

## Thomas Merton Selected Essays

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thomas merton the trappist monk who died in 1968 was one of the great spiritual writers of the twentieth century his published works include a hundred volumes in many genres but it was perhaps in the essay that he found his natural element especially in the last decade of his life merton showed in his essays an increasing willingness to dispense with pre fabricated conclusions bringing his deeply spiritual profoundly catholic sensibility to bear on matters beyond the usual religious and monastic milieu this volume is the first to provide a broad cross section of merton s work as an essayist collecting pieces that reflect characteristic examples of his astonishing output and the fantastic breadth of his interests the 33 essays collected here range from interreligious dialogue to racial justice from the wisdom of the desert fathers to the novels of faulkner and camus from the nuclear threat to the philosophy of solitude and throughout the centrality of the christian mystery to authentic human identity

this volume gathers together twelve essays that thomas merton wrote for various journals between 1947 and 1952 the years that saw the publication of his best selling autobiography the seven storey mountain his ordination to the priesthood and his initial appointment as spiritual and intellectual guide of the young monks at the abbey of gethsemani the essays most of which have never been reprinted focus above all on aspects of the contemplative life but also consider the spiritual dimensions of literature and the social implications of christian life issued to coincide with the one hundredth anniversary of his birth this collection brings to fruition at long last merton s own original plan of publishing these essays as a group and so makes available a previously little recognized and underutilized resource for understanding and appreciating a crucial transitional phase in his life as both monk and writer

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