

Escape the World or Change the World ? Towards a Feminist Theology of Contemplation.

By
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Introduction

I encountered the spell of Thomas Merton very early on through the English version of his autobiography *Elected Silence*¹ with its introduction by Evelyn Waugh. But I had already been enchanted by the story of Gethsemane through an earlier work, *Burnt-out Incense*, which told the story of the monastery's foundation.² It coincided with my very romantic, idealised attachment to religion, the kind which the later Merton scorned. Escaping the world, detachment from worldly goods – not that I had any ! – punishing the body, (I remember my sisters and I tried to build a bed of nails in imitation of St. Rose of Lima !) – all this seemed of the utmost importance. I was insufferably pious – but, thank God, it was all knocked out of me by a combination of studying Oxford philosophy and by some real relationships. Marriage, children, illness, liberation and then feminist theology all removed Merton from my sphere of experience and reflection. But years of activism and struggle in various justice movements have brought me full circle. Not the romance of burnt-out incense but just sheer burn-out, plain and simple, has driven me back to works like *Seeds of Contemplation*, but with a completely different motivation. This invitation, together with my own conviction that it is in a mystical, contemplative faith that resources are discovered for the dark night of the struggle, have challenged me to try to develop a feminist theology of contemplation, looking again at key insights of Merton from this particular perspective.

Yet another catalyst has been the publication of the correspondence between Rosemary Ruether and Thomas Merton.³ This is a very poignant exchange between the young Rosemary Ruether, just beginning her career, and Merton, who, one year before he died, is struggling for further authenticity in his monastic vocation and to understand his place in the Church:

I do wonder at times if the Church is real at all...Am I part of a great big hoax? ⁴

The intensity of the letters focuses on the issue of whether monasticism is escaping the world, or more specifically the wretchedness of the inner cities which demands a real commitment of anyone who takes the Kingdom seriously. As Ruether insists:

For those who wish to be at the "kingdom" frontier of history, it is the steaming ghetto of my big city, not the countryside that is the place of the radical overcoming of this world, the place where one renews creation.⁵

She argues strongly that – recalling Plato's myth of the Cave – that one has to go back to release those who are imprisoned within and questions the authenticity of contemplation which is out of relation with touch, sight, smell, verbal feel of another. Merton's reply is a spirited defence of monasticism's part of the total vocation of the Church, which he insists is living a life of total integration with creation. Referring to the thousands of pine saplings which he and his novices have planted, he argues that:

the monk is one of those who not only saves the world in a theological sense, but saves it literally, protecting it against the destructiveness of the rampaging city of greed, war etc.⁶

But Ruether will not have it. The *shalom* of the kingdom – lions lying down with lambs – will only be realised through historical redemption, through "struggling with the powers and principalities where they really are", not by taking off into the hills! (p.41). It will be a result of taking seriously the injunction to "stay hooked into and love the world of technology." ⁷

It is striking that Merton's spirited reply "Is there anything you can do in the city to stop the war in Vietnam ?" (p.43) is an indication of how deep over the years has become his commitment to peace and social justice, and how clearly he repudiates his earlier quite clear rejection of the world.

The point for what I am developing here is that now, 28 years later, Rosemary Ruether although radically involved in the struggle against multiple interlocking oppressions, is also a pioneer in ecological theology – which she lives out in a variety of ways, including gardening – and Merton's own inspiration for the Peace Movement and social justice generally has developed greatly over the years. So this nodal point of tension – escape the world or change the world? – which proves to be a false dichotomy in the case of Ruether and Merton, I take as jumping-off point for my explorations.

Returning to the Dark Night - why Mysticism ?

It is no surprise that a return to mystical faith is being witnessed in different ways. There is a hunger for the prayer of silence, for meditation, great enthusiasm for mediaeval mystics like Hildegard, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross and through the alliance between what is called creation spirituality and new cosmology this has spread to the celebration of the immanence of God in creation. There are now religious congregations which are discovering new contextual meanings for the original mystical charism of their founder/foundress.⁸ Distrust of mere verbiage and

the wordy character of liturgies together with a rejection of theology as merely a cerebral activity which does not touch the whole person, has stimulated the recovery of *theologia*, the mystical theology of the early Church. The very climate of postmodernism in its challenge to dogmatic expressions of universal truth has encouraged the return of the *Via Negativa*, the apophatic way of darkness and unknowing.

But it is vital to look at the context where this is occurring. Mystical insights, as Grace Jantzen writes in her new book *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*,⁹ do not free-float through history, but are in direct response to the needs of the times. Thus Julian of Norwich wrote down her visions when the Black Death was sweeping across Europe; John of the Cross described his way of the Dark Night when he was literally in prison. It seems that the consciousness of being in crisis, of reaching the end of known solutions, can create a receptivity and openness to God's search for us. But this is not an individualist activity, or stemming from the eccentricity of certain individuals. Grace Jantzen accuses William James of shrinking mysticism to the private experience of an individual characterised by ineffability.¹⁰ Mysticism is rather directly related to a community's struggle: and what seems particularly to characterise the mystics is the desire to communicate God's revelation, always within the humble consciousness that language is a poor vehicle. The hunger for a mystical and contemplative faith is not the *private* search for comfort in the experience of lostness and current confusion, but springs from the existential angst of our time, from the cultural despair of struggling not to go under at this juncture.

Our own particular crisis is born from the cultural despair which followed the initial euphoria at the fall of communism in the eastern European countries. It seems that we have no spiritual or moral resources with which to stem either the flood of violent conflicts which have been set in motion, or the overwhelming tide of consumeristic demands which define a person in terms of their spending capacity. "I shop therefore I am" is now not even a shocking modernisation of the aphorism of Descartes. Nor is religion guiltless in this phenomenon. A recent book *Consumer Rites: the Buying and Selling of American Holidays* points out that

In the United States, religion and religious leaders have pioneered to an extraordinary degree in the invention of marketing techniques that have shaped the rhythms of consumer buying habits. ...the shopping mall has become the central location for the commemoration of Christianity's most important holy days as well as for the enactment of America's most prominent civic holidays.¹¹

If we add to this bleak picture the disillusionment following the breakdown of the Peace Movement and Peace Processes and the seemingly unrecoverable degree of environmental perishing, it is small wonder that we have reached an impasse.

Feminist theologians have particular reasons for reaching this point. It is not just the simple fact of burn-out which we share with all activists whose movements have lost their charge. It is a combination of the fact that just as we were on the point of reaching a crucial moment in our work, of seeing the global interconnections

between sexism, racism, economic poverty and militarism, there is a cultural assumption that feminism as a movement is passé, the battle is won, and there is a fierce and deadly backlash against even using the word.

So it is out of a conviction, not that political action is finished or pointless, and that now is the time to sink into self-indulgent consumerism, that I seek a feminist theology of contemplation; rather, to find a way of staying with the struggle, to re-source in such a way as to free new energy. The God who is our passion for justice has inspired and fuelled many of us in the last ten years.¹² Perhaps there are new embodiments of Divine power in our midst by the honest admission of our failures, the limits of our finitude, the rejection of our visions of truth and justice. And even if there is no great vision awaiting, simply to find courage to stay in the struggle will justify this search.

But it is not only the plight of the present which is the catalyst. There is a nodal point at the heart of feminist theology which encounters mystical faith and touches the heart of Merton's own concerns. First, there is a concentration on the search for self, through a process of stripping off layers of false and illusory selves. Secondly, there is a search for God, beyond the limits of the traditional concepts to an acceptable interpretation of dependence. And thirdly, there is a search for life in all its fullness, through what Mary Daly called a *biophilic* – life-giving – analysis, as opposed to the social structures of patriarchy, which are by definition *necrophilic* or death-dealing. It is because Merton saw the contemplative life as fullness –

contemplation is life itself, fully awake, fully alive, fully aware that it is alive¹³

– that I justify the congruence between his thought and the feminist theological insights I develop.

Can a Feminist walk the Path of Kenosis?

Before exploring these three points it is crucial to state that the starting point of Merton and Feminist Theology are very different. That was made very clear by the tensions between the priorities of Ruether and Merton from the correspondence. Feminism is rooted in the desire for justice for women. Even if there are many types of feminism and strands within them¹⁴, the common core is the disordered pattern of relating between women, men and the non-human world, which is bred by the structure of patriarchy, (kyriarchy). The tension between world-affirming/world-denying which was such a stumbling block for the early Merton does not exist in the same way in feminism. Women struggle to be given a place in the world, a place in the structures other than simply being the *other*, the reflection and mirror image of the least desirable or rejected parts of the male personality. If there is a hermeneutical priority it is that the needs of poor women are to be placed first. "If it's good for poor women, it's good for all" is a slogan issuing from black and Hispanic communities. This echoes the "option for the poor" of Liberation Theology: yet this is not an

explicit theological concern in Merton's thought – as far as I can judge. But the point of contact comes in that Merton, in denying the world, denies its false values and idols, not the sacramental goodness of creation – in which he rejoices. Feminism in being world-affirming, both affirms bodiliness in the face of the negative, spiritualising tradition on the body in much of western spirituality, and proposes a world-transforming agenda: as Adrienne Rich's oft-quoted words put it:

My heart is moved by all I cannot save
So much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot in with those
who age after age, perversely,

with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.¹⁵

Feminist theology is built on a rock-like conviction that knowing God, loving God cannot be separated from justice-making. So a sentence of Merton's like ...

Go into the desert, not to escape other men, but in order to find them in God,¹⁶

is not relevant to those women who find themselves already in a desert of exclusion, whose solitude is based on isolation and alienation. It is certainly not relevant to those women in drought-stricken areas of many Third World countries who go into the desert daily in search of water. Feminist theology begins with clear awareness of the political dimension, but seeks the face of God in this experience.

It is in the search for the authentic self that there is an amazing congruence between Merton and feminist theological insights. I discern three aspects. The first is that Merton's life-long struggle against the illusory, false self – seen in all his writings, from *Seeds of Contemplation*, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, to the later work influenced by Zen and Eastern mysticism¹⁷ – is paralleled by Feminist Theology's search for an authentic self for women nurtured by – and not suppressed by – Christian theology. In fact Merton's *no-self* – a Buddhist concept – finds an echo in the feminist search for self on the basis of experiencing oneself as nothing, literally *no-thing*.¹⁸ Carol Christ, in her ground-breaking book on feminist quest, *Diving Deep and Surfacing*, explores the desperation of women as we come to realise that women's experience of being a self – in its enormous diversity of race and class – is not reflected in the dominant experience of selfhood. Jean Baker Miller admitted that women frequently develop a sense of self which is so mediated through husband, father, children, brother, that the word *self* is a misnomer.¹⁹ So the *no-thing* which is positive in Merton, is negative in feminism. To be abused, despised, accounted as a non-person, this is what we have to resist in the name of the Kingdom of peace and justice. But it is in the stripping away of the false self – the way of kenoticism – that we find the congruence. Feminist theology has been active in

pointing to the dangers of extolling the death of self which, it is claimed, is the Gospel injunction to every disciple.²⁰ The Dutch feminist theologian Annelies Van Heijst, in her book *Longing For the Fall*, showed how the experience of the death of self could have two or three different outcomes.²¹ Either a person re-discovers a sense of self on the same basis – recovers confidence, pride, after, for example depression, bereavement, failure – or recovers self on a different basis. But this could be according to the traditional model of the dominant self, achieving selfhood through controlling others; or it could be a selfhood attained on a totally different basis – the feminist self, achieved in solidarity, in mutuality and in relationship with others, in particular with the poor and oppressed – across a range of real life situations.

Secondly, Merton's views on the self in solitude find a resonance in feminist insights. He is careful to distinguish "solitude" – his early criticisms of the way we try avoid solitude and fill up the day with noise and meaningless activities²² certainly rings true! – from "separation". Whether he speaks of the inner or external self, the false or true self, the separate, individualist self or authentic self, his sense of discovering connection with the human race while in solitude is exactly what is meant by the "connected aloneness" of the feminist mystic,²³ or what I have developed as *epiphanies of connectedness* as moments of Divine grace and revelation²⁴. As he says,

The person must be rescued from the individual. The free son (!) of God must be saved from the conformist slave of fantasy, passion and convention. The creative and mysterious inner self must be delivered from the wasteful, hedonistic and destructive ego that seeks only to cover itself with disguises.²⁵

The experience of being freed from a solitude which separates and the recovery of a passion for connectedness was of course revealed by the famous Louisville vision:

In Louisville. ...in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness ... I have the immense joy of being ... a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate ... There is no way of telling people that they are walking round shining like the Sun.²⁶

It is striking that this moment of revelation - epiphany of connection - is linked with Merton's writing of the prose-poem *Hagia Sophia*, with God entering creation as the feminine figure of Sophia/Wisdom and his seeing the incarnation of Sophia - *God entering Creation as Sophia, female*, in sophianic figures like Lara in Dr Zhivago.²⁷ I don't want to enter the pontifications on Merton and women: there is much written about his friendships with Flannery O'Connor, Rosemary Haughton,

Dorothy Day, and of course his love affair with the nurse, Margie, when he was in hospital: I am convinced that his thought would have developed from the abstractions of Sophia, the idealisation of the feminine into making the concrete connections with the real lives and sufferings of women as women.

What I would like now to develop is the way that the insights of Merton's Louisville vision and a feminist spirituality based on "epiphanies of connection" offer a spirituality which moves on from the tension between "escape the world" or "change the world". This is a spirituality which also addresses my other two points - the search for God which respects a true sense of dependence, and the hope of life in all its fullness.

Epiphanies of connection: Merton's link with a Feminist Spirituality.

Merton's call to get rid of the false and illusory self is linked with the distinction made today between the *disengaged self* - constantly called to the great ethical projects - and we should make the connections today with the travelling business executive, the absent father, or mother! - and the *relational self*, (or even the *ecological self*) - investing total identity in relationships - which could be both positive and destructive. This ambiguity is also found in my second point which is the contemplative search for complete dependence (abandonment?) on God. Clearly for the contemplative, or mystic, total abandonment to God's love is the ideal. Yet for women, notions of dependence mean demeaning situations of economic poverty or emotional dependence which can cripple the development of the autonomous self. Merton was unaware of the effects on women of Christian (and other faiths') insistence on obedience and submission of will as the path to sanctity. The complex structure of kyriarchy can function to block all development of freely-chosen self-giving for women. He was unaware of the connotations of words like "innocence" and "purity" for women - where sexual innocence has been made a bargaining tool for marriages, and a means of imprisonment of young girls in order to achieve a lucrative match. Nor can the achievement of "life in all its fullness" be even realistically hoped-for, without understanding the political and social contexts for words to which we attach theological meaning.

Is there any way out of the impasse? To discover this, I explore here the ideas of the young Jewish woman Etty Hillesum who died in Auschwitz, particularly her notion of *soulscape*, together with my own notion of the connected and ecological self.²⁸ Etty Hillesum lived and worked in Amsterdam at the time of the German occupation, so the narrowing opportunities for joyous living form the background to her Journal. Deportations, starvation are its backcloth - as is her own relationship with an extraordinary man Julius Spier, a chiropractitioner, at the same time as her growing relationship with God. It was a scenario that Merton would have understood. Her idea of *soulscape* links interior growth with outward circumstances - in a way which bridges some of the duality we are struggling with. Here Etty describes a train journey:

The train to Deventer, The open skies, peaceful and also a little sad. I look out of the window and it as if I were riding through the landscapes of my own soul. Soul-landscape. I feel like that often: that the outer landscape is the reflection of the inner. Thursday afternoon along the River IJssel. A radiant, sweeping, bright, landscape. (p.80)

Creating a *soulscape* is not about writing mystical poetry to encapsulate all experience. It is more about connecting the fragmented elements of the physical, material, psychological and emotional elements of all of our lives, with an intensity and a desire for wholeness - the root meaning of salvation. It means a thoroughly ecological view of self. Every environmental detail - landscape, weather, diet, health possibilities, air pollution, contributes to the landscape of the self, to the possibilities of this *soulscape*. It requires patient awareness and a kind of connecting perception. I think Merton would call it a *sacramental perception*. Etty Hillesum is full of such detail as "gas fire, yellow and red tulips, an unexpected piece of chocolate...., three fircones," (p.81) and a sense of joy emanates which reminds me of the tenderness with which the painter Chagall paints ordinary things. (Merton loved his *angelic innocence*). So it's about relating to these elements of ordinariness with a tenderness, a reverence and a sense of gratefulness, integrating it all into a process of self-becoming. Etty describes the extraordinary transformation which overcame her. This passage is in the context of her relationship with Julius Spier - the greatest influence in her life: (remember her context of scarcity of food)

We managed with great difficulty to get three lemons from a barrow... But we were determined to have some cake and whipped cream. And then we roamed the streets again ... and now it's nearly 8.30. The last evening of a year that has been the most fruitful, and yes, the happiest of all. And if I had to put in a nutshell what this year has meant ... then I would say: greater awareness and hence easier access to my inner sources. (p.81)

I recognize here Merton's great appreciation of food and companionship. But the extra element here is that this enjoyment is linked with a relationship with God. From being "the girl who couldn't kneel, couldn't pray", her laughing description of herself, she becomes propelled by the sense of cosmic awareness, being part of a greater whole, forced onto her knees in response. And this deepens until - towards the end - she wants to be nothing but prayer. As the external scene becomes increasingly more fragmented, with the beginnings of the deportations to the camps, - and Etty went voluntarily with one of the first groups to the Labour Camps - this sense of inner strength grows. She describes the ruin of the jasmine outside her house. But the flourishing of the jasmine within brings an increased sense of responsibility to God for all the people and the evil of their actions:

And it spreads its scent around the House in which you dwell, O God. You see, I can look after you, I bring not only my tears, and my forebodings on this stormy, grey, Sunday morning. I even bring you scented jasmine. I shall try to make You at home

always, even should I be locked in a narrow cell, and a cloud should drift past my small barred window, then I shall bring you that cloud, O God, while there is still strength in me to do so (p.188).

Can this sense of taking responsibility for God, recognising the vulnerability of God, lift us from the difficulty of developing a real dependence on God, while crushed with debilitating dependencies? The sense that God too, can be debilitated by the false dependencies? Etty Hillesum blazes a trail by affirming the need to develop the stripping away of crippling notions of dependency and obedience by affirming life in its fullness, despite the horrors of the present. Hyun Kyung Chung, the Korean feminist theologian, tells the poignant story of the Korean Comfort woman, Soo Bock, who, in the midst of her degrading and shocking treatment by the Japanese soldiers, chooses, not death but life. She chooses to eat – does whatever the soldiers tell her, because she has decided to survive – unlike many of her companions. She did survive, and today at 74 years, she is a great strength for reconciliation. What gave her strength to survive? asked Hyun Kyung. The affirmation of life in all its fullness? The complete loss of self (Soo Bock is a Buddhist) - but also finding of the *connected self* because of this?

This awakening to the connected self, to the ecological self, is accompanied by the awareness of being part of a larger, interconnected whole. Yet the sense of smallness within this – what the Buddhists call the “jewelled net of the Lord Indra” –, in which all interconnecting nodes reflect each other, yet retain their own identity, does not diminish the sense of responsibility for the specific context. I mean responsibility in its primary sense of “being responsive-to” as well as “responsible for”. Etty's *responsiveness-to* brought a vocation of responding to the suffering of the people in the camps, of refusing – like Soo Bock – to give way to hatred of the enemy, of accommodating something of that terrible suffering, of anticipating the whole burden of sorrow. Secondly, in the deepening awareness, comes realisation of the *broken connections*, the polluted sky, earth, water, the poisoned lakes, the dying species, the lost connections with the animal world, the missing language of relation, the inherited wounds of our families, our institutions, structures in the workplace, the inadequacy of the patterns of caring we received. Connection is reconnecting ... rebuilding fragmented selves in a fragmented world. As Adrienne Rich wrote,

Freedom. It isn't once, to walk out
under the Milky Way, feeling the rivers
of light, the fields of dark

Freedom is daily, prose-bound routine
remembering. Putting together inch by inch
the starry world. From all the lost connections. ²⁹

Merton spoke of being married to the silence of the forest:

One might say I had decided to marry the silence of the forest. The sweet dark warmth of the world will have to be my wife. Out of the heart of that dark warmth comes the secret that is heard only in silence. ³⁰

What he speaks of as “the secret that is heard only in silence” becomes in a spirituality of epiphanies of connectedness a way of healing fragmentation and brokenness. Putting together the fragmented pieces of our broken selves, creating a soul-scape by giving our emotions time and space, respecting bodily rhythms, “re-membering” in the sense of joining together the fragments into a different whole even through reaching backwards into the past. Adrienne Rich, in another haunting passage, in “The Spirit of Place,” combines the connecting of self with environment, as well as with re-membering our past foremothers:

The world as it is: not as her users boast
Damaged beyond reclamation by their using
Ourselves as we are in these painful motions
of staying cognizant; some part of us always out beyond ourselves
Knowing knowing knowing...

On a pure night, on a night when pollution
seems absurdity when the undamaged planet seems to turn
like a bowl of crystal in black ether
They are the piece of us that lies out there
Knowing knowing knowing. ³¹

A spirituality of connectedness can be encapsulated in the notion of *heart*, which is the theme of this Conference. I have chosen to focus on soul-scape, because of integrating interiority with external political and social circumstances into a contemplative faith, responsive in freedom, to the vulnerability of God. “Your Heart, my Hermitage” implies that God's true dwelling is in the depths of the human person. *Cor ad Cor loquitur*, as Newman said - and we are spoken to from the depths. But Etty Hillesum gives another depth to the indwelling of God. Again it is rooted in God's vulnerability:

Alas, there doesn't seem very much You yourself can do about our circumstances, our lives. ...You cannot help us but we must help you to defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last.... (p.187)

Sometimes they (people) seem to me like houses with open doors. I walk in and roam through passages and rooms, and every house is furnished a little differently and yet they are all of them the same, and every one must be turned into a dwelling dedicated to you, O God. And I promise you, yes, I promise that I shall try to find a dwelling and refuge for you in as many houses as possible. There are so many empty houses, and I shall prepare them all for you, the most honoured Lodger. Please forgive this poor metaphor. (p.215).

The human heart, God's dwelling, and the responsibility to make God welcome in all the empty houses - is it here that we find the reconciliation of

Merton's tension between solitude and community? Is it here that we solve the dichotomy *escape the world or change the world*? We may, as Merton said, "be exiles at the far end of solitude living as listeners, with hearts attending to the skies we cannot understand"³², but through epiphanies of connection, freely-given - at Louisville - or elsewhere, we glimpse the eros or yearning of God to be indwelling presence in all of us. This is uncrushable hope in our fragmented world.

Notes and References

1. *Elected Silence*.
2. *Burnt-out Incense*.
3. *At Home in the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Rosemary Radford Ruether*, ed. Mary Tardiff OP, Introd. by Rosemary Ruether, (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1995).
4. *Ibid.*, p.17.
5. *Ibid.*, p.20.
6. *Ibid.*, p.35.
7. *Ibid.*, p.41.
8. An important example is Sr. Myra Poole's, *Standing Again at Compiègne*, a re-examination of the mysticism of St Julie Billiart in the light of contemporary feminist spirituality.
9. Grace M.Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Mysticism*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1995).
10. Jantzen, op cit., pp.304-7. She cites James on ineffability: "The handiest of marks by which I classify a state of mind as mystical is negative. The subject of it immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words...In this peculiarity, mystical states are more like states of feeling than like states of intellect". (James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*(Collins, Glasgow, 1960, p.367).
11. Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: the Buying and Selling of American Holidays*, (Princeton University Press, 1996). Quotation is from "Mall things bright and beautiful", review of the former, R.Laurence Moore in *The Times Higher*, March 29th, 1996, p.22.
12. See Carter Heyward *Our Passion for Justice*, (New York, Pilgrim, 1984); M.Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, (London, SPCK, 1989).
13. From *New Seeds of Contemplation*, cited in W.H.Shannon, *Thomas Merton's Dark Path*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, revised ed., 1987), p.150.
14. See the discussion in Maria Riley, *Transforming Feminism*, () of liberal, romantic, radical and separatist feminisms.
15. Adrienne Rich, "Natural Resources", in *The Dream of a Common Language* (New York, W&W Norton, 1978), p.67.
16. T.Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*. (London, Burns and Oates, 1949), p.20.
17. A helpful resource for Merton's theology of the self is Anne Carr, *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit: Thomas Merton's Theology of the Self* (Ind, University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).
18. See Carol Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing*, (Boston, Beacon, 1980)

19. See Jean Baker Miller, *Towards a New Psychology of Women*, (Boston, Beacon, 1978); also the discussion in M.Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, op cit.
20. See M.Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, op cit., p.
21. Annelies Van Heijst, *Longing for the Fall*, (Kampen, Koks 1994).
22. *Seeds of Contemplation* op cit., p.
23. See Margaret Miles, "The Courage to be Alone - In and Out of Marriage" in Mary E.Giles, ed., *The Feminist Mystic*, New York, Crossroads, 1985, pp.84-102
24. See M.Grey, *The Wisdom of Fools?* (London, SPCK, 1993), p.60ff.
25. From *New Seeds Of Contemplation*. Cited by Shannon, *Thomas Merton's Dark Path*, op cit., p. 156.
26. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, (London, Burns and Oates (1965) (1995), pp. 156-7.
27. See Anne Carr, op cit. p.71.
28. Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life: The Diaries of Etty Hillesum 1941-3*. (Washington Square Press, 1981).
29. Adrienne Rich, Integrity in *The Dream of a Common Language*, Poems, New York, Norton and Norton, 1978.
30. "Day of a Stranger," in *A Thomas Merton Reader*, ed. Thomas P.McDonnell, (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), p.434.
31. Adrienne Rich, "The Spirit of Place", in *A Wild Patience has Taken me thus Far*, New York, Norton and Norton, 1981, p.45.
32. Thomas Merton, *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* (Spencer, Mass., Cistercian Publications, 1969).