

of scholars. Those of us with a passion for Merton have a personal story about how he impacted our lives and I'm glad Father Park shared his own. This book breaks new ground in its detailed description of how Merton influenced subsequent interreligious dialogue and this element helps set it apart from other writings about Merton's interest in Buddhism.

David Orberon

SAVASTANO, Peter, ed., *Merton and Indigenous Wisdom* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2019), pp. xx + 282. ISBN: 978-18917-859-93 (paper) \$29.95.

Thomas Merton was often on the cutting edge of movements in culture and religion during his time. His wide range of interests and writings tempt us, at least to some extent, to read Merton into our own image. Merton was becoming aware of the plight of indigenous people in a post-colonial world with its cultural genocide and ignorance of the value of their spirituality. But his untimely death prevented him from advocating more for their concerns or exploring the topic more extensively. This book is an effort to bring the few and sparse contributions that Merton did make to the topic of indigenous wisdom and is expanded into a single volume.

In his Introduction to the book, Peter Savastano raises the question of the status of homosexuality among the religions of the world (see xviii). While it is likely that if Merton had lived longer, he would have come to the same conclusions that Pope Francis did in the recent movie-biography *Francesco*, where he advocated for civil union protections for homosexuals. But to introduce this issue into a volume on Merton and Indigenous Wisdom appears out of context. For unlike John Henry Newman, the question of Merton's sexual orientation has not been raised due in large part to his well-documented encounters with women. But that aside, the Introduction does not introduce the individual essays, and so does not give the scope and parameters for the collection. That said, there are some rich selections in this volume.

The first essay (1-19), an excerpt from Vine Deloria, Jr.'s classic *God Is Red* sets the tone for a paradigmatic post-colonial discourse and likewise provides a basis for affirming and critiquing Merton's approach to indigenous spirituality.

The second and third essays explore Merton's relationship with "Native America." Lewis Mehl-Madrona and Barbara Mainguy write from a Lakota perspective. In the second essay (21-42) they acknowledge that Merton, like others such as Achiel Peelman, have moved the Roman Catholic Church towards more positive views of Indigenous religions and practices. (I would add to the list the late Carl Starkloff, SJ (1933-2007),

who wrote prolifically on the topic and devoted his life to taking indigenous religious practices seriously; he was instrumental in establishing the Anishinaabe Centre in Northern Ontario.) However, they are also aware that Merton was a product of the Western culture of which he was born and raised. Specifically, his dialectic of the true/false self can easily take on the trappings of Western dualism. In contrast, the authors draw on the traditional Lakota notion of self which is more ambiguous, less individual, less autonomous, and by nature, fundamentally social. Such a notion was not foreign to Merton's experience – after all he did debate within himself whether his Buddhist commitment was to be more Tibetan or more Zen-like. As well, one wonders if this true/false self dialectic would have eventually given way to a more sophisticated notion had Merton lived longer and developed his thinking on the topic. Nevertheless, it was his emphasis on experiential exploration of other traditions that the authors claim resonates with the indigenous traditions. The third essay (43-81) is an interesting comparative study from the point of view of the Lakota authors. They are respectful of and sympathetic to Merton's approach. However, they do not hesitate to point out his limitations mainly due to his classical Western assumptions and personal biases. Referencing Merton's *Ishi Means Man*, they point out how Merton is friendlier in his comments towards Buddhists and Central American indigenous peoples than to the indigenous people of his own country – the USA. Specifically, the author responds to Merton's nomenclature “stone age” and “archaic” in the following way: “It is sad to me (LMM) to be called a stone-age person. . . . Our wisdom is not archaic, but quite contemporary; at least as contemporary as Asian Buddhists, whom Merton respected more” (79).

The fourth essay (83-92), by Robert Toth, explores the biographical and cultural context in which Merton discovered the story of Ishi. He wrote a review of *Ishi in Two Worlds* by the anthropologist Theodora Kroeber. The initial review formed a book of essays with the title *Ishi Means Man*, published posthumously. Toth emphasizes how the traditional indigenous worldview is holomorphic, seeing the world holistically and as interconnected. Its appeal to Merton, Toth suggests, lies in a similar direction in Merton's life, to move out of the individualism of his cultural formation into a more holomorphic view.

The lengthy fifth essay (93-141), by Donald P. St. John, is sympathetic to Merton's approach to indigenous issues. He explores Merton's engagement with Native traditions in book reviews, letters and his lengthy poem *The Geography of Lograire*. He makes a convincing argument that Merton was a prophetic voice for issues concerning Native peoples, their genius, as well as in his protesting their demise under colonial powers.

The sixth essay (143-61), by William Torres, bluntly asks: “did Merton ever drop acid”[?] (160). The question arises from a claim by an entheogen user that he did LSD with Merton in Seattle sometime around 1960. The credibility of the anecdote is suspect. Not only does the time frame not corroborate the story but the author documents evidence from Merton’s writings disparaging drug use. While I am not convinced, as is the author, that “[i]n disagreeing, he [Merton] authenticated” their use, I do appreciate Torres’s honesty about his motives and methodological presuppositions.

The seventh essay (163-82) republishes excerpts from Kathleen W. Tarr’s *We Are All Poets Here: Thomas Merton’s 1968 Journey to Alaska – A Shared Story about Spiritual Seeking*. It recounts experiences the author had with the Tlingit and other experiences in Alaska. However, its direct connection with Thomas Merton, as well as his connection with the indigenous people of Alaska, was not clear and this contribution could have used more context.

The eighth essay (183-222), by Allan M. McMillan, explores themes from Indigenous peoples in Canada in relation to Merton’s essays on Faulkner and in *Ishi*. The connections attempt to fill Dorothy Day’s demand for “More, More!” (185) in the Preface to *Ishi Means Man*. Still, the reader gets the impression that the author is at points overreaching in order to fill that lacuna.

The ninth essay (223-50) by Malgorzata Poks is republished from *The Merton Annual* (2012). It is one of stronger essays, consisting of a complex argument based on Merton’s posthumous *Geography of Lograire*. Where other authors have focused on his reference to the Ghost Dance in that poem, an obvious connection with indigenous peoples, Poks focuses on a section on Bronislaw Malinowski. In a nuanced and sophisticated argument, she convinces the reader that in the poem, Merton is performatively embodying the burgeoning post-structural and post-colonial attitudes of the 1960s.

The final two entries are the re-publication of Merton’s Preface (newly translated) to the Latin American edition of his own *Obras Completas* (Complete Works). The original Spanish version is in the Appendix of the book (275-82). While only one volume appeared, Merton was delighted that this was the first initiative of its kind. The tenth essay (251-60) contains an introduction to the Preface by translator Marcela Raggio, followed by the Preface itself (261-66). Raggio’s comments are insightful and heartfelt. She correlates Merton’s turn to Latin America with his famous experience on Fourth and Walnut. The fact that Merton receives the printed copy of the Spanish volume on Our Lady of Guadalupe’s

feast day serves as a confirmation for Merton. As an ecclesiologist I am heartened by Merton's recognition in the Preface that his own Catholicism is irreducible to any one culture, time or place. In this way, can we say that Merton had intuited the tensions to come between the Vatican and Latin American contextual theologies?

While a justification for the selection of the essays could have been more clearly articulated, one comes away from reading it with a greater sense of Merton's engagement with and appreciation for the plight of indigenous people and the genius of their spirituality. And while it cannot be helped, one also comes away with mixed feelings that echo Dorothy Day's sentiment for "More, more!"

John Dadosky

HALL, Gary and Detlev Cuntz, eds., *Guard the Human Image for It Is the Image of God: Essays on Thomas Merton* (Münsterschwarzach: Vier Türme, 2019), pp. 135. ISBN 978-3-7365-0260-4 (paper) \$19.60.

In January 2019 the German Benedictine Abbey of Münsterschwarzach hosted a conference as part of the series of ITMS-funded events commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Thomas Merton's death. This was the third such gathering held at the abbey, the most recent previous one in January 2015 marking the centenary of Merton's birth. The proceedings of those earlier meetings were published in German,¹ but this time the decision was made to issue the collection of presentations in both German² and English versions, edited by the German–British team of Detlev Cuntz and Gary Hall, with reciprocal translations provided for each volume, reflecting the fact that the talks themselves were almost equally balanced between the two languages. The title is drawn, in somewhat modified form, from the Prologue to Merton's *Raids on the Unspeakable*, actually part of a quotation (as Malgorzata Poks notes at the beginning of her essay [116-17]) from the Russian religious philosopher Nicolai Berdyaev, which reads: "The practical conclusion derived from this faith . . . turns into an accusation of the age in which I live and into a command to be human in this most inhuman of ages, to guard the image of man for it is the image of God."³

1. Detlev Cuntz and Wunibald Müller, eds., *Kontemplativ Leben: Erinnerungen an Thomas Merton* (Münsterschwarzach: Vier Türme, 2014); Detlev Cuntz and Wunibald Müller, eds., *Gegensätze Vereinen: Beiträge zu Thomas Merton* (Münsterschwarzach: Vier Türme, 2015).

2. Gary Hall and Detlev Cuntz, eds., *Das Menschenbild als Abbild Gottes Bewahren: Beiträge zu Thomas Merton* (Münsterschwarzach: Vier Türme, 2019).

3. Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York: New Directions, 1966) 6.