

# MERTON: VIEWS AND RE-VIEWS

by  
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This Merton "Season" has brought us a number of new books, four of which are reviewed in this issue. Things have continued to be busy in the Merton world and we list nearly 80 publications by and about Thomas Merton in the Bibliography section.

**Blaze of Recognition:** Thomas P. McDonnell, who edited *A Thomas Merton Reader*, both in its first edition in 1962 and in its revised paperback edition in 1974, has selected and edited an edition of Merton quotations for every day in the year. This "Day Book" takes the place in this year of the Merton calendars which were not published for 1984. Father Paul Ruttle, C.P., who wrote his master's thesis on Merton and who has conducted Merton symposiums and retreats, reviews the McDonnell selections.

**Thomas Merton and Asia:** This new study, subtitled "His Quest for Utopia," written by Professor Alexander Lipski of California State University at Long Beach, examines Merton's interest in the East. Of particular interest to students of Merton is Lipski's discussion of Merton's study of Hinduism, a form of religious expression on which he wrote little in comparison to his writings on Buddhism. Dr. Chalmers MacCormick reviews this book, an appropriate reviewer since his own essay, "The Zen Catholicism of Thomas Merton," explores some of the same areas. Drs. Lipski and MacCormick met and worked at the Center at the same time in 1980 and even enjoyed an afternoon together at Churchill Downs viewing Kentucky horse racing.

**The Social Thought of Thomas Merton:** Rev. David W. Givey has revised and abridged his doctoral dissertation, "The Social Thought of Thomas Merton: Towards a Christian Philosophy of Non-Violence," done at St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome, for this volume published by Franciscan Herald Press. A special epilogue was written by John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia and a special presentation copy was given by Cardinal Krol to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. Sister Mary Madeline Abdelnour, friend of Merton and long-time teacher and retreat leader about Merton, reviews Rev. Givey's book in this issue.

**Follow the Ecstasy:** This book, subtitled "Thomas Merton, the Hermitage Years, 1965-1968," is a *fragment* of John Howard Griffin's work on the "official biography" of Thomas Merton. Griffin, hampered by ill health for years, unfortunately did *NOT* complete the biography. This volume of his drafts of the last chapters, while presented as a finished work, should be regarded as what it is: an unfinished portion of a larger work which was never completed. Dr. Michael W. Higgins, noted Canadian scholar and co-editor of *Thomas Merton: Pilgrim in Process*, reviews *Follow the Ecstasy* in this issue.

**The Official Biography:** Michael Mott, poet and author, was appointed to *write* the "official biography" of Thomas Merton when John Howard Griffin gave up the task. No publication date has been set as yet for the "official biography" by Professor Mott.

**Letters from Tom:** W. H. "Ping" Ferry, friend and correspondent of Thomas Merton's, has selected and edited a number of the letters which Merton wrote to him between 1961 and 1968. Merton, in fact, visited Ferry and spoke at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California, before leaving for Asia in 1968. This slim volume was privately printed in a limited edition of 500 copies and has not been made available for general sale. Only a very small portion of Merton's vast correspondence has been published to date though, as Ferry points out in his "Introduction": "Letter writing was as natural to Tom Merton as praying." Merton's correspondence is now being prepared for publication under the General Editorship of William H. Shannon.

**Merton: a Film Biography:** The Merton Documentary project has been completed. Produced by Paul Wilkes and Audrey L. Glynn; written by Paul Wilkes; narrated by Alexander Scourby, the documentary traces Merton's life chronologically and includes interviews with James Laughlin, Naomi Burton Stone, Joan Baez, Ernesto Cardenal, the Dalai Lama, and others who knew Merton. It will be aired on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) on **TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 1984, at 10 P.M. E.S.T.** Advance reports indicate that the documentary presents a balanced and comprehensive overview of the Merton life.

**Elderhostel:** For the second year in a row the Thomas Merton Studies Center will play host to Senior Citizens in its "A Week with Thomas Merton" program from June 24 to June 30, 1984. General coordinator is Dr. Nancy A. Howard, Academic Dean of Bellarmine College, and Co-ordinator for Instruction is Dr. Robert E. Daggy. Guest speakers will include Dr. Don Osborn of the Bellarmine Psychology Department and Ron Seitz of the Bellarmine English Department. A potential guest speaker is Dr. Bonnie Bowman Thurston, currently at the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tuebingen, West Germany. The schedule for the upcoming ELDERHOSTEL is given on pp. 14-15 of this issue.

# LETTERS from TOM

THOMAS MERTON  
writes about Nuclear Weapons,  
Black/White Encounters,  
Authority in the Church,  
and other matters

