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Michael W. Higgins

Sacred Heart University, higginsmw@sacredheart.edu

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The Priestly Imagination: Thomas Merton and the Poetics of Critique

Michael W. Higgins

According to David M. Denny, the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner "claims that the world is not fully itself until it is seen with the eyes of love and celebrated in art."¹ The poet and the priest are one in their celebration of the "mundane" and never more especially so than when the poet is the priest.

Think first of Thomas Merton, who thought of William Blake, master craftsman, poetic visionary, and mystical lover of Creation: "I think suddenly of Blake, filling paper with words, so that the words flew about the room for the angels to read, and after that, what if the paper was lost or destroyed? That is the only reason for wanting to write, Blake's reason."² The Precursor of the Incarnate Word, John the Baptist, represents for Merton the primordial hermit, history's model anchorite, "the first Cistercian and the greatest Trappist" ("St. John Baptist,"³ l. 102); but he is also the first of three Johns. He is the Herald of the Word ("Name Him and vanish, like a proclamation" [l. 39]), and he seeks in solitude the strength to speak the word:

I went into the desert to receive
The keys of my deliverance
From image and from concept and from desire. (ll. 83-85)

The paradox of John's life and mission, receiving in silence the grace to announce in the desert the "clean rock-water" that "dies in rings" ("Ode to the Present Century" [CP 121-22], l. 33) clearly marks the pattern of Merton's own vocation. John the Baptist is Advent's noble herald, the prophet, and the man of hope. He is the "Desert-dweller" ("St. John Baptist," l. 98), the Lamb's most eloquent spokesman and he knows "the solitudes that lie / Beyond anxiety and doubt" (ll. 98-99). Like St. Paul the Hermit in "Two Desert Fathers" (CP 166-68), "You died to the world of concept / Upon the cross of your humility" (ll. 53-54).

In "The Quickening of St. John the Baptist" (CP 199-202), Merton explores the *conception* of a contemplative vocation. The life of a contemplative, suggests Merton, is similar to the bearing of

young life in the womb. Elizabeth carries the unborn John:

You need no eloquence, wild bairn,
 Exulting in your hermitage.
 Your ecstasy is your apostolate,
 For whom to kick is *contemplata tradere*. (ll. 37-40)

For Merton the “small anchorite” (l. 27) singing in his cell is the prototype of the Christian contemplative, both “exiles in the far end of solitude, living as listeners” (l. 52). For the unborn John and the reborn Merton, “Night is our diocese and silence is our ministry” (l. 48), and they are “Cooled in the flame of God’s dark fire” (l. 64). The Baptist’s relationship to the Word imparts new meaning to the language of a poet who sees his life as a living celebration of the Baptist’s vocation. The instrument of a poet’s vision is language. The talent of the poet is to be tested by the word, and yet how shall he speak of the Word when silence is his grace and joy? “Now can we have Your Word and in Him rest” (“St. John’s Night” [CP 171-72], l. 26).

There is another John: the one they called the Beloved: the poet-apostle, the rich visionary of Patmos, the one who speaks with deep love of “the Word that came into the world” (cf. Jn. 1:9). There is yet another John: the Spaniard who is of the Cross. This poet-mystic, whose rare gifts of lyrical genius and solemn contemplation transformed his rigorous sufferings into one living ceaseless paean to the God of men, quickened Merton’s imagination and served as a crucial factor in his resolution to be a poet.

The three Johns represent the indivisible and comprehensive dimensions of Merton as a *whole man*. They each represented for him the ideals of the Christian poet-priest.

Merton		
John the Baptist	John of the Cross	John the Beloved
herald	mystic	lover
<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/>		
The Lyricist		
prophet	poet	priest
<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/>		
The Ordained		
hope	faith	charity
The Complete Man		

As Margo Swiss observes: “‘The Word . . . made flesh’ (John 1.14),

– Christ is (we may say) the perfect poet of the perfect poem. Poets who express a Christian *ethos* are therefore performing their version of a Liturgy of the Word” (Swiss 17).

Merton’s poetics of critique is twofold: ecclesial/monastic and societal. To understand the former it is essential to grasp the spirit of the place, to taste the physical geography. As the Catholic poet-philosopher Tim Lilburn reminds us:

I remembered one of the apothegmata
Merton had collected: if you don’t manage
to take in the genius of the place, let it
say its piece through you, the place will
throw you out. And I saw that these hills,
these poplar islands, could just shrug me off,
no problem. With some desperation, I drove
myself to find a way into the good graces
of this particular bit of land.⁴

For Lilburn the hills of Saskatchewan are his sacred, defining space, and for Merton, of course, it was Gethsemani, the Abbey and the land.

Merton’s ecclesial/monastic critique is best appreciated by examining select poems from *Early Poems (1940-1942)* (1971), *A Man in the Divided Sea* (1946), *Figures for an Apocalypse* (1947) and *The Tears of the Blind Lions* (1949).

Perhaps, the most eloquent statement of what the abbey meant for Merton (in the mid-1940s) can be found in the poem “Clairvaux” (CP 126-30). Clairvaux, one of the earliest and most celebrated of Cistercian foundations, lives again in spirit in the Abbey of Gethsemani. No longer in the Aube Valley of France but now nestled in the woodlands of Kentucky, “whose back is to the hills whose backs are to the world” (l. 6), the “model of all solitudes” (l. 3), Clairvaux/Gethsemani is inward-looking and “ever resting” (l. 7); she is an enclosure “full of sun” (l. 8), a garden bathed “in fleets of light” (l. 18), a cloister rich “in sure and perfect arbors of stability” (l. 40), and a veritable reflection of Heaven, “Where He may rest unseen by the grey, grasping, / Jealous, double-dealing world” (ll. 26-27). In the poem Merton identifies Christ as a Vintner who “Will trample in His press” (l. 43) the monks “in their quietude” (l. 37). He is also the Keystone upon whom the brothers, as the stones of the arches, lean, “Forgetting gravity in flight” (l. 56). But most important of all He is the Sun, whose rays penetrate the souls

of the monks "All interlacing . . . as close as vines" (l. 35). In the garden of each monk's soul, in his interior Clairvaux, the light of perception, the light of vision, the light of grace can be seen

Pouring in sun through rib and leaf and flower of foliate window
Gardening the ground with shadow-light, with day and night
In every lovely interplay. (ll. 49-51)

The intricate tracery of a stained glass window bears the imprint of the master artist, the supreme craftsman who outlines with delicate skill the clearest image of "the Maker's mind and plan" (l. 67). The "foliate window," the prism of art, can only be finely stained in the silence of "our holy cloister," in the heart of our recollected self, and must be receptive to the sensitive impressions of the Eternal Artist.

Enclosed by the "penniless hills / Hidden in the poor, laborious fields" ("Three Postcards from the Monastery" [CP 153-55], ll. 33-34), the monks have seen ravaged the pure dream of Nature; they have seen Eden invaded with "tons of silver" (l. 32), America's promise sold for a "Pittsburgh, in a maze of lights" (l. 48):

We have refused the reward,
We have abandoned the man-hunt.
But when the contest is over
We shall inherit the world. (ll. 40-43)

Though refused, the allure of the world is great and the security of the monastic Eden unsure. In "The Song of the Traveller" (CP 172-73), the speaker, a palmer or pilgrim, warns that once we have reached the "holy heights where the low world will die" (l. 12), we must not look back upon what we have rejected lest we become as "Mistress Lot" (l. 28). The monastic enclosure is not immune to the music of the world's treachery and, once bewitched by the "thin clarions" (l. 23) of worldly triumph, "all our flowery mountain will be tattered with a cost of weeds" (l. 24).

The "Pilgrim's Song" (CP 189-90) is a monastic canticle that celebrates what is "foolishness to the Greeks" (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23-24) and what must appear as an outrageous contradiction of secular priorities:

We'll lose you by our stratagem
In the amazing dusk: by the safe way that you ignore: –
We are in love with your antagonist. (ll. 19-21)

At the heart of the monastic rejection of the world is a total acceptance of a way of life that is seen as a positive affirmation of the values of the "appalling Cross" (l. 22).

The monk is a "grain that dies and triumphs in the secret ground" ("Spring: Monastery Farm" [CP 169-70], l. 12), a russet worm which hastens "as best he can / To die here in this patch of sun" ("Natural History" [CP 182-84], ll. 22-23), and a midshipman aboard the "lonely Abbey" (l. 11) battleship awaiting "the angel with the trumpet of the Judgement" ("Winter Afternoon" [CP 185-86], l. 22). Enwrapped in a spiritual cocoon of Gethsemani's weaving, the monk waits for the promised metamorphosis, ever conscious that the world is yet with him should he deny the world. In the light of this conviction the monastic ethos could well appear to approve a proudly elitist, near-Manichaeian spirituality. Such, however, would be an inauthentic expression of the true monastic spirit; but it must be admitted as a danger and one to which, at this time in his monastic career, Merton is particularly vulnerable.

"From the Legend of St. Clement" (CP 203-204) is a meditation on a subject, generally a lesson from the Martyrology, that the monks would be accustomed to hear during their meals. Because of the scarcity of historical evidence associated with the life and martyrdom of St. Clement, a not unusual situation in the early life of the Christian Church, Merton freely mixes the legendary with the authentic. A Bishop of Rome, Clement was sentenced to the marble quarries of the Crimea during the reign of Trajan where he and other Christians were eventually martyred:

Deep in the wall of the wounded mountain
 (Where seas no longer frown)
 The songs of the martyrs come up like cities or buildings.
 Their chains shine with hymns
 And their hands cut down the giant blocks of stone. (ll. 6-10)

Every martyrdom becomes a poem, a psalm, and the opening lines – "I have seen the sun / Spilling its copper petals on the Black Sea" (ll. 1-2) – are highly reminiscent of the forbidding note sounded in "From the Second Chapter of a Verse History of the World" (CP 13-19) when the unknowing victims sailed for Minos' den: "The roaring poet sun shall play the hot sea like a lyre, / And twang the copper coastal ridge like any vocal wire" (ll. 104-105). The mountain becomes a "prophetic cathedral" (l. 15) whose windows are emblazoned with the acts of the martyrs who die "By the base of the

prisoners' cliff" (l. 3). Deprived of water, the followers of Clement seek succor from the bishop; and, like Moses with the Israelites in the desert, Clement gave them their water, though unlike Moses he was not put to the test. It was a lamb that led him to the spot where water could be obtained:

The Lamb shall soon stand
 White as a shout against the sky:
 His feet shall soon strike rainbows from the rock. (ll. 20-22)

The rainbow, the sign of Yahweh's covenant with Noah after the Deluge, becomes the sign of the new covenant rendered perfect in the blood of the Lamb. The prisoners of the "marble hill" (l. 19) have drowned only to recover life. They have been baptized by blood and their lives shall "swing with fruit in other worlds, in other centuries" (l. 31). The Biblical use of water as the symbol of chaos and death and, paradoxically, also as the symbol of regeneration and vivification is ably employed when Merton contrasts the "copper petals on the Black Sea" (l. 2) with the "buried streams" (l. 23) released from the cliffs by Clement's faith. The new prisoners of the "marble hill," the monks of Gethsemani, replenish themselves with the faith of the martyrs, the waters of baptism, which "shatter the land at my feet with seas forever young" (l. 43).

There are, however, times of private and collective desiccation when the soul thirsts for the water of life and remains unslaked. "On a Day in August" (CP 204-206) pictures a torrid Gethsemani day when "a brown wing hovers for carrion" (l. 6) while the monks, prey to spiritual torpor, merely wait

In the air of our dead grove
 Dreaming some wind may come and kiss ourselves in the red eyes
 With a pennyworth of mercy for our pepper shoulders.
 And so we take into our hands the ruins
 Of the words our minds have rent. (ll. 10-14)

The monks wait like the hay in the fields while "locusts fry their music in the sycamores" (l. 4) and their dream is "drowned in the din of the crickets' disconnected prayer" (l. 23). The monks "In the air of [their] dead grove" find themselves like the parched souls of *The Waste Land* for whom

Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
 If there were only water amongst the rock

Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
 Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
 There is not even silence in the mountains.⁵

Enervated by the spiritual lassitude that has overtaken the monastery the monks watch "the grasses and the unemployed goldenrod / Go revel through our farm, and dance around the field" (ll. 24-25). They remain inert, passive and helpless in their "dead grove":

In this decayed hole among the mountains
 In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
 Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
 There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
 It has no windows, and the door swings,
 Dry bones can harm no one. (Eliot 49)

For Merton, the spiritual dryness of the Gethsemani monks precedes and occasions their realization of authentic prayer's efficacy:

And when the first fat drops
 Spatter upon the tin top of our church like silver dollars
 And thoughts come bathing back to mind with a new life,
 Prayer will become our new discovery

When God and His bad earth once more make friends. (ll. 42-46)

Such a realization is best achieved when accompanied by an apocalyptic sentiment:

Summon the punishing lightning:
 Spring those sudden gorgeous trees against the dark
 Curtain of apocalypse you'll hang to earth, from heaven:
 Let five white branches scourge the land with fire! (ll. 38-41)

Though those are the days of judgment and the monk functions as both eschatological sign and sentinel "upon the world's frontier" ("The Quickening of St. John the Baptist" l. 55), they are also the Advent days, the days of expectation and yearning.

In the seasonal poem "St. Malachy" (CP 209-11) Merton returns to autumn. St. Malachy, a twelfth-century Irish Cistercian bishop, has traditionally had his feast day on November 2 "in the days to remember the dead" (l. 1). The saint whose "coat is filled with drops of rain, and [who] is bearded / With all the seas of Poseidon" (ll. 5-6) comes to the monastery where "He weeps against the gothic

window, and the empty cloister / Mourns like an ocean shell" (ll. 8-9). The bells of the monastery tower which "considers his waters" (l. 12) summon the monks to prayer and, in the language of St. Gregory the Great, "Oceans of Scripture sang upon bony Eire" (l. 24). The remains of a former season, the spoils of a richer time, are offered on the altar of propitiation:

Then the last salvage of flowers
 (Fostered under glass after the gardens foundered)
 Held up their little lamps on Malachy's altar
 To peer into his wooden eyes before the Mass began. (ll. 25-28)

The autumn is Malachy's emblem, the sign of his complete submersion in the ocean of God's grace. Gethsemani, which he has visited, is like an anchored ship: "Rain sighed down the sides of the stone church. / Storms sailed by all day in battle fleets" (ll. 29-30). Earlier, in "Winter Afternoon," Merton had spoken of Gethsemani as a war vessel tossed about by the angry seas of "the Kentucky forest":

... our lonely Abbey like an anchored battleship:
 While the Kentucky forest
 Pouring upon our prows her rumorous seas
 Wakes our wordless prayers with the soft din of an Atlantic.
 (ll. 11-14)

The monks desire to "see the sun" when the "speechless visitor" (l. 21) leaves and in his wake

copper flames fall, tongues of fire fall
 The leaves in hundreds fall upon his passing
 While night sends down her dreadnought darkness (ll. 25-27).

Malachy, "the Melchisedec of our year's end" (l. 29), leaves the monks "And rain comes rattling down upon our forest / Like the doors of a country jail" (ll. 31-32). Incarcerated in their Advent prison, shipwrecked in their Kentucky ocean, the monks can continue to long for the sun or they can learn the lesson of Malachy and seek Christ "in those soundless fathoms where You dwell" ("Theory of Prayer" [CP 179-81], l. 56). In "Theory of Prayer," as in "St. Malachy," Merton knew the "ocean of peace" (l. 42), the "ocean of quiet" (l. 45) that surges within us; yet "How many hate their own safe death, / Their cell, their submarine!" (ll. 51-52). Malachy, autumn, teaches us how to die in the season of prepara-

tion, to drown in the "soundless fathoms."

The special function of the Christian poet as Advent visionary is described in the poem "In the Rain and the Sun" (CP 214-15), which admixes the sentiments of "On a Day in August" with those of "St. Malachy." In the first stanza Gethsemani, the "dead grove," is again "without rain" (l. 2) and the "Tall drops" (l. 4) of the "noonday dusk" (l. 3) pelt "the concrete with their jewelry" (l. 4). It is still Eliot's "decayed hole among the mountains," a place "Belonging to the old world's bones" (l. 5). The poet listens to what the thunder says, surveying the horizon as the monks scurry from the fields to the monastery for protection:

Owning this view, in the air of a hermit's weather,
 . . . I plumb the shadows full of thunder.
 My prayers supervise the atmosphere
 Till storms call all hounds home. (ll. 6, 9-11)

The poet observes "the countries sleeping in their beds" (l. 16) as "Four or five mountains" (l. 13) of water drench the land:

Wild seas amuse the world with water:
 No end to all the surfs that charm our shores
 Fattening the sands with their old foam and their old roar. (ll. 18-20)

The poet watches as the earth divides into the "Lands of the watermen" (l. 17), and the "Dogs and lions" caught in "the boom of waves' advantage" seek the poet's "tame home," "my Cistercian jungle." At this point in the poem the abbey becomes the familiar image of the ship, although this time not a battleship but Noah's ark with the poet as Noah. "Noah" (which Semitic-language scholars believe might mean "rest" in Hebrew), as the poet-monk of Gethsemani, offers to appease a just God with his verses, hoping thereby that "God and His bad earth once more [may] make friends" ("On a Day in August"). Like St. Clement, the poet-as-Noah seeks to "strike rainbows from the rock" ("From the Legend of St. Clement") and form a new covenant by means of his verses:

Thus in the boom of waves' advantage
 Dogs and lions come to my tame home
 Won by the bells of my Cistercian jungle.
 O love the livid fringes
 In which their robes are drenched!
 Songs of the lions and whales!

With my pen between my fingers
Making the waterworld sing!
Sweet Christ, discover diamonds
And sapphires in my verse
While I burn the sap of my pine house
For praise of the ocean sun. (ll. 21-32)

The covenant will again be compromised, the "Dogs have gone back to their ghosts / And the many lions, home" (ll. 40-41), but the poet's verses shall preserve the dream of Edenic innocence so briefly captured during the Deluge aboard the bark of Geth-semani:

words fling wide the windows of their houses –
Adam and Eve walk down my coast
Praising the tears of the treasurer sun (ll. 42-44).

The poet's verses, the rainbow, "the tears of the treasurer sun," are a reminder that although the innocence of Eden was once lost it is not irretrievable, living in the poet's vision and the monk's faith.

The monastery is both "the decayed hole among the mountains" and the ark-like "tame home" that offers rest to a world beset with the waves of tumult. It is the harbor in the storm and the "dead grove."

When it comes to the societal critique it is best to draw on *Cables to the Ace or Familiar Liturgies of Misunderstanding* (CP 393-454), Merton's 1968 anti-poetic epic consisting of a prologue, eighty-eight cantos/cables, and an epilogue.

Just before the book's publication Merton spoke of it in less than flattering terms in a letter to a fellow poet: "Maybe you will feel it does not communicate: it is imprecise, noisy, crude, full of vulgarity and parody, making faces, criticizing and so on."⁶ He feared that it would be misunderstood, that he was less than capable of realizing the next step in the unfolding of his myth-dream: the reparation of the Fall. There is no doubt that *Cables* is a daring undertaking. It is a kaleidoscope of sixty pages of poetic experimentation and raises the "problem of word" to a new level of intensity.

Since language has become a medium in which we are totally immersed, there is no longer any need to say anything. The saying says itself all around us. No one need attend. Listening is obsolete. So is silence. Each one travels alone in a small

blue capsule of indignation. (Some of the better informed have declared war on Language.) (#3 [CP 397])

There is an air of desperation about this poem precisely because it is written with a sense of urgency. It is electric in form and imagery: "electric jungle" (#14 [CP 404]), "their imitable wire" (#15 [CP 404]), "expert lights" (#15 [CP 405]), all contributing to the mad congestion of "the blue electric palaces of polar night" (#34 [CP 418]). The poem's irony is oppressive, communication and mobility are everywhere but no one hears and language has become static in the world of "the monogag" and "the telefake" (#34 [CP 418]). The world of immediate intimacy is a world of "Dull energies in the dust of collapsing walls" (#44 [CP 424-25]). It is not the garden of paradise but the wasteland of apocalypse. We have been deceived by language and the "Great Meaning," loving the inevitable, each having "his appointed vector / In the mathematical takeoff" (#52 [CP 431]).

In *Cables* form is content; it does not contain or transmit a message, it simply *is* a message. The title of the poem itself suggests the identification of the means of transmission with the content transmitted, for a cable is both the electrical apparatus by which the message is channeled and the message or cablegram itself. The medium is the message. For neither Marshall McLuhan nor Merton, however, are electric communication and its creation, the "global village," any panacea:

Some may say that the electric world
Is a suspicious village
Or better a jungle where all the howls
Are banal
NO! The electric jungle is a village
Where howling is not suspicious:
Without it we would be afraid
That fear was usual. (#14 [CP 403-404])

Cables underscores humankind's desperate need for redemptive unity precisely because it highlights the dissensions that pervade human society, dissensions that are often the result of an egocentrism nourished by the media and the technocratic overloads. The medium is indeed the message, the form of the poem is the statement.

Cables is a mosaic of messages of reassurance, of good fortune,

which, once decoded, reveals the compelling credibility of skillful dissembling. In the Prologue Merton makes explicit his implicit contempt of the advertiser, the master scribbler of our consumerist society: "My attitudes are common and my ironies are no less usual than the bright pages of your favorite magazine. The soaps, the smells, the liquors, the insurance, the third, dull, gin-soaked cheer: what more do you want, Rabble?" (CP 395). By detailing the lies that have been our common diet, the poem obliges the reader to accept the implications of this ironic feedback. The cables are "familiar liturgies of misunderstanding" and it is the reader's moral and intellectual duty to reject the tyranny of lies by ceasing to misunderstand. This is best done by appreciating the intention of antipoetry, a *genre* that Merton defines as "a deliberate ironic feedback of cliché":⁷

Marcuse has shown how mass culture tends to be an anticulture – to stifle creative work by the sheer volume of what is "produced" or reproduced. In which case, poetry, for example, must start with an awareness of this contradiction and *use* it – as antipoetry – which freely draws on the material of superabundant nonsense at its disposal. One no longer has to parody, it is enough to quote – and feed back quotations into the mass consumption of pseudoculture. (AJ 118)

Failure to accept the implications of this ironic feedback could result in a sentence of mass death, a possibility Merton considers in the Epilogue, where the uncommon juxtaposition of apocalyptic sentiment with an outrageously parodied advertising jargon shows not only an adept handling of "super-abundant nonsense" but an intensity of purpose by no means subdued in the poet's mature years.

The "elite" are the architects of our universal ruin, the technocrats and engineers who design the instruments of our doom. But their most effective weapon is language for language is power and the advertisers/politicians/engineers combine their respective energies to ensure that language does their bidding:

Let choirs of educated men compose
 Their shaken elements and present academies of electronic renown
 With better languages. Knowing health
 And marital status first of all they must provide
 Automatic spelling devices or moneymaking

Conundrums to program
 The next ice-age from end-to-end
 In mournful proverbs

Let such choirs intone
 More deep insulted shades
 That mime the arts of diction
 Four-footed metaphors must then parade
 Firm resolution or superb command
 Of the wrong innuendo (#16 [CP 405]).

The apocalypse is the consummate "brilliant intuition of an engineer" (#85 [CP 453]). Abstraction has firmly ensnared humankind, and the Cartesian *cogito* secures our continued isolation.

Look! The Engineer! He thinks he has caught something! He wrestles with it in mid-air! (#51 [CP 430])

The priest-poet incarnates the word, vaporizes the specter of abstraction, celebrates enfleshment as the antidote to reason's captivity, and grounds worship in the elements of matter, the true sacrament of the Creator's sustaining love.

Endnotes

1. Margo Swiss, ed., *Poetry as Liturgy: An Anthology by Canadian Poets* (Toronto: The St. Thomas Poetry Series, 2007) 20; subsequent references will be cited as "Swiss" parenthetically in the text.

2. Thomas Merton, *My Argument with the Gestapo* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969) 259.

3. Thomas Merton, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1977) 122-26; subsequent references will be cited as "CP" parenthetically in the text.

4. Tim Lilburn, ed., *Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy* (Toronto: Cormorant Books, 2002) 173.

5. T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962) 47; subsequent references will be cited as "Eliot" parenthetically in the text.

6. Thomas Merton, *The Courage for Truth: Letters to Writers*, ed. Christine M. Bochen (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1993) 248-49 (9/5/66 letter to Cid Corman).

7. Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal*, ed. Naomi Burton Stone, Brother Patrick Hart and James Laughlin (New York: New Directions, 1973) 286; subsequent references will be cited as "AJ" parenthetically in the text.

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