Redeeming the Rhinoceros:
Thomas Merton – Prophet and Social Critic

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Some longtime readers of The Merton Journal *may feel a strong sense of* déjà vu *as they start to read this essay, and they are not mistaken! The essay that follows grew out of a previous one I wrote that was presented at the Eighth General Meeting of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland held at Oakham School in 2010 and subsequently published in* The Merton Journal *in 2011. However, it has been extensively revised and expanded based upon further readings of* Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander *and in the light of subsequent events over the last fifteen years.*

Introduction

When the late Pope Francis held Thomas Merton up to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in September 2015 as one of four great American's to be emulated, along with Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Abraham Lincoln, he concluded by saying that Merton was "a thinker who challenged the certitudes of his time," describing him as "above all a man of prayer," and "a man of dialogue, a promoter of peace between peoples and religions." This afternoon I want to explore those themes in two of Merton's key works from the 1960's, his book, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* and his essay, "Rain and the Rhinoceros" included in his book *Raids on the Unspeakable*, both published in 1966. I think, in this book and this essay, Merton sets out most clearly his understanding of the role of the monk, his own role, as a Guilty Bystander, in an age when such voices could easily be overlooked against the bellowing of herds of rhinoceroses. Just recall for a moment the times in which they were penned – the height of the cold war; the battles in the U.S. over racism, civil rights and desegregation; the escalating conflict in Vietnam; the dawn of the space race and the burgeoning of new technology.

Over sixty years have passed since Merton penned *Conjectures* and "Rain and the Rhinoceros" and yet his reflections on the role of the Guilty

Bystander are still as relevant, I want to suggest, as when he wrote them, if not more so, and such voices are still mostly going unheard, still being drowned out by grunting, bellowing, tweeting, the continued pounding of gunfire, and the whine of drones. And these two works, I believe, can suggest to us some of the tools Merton offers us, as highlighted by Pope Francis, that we can use to "Redeem the Rhinoceros" in our own time.

I'd like to begin by setting these works in the larger context of Merton's life. As a relatively neophyte convert to Catholicism Merton initially wholeheartedly embraced the monastic life he found at Gethsemani in the early nineteen forties. A very traditional version of the strict Cistercian Observance little changed from the way of life brought to Kentucky by the first monks almost a century before. In his early history of the Cistercian order in the United States Merton described a way of life that removed the monk from the world of their time into a separate realm writing that it: "takes a man above the terrors and sorrows of modern life as well as above its passing satisfactions. It elevates his life to a superhuman level to the peace of the spiritual stratosphere where the storms of human existence become a distant echo and do not disturb the center of the soul."[1] A stark contrast with his 1963 introduction to a Japanese edition of *The Seven Storey* Mountain, written at the time Merton was working on *Conjectures*, where he would say, in no uncertain terms:

> ... the monastery is not an "escape from the world." On the contrary, by being in the monastery I take my true part in all the struggles and sufferings of the world ... by my monastic life and vows I am saying NO to all the concentration camps, the aerial bombardments, the staged political trials, the judicial murders, the racial injustices, the economic tyrannies, and the whole socio-economic apparatus which seems geared for nothing but global destruction in spite of all its fair words in favor of peace.[2]

And that being "the contemporary of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Viet Nam and the Watts riots, are ... events in which, whether I like it or not, I am deeply and personally involved."[3]

The beginnings of this change can be traced back to the period of *The Sign of Jonas* as Merton was drawn into the lives of his students and all the issues they were bringing with them into the cloister; coming to appreciate, with deep mercy, the uniqueness of each individual human person with all their hopes, joys, griefs and anxieties. That change

continued from there, developing rapidly in the final years of the fifties. It is not necessary even to open his books from the sixties to encounter this change, it is evident in the titles alone. The titles of his early books – *The Sign of Jonas*, *The Ascent to Truth*, and *Thoughts in Solitude* – titles which conjure up images from the scriptures and literature, images of the monk's fervent spiritual journey, these titles have gone. In contrast the reader encounters titles such as *Emblems of a Season of Fury*, *Seeds of Destruction*, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander and Raids on the Unspeakable*. The quiet voice of monasticism had seemingly disappeared into the Gethsemani woods and the new Merton was disturbing and could grate on his readers sensibilities as Merton comes to the conclusion in *Conjectures* that instead of bystanding "you must be willing, if necessary, to become a disturbing and therefore an undesired person, one who is not wanted because he upsets the general dream."[4] Merton's awareness of events in the world prompted him to become for some, including his own Cistercian order,[5] a disturbing and undesired person as he felt "the time had come to move from the role of bystander ... to that of declared witness."[6]

Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

However, the content of *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* is also completely different from anything Merton had written previously. In his preface Merton is completely honest with his reader, warning them that *Conjectures* is not a spiritual journal like *The Sign of Jonas*. It does indeed contain some passages taken from his personal journals that have been reworked for publication along with "brief notes on nature and life" and "occasional meditations." But he characterizes the book more as a "personal version of the world in the 1960 ... a series of sketches and meditations, some poetic, and literary, others historical and even theological" fitted together informally so that they "react upon each other."[7] In some ways it can be discombobulating for the reader in its kaleidoscopic approach. In *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* the Merton scholar William Shannon introduces *Conjectures* suggesting that the material is "so diverse" that it "defies summarization" adding that the titles that Merton gives to each of his five sections of the book "are of little help" and any attempt at summarizing the content of the book will "almost certainly ... be doomed to inadequacy." However, I think that Merton was an inveterate craftsman in the way that he so carefully fashioned this book, and indeed everything he wrote, for publication.

That is why we have multiple variant drafts as he reworked and expanded his material.

Instead, putting Shannon's warning aside, I would suggest that the five sections of *Conjectures* have "greater focus" and a "more cohesive thematic integrity"[8] than appears at first. I now want to look briefly at Merton's arrangement of *Conjectures* before moving on to reflect on some of the themes that emerge as Merton forthrightly "challenges the certitudes of his time," especially in his use of "the Night Spirit and the Dawn Air," in the pivotal central section of the book, as one of a number of counterpoints he gives us as to the mentality of the rhinoceros.

Conjectures as I've already mentioned is divided into five parts each of which has a title and epigrams indicative of the essence of that chapter, and these can help guide the reader through the book and to see Merton's themes. In the first part, entitled "Barth's Dream," Merton begins by recounting a dream experienced by the theologian Karl Barth. In his dream the composer Mozart suggests Barth would be saved more by "the Mozart in himself than by his theology." Merton suggests that Barth's attraction to the music of Mozart was an attempt by him to awaken the "hidden sophianic Mozart in himself," to awaken the "'divine' child" and concludes his account by telling Barth to "trust in the divine mercy" as "Christ remains a child in you" and "your books (and mine) matter less than we might think! There is in us a Mozart who will be our salvation."[9]

In the first part of *Conjectures* Merton presents a myriad of issues to his reader: questions about the church, his relationship to the world, peace, Gandhi, race issues, space exploration, the world of media and technology. The title given to this chapter, Barth's Dream, serves to present a contrast between the issues and questions Merton raises, and the presence of an alternative, higher wisdom, and his epigrams for this chapter reflect this contrast. The first from Kabir, an Indian mystic and poet, is a few lines from a song exhorting his listener to stop their "buying and selling" and to "have done with your good and your bad" as "there are no markets and shops in the land to which you go." Stark words for a society enslaved by buying and consuming as if that were the apex of human development. The other epigram from Thomas Traherne suggests that, though an infant does not often realize it, when compared to the world and all its treasures the child is "the cream and crown of all that round about did lie,"[10] pointing the reader in the direction of the important themes in this chapter, in particular the

wisdom figure of the child as opposed to all the supposed treasures the world, in the bad sense, has to offer.

In an unpublished draft of Merton's preface to *Conjectures* he goes into more detail about his understanding of the world in both its bad and its good sense. He writes that the world in the bad sense is represented by the "more obviously deplorable phenomena of our time" which he goes on to describe as:

> Nazism, total war, Stalinism, the police state, racism, genocide, as well as the profound economic and social, cultural and spiritual dislocation resulting from the greed of the greedy, the power of the powerful and the unscrupulous selfishness of almost everybody, not excluding good Catholics and not excluding the author himself.[11]

In contrast here Merton is beginning to share some of his vision for the world in the good understanding of it, the vision that will help us in redeeming the rhinoceros. Alongside the wisdom figure of the child, a second theme found in chapter one and running throughout the book are the brief descriptive passages about nature that Merton shares, and I'll return to those later.

In the second part of *Conjectures*, "Truth and Violence: An Interesting Era," Merton paints a picture of the early part of the sixties as "an interesting era," a phrase taken from a story told by the novelist Albert Camus. In Camus's story a wise man prayed regularly to be spared "from living in an interesting era" and Camus suggests that since we are not wise "the Divinity has not spared us, and we are living in an interesting era."[12] In this chapter Merton discusses many of the issues he was developing, in particular those relating to truth and violence, suggesting that humanity has perverted its understanding of truth, so that everyone is convinced they "desire the truth above all" but what "we desire is not 'the truth' so much as 'to be in the right'"[13] and, drawing on Gandhi, he suggests violence comes from this perversion of truth, as "a truthful man cannot long remain violent."[14] For Merton this leads to a choice: "either to live by the truth or be destroyed."[15] Following the truth will then be a way of love, of mercy and of compassion, virtues alien to the world in the "bad" sense. The period in which Merton was writing this was the height of the cold war when truth was being perverted in so many areas of life. But, ultimately, Merton is not pessimistic, ending the chapter on a positive note in reminding his reader of the good news of the gospel, that:

> I can respond now in perfect freedom to the redemptive love of God for humanity in Christ, that I can now rise above the forces of necessity and evil in order to say "yes" to the mysterious action of Spirit that is transforming the world even in the midst of the violence and confusion and destruction that seem to proclaim God's absence and God's "death."[16]

Though, in the very final sentence of the chapter, he still cautions his reader not to "underestimate our era ... by calling it interesting."

Part three, "The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air"[17] is a pivotal chapter, drawing on the wisdom images of part one, suggesting the kinds of consciousness required to live in "an interesting era," and laying key foundations for the remainder of the book. His epigrams, the first from Aquinas suggests the need for balance and inclusiveness – "we must love ... those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject." The second from Auden speaks of the need to recover the child's vision to be able to learn again to love:

> When devils drive the reasonable wild
> They strip the adult century so bare,
> Love must be regrown from the sensual child.[18]

The chapter's title come from "The Ox Mountain Parable" by Mencius, in which the "night spirit" and the "dawn breath" are important "in restoring life to the forest that has been cut down." Through rest and recuperation "in the night and the dawn" the trees will return. Similarly, "with human nature. Without the night spirit, the dawn breath, silence, passivity, rest, our nature cannot be itself."[19] Mencius's approach is one that would obviously appeal to Merton and is a key tool for redeeming the rhinoceros. I will return to the pivotal effect of the night spirit and the dawn air shortly but first I just want to sketch out briefly the two final sections of *Conjectures*.

In a brief entry in the fourth section of *Conjectures* Merton points to Thoreau as someone who experienced the night spirit and the dawn air. Set against the industrial and affluent (effluent) image of America, "Thoreau's idleness (as 'inspector of snowstorms') was an incomparable gift." After offering his gift to America Thoreau, in Merton's words, "went his way, without following the advice of his neighbors" and, instead of conforming uncritically,[20] "he took the fork in the road."[21] Merton takes

that phrase, "The Fork in the Road," as his title for this chapter reflecting a movement in his own life as presented in *Conjectures*. After Merton's awakening to the importance of the night spirit and the dawn air (a gradual discovery over many years but which, in *Conjectures*, he actually names for the first time) he can approach the questions and problems he was facing earlier in the book with a new sense of freedom. The effect upon him of the night spirit and the dawn air is summed up in one of his epigrams for this chapter where Lieh Tzu says "life comes without warning."[22]

The final chapter of *Conjectures*, "The Madman Runs to the East," takes its title from one of Merton's epigrams for the chapter, a Zen Proverb:

> The madman runs to the East
> and his keeper runs to the East:
> Both are running to the East,
> Their purposes differ.[23]

For Merton, returning to the world from the new perspective the monastery has given him is like the difference between the madman and his keeper. Both are going in the same direction, but their reasons for doing so are vastly different. His final section of *Conjectures* focuses much more on the immediate, placing an emphasis on the beauty of life that is present at all times, the beauty he originally pointed to in Mozart at the beginning of the book; the beauty continually renewed by the night spirit and the dawn air, signifying God's presence in the world. Worldliness, Merton can now say, is acceptable providing it is of the "right kind," of worldliness, the worldliness "which sees the world redeemed in Christ."[24]

The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air

I want now to look in more detail at the "Night Spirit and the Dawn Air," before moving on to some insights from "Rain and the Rhinoceros" and drawing this presentation to a close. Merton's own discovery of the "Night Spirit and the Dawn Air" was central to his vocation in the final decade of his life and I think it is an important key to "Redeeming the Rhinoceros."

Merton's arrangement of "The Ox Mountain Parable,"[25] his source for the phrase "the night spirit and the dawn air," was published in 1960.[26] However, Merton had first discovered Mencius as early as 1950 when, at his request,[27] his friend and publisher, James Laughlin, sent him books on Chinese philosophy including Ezra Pound's translations of Mencius.[28] At this point Merton makes no reference to Mencius with his first references to "The Ox Mountain Parable" only occurring ten years later in 1960 when, in a journal entry for July 10th, he writes:

> Mencius – "The Ox Mountain parable." Importance of "night-spirit" and "dawn-breath" in the restoration of the trees to life. Men cut them down, beasts browse on the new shoots, no night spirit and no dawn breath – no rest; no renewal – and then one is convinced at last that the mountain *never had* any trees on it.[29]

Section three of *Conjectures* begins with a description of the valley awakening in the early morning -- an apposite beginning to the section titled "The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air." In his description of dawn and the gradual awakening of nature, Merton highlights a different kind of wisdom, describing the early morning as "the most wonderful moment of the day ... when creation in its innocence asks permission to 'be' once again, as it did on the first morning that ever was" and at that moment of dawn "all wisdom seeks to collect and manifest itself at that blind sweet point."[30]

In "The Ox Mountain Parable" Merton found an expression of his experience of the effect nature had upon him, especially the effect of the woods and of nature in the very early hours of the morning a time when he, as a Cistercian monk, was awake as nature itself began to awaken. So, in the early morning, Merton discovers "an unspeakable secret: paradise is all around us and we do not understand," the "dawn deacon" cries out "wisdom" but "we don't attend."[31] Or again:

> The first chirps of the waking birds – "*le point vierge* [the virgin point]" of the dawn, a moment of awe and inexpressible innocence, when the Father in silence opens their eyes and they speak to Him, wondering if it is time to "be"? And he tells them "Yes" ... with my hair almost on end[32] and the eyes of the soul wide open I am present, without knowing it at all, in this unspeakable Paradise.[33]

In a letter to Abdul Aziz Merton spoke of "the hour of dawn when the world is silent and the new light is most pure," as "symbolizing the dawning of divine light in the stillness of our hearts"[34] – a rekindling of Eckhart's spark of God in the soul, a precious spark that we have to protect and nurture. Merton is pointing us to some of the powerful, hidden realities that surround us and are capable of rebuilding and sustaining our humanity.

In his introduction to the "Ox Mountain Parable" Merton draws a parallel between the violence, war and chaos of Mencius's age and the sixties, writing:

> One of his [Mencius's] central intuitions was that human nature was basically good, but that this basic goodness was destroyed by evil acts, and had tactfully to be brought out by right education, education in "humaneness". The great man, said Mencius, is the man who has not lost the heart of a child. This statement was not meant to be sentimental. It implied the serious duty to preserve the spontaneous and deep natural instinct to love, that instinct which is protected by the mysterious action of life itself and of providence, but which is destroyed by the wilfulness, the passionate arbitrariness of man's greed ... This is a parable of mercy. Note especially the emphasis of Meng Tzu on the ... "night spirit", the merciful, pervasive and mysterious influence of unconscious nature which, according to him, as long as it is not tampered with, heals and revives man's good tendencies, his "right mind".[35]

It is interesting to note here Merton's stress on both the need to keep "the heart of a child,"[36] and his understanding of the parable as a "parable of mercy." Arthur Waley in his introduction to the parable wrote that all of Mencius's teaching centered around the word Goodness[37] which had varying meanings in the different schools within Confucianism. But, for Mencius, in a paragraph underlined by Merton in his copy of Waley's book:

> Goodness meant compassion; it meant not being able to bear that others should suffer. It meant a feeling of responsibility for the sufferings of others.[38]

In this chapter, as well as the healing power of nature, its sacramental goodness, Merton's vision is expanded to include human nature too. As the birds hear the call to awaken at dawn, so too Merton awakens with

his epiphany on the corner of Fourth and Walnut, encountering the divine in everyone he sees around him. So we see this joint strand in both Merton and Mencius: the inherent goodness of both nature and of human nature.

This pivotal chapter of *Conjectures* concludes with Merton taking his turn on the nightly fire watch at the monastery. As he passes through the novices' scriptorium, he felt that "their love and their goodness had transformed the room" and that Christ was "as truly present here ... as upstairs in the Chapel." This experience allows Merton, as he writes, to "recover hope for the other dimension of human life: the political" writing "even though we have the power to destroy the whole world, life is stronger than the death instinct and love is stronger than hate.[39]

Rain and the Rhinoceros

Many of the same themes are present in Merton's essay "Rain and the Rhinoceros." Instead of the "night spirit and the dawn air" representing the goodness of nature, this essay begins with Merton in his hermitage enjoying the gratuitousness of a torrential downpour of rain, a rain that renews both nature and humanity if it is given the opportunity. In the isolation of the hermitage Merton is reading Philoxenos, a sixth century hermit. His isolation is disrupted by "the world" as at 3.30 a.m. the Strategic Air Command plane flies over: "red light winking low under the clouds, skimming the wooden summits to the south side of the valley, loaded with strong medicine. Very strong. Strong enough to burn up all these woods and stretch out hours of fun into eternities."[40]

Merton found in Philoxenos a fellow social critic who questioned the "collectivity" of his time and fled to the desert in his search for truth. In the modern world, Merton writes, similar insights to those of Philoxenos are not found in the writings of theologians or church hierarchies but in the meditations of the existentialists and the Theater of the Absurd, in particular Eugene Ionesco, the French Romanian playwright, and his play *Rhinoceros*. In that play, as all of the friends and fellow citizens of the lead character, Berenger, gradually become rhinoceroses, he is faced with the crisis that he no longer resembles anyone and "solitude and dissent become more and more impossible, more and more absurd."[41] By the end of the play everyone on the stage is wearing a rhinoceros mask, except for Berenger. It is a play about the dangers of totalitarianism. Both *Conjectures and Raids on the Unspeakable* contain Merton's reflections on totalitarianism, especially as he saw it portrayed through the trial of

Adolf Eichmann, and Hannah Arendt's reporting of that trial. "Rain and the Rhinoceros" is not just a warning about totalitarianism but about all forms of collective thinking, especially those that derive their power from channeling contempt at people it defines as other, as the outsider. As Merton writes: "Collectivity needs not only to absorb everyone it can, but also implicitly hate and destroy whoever cannot be absorbed. Paradoxically, one of the needs of collectivity is to reject certain classes, or races, or groups, in order to strengthen its own self-awareness by hating them instead of absorbing them."[42]

In "Rain and the Rhinoceros," Merton paints a picture of his life, like the hermit Philoxenos, as a life lived in protest to the herd mentality of his day – whether the monastic or ecclesial herd, the political or military herd, the commercial herd, or the technological herd. Both Ionesco and Merton agree, that the sickness that lies in wait "for those who *have lost the sense and the taste for solitude*," is rhinoceritis; the sickness of those who rush around like belligerent beasts mindlessly, recklessly, following the herd, like rhinoceroses, prisoners of necessity who accept without question the certitudes of their times and are no longer open to the gifts of the natural world and of human nature. Against such a background Merton stands as a witness who "when speech is in danger of perishing or being perverted in the amplified noise of beasts" is obliged to try and speak out.[43]

Once again, Merton concludes this essay pointing to the useless gratuitousness of nature, to the valley awakening after the rainstorm – the smell of the pine needles, the talk of the creeks, the sweet whistling of quails. But "the world" is never far away as in his final sentence he records: "Yet even here the earth shakes. Over at Fort Knox the Rhinoceros is having fun."[44] But, as Merton had written in his personal journal:

> this is no mere 'distraction,' and that I am here because they are there so that, indeed, I am supposed to hear them. They form part of an ever renewed 'decision' and commitment for peace.[45]

The writer Scott Russell Sanders, in an excellent talk, testifies to the power of Merton's written word, specifically his essay "Rain and the Rhinoceros," which gave him the courage to face life and death issues in his own life. Sanders was a young committed Christian man from a strong military background, having grown up on U.S. army bases, with other

male family members all serving in the military. Troubled as a young student by the shadow of the Vietnam draft he went to see his college chaplain who simply gave him a copy of "Rain and the Rhinoceros" to read, his first introduction to Merton. The impact on Sanders of Merton's essay was profound, leading him to change his course of study from physics, to the arts, and applying for conscientious objector status, willing to go to prison or into exile if his application was rejected. Merton's essay helped Sanders distinguish the quiet voice within from the outer bellowing of the herd.[46]

Conclusion

So, to conclude. The ages in which both Mencius and Philoxenos lived, as Merton points out, were times of violence, war and chaos which he parallels to the time in which he was writing at the beginning of the sixties and that message is as relevant to our present age of violence, war and chaos, technological upheaval, ecological vulnerability, dehumanization and cultural erosion, as it was for the times in which Merton, Mencius and Philoxenos lived.

In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* and other writings from the final decade of his life, Merton tells us that it is possible to stop ourselves calcifying, putting on armor, growing a horn and starting to grunt. It is possible to avoid the symptoms of rhinoceritis. Hopefully this afternoon I've highlighted some of the tools Merton suggests we can use to prevent this from happening:

- by our openness to the experience of the night spirit and the dawn air, to the gratuitousness of nature and by preserving some silence and solitude in our lives
- by our willingness to question the certitude of our time and dissent from the general myth dream
- by our respect and love for human nature, our compassion and responsibility for the sufferings of others,[47] and through sharing the mercy we were freely offered, our Christian hope, with a world so desperately in need of that message

"Human beings," Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*, "while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is

good, and making a new start." Merton also strikes a similar note of hope at the end of his introduction to *Raids on the Unspeakable*, writing that our Christian hope will stand in the void where every other hope stands frozen stiff before the face of the unspeakable and encouraging us to remain human in this most inhuman of ages, guarding the human image for, as Merton reminds us, it is the image of God.

Notes

1. Thomas Merton, *The Waters of Siloe* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. xxxviii.
2. Thomas Merton, *Reflections on My Work*, ed. by Robert E Daggy (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1989), p. 74.
3. Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), p. 145.
4. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 83.
5. For a period in the early sixties Merton was prevented by his order from publishing on issues of war and the arms race.
6. Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (London: Sheldon Press, 1986), p. 368.
7. Merton's "conjectures" are "tentative observations" not "universal truths." Merton "reads the signs of the times" and "offers his tentative conclusions." Bonnie Thurston, "Conjectures and Contributions of Guilty Bystanders." *Margaret Beaufort Association Newsletter* (Winter 2022), p. 2.
8. Although I am here quoting Ross Labrie's article, "Thematic Integrity in Thomas Merton's *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*" (*Cithara* 48.2 (May 2009), pp. 14-27) this was a thesis I first address in chapter 5 of my doctoral dissertation over ten years earlier: "The Geography of a Soul: Thomas Merton's Ongoing Spiritual Autobiographical Quest within the Context of the Literary Genre of Autobiography." doctoral (Heythrop College, University of London, London, England, 1996).
9. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 3-4.
10. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 1.
11. Unpublished "Preface" for *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. Archives of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University.
12. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 51.
13. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 65.
14. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 71.
15. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 79. "The Greeks believed that when a man had too much power for his own good the gods ruined him by helping him increase his power at the expense of wisdom, prudence, temperance, and humanity until it led automatically to his own destruction," p. 60.

16. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 113.
17. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 115.
18. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bys*tander, p. 115.
19. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 122-3.
20. But taking that fork becomes harder with increasing bureaucracy and technology creating more and more social conformity.
21. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 227.
22. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 195.
23. Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, p. 251.
24. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 289.
25. Based on the translation of I.A. Richards from his book *Mencius on the Mind*. Merton was also familiar with the arrangements of the parable by Arthur Waley - *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (New York: Doubleday, 1956) - and Albert Felix Verwilghen's, *Mencius: The Man and His Ideas* (New York: St. John's University Press, 1967).
26. It first appeared as Broadside 2 on Victor Hammer's Stamperia del Santuccio press in Lexington, Kentucky, in a limited edition of one hundred copies in 1960. Subsequently in *Commonweal* 74 (12 May 1961), p. 174; in Merton's book *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1967), pp. 65-68; and in *The Collected Poems of Thomas M*erton, pp. 970-971, though Merton's introduction was not included in the latter.
27. Thomas Merton to James Laughlin, June 1st, 1950.
28. Ezra Pound was another of James Laughlin's authors.
29. Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years*, ed. Victor A. Kramer (San Francisco, Harper San Francisco, 1996), p. 19.
30. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 117
31. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 117-18.
32. This is a wonderful description of the intensity this balding, tonsured monk was experiencing here.
33. *Turning Toward the World*, p. 7.
34. *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985), p. 46.
35. *The Ox Mountain Parable* [With notes and text arrangement (after the translation of I. A. Richards) by Thomas Merton] (Lexington, KY.: Stamperia del Santuccio, 1960).
36. *The Ox Mountain Parable*.
37. The word used in Confucianism for this concept is *jên*.
38. Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 83.
39. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 194. In comparison he cautions against looking for "signs of hope in the newspaper or the pronouncements of world leaders (in these there is seldom anything really hopeful, and that which is supposed to be most encouraging is usually so transparently hopeless that it moves one closer to despair.)"
40. Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New York: New Directions, 1966), p. 14.
41. *Raids on the Unspeakable*, p. 20.
42. *Raids on the Unspeakable*, p. 22.
43. Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1964), p. 170-1.
44. *Raids on the Unspeakable*, p. 23.
45. Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life: Seeking Peace in the Hermitage*, ed. by Robert E. Daggy (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 182.
46. His presentation is available at: https://merton.bellarmine.edu/s/Merton/item/38905 [Accessed October 21, 2024]
47. "Love, love only, love of our deluded fellow man as he actually is, in his delusion and in his sin: this alone can open the door to truth." *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. 57.

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