

**“Lamb Admits Ties to Cain” –
The Human, the Less-Than-Human, and the
Kin(g)dom in Thomas Merton’s
*The Geography of Lograire***

**1. Introduction:
Conjectures of a Guilty (Post)Humanist**

*Be human in this most inhuman of ages; guard the image of man for it is
the image of God¹*

– this is how Thomas Merton addresses his book, *Raids on the Unspeakable*, before releasing it into the world. Admitting that he loves *Raids* “more than the rest [of his books]” (*Raids*, 2), Merton explains that this is so because of the book’s resistance to the Unspeakable – a kind of eschatological emptiness that has penetrated deep into twentieth-century reality (hence the “inhumanity” of that age). Still, quoting Nicolai Berdyaev, the Russian Orthodox philosopher who affirmed universal salvation, Merton remains positive that underneath all the corruption that can be seen around, the world remains essentially good and love-worthy (*Raids*, 5). It is this certainty that is to inspire Christians to persist in actualizing the indelible image of their Creator – that spark of pure light, that *point vierge*, as Merton called it elsewhere,² untouched by evil because it belongs solely to God.

1 Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable*, New York: New Directions, 1966, 6. Subsequently referenced as *Raids* in the text

2 Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Image Books, 1968), 131, 151, 158.

What Merton scholars often overlook when discussing his famous plea to “be human” is that Merton borrows it *verbatim* from Berdyaev. The fact that he quotes from the philosopher of universal salvation allows us to extend the concept of God’s image (which is the focus of this essay collection) beyond its human frame of reference towards those “othered” by the exclusivist humanist discourse: women, people of colour and – why not? – all the “earth beings”³, for all of them harbour the same virginal point of pure light, the Creator’s imprint, which is free from corruption.

At this point I need to acknowledge the theoretical framework which will facilitate my extension of the notion of God’s image to the “less than human.” Both posthumanism and decolonial thought have demonstrated that the normative concept of the “hu/man” is at the very root of intersectional systemic oppressions. In this article I want to suggest that Merton was a decolonial (and de/constructive) thinker *avant la lettre*, and that in his mature *oeuvre*, the epic poem *The Geography of Lograire*, there are traces of decolonial reformulations of the “human”, which, as pointed out by numerous critics of color, are inseparable from re-articulations of the “animal”⁴. Indeed, the very notion of the Unspeakable is inseparable from the strategy of animalization. By denying intrinsic worth to many beings, it falsifies the fulness and richness of God’s image. In the final part of this article I will try to locate in Merton’s *Lograire* seeds of an inclusive Kin(g)dom of peace and justice that would accommodate all of God’s Creation.

3 I borrow this phrase from Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean World* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2015).

4 See especially: Aph Ko and Syl Ko, *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters* (New York, Lantern Books, 2017).

2. The Geography of Lograire

First, however, *The Geography of Lograire* needs to be briefly introduced. This epic poem, published in 1969, is Merton's poetic testament and ultimate autobiography. Unlike the early, prose autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), which was the product of a young mind seeking stability and security in the midst of a confusing world, *Lograire* was written by a person no longer afraid of life's ambiguities, a mature monk open to the paradoxes and contradictions of a life that is always changing, always resisting closure. While *The Seven Storey Mountain* is written in lucid prose, clearly argued and highly readable, *Lograire* is manifestly different: it is open-ended, processual, unfinished, at times hermetic. Equally importantly, being poetry and thus relatively free from monastic censorship, it provides access to Merton's most intimate thoughts and ideological struggles. The monk often claimed that poetry was among his most authentic writings, along with letters and journals.

Merton's friend and publisher, James Laughlin, believed that *Lograire* "will eventually be recognized as one of the modern personal epics along with the *Cantos* [by Ezra Pound] and *Patterson* [by William Carlos Williams]." Laughlin elucidated:

[Merton] expected to be working on it for the rest of his life and it might be a thousand pages long. The title *Lograire* is a code name that he made up. It comes of course from Villon, the French poet's family name, Des Loges. It also comes out of Arthurian romance, where it might have been a mythical country in the Arthur legend. The geography is simply his mind. What he is going to tell us in this poem is everything that went on in the geography of his mind, everything that he had read, everything that he remembered, but all distilled into these marvelous, compact, almost symbolic poems.⁵

5 James Laughlin, quoted in: Paul Wilkes, "An Interview with James Laughlin", in *The Merton Annual: Studies in Culture, Spirituality, and Social Concerns*, 2013, vol. 25, 40.

The Geography of Lograire consists of four books – four cantos – which are named after the four cardinal points of the compass: South, North, East, West. All of them bear inscriptions of the poem's controlling consciousness, whose identity is that of a privileged, educated, able-bodied, white, Anglo-Saxon male who, nonetheless, embraces his family's Welsh roots and, by the same token, renounces his epistemic/ontological privilege to side with the excluded, the oppressed, and the colonized. In postcolonial discourse, the poem's speaker would be called a hybrid⁶, which appellation best demonstrates Merton's uneasiness with oppositional thinking. In *Lograire*, the poet attempts to move beyond the binaries that characterize Western culture, toward a position that would transcend and accommodate oppositions. Such a "third space", a space in-between, would simultaneously liberate a person occupying it from antagonistic polarities and inscribe him/her in a larger frame of our "confounding togetherness" a "democracy of fellow creatures"⁷ which knows no innocent bystanders.⁸

6 A theory of cultural hybridity can be found in: Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994)

7 I borrow this phrase from Catherine Keller, "A Democracy of Fellow Creatures: Feminist Theology and Planetary Entanglement", *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology*, 2015, vol. 69, no.1, 3-18.

8 See Bonny Thurston's essay in this collection.

3. The Human, the Less-Than-Human, and the Image of God

In the Abrahamic religions, the idea of man as the image of God has its origin in Genesis 1:27. The King James Version, the most influential English translation of Scripture, says:

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*⁹

Although in more modern translations the word “man” is replaced by the more inclusive term “human”, the ambivalence about representation remains: how are we to imagine God if humanity is so diverse that it cannot be reduced to a single representative hu/man being?

Traditional theology has often identified God with white privileged males (God as an omnipotent, white Father). The depiction of God as male, rather than androgynous or transcending of gender binaries¹⁰, started to be questioned in the late 1960s.¹¹ In the binary thinking characteristic of Western cultures, one element – that associated with masculinity – is always privileged at the cost of the other – that associated with femininity.¹² Thus the practice of using “man” as supposedly gender-neutral, in fact invisibilizes the other half of humankind (women) and renders this invisibilized part of God “less normative” for humanity at large. This supposedly universalist term, *de facto* synonymous with white, privileged, able-bodied, Christian, heterosexual males, is also responsible

for the exclusion of all the remaining “less normative” parts of humanity from the realm of the “human” – racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, the disabled, LGBTQ people, etc. In other words, all who deviate from that elitist (hu/man) norm have been marked as “less than” and denied full humanity, along with the fulness of human rights. Sadly, Christians have often enacted this hierarchical understanding of their normative privilege by marginalizing the Other, to the point of allying them with Satan,¹³ and thereby refusing to see the image of God in them.

Merton, who in his pre-Gethsemani days was a modern hu/man *par excellence*¹⁴, never fell into the trap of dehumanizing the Other. If anything, he was closer to idealizing him/her. While a student at Columbia University, Merton became so fascinated with the work of Baroness de Hueck Doherty in New York’s Harlem that he considered becoming part of her apostolate. Ultimately, he spent two or three weeks in Harlem’s Friendship House, before deciding that monastic discipline would be better for him.¹⁵ Nonetheless, in *The Seven Storey Mountain* Merton demonstrates a profound attunement to the eschatological dimension of Harlem’s black ghetto:

What has not been devoured, in your dark furnace, Harlem, by marijuana, by gin, by insanity, hysteria, syphilis? (Mountain, 345)

In the middle of the twentieth century, Harlem was synonymous with poverty, crime, and despair, resulting from the dire economic segregation of America’s black population.

9 <https://www.bibleref.com/Genesis/1/Genesis-1-27.html>

10 This is suggested by the phrase “male and female created he them [in His own image]”, as well as by the plural noun “Elohim” which is used in the P and E Biblical narratives.

11 Merton read Mary Daly’s book, *The Church and the Second Sex*, and held a lively correspondence with radical feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruther.

12 Some examples are: culture (M) - nature (F); reason (M) - emotions (F); civilized (M) - savage (F); white (M) - colored (F); human (M) - animal (F).

13 This was especially evident in the colonial perception of Africans and other indigenous peoples as “savages” and idolaters in need of Christian salvation.

14 Merton received an elitist education, travelled widely in Europe, and was financially independent.

15 Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1948), 349. Subsequently referenced as *Mountain* in the text.

Once in Gethsemani, Merton remained attuned to the voices of African American prophets of change – such as Martin Luther King (assassinated in 1968) or Malcolm X (assassinated in 1964) – but by the end of his life he was losing hope in the capacity of mainstream Christianity to incorporate and respond to the spiritual and liberatory longings of blacks. In *The Geography of Lograire*, we find a telling scene set in Harlem. The scene testifies to Merton's growing recognition that even the promise of spiritual salvation has been hijacked by the white man (whom blacks simply called "the Man" and equated with the oppressor):

*So Christ went down to stay with them Niggers and took his place with them at the table. He said to them, "It is very simple much simpler than you imagine." They replied, "You have become a white man and it is not so simple at all."*¹⁶

The "Niggers"¹⁷ of the scene clearly feel excluded from the good news preached by Christian churches and alienated from a God who "has become a white man." But is God a white man? Or, to put it differently, does God behave like a white gentleman? The latter denotation would resonate even now, in the cultural milieu of the American South (where Merton wrote his poem)¹⁸ amongst those sympathetic to the Ku Klux Klan. In other words, the white gentleman is a colonialist, elitist construct that fully encapsulates the idea of normative humanity.

16 Thomas Merton, *The Geography of Lograire* (New York, New Directions, 1969), 60. Subsequently referenced as *Lograire* in the text.

17 This word is considered offensive when used by outsiders. However, Merton knew that Harlemites would use it among themselves.

18 The Trappist monastery of Our Lady of Gethsemani is situated in the Southern state of Kentucky, which was tragically torn between Confederate and Union supporters during the Civil War. An estimated 35,000 Kentuckians served as Confederate soldiers; an estimated 125,000 Kentuckians served as Union soldiers (A.C. Quisenberry, "Kentucky Union Troops In the Civil War," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, vol. 18, no. 54, 1920, pp. 13–18. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23369562).

4. The Image of God in Merton's *Lograire*

The Prologue to *The Geography of Lograire* introduces a captain figure, who embodies the above-mentioned elitist notion of (white) humanity. Involved in shipping slaves from Africa and oppressing anybody who represents difference, the captain is a composite figure of white heteropatriarchy. Together with his dark counterpart (called Famous John), he plots the manifold "design[s] of ire" referenced in *Lograire's* Prologue. On the receiving end of his violence are: people of colour, indigenous inhabitants of colonized lands, slaves, indigenous priests of native rites, religious "heretics" within Christianity, as well as average citizens of modernity, regardless of their skin colour, who are being manipulated by consumer culture (embodied by Famous John) to accept the fake and insignificant choices the leader/captain allows them to make.

In another essay¹⁹ I argue that *The Geography of Lograire* is a critique of patriarchy, an in-depth deconstruction of the reign of "the Rulers of Lograire" (*Lograire*, 44). In his experimental epic poem Merton embraces a radical version of the preferential option for the "less than": the raced, the persecuted, the criminals, the heretics, and other people on the wrong side of modern binaries. In Merton's inclusive embrace of the human, even Cain-the-killer bears the image of God, as evidenced by the designation "Lamb's friend, Paschal Cain" (*Lograire*, 11). Not only has crime failed to erase the divine image, but the opposite has happened: Cain is identified with Paschal Lamb, Christ himself, God's only Son.

The first part of *Lograire's* "South" canto, which re-enacts the Cain and Abel motif within the racial context of the American South, proclaims: "Lamb admits ties to Cain" (*Lograire*, 9). Instead of condemning and rejecting Cain-the-evildoer, as the "just humans" (those who have legal

19 "Dismantling the Rule of the Father: Towards the Kingdom of the Im/Possible in *The Geography of Lograire*", *The Merton Annual*, vol. 31, forthcoming.

and executive powers) have done, the meek God, who comes under the guise of the lamb to seek what has been lost, feels responsible for this ailing member of his Mystical Body (and so admits ties to him). Against all those who pursue Cain in order to lynch the reprobate, Lamb alone shows mercy and forgiveness – even though, or perhaps *because*, Paschal Cain is believed to be degenerate, sub-human, much inferior to his self-righteous pursuers. It is at this point that Merton demonstrates that mercy and forgiveness, and not human retaliation logic, constitute the normative ethic of the heavenly Kingdom; and that the vulnerable Christ-Lamb, not the powerful Ruler figure (captain Famous John), is the exemplar, the normative Image of God.

As raced minorities have learned from their traumatic experiences, animalization is a strategy of dehumanization. The animalized Other, branded as inferior or barbarous for lacking typical “human” qualities, can be mistreated and oppressed at will, because he/she is, after all, “only an animal”. Such logic has rendered “Jewish pigs”, “black apes”, or “Mexican cockroaches” disposable: they could be killed, raped, and tortured at will. As argued by a number of scholars from raced minorities, addressing racism requires addressing the situation of animals. Dismantling oppressions is an all-out effort. There is no single-issue campaign.

5. The Kin(g)dom to Come: Of Lambs and Men

A lamb evokes associations with cuddliness and meekness, but also helplessness, silence (sheep are “dumb before their shearers”, Isaiah 53:7), lack of agency, irrationality, and killability (“like lambs brought to the slaughter”, Isaiah 53:7). Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben calls such life *zoe*, or bare life. In contrast to *bios*, or qualified life, *zoe* is reduced to its purely utilitarian value and exists in a permanent state of exception. Whether in a death camp or a colony (or the multiple “animal death camps” which are animal industrial farms, slaughterhouses, or scientific

laboratories), the rule of law has been suspended, emergency becomes the rule, and a distinction between peace and war becomes impossible.

As recently noted by scholars of religion Ron Preece and David Fraser, the Bible does not present a consistent animal ethics.²⁰ The authors of “The Status of Animals in Biblical and Christian Thought” note that, apart from the often misunderstood and abused command to “subdue” the earth, with all the animals living on it, the Scriptures also suggest a much more intimate human-animal relationship “bordering on kinship”. In the second account of creation (the J narrative), we learn that humans and animals, made from the dust of the earth (*adamah*), “possess no distinct ontological status, both simply referred to as living beings”.²¹ Bearing this kind of ontology in mind, the depiction of Christ as lamb seems to acknowledge the universal kinship of all creation. Brought to the slaughter like sheep, Christ the Lamb is one with *zoe*: the despised and condemned of the earth. As the incarnate Word of God, He talks to us of nonviolence, compassion and liberation for all, not merely for a select few. Why should we not take seriously this Word of Universal Compassion, this Christ who, as the perfect image of the Father, is God, man, and animal (lamb), all at once?²² With this brief appeal

20 Ron Preece and David Fraser, “The Status of Animals in Biblical and Christian Thought. A Study in Colliding Values”, *Society and Animals*, 2000, vol. 8, no. 3, 245–263. Accessed at: <https://www.animalsandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/preece.pdf>. The most famous author, however, who almost single-handedly established the discipline of Animal Theology, is British Anglican priest Andrew Linzey.

21 Preece and Fraser, quoting Andrew Linzey’s *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, 1991.

22 Although John Dear, in his book *Christianity and Vegetarianism: Pursuing the Nonviolence of Jesus* (PETA) has established a connection between radical Christianity and the command to abstain from killing and abusing animals, it is with utmost difficulty that Christians are beginning to register their responsibility for helping and abetting the oppression of nonhuman animals. By continuing to enjoy the privileges of carnophallogocentrism (Derrida’s term), numerous Christians remain guilty oppressors, not merely guilty bystanders.

to the anti-speciesist, non-anthropocentric potential within Christianity, I want to contextualize Merton's words about Lamb admitting ties to Cain. I like to think Merton was tapping into this very potential. I want to argue that the statement "Lamb admits ties to Cain" enacts an epistemic decolonization of the nonhuman, or the not-quite-human, beyond the mirror game of oppositional politics.

In Merton's *Lograire*, the lamb not only has agency (which already renders him more than *zoe*), but acts in epistemologically disobedient ways.²³ Building solidarity with the victim of Western hegemonic discourses (the emblematic Cain), he breaks down labels and forces us to re-think our culturally-inherited beliefs. In the language of decolonial critique, Lamb de-links from the worldview constructed and naturalized by the patriarchal Rulers of Lograire. That culturally dominant worldview protects their *status quo* and reflects their understanding of God as an image of their own violent, vengefulness, discriminatory practices, and despotism. De-linking from this image of God-the-white-heteropatriarch, Lamb re-links to an alternative cosmology/wisdom, repressed by and subversive of patriarchal constructions. Foregrounding solidarity, mercy, and compassion, it reflects a much older, feminine face of God who rejoices in Her creation, cares about the least of Her (human and nonhuman) children, and dismantles hierarchies. It is the same Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia, that saved Merton from the narrow dogmatism that *The Seven Storey Mountain* sometimes evinces, and led him away from the safety of monastic enclosure towards the confounding crossroads and city gates where she lives (Proverbs 8:2–3). There, at the crossroads, fixed categories of thought crumble. Life reveals itself as "confounding togetherness".

23 Walter Mignolo rightly notes that civil disobedience alone will not transform reality, as it remains locked in the binary logic of modernity/coloniality. What is needed is epistemic disobedience, which changes the very terms of the conversation.

In Merton's poem, the nonhuman animal – the embodiment of the despised, the "less than" – will ultimately save the criminal Rulers of Lograire, including Cain, the failed ruler. Because they have all been created in God's image. Constructive theologian Catherine Keller writes:

*The kingdom of God is a deconstruction of the kingdoms of this world, it is a kin-dom of the least, the poor, the prisoners, the immigrants, the LGBTQ folk.*²⁴

(I am adding nonhuman animals to this list). What God, what hu/man, what Image survives the decolonial/(de)constructive critique? What would a Kingdom based on the kinship of all beings look like? Is such a reality materializing in *Lograire*? These questions cannot be answered except by recourse to imagination and theopoetics.

6. Theopoetics of Lograire

Protestant theologian Amos Niven Wilder argued in 1976 that "the Christian imagination must go halfway to meet the new dreams, mystiques, and mythologies that are gestating" in each and every epoch.²⁵ Dissatisfied with one-sided reliance on rational discourse, Wilder proclaimed, in the foreword to a collection of his poetry:

Old worlds do not reach across the new gulfs, and it is only in vision and Oracle that we can chart the unknown and new-name the creatures.

24 Catherine Keller, "The Cloud of the Impossible: Theology as Apophatic Panentheism", 16. Retrieved from: <https://devrijzinnigelezing.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/lezing-catherine-keller-dvl.pdf>

25 Amos Wilder, *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 1.

*Before the message, there must be the vision, before the sermon the hymn, before the prose the poem.*²⁶

Even though Merton could not have read these words, he was an avid reader of another visionary, the English poet, William Blake.²⁷ Like Blake, Merton believed in the power of the Imagination and sympathized with Blake's desire to bring Jerusalem into being by a transformed vision. The author of "Auguries of Innocence" urged his readers "to see the world in a grain of sand / And a Heaven in a wild flower".²⁸

References to Blake and his unshakeable belief in the transformative power of vision resurface in Merton's *Geography of Lograire* at the most unexpected, seemingly most hopeless moments of history. Thus, as the colonized Maya Indians conclude that "[t]he world is once again / Controlled by the devils" (*Lograire*, 38), we are asked to defer judgment. In fact, this depressive conclusion can be matched with a quote from William Blake which is to be found in the "North" canto: "There is a grain of sand in Lambeth that Satan cannot find" (*Lograire*, 61). Lambeth was a place of no importance when Blake and his wife moved there in 1790. For the English poet and visionary, however, it was still "the place of the Lamb"²⁹, a site for a New Jerusalem to be built. Additionally, by suggesting cross-species kinship, the name Lambeth, the place of the Lamb, resonates with a promise of justice that extends beyond the human to

26 Amos Wilder, Foreword to *Grace Confounding: Poems by Amos Niven Wilder* (Oregon, Wipf and Stock, 2014 [1972]), ix.

27 I am using some of these arguments in the forthcoming article "Dismantling the Rule of the Father: Towards the Kingdom of the Im/Possible", subchapter title "Future Im/Possible" (*The Merton Annual*, vol. 31).

28 The poem is available online at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auguries_of_Innocence.

29 In 1790s Lambeth was a village surrounded by marshes. "William Blake: Exhibition themes: The Furnace of Lambeth's Vale", What's On. Tate Britain. Exhibitions. <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/william-blake-2000-2001/william-blake-exhibition-themes/william-0>

non-human animals. It is a place where lambs will "stay forever well in skins" (*Lograire*, 11), valued for what they are rather than for their worth to "Man the Master";³⁰ equal to, rather than less than; friends even with Cain and the Rulers of Lograire (who will no longer be rulers). In God's Kin(g)dom every being will be a node in a dense web of relations. Deconstructive theologian John D. Caputo asks:

*What would a political order look like, were the Kingdom able to be reinvented and transformed into a political structure? What would it be like if there really were a politics of the bodies of flesh that proliferate in the New Testament, a politics of mercy and compassion, of lifting up the weakest and most defenseless people at home, a politics of welcoming the stranger and of loving one's enemies abroad? What would it be like where there a politics of and for the children, who are the future; a politics not of sovereignty, of top-down power, but a politics that builds from the bottom up, where ta me onta ... enjoy pride of place and a special privilege?*³¹

My guess is, and Merton's poem does not exclude this possibility, that such a Kingdom would have to resemble Catherine Keller's panentheistic kin-dom of "apophatic entanglements". What is revealed to a lover of wisdom, to one who stands at the crossroads to rejoice in the goodness of God's creation, is that the God of Love, a relational God, always comes to us under the guise of a stranger, especially the most unlikely stranger, like "Paschal Cain" or – why not? – a mistreated dog, a pig escaped from slaughter, a cow crying for her newborn calf that is destined to become veal. Will we risk extending hospitality to the disturbing One that keeps coming, keeps calling us out of our many bondages? If we do, perhaps

30 This is the title of a poem that is included in Merton's 1968 collection *Sensation Time At the Home*.

31 John D. Caputo, "Theopoetic/Theopolitic", *Crosscurrents*, vol. 56, no. 4, winter 2007, 106. Available at: <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Caputo0406.pdf>

we will be able to repeat, with Jacob Baunthemly, a seventeenth-century Ranter, the “damnable and diabolical” (*Lograire*, 146) words that so terrified his self-righteous persecutors and that, nevertheless, are so desperately needed in the age of the Anthropocene:

*I see that God is in all creatures,
Man and Beast, Fish and Fowle,
And every green thing from the highest cedar to the ivy on the wall;
And that God is the life and being of them all. (Lograire #7, 66)*

7. Conclusion

Blake’s vision was theopoetic rather than theological. Also Merton, in his late poetry, abandoned the Reason Blake had abhorred and enacted an imaginative/speculative marriage of heaven and hell. In *Lograire*’s realized eschatology, heaven is, literally, everywhere that love and mercy reign. “Then God does not hate? Not even sin? / So heaven and hell are in Deptford, Woolwich, Battersea and Lambeth?” (*Lograire*, 68), asks a terrified inquisitor. Merton concurs: they are both here, “at this precise moment of history” (*Lograire*, 127), and at all times and places: in eighteenth-century Lambeth, sixteenth-century Mesoamerica, or the nightmarish borough of New York’s Queens revisited in the speaker’s memory (“Queen’s Tunnel”). Glimpses of heaven amidst the hell of human history can likewise be spotted in fourteenth-century Cairo in the humble lives of prayer of Sufi mendicant ascetics (*Lograire*, 82–83), or in the hospitality extended by non-European natives to the white explorers and colonists who came to claim their lands. Had he lived longer, I firmly believe Merton would have included more glimpses of interspecies justice in his work in progress. I can imagine Merton being angered by the

US Animal Enterprise Terrorist Act³² and the Ag-Gag Laws³³ that make compassion a crime – those brand new manifestations of the Unspeakable in the twenty-first century.

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32 A 2006 US federal law that makes it illegal to expose cruelties and neglect in animal agriculture. Persons found guilty of “damaging or interfering with the operations of an animal enterprise” are treated like terrorists. To ridicule this law veganarchists often pose for pictures as hooded and masked figures bottle-feeding young sheep.

33 Anti-whistleblower laws that apply within the agriculture industry.