

The quotations act as a seed for Vandergrift's own meditations which range quite freely and are always heartfelt. They are followed by a short passage of scripture and a prayer. The reflections are divided into themes which could be used for liturgies.

Simsic takes a different approach which is at once more flexible yet structured. He introduces his themes such as freedom, silence, prayer of the heart and then gives a suggested opening prayer. He then proceeds to relate an incident from Merton's life followed by some of Merton's own words. Like Vandergrift he embellishes the quotation with his own reflection and then produces a choice of meditations for the reader to prayer. The meditations reflect a variety of traditions: mantra prayer, lectio divina, imaginative prayer, examen of consciousness, journal writing and action. This is followed by a scripture passage and a suggestion for a closing prayer.

Simsic takes his Merton passages from a wide variety of his works and his themes span and follow the developments in Merton's spirituality. He brings out Merton's wisdom and experience as a contemplative. He does look at some of Merton's social concerns but these are covered in better detail and with more interpretation by Vandergrift.

Two such thoughtful and heartfelt books on Merton are to be welcomed. For an introduction to Merton's spirituality I would particularly recommend Simsic's book since it unites reading with prayer, thus guiding us back to the silence which was Merton's inspiration and 'ground of being'.

Lawrence Petch

Robert G Waldron, Thomas Merton In Search Of His Soul: A Jungian Perspective. (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1994), pp.157, softback, £5.95, ISBN: 0-87793-524-6.

In this book we find Merton on the couch of Jungian enthusiast RG Waldron. The author's intentions are clear, '... to illustrate how the course of Merton's life is not merely similar to Jung's paradigm of individuation, but identical to it.' (p.9) It must also be clear that Waldron admits Thomas Merton In Search Of His Soul is not a systematic biography, but rather a commentary utilising Jung's analytical psychology to '... examine essential stages in Merton's life which propelled him in his inner journey to wholeness.' (p.9) The book is divided into two sections that correspond to Jung's theory of individuation. Jung held that a person must integrate their Shadow (the negative aspects of

one's character) and their Anima or Animus (ones unconscious inner woman or man) to achieve full awareness of the self.

Chapter one is entitled 'His Father's Death: Emergence of the Shadow.' Waldron explains that whilst Merton could not integrate the self-loathing and guilt which was to dominate his shadow-self for many years after Owen Merton's death, it did nevertheless, launch him into examining his own inner self, which is in Jungian terms, the beginning of the individuation process. At Cambridge Merton endured a number of profound and sometimes traumatic experiences. In Waldron's view he compensated for these by projecting his self-hatred onto the city itself, seeing it as the centre of a 'corrupt world' and believing it to have a wholly negative influence on his character. In America, Merton, unable to rid himself of his shadow continued to indulge in a reprobate lifestyle. The author feels that having been given a second chance, after the mistakes in England, 'He ... failed to transform himself as quickly as he might.' (p.50)

The combination of a nervous illness resulting in gastritis, which is assessed to be psychosomatic, and a failed love affair - the consequence of the rejection by 'a woman' of Merton's anima projection, led the young man to seek some meaning in life. He began to read - because, says Waldron following Jung somewhat slavishly, 'LOGOS ... is a principle characteristic of men because it involves judgement and discrimination.' (p.56) [!] In any event, Merton discovered in Catholicism both an intellectually satisfying cosmology and a reliable subject for his anima projection. At Gethsemani Merton found he was still a divided man, but the experience of writing his autobiography let loose the shadow of his writer-self. The Seven Storey Mountain is judged to be spiritually illuminating but damaged by Merton's CONTEMPTUS MUNDI (contempt for the world). (p.69) Indeed it is only in The Sign of Jonas that he would discern his own case of shadow-projection - a pivotal point in the individuation process. The next stage - embracing the shadow, is discussed in Chapter five, 'The Journey to Wholeness', which is an analysis of the prose work "Fire Watch, July 4, 1952." Waldron quotes a sentence in the epilogue, "The night contains values the day never dreamed of.", regarding it as '... the key to a Jungian understanding of Merton's journey' (p.93), and as proof that the two men held similar, if not identical views on the development of the human psyche.

Section two begins with two chapters that scrutinize four dreams concerning women - a Jewish girl named Proverb, a Lady Litanist, a Chinese Princess and a Black mother. We are told that in subsequent letters to Proverb, Merton gradually accepted his Anima and that it was this recognition which paved the way to the Louisville Vision and the composition of HAGIA SOPHIA. The last chapter contains an examination of the poem "All The Way Down" which '... can be interpreted as a retrospective view of Merton's individuation.' (p.127)

The thesis of the book" that the nature of individuation is universal and that the observations of Merton and Jung exemplify this, is again hammered home. Waldron also explains in general terms some of the pitfalls those who embark on the quest for self-knowledge will encounter.

The book contains a useful glossary of Jungian terms which equips the lay reader with an adequate enough vocabulary to understand the text. In addition there is a chapter devoted to contrasts and parallels in the works of the monk and the analyst. Whilst the book is eminently readable, it does in my view disappoint in two respects, both of which are derived from one central problem - that Waldron seems unsure about whom the book is aimed at. Firstly there is a lack of precision and depth in the writing. This point is perhaps made more acute by the limited amount of material that is evaluated. For example Merton's love affair with Marge the nurse is skimmed over and one is left with the sense of having read an incomplete story. Secondly, there are some obvious intimations that reading this book will help the reader to understand their own spiritual journey. It may do so in a vague way for men, but some will find the lack of parallel explanations of a woman's individuation process both unsatisfactory and an example of the inherent sexism in Jung's assessment of men and women.

However these points should not deter the open-minded reader of what is after all, a relatively short book. The approach is refreshing and with a little imaginative application, Waldron's study will compliment any reading of Merton's life story.

John Wright

Our Reviewers

Ian Thomson is a member of the committee of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland and active in the Bath and Wells Chapter.

Paul M. Pearson is a member of the committee of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland. He is currently writing a doctorate on the theme of journey in Merton's life and writings.

Lawrence Petch teaches at St. Patricks RC Primary School in Farnborough, Hampshire.

John Wright lives in Southampton and is studying a Masters degree in Theology at LSU College, Southampton.