "Thomas Merton, moine et critique littéraire." *La Revue Generale* [Ottignies, Belgium] (February 1991): no. 2, pp. 23-30.

13. E. Glenn Hinson, "Contemptus mundi—amor mundi: Merton's progression from world denial to world affirmation." *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 26 (1991): no. 4, pp. 339-349.

14. George A. Kilcourse, "News of the Thomas Merton industry." *Mid-Stream: An Ecumenical Journal* 30 (January 1991): no. 1, pp. 35-49.

15. George A. Kilcourse, "Thomas Merton on literature's 'naked spiritual reserves'." *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* 86 (June 1991): no. 261, pp. 127-138.

16. Bill Koch, "Thomas Merton and Walt Whitman: seekers of the 'passage to India'." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Spring 1991): no. 2, pp. 15-18.

17. Vivian Ligo, "The Trappist monk revisited: an essay in retrieval of a Mertonian vision." *Louvain Studies* 16 (1991): pp. 312-330.

18. Marianna Kane Neal, "The timelessness of Merton: thoughts on Desert Storm." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Spring 1991): no. 2, pp. 5-6.

19. Christopher Nugent, "Merton, the coincidence of opposites and the archeology of Catholicism." *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 26 (1991): no. 3, pp. 257-270.

20. Daniel J. O'Hanlon, SJ, "The influence of Eastern traditions on Thomas Merton's personal prayer." *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 26 (1991): no. 2, pp. 152-164.

21. Paul M. Pearson, "Everyone is called to contemplation: Thomas Merton on prayer." *Priests and People* 5 (June 1991): no. 6, pp. 110-223.

22. Carl Scovel, "Mozart, Merton, and Karl Barth." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Autumn 1991): no. 4, pp. 5-8.

23. Catharina Stenqvist, "Thomas Merton—en munk for var tid." *Studie Kamraten* [Lund, Sweden] 73 (1991): nos. 1-2, pp. 12-14.

24. Robert G. Waldron, "Merton's dreams: a Jungian analysis." *Merton Seasonal* 16 (Autumn 1991): no. 4, pp. 11-23.