EMMANUEL FALQUE

The Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE HUGHES

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESS
New York ▪ 2016

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Copyright © 2016 Fordham University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

This book was first published in French as *Les noces de l'agneau: Essai philosophique sur le corps et l'eucharistie*, by Emmanuel Falque © Les Éditions du Cerf, 2011.

Fordham University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Fordham University Press also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Visit us online at www.fordhampress.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Falque, Emmanuel, 1963– author.
Title: The wedding feast of the Lamb : eros, the body, and the Eucharist / Emmanuel Falque ; translated by George Hughes.
Other titles: Noces de l'agneau. English
Description: First edition. | New York, NY : Fordham University Press, 2016. | Series: Perspectives in Continental philosophy | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2015050568 (print) | LCCN 2016019976 (ebook) | ISBN 9780823270408 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780823270415 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780823270422 (ePub)
Subjects: LCSH: Human body (Philosophy) | Human body—Religious aspects—Catholic Church. | Lord's Supper—Real presence.
Classification: LCC B105.B64 F3513 2016 (print) | LCC B105.B64 (ebook) | DDC 128/.6—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2015050568

Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 5 4 3 2 1

First edition

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Contents

Translator's Note *ix*

Opening *xiii*

Preface: The Ghent Altarpiece, or, The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb *xv*

Introduction: The Swerve of the Flesh *1*

Part I: Descent into the Abyss *5*

1. **Philosophy to Its Limit** *11*

§1. The Residue of the Body, 12 • §2. Chaos and Tohu-Bohu, 15 • §3. The Limit of the Phenomenon, 18 • §4. Bodying Life, 24

2. **The Staging of the Last Supper** *31*

§5. The Figure of the Lamb, 32 • §6. From the Mystic Lamb to the Flayed Ox, 39 • §7. Toward Another Metamorphosis, 41 • §8. A Matter of Culture, 43

3. **Eros Eucharisticized** *46*

§9. The Body Eucharisticized and the Body Eroticized, 46 • §10. Charitable God, 47 • §11. From Birth to Abiding, 49 • §12. The Reason for Eating, 53

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Part II: The Sojourn of Humankind 59

4. **The Animal That Therefore I Am** *63*

§13 The Other Side of the Angel, 70 • §14. The Animal in Common, 79 • §15. From the Turn to the Forgetting, 84 • §16. The Metaphysical Animal, 90

5. **Return to the Organic** *100*

§17. What the Body Can Do, 104 • §18. Manifesto of the Flesh, 112 • §19. In Flesh and Bones, 118 • §20. The Work of Art in Prose, 125

6. **Embrace and Differentiation** *133*

§21. The Difference at the Origin, 138 • §22. Love of the Limit, 147 • §23. Desire and Differentiation, 154 • §24. The Gaps of the Flesh, 166

Part III: God Incorporate 173

7. **The Passover of Animality** *177*

§25. Return to the Scandal, 178 • §26. Getting around the Scandal, 183 • §27. The Dispute over Meat, 188 • §28. Hominization and Filiation, 195

8. **"This Is My Body"** *199*

§29. Transubstantiation, 200 • §30. Incorporation, 205 • §31. Consecration, 209 • §32. Adoration, 213

9. **Plunging Bodily** *218*

§33. The Assumption of the Flesh ["*encharnement*"], 220 • §34. The Viaticum, 221 • §35. The Rapture of the Wedding Feast, 224 • §36. Abiding ["*manence*"], 227

Conclusion: The Flesh in Common *231*

Notes *235*

Index *295*

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Introduction

The Swerve of the Flesh

The traditional dualism of body and soul is now considered dated, but we have put a new binary structure in its place: that of flesh and body. Certainly this is an important step forward and one that has proved fruitful. When we talk of the "flesh" we describe the *lived experience* of our bodies, and we bring into view what we actually do, while we also bracket off the *organic* quality of the "body," seeing it as an obstacle to the body's subjectivity. But there are some questions that we still need to consider: Hasn't philosophy forgotten the *material* and *organic* body in coming to speak of flesh as lived experience of the body? And hasn't theology become blocked in its discussion of the organic or the living body of Christ? Hasn't it overdone spiritualizing the mystical, offering us a quasi-spiritual angelic flesh?

It would be useless to denounce a supposed drift into Gnosticism by theology and philosophy if a consensus had not been established, in phenomenology, on the one hand, and in a certain reinterpretation of doctrinal statements, or dogmatic theology, on the other. It is found in phenomenology where there is the notion of "flesh without body," or the primacy of the lived flesh (*Leib*) over the organically composed or objective body (*Körper*), providing a theme that runs right through contemporary philosophy (from Husserl up to and including Michel Henry).[1]

The consensus is also found in doctrinal or dogmatic statements because of the difficulty we have nowadays in believing that bodies step out of coffins, as we sometimes see represented in sculpture in the doorways of

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

cathedrals. Our difficulty in that respect makes it almost impossible to think seriously about the organic at the heart of the Resurrection. The "body" is forgotten and buried in the "flesh" in phenomenology (where flesh has priority over the body) and also in theology (where an objectivity for the resurrected body becomes difficult). What seemed like a step forward only yesterday (the taking into account of the subjective aspect of the body) has today become exactly the opposite: a step backward (an absence of discussion of the objective body).

I am not suggesting—it goes almost without saying—that we reintroduce a simple concept of the materiality of the body, or its "extension," as though this extension were a device through which we could examine all corporality. The time for that is past, and space imagined in a "geometrical manner" (Spinoza) is also out of date, as is the Cartesian reduction of the body to artificial machines moved by springs.

All the same, the question abides with us: when we speak of the lived experience of the body, aren't we losing sight of the materiality of the body that also makes up its existence? My body has its weight, which I have to carry. It shows its wounds, which I cannot ignore and which sometimes cause me to suffer. It digests and secretes without me needing to think. It grows larger and grows older without being told to do so by me. There's not much point in a protest from "the despisers of the body": the Great Self of corporality, even if anonymous, dominates the "I" of my thoughts. Our "I" has no option but to bend its knee before corporality. Nietzsche laughs at us: "'I' you say, and are proud of the word. But the greater thing—in which you do not want to believe—is *your body* and its *great reason*: it does not say I, but does I." The Self of your body is what, in reality, makes your true I. "The Self says to the I: 'Feel pain here!' And then it suffers and thinks about how it might suffer no more. . . . The Self says to the I: 'Feel pleasure here!' Then it is happy and thinks about how it might be happy again."[2] Trying to deny the body, even if just by shifting the center stealthily and phenomenologically toward lived experience (flesh), is in reality denying the body's organic nature. And we know full well to what extent "organicity" is able to dominate us: "When our stomachs are 'out of sorts' they can cast a pall over all things," Heidegger says. Paradoxically, it is in his reading of Nietzsche that Heidegger finds a possible organic origin for the basic affections: "We live in what we are embodied [*leiben*]."[3]

There have been some objections to the effect that I have proposed, in previous writings, a "flesh without body"; to this, there has been a reaction that starts with quite appropriate questions. But I hope to put the record straight in this book and perhaps even to reorient my own thought where necessary.[4] Challenges always catch one slightly off guard, but what fol-

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

lows from them is at least a development in one's thought; otherwise, there is a risk of slow death by repetition, or a kind of self-prolongation into inanity. One takes one's side in an argument—because thinking is also a matter of decision-making: phenomenology is perhaps not the last word in the ambitions of philosophy (something that up to now I have not suggested). And neither "flesh" nor the "lived experience of the body" are ultimate terms in all theology (as I underlined in *The Metamorphosis of Finitude)*. I don't wish to deny or go back on what I have put forward elsewhere; rather, I think it will be affirmed in finding something of a counterbalance—a counterbalance that is best adjusted when it is closest to equilibrium. So, where phenomenology uses "flesh" of the "lived experience of the body" unilaterally (see Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Yves Lacoste), I give more weight to a "philosophy of the organic," one that does not forget or neglect our own proper animality (like Nietzsche certainly, but also like Francis Bacon or Lucian Freud). And when theology—or perhaps I should say "my theology"—defines suffering and death phenomenologically as the "breaking up and exposure of the flesh," and resurrection as the "raising of the flesh" or the metamorphosis of our manner of being through our bodies, I want to offset this now with a consideration of the eucharist, taking fully on board this time the gift of the organic to the organic (*hoc est enim corpus meum*—this is my body).[5]

The *shifts of the flesh*, or a journey ahead toward the lived experience of the body that forgets its organic nature (as in the primacy given to the flesh over the body in phenomenology, and resurrection of the flesh as the lived experience of the body in theology), would leave aside an important reminder—in other words, would defer consideration of the "body" as such. Like a physiologist, one has to sound out the body, to "auscultate" it, to observe it. One has to extend one's view of the body and intensify what one says about it. Philosophically, first of all, in this book we descend into the abyss, to discover there the Chaos of our existence as well as its embodiment, until we come to read the figure of the sacrificial lamb (Part I). Next, we stay with man to uncover his animality, to recognize his organic nature, and to differentiate his sexuality (Part II). Then, theologically, we see the Son of God, as "embodied God" transforming our animality at Easter, giving his own body to be eaten, and giving himself up to eros while awaiting "*agape*" [the Christian "love-feast"] (Part III). Thus we can make our dwelling place in him, gather together in a "common flesh," or *Ecclesia*, and entirely live there (Conclusion). The route I have chosen can certainly seem hard, because (in Heidegger's terms) it probes the ground, it unearths

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

(*ergründen*), more than it tries to ground, or found (*begründen*): it plunges into the depths more than it surfaces into the light. As a thinker, I am trying to explore my own humanity. I am like an explorer of caves who will not draw back in case he endangers an enterprise whose end he himself does not know. What I do know is that to take on this enterprise is to advance further along a precipitous road. It is a route to which I have already, for some considerable time, been committed.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

PART I

Descent into the Abyss

> *Grande profundum est ipse homo*
> Man himself is a great deep.
>
> **—St. Augustine, *Confessions* 4.14.22**[1]

We descend ever deeper into the abyss, because the chasm that opens before us is so profound. As we lose ourselves there we find also an extraordinary sensation of proximity. Those who plunge beneath the surface of the Earth are witness to this effect. From the stagnant pool ("*la souille*") in Michel Tournier's *Friday, or, The Other Island* to the explorations of subterranean caves (at Padirac, in France, for example), submerging in the depths of the Earth is a way of reuniting with an "underground" self, or perhaps a "mezzanine" self, that we cannot ignore.[2] Some people call this the "unconscious." I call it Chaos, Tohu-Bohu,[3] or the mass of sensations. I don't mean to deny what psychoanalysis has revealed to us here, but rather the contrary; what I wish to explore is not exactly psychological, nor symptomatic, nor a matter of affect. It is not pathological or historic (features that have contributed to the significance of psychoanalysis). It is quite simply cognitive—indeed, existential and universal.

The abyss makes humankind. It is what humankind is constructed upon: It is what we can never destroy, even if we never recover from it. To borrow a term from the Jewish tradition, there is a *Shéol* (the grave, the pit, the underworld) in humanity. It is not simply a version of the Greek Hades (hell or the abode of the dead), but the etymology of its name points to a "corruption," a "place of questioning, of interrogation" (*cheôl*).[4] Chaos, the abyss, the gap, the opening—what Jackson Pollock paints in his work *The Deep*: "A break in the middle of a field of force, something bottomless under the cover of a cloud that immobilizes it."[5] That is what we must now philosophically or, quite simply, humanly try to rediscover.

In our descent we strive to reach an abyss. Descent will substitute for programmatic or existential development, setting itself up instead as a series of problems. Thus, I have found it necessary in this book to question, first of all, by way of exploration, the limits of phenomenology (Part I). I go on to the problem of the sacrificial lamb (Chapter 2) and the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

PART I

Descent into the Abyss

Grande profundum est ipse homo
Man himself is a great deep.

—St. Augustine, *Confessions* 4.14.22[1]

We descend ever deeper into the abyss, because the chasm that opens before us is so profound. As we lose ourselves there we find also an extraordinary sensation of proximity. Those who plunge beneath the surface of the Earth are witness to this effect. From the stagnant pool ("*la souille*") in Michel Tournier's *Friday, or, The Other Island* to the explorations of subterranean caves (at Padirac, in France, for example), submerging in the depths of the Earth is a way of reuniting with an "underground" self, or perhaps a "mezzanine" self, that we cannot ignore.[2] Some people call this the "unconscious." I call it Chaos, Tohu-Bohu,[3] or the mass of sensations. I don't mean to deny what psychoanalysis has revealed to us here, but rather the contrary; what I wish to explore is not exactly psychological, nor symptomatic, nor a matter of affect. It is not pathological or historic (features that have contributed to the significance of psychoanalysis). It is quite simply cognitive—indeed, existential and universal.

The abyss makes humankind. It is what humankind is constructed upon: It is what we can never destroy, even if we never recover from it. To borrow a term from the Jewish tradition, there is a *Shéol* (the grave, the pit, the underworld) in humanity. It is not simply a version of the Greek Hades (hell or the abode of the dead), but the etymology of its name points to a "corruption," a "place of questioning, of interrogation" (*cheôl*).[4] Chaos, the abyss, the gap, the opening—what Jackson Pollock paints in his work *The Deep*: "A break in the middle of a field of force, something bottomless under the cover of a cloud that immobilizes it."[5] That is what we must now philosophically or, quite simply, humanly try to rediscover.

In our descent we strive to reach an abyss. Descent will substitute for programmatic or existential development, setting itself up instead as a series of problems. Thus, I have found it necessary in this book to question, first of all, by way of exploration, the limits of phenomenology (Part I). I go on to the problem of the sacrificial lamb (Chapter 2) and the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

meaning of the eucharistic eros (Chapter 3) before looking philosophically (Part II), and then theologically (Part III), at our animal nature (Chapters 4 to 7), our organic nature (Chapters 5 to 7), and our erotic nature (Chapters 6 to 9), as they are all engaged in the eucharistic act. Everything is there, or perhaps is just implied, in the "first moment" by way of an "expansive introduction," or a "great crossing," of what will later be deployed theologically and philosophically. Discussion of these issues has often been a matter of special pleading, directed in such a way as to not burden itself with fine details (Part I). But it remains true that, in the eyes of both author and reader, development of thought is a necessary condition for the recognition of its truth (Parts I and II). Development is important also in order to counter objections that a humble but inevitably bold inquiry may raise.

The abyss certainly ensures that we feel bad about it, seeing that we become formless there: We break up. We are first of all ruined there, spoiled, like objects that fall and collide. But then there is more and better in the abyss, which takes the place and role of finitude, once there is a question of the eucharist (*Wedding Feast of the Lamb*) and not simply of resurrection (*Metamorphosis of Finitude*).[6]

According to nautical terminology, abyss (or abysm) refers to the depths of the ocean, to places that humankind can almost never reach, inhabited by the "abysmal protozoan fauna, medusae and other marine monsters."[7] The abyss is etymologically "bottomless" (*a-bussos*). It points to a region—unexplored, no doubt, and perhaps also inexplorable. As for those *abysmes* that, according to Aristide Quillet's encyclopedic dictionary, are "subterranean cavities, fissures resulting from a collapse, or excavations hollowed out by waters," they denote the profound depths of that which faces us, and sometimes engulfs us, impenetrable and without limits.[8] They are there for better and for worse: for better, in the abyss of science and the meditations that are opened up on the trail of astronomy or by the mysteries of religion; for worse, in the fathomless abyss that loss and oblivion may sometimes cause us, as when ships are "swallowed up" by the sea.

To be swallowed up in this way in the abyss is not simply to collide or to lose one's shape. It is, rather, to be lost, to fall—to collapse. It is to disappear into a bottomless pit and into impenetrable water from which nothing can retrieve us. To go down there—"Descent into the Maelstrom," or descent into the abyss—means accepting that one will not draw back or, at the very least, that there will be no quick exit.[9] There is in humankind, as also in the world, something dark that can hold onto us, whether we call it Chaos, Tohu-Bohu, or the "bottomless." It makes of us

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

more than we know. It makes us lose our way. "In the beginning, there was first a yawning gap," Jean-Pierre Vernant explains.

> The Greeks called it Chaos. What was this gap? An emptiness. A dark emptiness where nothing can be distinguished. A place of falling, of vertigo, of confusion—without end, bottomless. We are caught up into this gap as though by the opening of an immense mouth where all will be swallowed up in the same indistinct night. . . . Then the Earth appears. The Greeks call this Gaïa. . . . On the Earth everything feels shaped, visible, solid. We can define Gaïa as that on which the gods, humankind and the animals can confidently walk. It is the floor of the world.[10]

I shall brave this challenge and suggest that the abyss, this *Shéol*, the Chaos or Tohu-Bohu—a dimension of the *cosmos* as well as of *anthropos*—is precisely what the *This is my body* of the eucharist comes to explore, comes to take on, the better to transform.

I don't mean to deny in this book a dimension of sin in the "sacrificial lamb" (§13); I do, however, hope to do it more justice in a forthcoming book.[11] But salvation is not simply a matter of redemption; it is also solidarity or fellowship. It is through the fellowship of God and humankind, which goes into the furthest depths of the obscurity that makes up our created being (our passions, impulses—our animality), that humankind will be saved. We need to admit, then, that "descending into the abyss" is not simply sounding out the depths of sin, something that would be more appropriate to consider under the heading of bestiality (§13). Just as the unconscious in psychoanalysis cannot or should not be labelled in terms of moral worth or value, so Chaos in philosophy, or Tohu-Bohu in theology, do not fall simply within the domain of sin or error. Beyond Good or Evil—or, better, on this side of Good and Evil—Christ plunges into the abyss of humankind and the world, and rejoins Adam on the day of Holy Saturday. Christ does this not just to save Adam from the Fall but also to espouse the bottomless in its own depths, to rejoin the "originary Earth" (*Urgrund*), and to sojourn there before drawing from it. The Orthodox icons of the great Resurrection show this scene to those who know how to read it: Christ stands above the cross and pulls Adam from the grave that has also been his. As the famous ancient homily for Holy Saturday on the Lord's descent into Hell recounts for the enlightened listener, "He [the Lord] took him [Adam] by the hand and raised him up, saying; 'Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.'"[12]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

I want to emphasize here—not to narrow down the field of inquiry, but rather so as not to judge matters too hastily—that the descent into the abyss inaugurated by *hoc est corpus meum* on the day of the Last Supper is not simply because of our exploration of humanity. Certainly it can and must be taken that way, and indeed leads us in that direction. Philosophically speaking, we need to follow the heuristic path rather than the didactic one and to explore the laborious passage in terms of humankind, rather than directly moving to the revelation of God. But then theologically we shall discover that we are not alone in this place, with humankind and in philosophy. And this is precisely because God has always already traversed the route in order to find us there and go along with us. A plunge to the depths of our Chaos is not, for believers, something undertaken completely alone, even though companionship cannot exempt us from the solitude of all humanity, nor even simply reassure us. It is in the form of one of humankind that we "limp along on the way" (see end of Opening). And this is so whether we go with or without the Son of Man—though the Son of Man is always there to escort us and, as it were in advance, committed to his resurrection. "The descent of a *single person into the abyss* becomes the *ascension of all*, out of that same abyss," we must remember, following Hans-Urs von Balthasar's commentary on the great Holy Saturday (*La Dramatique divine*). It has been suggested that "what makes possible this dialectical reversal derives on the one hand from the 'for all' of the descent, and on the other from the *prototypical resurrection* mentioned here: *Without this resurrection the Son would certainly sink into the abyss*, but *all would not be resurrected*."[13]

A descent like this into the abyss is thus, in a sense, programmed and at the same time a kind of preliminary guide. "This is my body" is not like "I am my suffering body" (*Passeur de Gethsémani* [The guide to Gethsemane]) or "he is the resurrected body" (*Metamorphosis of Finitude*). In suffering, as in resurrection, the philosophically existential is directly given in equivalent doctrinal terms and then transformed. It becomes "anguish" in Gethsemane (*Passeur de Gethsémani*) or "birth" in the Resurrection (*Metamorphosis of Finitude*). But in the case of the eucharist (*Wedding Feast of the Lamb*) the associated experience awaits its formulation. The words *this is my body* are, of course, also those of a bridegroom to his bride, before they signify the union of Christ with his apostles, or that of the Church with all humanity. But it would be unsatisfactory to reduce them to this, because if on the one hand the eucharist is *eros* converted into *agape* in the gift of embodiedness (see Chapters 2, 6, and 9), it also questions, more paradoxically, what belongs to the space of animality, through the figure of the sacrificial lamb (Chapters 2, 4, and 7), as well as

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

the role of the organic body in that which is given to us to eat (Chapters 1, 5, and 8).

I hope that my reader will bear with me, or at least give me some leeway, especially in the first part of this book, and risk being surprised by what later becomes explicit. I must emphasize again here that to speak of the animality in humankind is not to reduce Christ to animal, and that is so even though the question will arise of Christ taking on animality in order to transform it into the humanity that is acknowledged in his filiation within the Trinity. To return to the erotic character of the eucharistic agape is not to identify it with a dionysiac form of carnal love, nor to reduce it to a kind of disproportionate rapture, though rapture plays its part in the folly that it proposes. If we expect a great deal from the "power of the body," we don't need to go overboard with enthusiasm for a force that is impossible to control. All the same, it has been the constant admission of weakness in Christianity that has only too rapidly led us to disregard the power of the Holy Spirit that is capable of bringing about our metamorphosis. As far as I can see, even more here than elsewhere, we don't need to force our understanding to read our situation fully, but rather must allow ourselves to be divested of preconceptions. These ideas may become radical, certainly, but the objects (the body and the eucharist) are so difficult to describe because the reality is so extraordinary: "'Take, eat; this is my body'" (Matt. 26:26).

Some readers—undoubtedly those philosophically inclined—will be surprised to see theological perspectives so directly engaged from the start of this book. I talk of the figure of the lamb (Chapter 2), or the eroticized body as the eucharisticized body (Chapter 3), even before I undertake a long philosophical analysis of animality (Chapter 4) or organic corporality (Chapter 5). Other readers—theologians, especially—may wonder why there are so many quibbles at the start of the book about the limits of phenomenology. And they must wonder why this is necessary when what is up for analysis is a question of *the body of Christ given to us* rather than just "bodying life" (Chapter 1). I know I am asking a great deal, and asking it of philosophers as well as theologians, but it is only problematic if the cut-and-dried separation of their respective disciplines has made interpenetration impossible from the start, preventing a mutually beneficial approach.

I should like to make this clear. An appropriate distinction between disciplines does not bar a certain unity of thought, particularly as far as the person who comes to use them is concerned.[14] The reversal or recovery of frontiers between the two disciplines in Part I of the book is thus intentional and, at the same time, a practical necessity. A long detour helps us

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

arrive at a point of junction in the problematic, to show that there are three dimensions in the act of the eucharist: embodiedness, animality, and eros. This first moment of descent into the abyss—in the form of a large-scale introduction to and synthesis of the whole of the movement proposed—in a sense says all, and yet nothing, of the proposition that I wish to express here. It says *all* because the whole of its scope is contained in its first premises, and it says *nothing* in that this cannot really be seen until the argument has been run through in its entirety, and also recapitulated. One can't judge a book or an author by what has to be said in the opening statements, but only by the full course of the argument once it has been wholly made. If philosophers are disappointed by too much theology, I would suggest that they push on, at least as far as Part II, where I aim at another mode of doing philosophy. And to theologians uneasy about the uphill struggles into philosophy, I would ask that they hang on until the end of the journey—at least waiting until the power of transformation of the eucharist is fully shown (Part III).

The eucharist is not in this sense something that "could be believed." It is also, and above all, credible. It is incumbent on each one of us to decide on this, and it is also a matter for all humanity, at least in the doctrine and tradition of Western culture that we inherit. The point is not, first of all, nor simply, whether we take communion. It is not just a matter of insisting that everyone come up to the table of the wedding feast, or the act of eucharist. My basic argument, insofar as there is one basic argument, is not put forward so as to convert or transform others. It comes down to an acceptance or recognition that Christianity has the cultural means, as well as the conceptual means, to touch the depths of our humanity, as that humanity is constituted in the twenty-first century—albeit through an *interior Chaos* that was taken on board and metamorphosed by God himself. What at first may seem surprising to us (the erotic, the animal, or the organic appearing in a discussion of the mystery of the eucharist) can show in this sense an exceptional fruitfulness, as we pose questions here "in a way that responds to the needs of our time" (Vatican II) concerning the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, or the invitation to the banquet table. "'Take, eat; this is my body.' . . . 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood'" (Matt. 26:26–28). The "wine of the absurd," or the "bread of indifference," so disparaged by Camus and many moderns (and yet still called upon when they have to make vows and promises), will also have to be considered—in wine that has been transubstantiated and bread consecrated on the eucharistic altar—even though we risk the loss of all our humanity that is still to be transformed and risk the loss of God, who comes precisely to us in order to incorporate us there.[15]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

1

Philosophy to Its Limit

To do philosophy *to its limit* is probably to reach the limits of doing philosophy. One can philosophize to its limit, in the sense of a limit to what remains to be done, because no other solution seems possible (as when I have to miss a rendezvous even *at the very limit* of the deadline because something more important has come up). More significantly, philosophers have been trying recently to do philosophy *at its limit*, precisely because they would then reach the limit of philosophy (rejecting the ascendancy of a predicative discourse, in phenomenology, as in analytic philosophy). Going to the "margins" of philosophy (Derrida) or relying on the "creation of concepts" such as rhizomes, extraterritoriality, or other invented conceptual monsters (Deleuze) is, however, not a possible solution to the problem of how to do philosophy, and it entails leaving the ordinary modes of thought in which Western philosophy—as inheritor of the Western tradition—was engendered.

Thus, although I may turn here from time to time to those thinkers who have looked for another way of doing philosophy (Deleuze or Derrida, for example), I do not intend to abandon ordinary modes of reason. There is certainly a "logic of feeling" that we can find within the act of thinking, with the help of the painter Francis Bacon (see Deleuze), and there is an "animal in us" found in the strange experience of nudity (see Derrida). But we can talk about these things without doing philosophy at its limits and without transgressing the fixed bounds of rationality. To do philosophy *to its limit* does not come back, then, either to philosophizing

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

as a worst case scenario or to doing philosophy beyond philosophy. Quite simply, it entails touching on the limits of doing philosophy, in particular when these limits are in what is called phenomenology. Without giving up on what engendered us (phenomenology), we shall come back here to its *limits*. That is to say, we shall come back to the impossibility of formulating, starting from phenomenology, what it is that *lies beneath signification*—when that is precisely what we have come today to consider.[1]

It is the *this is my body* of the eucharist that takes on exactly a mode of non-signifying of organic embodiedness—something that simply the lived experience of the flesh in the Resurrection could not express or even envisage (see *Metamorphosis of Finitude*). The distinction of these doctrines (on resurrection and the eucharist) reaches out to the diversity of experience (birth and eros), as well as to the difference in what the doctrines concern (flesh and the body). This is the way thought moves and takes a step forward, not by going two steps backward, but by shifting toward what has not yet been seen and taking what has been seen in another light. Moving or shifting is not going back on what one has thought, but rather the contrary (after all, philosophers have their epochs just as artists do): It may open up a spectrum that has previously been too narrow. In "philosophy to its limit" there will always be, then, the residue of the body (§1) as there will be a Chaos and Tohu-Bohu (§2). So, we can head toward the limit of the phenomenon (§3) as we make our way to the threshold of a bodying life (§4) capable of engendering what is in our true humanity. Paul Ricœur underlines that "each work responds to a determinate challenge"—a notion that could very well describe the relation to my previous books of what I undertake here. "And what connects it to its predecessors seems to me less the steady development of a unique project than the acknowledgement of a residue left over by the previous work, a residue which gives rise in turn to a new challenge."[2]

§1. The Residue of the Body

Probably we can no longer be satisfied, as far as philosophy is concerned, with the simple charms of the "toucher-touched"—a notion that derives from the episode of the woman with a hemorrhage in the Gospel of St. Mark, which I have used and discussed extensively elsewhere.[3] But the body remains. Or rather a "residue" remains (of the body) that is still always subjectivized. Embodiedness is, if not extended (*étendue*), at least spread out (*épandue*). It cannot be reduced to subjectivity nor declared purely objective. It is in fact a body—perhaps we should describe it as "intermediate," or a frontier zone? And this residue is between the *subjec-*

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

tive flesh of the phenomenologist and the *objective body* of the scientist. It is that of the organic matter to deal with or operate on, which is not totally objective because it cannot be reduced to a geometric form. Nor is it totally subjective, because it does not fully correspond to the ego when we examine it in terms of consciousness. We can take as an example the body under anesthetic, something most of us have experienced ourselves and seen in others, both animals and human beings.[4] A doctor, or rather a surgeon, works with or cuts open the body as bodily objectivity (*Körper*). He or she knows that another subject is there, at least as far as they share a hypothetical humanity. And he or she shows respect for the body lying on the operating table, if not as a matter of experience, at least through a professional ethic (isolation of the part to be operated on; prohibition of completely stripping the body to the nude). Nonetheless, the body that doctors work with, and do something to, cannot be called a purely subjectivized flesh (*Leib*). Nor does the encounter with the lived experience of the medical staff constitute intersubjectivity, or a mode of empathy, of the kind that is so often falsely sought.

Only if one had never visited an operating theater in which the body was to be operated on, or if one had been taken in by the kind of philosophical discourse that doctors themselves do not heed, would one believe that the lived experience of the body, or the "flesh," was the site of a lived intercorporality. In the operating theater, the silence of "anaesthetized matter" no longer lets through any cries of pain from a particular subjectivity. The body extended on the operating table is not there in length, breadth, and depth—as we might describe a Cartesian geometric space. It is there in heartbeats, respiration, and intestinal rumbles—qualitative attributes of biological life. We may be surprised to have to claim these attributes here, but they also are part of our living corporality in its proper qualities, even though we quite often, and quite wrongly, try to ignore them. The geometric rigour of the objectified body must give place to the biological copiousness of a flesh that is profuse and also impossible to subjectify. Extended, the anesthetized body is, as it were, spread out onto the operating table; it is fleshly matter that has often been offered and given and over which the doctor would be able, in the absence of regulation, to exercise an unlimited power. It is the "unconscious of the body" (Nietzsche), as we shall see later, that makes our corporality—rather than the psychic that waits on the organic, or the simply physical—lost in its own objectivity.[5]

In philosophy, or at least in phenomenology, we come across the notion of flesh (*Leib*), used to speak of the lived experience of the body or of the body itself: "Husserl suggests that the sphere of what is proper to the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

individual, [or 'ownness,'] sends us back to that first experience where the lived experience of the consciousness is constituted or engendered. It has the status of something that originates, in so far as it is the originating matrix of our corporality. The notion of 'flesh' suggests that this problem area is irreducible to objective spatiality." [6] There is also the body (*Körper*), which, according to Husserl, remains purely objective: "The inertia of the *Körper* which can indicate the body in the physical sciences just as well as the celestial bodies in the Aristotelian cosmology, or the corpuscles in quantum physics." Husserl maintains that "in a human context the 'body' signifies a simply organic structure in its static, functional and quantifiable configuration."[7] But what do we find in, and what can we say about, the relation *between* the flesh and the body? Between the subjective lived experience of corporality (*Leib*) and objective reduction into its entity (*étantité*) (*Körper*)? Phenomenology does not tell us, yet ordinary experience is able to help us. There is a biological aspect to myself that is not quantifiable (not extended in geometric fashion in the body) but that nonetheless cannot simply be reduced to subjective qualities (how the ego copes with the flesh). The body spread out—on the operating table, certainly, but also dozing on a bed or even crucified on a cross—is more than the simple extension of matter (the objectivity of the body) and more than pure selfhood of the flesh (subjectivity of the flesh). Between the objective body and the subjective flesh, between the *Körper* and the *Leib*, stands the flesh in the current sense of the term: *Fleisch* in German, *flesh* in English, and *chair* in French. In every case the flesh as commonly understood is "linked to blood, to meat, to that soft substance of the body which is opposed to the bones. It is unstable, fluid and soft in character and reduces the structural stature of the body."[8] It is surprising to note here that phenomenology does not know how the body is material, unless it is made objective. To appear "in flesh and bone" (*leibhaft gegeben*), in phenomenology, is paradoxically to have neither flesh nor bone. And, as we shall see later (§19), when phenomenology speaks of "self-givenness" (*Selbsgegebenheit*), we find that in reality there is no-body much there. In Husserl, as also in the swerve of the flesh in phenomenology, and in theology, there is a kind of docetism (i.e., belief that Jesus's physical body was an illusion) with regard to the flesh. We could call this an idealism of the perceptible, or a theoreticization of the flesh (Romano)—something from which even Merleau-Ponty was not exempt. A concern with clarity overrides the inevitable confusion of these fleshes, as also of bodies, so that no obscurity or chaotic version of reality remains where the pure transparency of intentionality, even if always reversed, overrides the impossibility of signifying or of structuring. As Gilles

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Deleuze points out, commenting on the work of Francis Bacon and using Bacon's work as his leitmotif, "the *phenomenological hypothesis* is perhaps *insufficient*, because it merely invokes the lived body. But the lived body is still a paltry thing in comparison with a more profound and almost unliveable Power [*Puissance*]."[9]

The in-between of the spread-out body—neither flesh nor body, neither purely subjective nor exclusively objective—is then, as I see it, what philosophy needs to recover and what theology needs to deal with. It is a part of the darkness in humankind, made up of passions and drives, which the mirages deriving from *signifying* in phenomenology are wrong to evacuate. One phenomenologist at least saw this: Heidegger reading Nietzsche—but he saw it only to pass over the problem. And one philosopher has formulated it as a reading of a certain kind of contemporary painting: Deleuze interpreting the work of Bacon—though outside the context of Christian thought. To return to Chaos and to Tohu-Bohu in the form of the depths of the world, as of our humanity, opens up a road to the obscure, when *this is my body* will encounter and will metamorphose, as Zeno of Citium, the Stoic, suggested (with a certain verve): "The Deity will manifestly be the author of evil, dwelling in sewers and worms." Christianity, and Tertullian, in particular, try to correct this stance, in order to avoid materialism, but at the same time go back over it without hesitation—at least in order to avoid too much Platonizing, or to avoid a falling off into the mistakes of angelism, a tendency that is only too frequently present in Gnosticism.[10]

§2. Chaos and Tohu-Bohu

What is meant by "to know"? Probably—as Heidegger suggests, discussing Nietzsche—it means "to impose upon chaos as much regularity and as many forms as our practical needs require."[11] I shall not revisit here the genesis of the concept of Chaos, as it has already been discussed elsewhere (J.-P. Vernant). Heidegger touches only briefly on this aspect of his subject. Still, we can say—at least in order to recapture and deal with the force and content of *this is my body*—that (1) in ancient Greece, Chaos is "originary," and (2) this is also true of its equivalent in the Semitic tradition, the Tohu-Bohu.

(1) *In ancient Greece.* "First of all Chaos came into being; but next wide-breasted Gaia, always-safe foundation of all . . . and Eros [Love] more beautiful among the immortal gods."[12] This stanza from Hesiod's *Theogony*, which has been much discussed, gives us Chaos as abyss, or as the yawning gap, in reality never covered over; it is something that the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

philosopher, or at least the theologian, must accept or even exhibit to us. Not just disorder or confusion, Chaos has to reach as far back as this third term of the abyss as its origin. According to Heidegger, "Chaos, *khaos*, *khainô*, means 'to yawn'; it signifies something that opens wide or gapes. We conceive of *khaos* in most intimate connection with an original interpretation of the essence of *alêtheia* as the self-opening abyss: 'From Chaos were born Erebos and black Nyx.'"[13]

We must take care here concerning the different interpretations of Chaos (the open, the confused, disorder) that try falsely to swallow it up into the cosmos, its opposite (the world, order, beauty—even cosmetic products [see §18]). Hesiod's ancient poem does not suggest that the nights of love between Chaos and the Earth bring forth darkness. It does not say that Chaos and the Earth, which along with love are the primordial powers, mate together and engender Erebos and night. It says, more simply and more radically, that "first of all Chaos came into being," then—or *nex*t (*gai*)—came Earth (Gaia) and Love (Eros). Chaos in ancient Greece is where we come from (*originaire*), not simply what is there (*original*). It engenders nothing but nonetheless remains as the base on which all will be engendered.[14]

Because we are rooted in Greek culture, Chaos remains as a fissure, or gap, in the abyss of all existence. Deriving both from *chaïnô* (to open oneself or gape) and from *cheïn* (to pour out or spread), Chaos designated at once yawning gap and opening (*chaïnô*) and mixture and confusion (*cheïn*). This is almost certainly what the eucharistic communion of *this is my body* takes on and transforms, without ever concealing or repudiating—whether it is a question of the Chaos of the world (yawning gap and confusion in the annihilation of the living, up to and including our own bodies) or of that of our own lives (abyss and mixture of passions and drives that our biological flesh retains in itself as the strongest form of their expression).[15]

(2) *In the Semitic tradition.* "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void [*tohu wabohu*] and darkness covered the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:1–2). There was, then, an "Earth" (formless void) and even an abyss (the deep [*tehôm*]) before the creation of the firmament or the vault of the heavens, on the second day of the creation of the *Hexaemeron* (i.e., the six days' work of creation). The Earth and abyss were before the creation of our "Earth" on the third day. We know about this because it has been the subject of extensive commentary. The idea of a creation *ex nihilo* does not appear until much later in the biblical exegesis, in the Second Book of the Maccabees: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein,

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

and consider that God made them of *things that were not*; and so was mankind made likewise" (2 Macc. 7:28). Similarly in theology we have to wait until the end of the third century before this idea is explicitly formulated by Tertullian: "There will be a doubt, perchance, about the power of God, who formed the great body of this world from that which was not, no less than from a deathlike vacuity and emptiness."[16] Tertullian's "that which was not" is not so much pointing negatively to the nothingness that a God will dominate as pointing positively to the all-powerful nature of he whose role is to start things. "In the seven days of the creation (in effect) God does not overcome, through his word, the confusion that is anterior to the creation. . . . It is not God and chaos that are face to face here, but the cosmos and chaos. And God, the Creator, is in command of both."[17] Moreover, in the final analysis, to say that God creates "out of nothing" (*de nihilo*) according to St. Augustine's formula—*fecisti aliquid et de nihilo* ("[you did] create something, and that out of nothing")[18]—signifies, because of the ambiguity of *de nihilo* in Latin, not simply that "God created starting from (*ex*) nothing, leaving it and substituting the existent for it ('after nothing becomes being')"; it suggests also that "God created *with* (*de*) the nothingness, to make the existent, in the form of matter, from nothingness itself."[19]

Following this interpretation, and returning now to my particular perspective, we can conclude that the original opening or yawning gap *is always there*, at the heart of Hellenism (Chaos), or Judaism (Tohu-Bohu), or Christianity (*de nihilo* or *ex nihilo*). The Earth "formless and void" is not easily covered, and God's prerogative in starting creation does not preclude in fact that something will remain of the opening and the yawning gap, and even of a confusion and jumble that is not easily assimilated.

It is precisely this that confronts God himself, at the moment of creation—of creating us. And it is what we ourselves are confronted with, so far as our own passions are concerned, and what we still confront. "The beginning has been made," Bonhoeffer tells us, with profound insight,

> But still our view remains focused upon one event, on the Free God. . . . It is dark before him, and that is the fame of his glory as Creator. His work is beneath him in the deep. Just as we look down, dizzy, from a high mountain into a chasm and the night of the abyss lies beneath us, so is the earth under his feet: distant strange, dark, deep, but [it is] his work. . . . *The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters*. . . . God reflects upon the work. The simultaneous release and joining of formless force into form, of existence into formed being, is the moment of the *hesitation of God*.[20]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Whether one was Greek (Chaos), Jewish (Tohu-Bohu), or Christian (creation *ex nihilo/de nihilo*)—but also if one were Sumerian (the primeval sea [*apsu*]), Chinese (the primordial chaos), or Egyptian (the primeval ocean)[21]—a "jumble," "confusion," "disorder"—or rather the "wide open," the "yawning gap"—remained, and no act of recognition or of giving of meaning (or, for that matter, of creation) could assimilate without necessarily negating it. My thesis is that "what we wish to recognize is the following—surely some terrible, savage, and lawless form of desires" is in every man—to follow Plato and his famous "tyrannic man" in Book IX of *The Republic* (where moreover we find, long before Freud, the explicit root of these desires in dreams). Plato sees these desires "even in some of us who seem to be ever so measured."[22]

If we go along with this supposition—and it is difficult to refute it, since it is found in philosophy, in psychoanalysis, and quite simply in the most ordinary experience of life—have we, however, somehow forgotten the body and the eucharist? As far as I can see, we have not. For the "body" given at the Last Supper, and offered once more at the heart of the liturgy, goes far beyond the circle of the disciples, whether they were gathered together just a little while earlier in that "large room upstairs, already furnished" (Luke 22:12), or whether it is we who today turn toward the altar of a sanctuary. Not only the formula *hoc est enim corpus meum* but also, and above all, the inevitable solidity of the body so paradoxically "given to eat" precisely accommodates this world and the whole of our humanity, up to and including its abyss (*kaïnô*), its jumble, and its formless void (*tohu wabohu*). So that is what we must attempt to do here, or else we shall lose the true substance of the eucharistic bread. It is certainly this "chaotic-there" that the Last Supper took over on Holy Thursday, whether in us (passions, drives, animality) or beyond us (the wide open, the yawning gap, disorder, confusion). And the Sunday liturgy, in the words of the deacon in particular, celebrate this and to an extent live it through, the better to transform it: "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the *divinity* of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our *humanity*."[23] The liturgy reaches up to and includes the Chaos of the world and our humanity—going, we might dare to add, as far as our animality.

§3. The Limit of the Phenomenon

We have undertaken a detour (toward Chaos and Tohu-Bohu), and to bring us back (toward a truly *bodied* sense of the eucharistic mystery), we need now to examine as promised—and to establish a certain distance from—phenomenology. When we conceptualize the "chaotic" as the abyss

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

or the gap that we have seen from Hesiod to Nietzsche, couldn't it be said that phenomenology tries to do too much with its concept of the phenomenon? Isn't it just covering up this overflowing obscurity with the transparence of intentionality, whether or not the phenomenon is "saturated"?[24] Such a harsh criticism might have been attacked as pointless if Heidegger had not himself already made it in passing, in the search for a fresh start when he was discussing Nietzschean Chaos in a series of lectures at Freiburg: "Must we not also *take back* this invasion by what we encounter?" Heidegger asks, stealthily pushing phenomenology to its limit. He talks of taking back what we encounter through "the words in which we have taken hold of what was encountered, in order to possess what is *purely* encountered, to let it be encountered. . . . Or does the region of what can no longer be said, the region of renunciation, begin here where we can no longer or not yet decide upon what is in being, in nonbeing, or not in being?"[25]

Making something seen, if it involves reaching the "region of what can no longer be said" (the Chaos where the eucharistic *this is my body* will come if we take it on), entails going through an experience, as in the detour by the simple "cognition of . . . a blackboard," where for once Heidegger demonstrated through his own cognition the limit of the phenomenon in phenomenology—or, in other words, a "beyond phenomenology" (Didier Franck).[26] He addresses the need to go beyond phenomenology once one has undertaken to enter into the abyss, and to signify it otherwise.[27]

Heidegger describes, as a "familiar example" during his lectures, what is there in front of his eyes: "We enter this room—let us say for the first time—and ascertain that this blackboard has been covered with Greek letters. In the case of such knowledge we do not first encounter a chaos, we see the blackboard and the letters."[28] We have to be careful here. The philosopher of Freiburg, at the University of Freiburg and in front of the Freiburg students (probably in or around 1938), does not mean to indicate that a knowledge of Greek is sufficient in itself to obliterate the chaotic, the open and the obscure of the blackboard.

> Perhaps not everyone is able to ascertain that these are Greek letters, but even then we are not confronted with a chaos: rather we confront something visible, something written, that we cannot read. We need to radicalize this reflection on, or rather this apprehension of, the blackboard. It is not a question of whether or not we can decipher these Greek letters: we see them "as characters" in the same way as we see this thing "as a blackboard": "*This blackboard*"—what does that mean? Does it not already mean the knowledge attained: the thing as blackboard?[29]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Doesn't the being of the thing—or the being *as* being and the being *as* thing—already determine the thing in the horizon of being? To put it another way, when we start from our own existence in the form of the beings that we are to ourselves, don't we always have to presuppose the being-in-the-human-world as a *cosmos*? Don't we have to evacuate ourselves of Chaos and of our own animality in order to signify something? In his radical approach, Heidegger paradoxically calls into question the intentionality of the phenomenon. Even the *phenomenon of intentionality* is questioned. It is as though intentionality, whichever way we take it, whether saturated or not, always manages to escape the invasion of Chaos, which is always bodied and not intentional. Heidegger, leaving phenomenology here, in a sense under the pressure of Nietzschean Chaos (the open and yawning gap), and leaving Kant also (the "mass of sensations"), affirms that "to know this thing as a blackboard, we must already have ascertained what we encounter as a 'thing' as such, and not, say, as a fleeting occurrence." And he adds, as if to hammer home that he is leaving the lived experience of the phenomenon to return to the thing itself (*Sache*), that

> we must have perceived in our first meeting up with it what is taken in advance as a thing in general, what we encounter, what we confront and what strikes and concerns us in *what and how it is*. We encounter black things, gray, white, brown, hard, rough things, things resonant (when struck), extended, flat, movable things—thus a manifold of what is given. Yet is what is given what gives itself? Is it not *also* already something *taken*, already taken up by the words *black*, *gray*, *hard*, *rough*, *extended*, *flat*? Must we not also *take back* this invasion by what we encounter through the words . . . Or does the region of what can no longer be said, the region of renunciation, begin here?[30]

When phenomenology perceives something, in reality it has always already been perceived that it perceives. We can certainly bring in death as the horizon of life (Heidegger), or intentionality as the inverse of the face (Levinas), the thickness of the flesh (Merleau-Ponty), the saturation of the sign (Jean-Luc Marion), the "event of an intimate call" (Jean-Louis Chrétien), the auto-affection of the self (Michel Henry), or the experience and the absolute (Jean-Yves Lacoste). But in each case, "apperception" is based on perception, in the sense that to perceive what one perceives in the return to things themselves determines in advance the apprehension of these phenomena, defining them as phenomena, on the one hand, and

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

reducing them always to the Kantian "mass of sensations," on the other. Heidegger suggests, in what was probably one of his most fascinating lectures (because he was insidiously leaving phenomenology), "Behind, so to speak, what appears so harmlessly and conclusively to us as an object, we do meet up with the mass of sensations—Chaos."[31] (The investigation of the "mass of sensations" brings in Chaos here; I will consider this further in §4.)[32]

We need to concede, then, as certain Nietzsche scholars familiar with phenomenology have quite rightly pointed out, that the borders of Chaos are inaccessible through a phenomenological approach. This is due (1) to the constant recourse to the lived experience of consciousness (or of the flesh), as opposed to the solidity of the body in its biological dimension and drives, and (2) to the constant recourse to the ideal of passivity as against force, so that the subject no longer tries to be made flesh, or rather to be embodied, in the initial Chaos with which he is confronted.

(1) *The ideal of lived experience, or* Erlebnis. A phenomenalism of the inner world in fact runs through all philosophies of consciousness, even those that borrow their terms from Nietzsche. It is an illusion, or a chronological reversal of cause and effect, that one has to wait for things to appear in consciousness before they exist, or before they take on meaning. When we say, "I feel unwell," we go directly to "this or that (that) makes me feel bad." If the phenomenon in phenomenology is not just a question of looking for causes, what it demands from being is first that it can be signified, and put into the framework of a subjectivity by which it takes on meaning (for me): "*I* feel unwell." The neutrality of evil, its chaos, and its virtual anonymity, which reach into my physiology (*that* makes me ill: *there is* something bad in me that bothers me, *a* virus or *a* cancer that is eating up my body, though I do not know exactly where or how it is), mean that the statements of the suffering subject, like the identification of the *one* who suffers with the *that* which is suffered, do not bring much to this suffering—rather, the contrary.[33] In me *there is* suffering, but it is not a question here of donation or "givenness" (Husserl), nor even of the absurd or non-sense (Sartre); instead, it is the absence of meaning (*sens*) or, better, of a kind of blank in the very idea of meaning or non-sense.

As far as insomnia, for example, is concerned—relying here on Levinas, who distanced himself here from phenomenology—the "fact that there is [*il y a*]" is "precisely the absence of all self, a '*without-self*' [*sans-soi*]."[34] And this invasion of myself by something that I do not recognize as myself—that is "the physiology of my flesh" that encumbers me (Nietzsche) or "the impersonal 'field of forces' of existing" (Levinas)—certainly makes my existence a matter of existing, but *existing without*

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

existents; that is, it is without an ego (*moi*) (as consciousness takes account of what is happening).[35] And yet it is still me (in this physiological flesh, for example, that weighs me down and drives me to distraction as it refuses to fall into sleep). Chaos is not vacancy or nothingness, in a kind of escape, or at a boundary that one always knows will somehow make sense, as in the existential fall (Heidegger) or the existential absurd (Sartre). Rather, Chaos is invasion. It is the impossibility of coming to terms with the "mass of sensations"—not simply in that it breaks open the framework of what we can come to terms with, to signify in another way (the saturated phenomenon), but, inversely, because it shows us that it is not able to formulate itself (the limited phenomenon).[36]

The limit to the phenomenon does not come, or does not solely come, because the phenomenon cannot be constituted by consciousness. On the contrary, it comes from accepting a limit that Chaos overflows, without ever being received or transformed into consciousness: "The only way to preserve meaning for the concept of constitution would consist in recognizing it as the work of the drive-body [*corps pulsionnel*] and not that of intentional consciousness. . . . To become-conscious of lived experiences means to constitute them as identical cases . . . [and] that reflection falsifies everything, because it logicizes everything."[37] It does so in a kind of "Phenomeno-Mania" (Nietzsche's term), which is characteristic of phenomenology today. Thus Nietzsche's "fundamental thought" quite rightly develops—"in anticipation"—"critical tools against certain tendencies of phenomenology."[38] We need such tools when we come to examine the *this is my body* of the eucharist in this context. It is not "I *have* a body" (a statement of ownership that contemporary philosophy has thankfully denounced); nor is it "*I am* my body" (an identification that is frequent today). The "*this* of his body that *is*" reaches out simply to the anonymity of the "there is" [*il y a*] of corporality, descending in a unique way into the depths of the abyss, the Chaos of the world, as also of myself, and thus making it possible to show this body and to transform it.

(2) *An ideal of passivity opposed to that of force*. This is what we find when subjects no longer make an effort to be "embodied" in the Chaos that confronts them. It is something we find in phenomenology as well as in theology.

(a) From the point of view of phenomenology, first of all, the spirited attacks against Heidegger's authentic being-there (Dasein) and his ambition to overcome everything, including the agony of death, are well known.[39] But still, with all this enthusiasm for the "dismantling" or "dismissal" of the subject, we cannot help asking if the subject does not lose its active quality, its identity, at least insofar as it describes a carefully

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

chosen truth, such as *liberty*, where decision and not simply openness is demonstrated. Certainly, according to Nietzsche, truth is not, or is no longer, simply what is suitable or "adequate." But that does not mean that it has to be *alêtheia*, or an unveiling, as Heidegger implies. As it is creative, it is also, and above all, an *acte libre*—a freely performed action; it is the courage to exist within a subject capable of self-affirmation. In 1883, Nietzsche talks about "truth and courage only among those who are *free*. (Truth, a *sort* of courage)."[40] I shall be taking this line, and I am not alone here. Didier Franck writes, "An analysis which takes account of the operative forces would perhaps be more convincing. But has phenomenology ever given us the means to think about these forces?"[41]

(2) From the point of view of theology, we should note that theological discussions of power and force (Chaos) are equally unsatisfactory. Saint Paul's view is well known: "My power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). So is Nietzsche's critique: "*Deus, qualem Paulus creavit, dei negatio* [God, as Paul created him, is a denial of God]."[42] Modern Christianity has followed the path of phenomenology, espousing in its ideal of "weakness" and "vulnerability" the philosophical outlook of pure "reception" and the "passivity" of the subject. (It is only necessary here, by way of example, to cite the celebration of the human face in the context of Christianity—although in the work of Levinas, the subject is without a face.)[43] The God of Christians, and in particular in his person of the Holy Spirit, is referred to and refers to himself as a God of power: "You were also raised with him through faith in the power of God" (Col. 2:12). Certainly the disciple remains weak if it is only up to *him* to live. As I have argued elsewhere, there is "Force against force": "The *Holy Spirit*, as metamorphosis of the Son by the Father, and of mankind in him, thus paradoxically connects with what Nietzsche despaired of finding in Christianity—the separation '*of strength from the manifestation of strength*' [paralogism of force]."[44]

The limit to the phenomenon because of its abstract and purified character suggests to us that the phenomenon reaches its limit, abandoning Chaos—or "the area of what cannot be spoken"—as unthinkable. We confront here the swerve of the flesh to the body (§1); the over-development of the intentionally lived, as opposed to the non-signifying Chaos (§2); and the unchecked primacy of passivity over activity (§3). These three stumbling blocks are "limits" that a philosophy of the body (and of the eucharist?) must accommodate. We must take them over and transform them. A new and different starting point is necessary, and not just for Heidegger, who brushed all this aside early on—even if he made some attempt to reactivate the topic in the Zollikon Seminars.[45] The need for a

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

new starting point applies to Nietzsche, and even more to us—as well as to Heidegger commenting on Nietzsche, reaching out to the limit of the phenomenon and opening the field to what is on this side in phenomenology. Here he opens the field toward that which cannot be spoken, in terms that simple signification offers us—toward the Chaos that only our human biological body encounters: the animal and instinctual.

I do not wish to say more here of flesh, nor of body—nor of "flesh" (*Leib*) insofar as the retroactive effect of the Kantian mass of sensations and Nietzschean Chaos in all phenomenology has rejected in advance the idea of a lived space, or intuition, made conscious as such (*Erlebnis*, insight). Nor will I speak about "body" (*Körper*), because the reduction of embodiedness to its extension does not do justice to its character of spreading out—that is, its "expansion" rather than its "extension" in the simple fact of being there, tangible, visible, and open to change, in its own eyes as well as in the eyes of others. Only painters such as Francis Bacon or Lucian Freud have been able to show this in their work—in contrast to theorization on the matter.[46] It remains simply to embody (*leiben*, in the Nietzschean sense of the term), or in other words, to see what *biological life* achieves in us and almost without us. Only this life helps us arrive at our true animality and at the Chaos that comes to meet it there. "Nothing else is 'given' as real but our world of desires and passions . . . as a kind of *instinctive life* in which all organic functions, including self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, secretion, and change of matter, are still synthetically united with one another—as a *primary form* of life."[47] It is then to the guiding thread of the body, and to the terrible original text *homo natura*, that we come this time, on the edges of Chaos. And by taking this direction we give a real content (fleshly, human, even cosmic and animal) to *this is my body* in Christianity, because, for Nietzsche as for us, it is primarily a question of "the body and the body alone that philosophizes [*der Leib philosophiert*]."[48]

§4. Bodying Life

To return to Chaos—that is, to the openness and the obscurity of the world and of myself—comes down then, according to my way of thinking (and I share Nietzsche's viewpoint here), to living as one who is bodied. This is probably where we can reach toward the strength and profundity of the *hoc est corpus meum* at the time of the celebration of the Last Supper. To be bodied, or "to body" (*leiben*), points first of all to a surge or impetus, something both alive and vast: intoxication (or rapture) as "the feeling of plenitude and increased energy," a dionysiac dimension of the Life, in the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

face of which the "life" of St. John—not to mention the eucharistic Last Supper—cannot remain indifferent (see §35).[49]

This impetus, or this feeling—which is also a physiological condition as we experience it in a moment of rapture, or intoxication, or drunkenness—is not just an interior mental-event taking place, as though a simple change of tone in affectivity, not directly drawn from the body, could be enough to make us what we are. The mood experienced here is not affect, but a kind of biological thrust of our body that raises us beyond ourselves (e.g., anger), or lets us tie ourselves up in ourselves and dulls us (e.g., shame). I hope we can agree on this. The point is not simply to deploy some kind of physiology of passions, like a contemporary neurology—one that privileges the somatic over the psychic;[50] it is important simply to understand, and to seek, what is at the foundation of our embodiedness, where the "mass of sensations" escapes all signification and thus also escapes from phenomenology, which is caught up in the mysteries of the *signifier*. As Kant explained, in his masterly fashion, "Unity of synthesis in accordance with empirical concepts would be entirely contingent, and, were it not grounded on a transcendental ground of unity, it would be possible for a swarm of appearances ["a mass of sensations"] to fill up our soul without experience ever being able to rise from it."[51]

What can we say, then, about this mass of phenomena, or rather this "mass of sensations," that the consciousness can never manage to synthesize? What would a "picture" be if we had not *beforehand* set our sights on it as a picture? Or perhaps we should talk about the phenomenon of a picture, be it black, gray, harsh, rough, extended, or flat. Why does the part of us that is our drives, or our own animality, prevent us in some way, apparently in advance, from signifying the picture by adjectives like these, that are somehow too rational or commonsense? Moreover, if we are confronted, as in the celebrated account by Husserl in *Cartesian Meditations*, with "the pure—and, so to speak, still dumb—psychological experience, which now must be made to utter its own sense," how can we live in such a silence without having already designated it as part of our lifeworld, or surrounding lifeworld (to use his terms)?[52] Is there a world before predication that has to wait for our words before it can be *predicated* (Merleau-Ponty)? As the biologist Jakob von Uexküll has demonstrated and the philosopher Martin Heidegger has shown conceptually, the dog, the cat, the tortoise, the fly—even the mollusc—can be part of the picture along with the rest of the "mass of sensations" (see §16).[53] But is signifying what really counts for them, or for us in our relationship with our own animality? If we presuppose that the animal lacks a world, aren't we always looking at the animal and imposing on it our own abundance? Aren't we

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

merely seeing its significations in terms of our own signifying? Aren't we conceptualizing what the animal embodies it its body and drives in terms of consciousness and the human? Heidegger, discussing the problem of the philosopher as solitary, says, "Nietzsche declares often enough in his later years that the body must be the *guideline* of observation not only of human beings but of the *world*: the projection of world from the perspective of animal and animality. The fundamental experience of the world as 'chaos' has its roots here."[54]

If we move to the problem of our own animality, Chaos can then be the name we give to *bodying life*: Life seen overall as bodied. We cross a threshold here and move from the major confusion of the chaotic (the mass of sensations) to Chaos itself, as an opening up of the biological body, or the thrust of our drives toward what remains creative in their relationship with the world (*pulsio* from *pellere*; pushing-repulsing). Chaos here does not point to "a turbulent jumble" nor to the "unordered, arising from the removal of all order," but to "what urges, flows and is animated, whose order is concealed, whose law we do not descry straightaway."[55] An irresistible biological approach is at work here, representing the world as "bodying," as "a gigantic 'body,' as it were, whose bodying and living constitutes beings as a whole."[56] One "bodies" then in Nietzsche—as in the intransitive verb *leiben* that comes up in phrases such as "to be empty" (*nichts im Leibe haben*) or "to be pregnant" (*gesegneten Leibes sein*)—when the drive or the "thrust" (*pulsio*) emerges, and nothing holds it back. If I suggest that health or illness provide the point of view from which we start here, as well as the starting point of our thought processes, I am not reducing the psychic to the biological in the neurological sense of the term. Rather, I wish to note, or to clarify, how our well-being (or our ill-being) is rooted in life at the level of our most basic corporality. "Every time an event enters into the consciousness," Nietzsche says, indicating how living is first of all being embodied, "it is the expression of the ill-being [*malaise*] of the organism."[57] Chaos then goes deep down into our emotions as well as into our drives and into our physiological and instinctive bodies. It starts as a kind of bottomless descent into our own animality; in that way it ensures that our embodiment, or our drives, reach into what we live without ever being able to signify what it is that we live (and thus the famous and appropriate resemblance between *Trieb* [drive] and *Tier* [animal] in the German language).[58] Simply to spiritualize all of this is not convincing. Nor is it enough to point out that a drive is not an "instinct," or to suggest that a drive simply unites and traces out "the frontier between the mental and the physical."[59] This again tries to signify too much, and attempts to humanize things too directly at the exact place where we must

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

stop doing so. I shall come back later to the topic (§17), to show that Freudianism does not work as well as Nietzsche's approach here because it fixes drives to some particular end, whether they are repressed or disguised (sublimation). In the end, the sphere of the consciousness determines the aims of the unconscious, whether these aims are unimportant or only part of what the unconscious expresses (the sunken part of an iceberg, so to speak). As long as sense determines non-sense—or, rather, as long as beyond-sense or non-sense is not brought out into the open, or somehow thought to be there—the descent into the abyss has not really been attempted, and a signifying base will, after all, always try to give structure to everything. Gilles Deleuze, in an interview, risks surprising those who want to see ethics (bestiality or sin) where in reality it is a question of metaphysics (animality or Chaos): "the problem is not that of being *this or that within man*, but rather of *a becoming inhuman*, of *becoming the universal animal*: not to see oneself as a beast, but *to deconstruct the human organization of the body*, to cross this or that zone of intensity of the body, each one discovering which zones are his or her own, and the groups, the populations, the species that inhabit them."[60]

As far as the unspoken is concerned—or rather, "the region of what can no longer be said, the region of renunciation"[61]—we might ask whether we are really able to throw light on the topic in a philosophical work on the body? The question may seem incongruous, even ridiculous—or at the very least presumptuous. After all, the specter of the rapture or intoxication of the gods hangs over the topic of banquets, particularly those "agape" where a "good wine" is served and there is "good bread" to eat. From the paradoxical proximity of dionysiac drives and eucharistic embodiment (§35) we can derive a conception of the action of grace (*eucharis*) that is, to say the least, ambiguous: a mad drunken bout as opposed to a meal shared in the agape; human bestiality as opposed to the humanization of the animal in us; a reduction to the biological rather than a renewal of the Christly. St. Paul himself gave warning, to Greeks who were first of all and above all dionysiac: "When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk" (1 Cor. 11:20). Some three centuries later, Tertullian, distancing himself from the Montanist movement, attacked those Christians who were permissive toward paganism—those, according to St. Paul, whose "god is the belly" (Phil. 3:19). Tertullian thought that in taking too literally the idea of the flesh to be eaten (*this is my body*), they were vying with drunken orgies. His warning to them was not without a certain humor:

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

> You are more irreligious, in proportion as a heathen is more conformable. He, in short, sacrifices his appetite to an idol-god; you to (the true) God will not. For to you your belly is god, and your lungs a temple, and your paunch a sacrificial altar, and your cook the priest, and your fragrant smell the Holy Spirit, and your condiment spiritual gifts, and your belching prophecy. . . . If I offer you a paltry lentil dyed red with must well boiled down, immediately you will sell all your "primacies"; with you "love" shows its fervour in saucepans, "faith" its warmth in kitchens, "hope" its anchorage in waters; but of greater account is "love," because that is the means whereby your young men sleep with their sisters! Appendages, as we all know, of appetite are lasciviousness and voluptuousness. . . . On the other hand, an over-fed Christian will be more necessary to bears and lions, perchance, than to God; only that, even to encounter beasts, it will be his duty to practise emaciation.[62]

In spite of these appropriate counsels of vigilance, in particular from the period when the dionysiac was dominant (St. Paul, or Tertullian), we can still encounter this problem today—despite the fact that everything has been done to formalize the episode that is, to say the least, *strange* of the "body given to eat," or the eucharistic body. Thus we constantly come up against this question: Is it necessary and will it always be necessary to spiritualize everything here? Must we lessen the scandal of the body given to us literally to chew (*trôgon*) as real foodstuff and the blood given to drink as true beverage?—"for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink" (John 6:55). Certainly, as I aim to show in this book (see especially §26), neither "body" nor "blood" had the same meaning in Palestine as they did in ancient Greece or Rome. Moreover, to eat and to drink in terms of a filiation with one's ancestors or in reference to rites of passage would not have had the same signification in Athens (dionysiac banquet) and in Jerusalem (Passover). The question, however, remains—at least for us, as in the past—"how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" This is what the Capernaites (the Jews of the Synagogue of Capernaum) ask, and it appears that we are not talking about something that was inevitable, even when "his hour had come," that is, at the Passover (John 6:52, 13:1) (see §25). What we need in Christianity, first of all, is "bodying life" (*leiben*). We need this when biology makes a body with the body, as it does in the world, just as we need it when Chaos is married to the "mass of sensations" with which we cannot come to terms. The incorporation in the eucharist, as we shall see later (§30), demands that our bodies make body with the body of Christ ("You are the body of Christ and individually members of

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

it" [1 Cor. 12:27]) and thus that we are also *bodied*—because our life is, above all, organic, and we need to start from the body and physiology. The *this is my body* then becomes a gift of the organic to the organic, rather than simply spiritualization in the mystical context. Appetites, emotions, drives, and all that make up our instinctive life with all its organic functions conjoined are taken into the eucharistic bread, reaching also into the abyss or the chaotic base of our humanity: "It is because our *bodies* are *driven* that subjectivity can be so truly a constituent element, and it is consequently in such bodies that we have to look for the ultimate source of phenomenality."[63]

A journey has already started here, and we will not stop midway, even if carrying on requires a certain boldness. I will return to and lay claim to matters of dogma, but precisely to show them "in a way that responds to the needs of our era"—that is, "in following the methods of research and presentation that are used in modern thought."[64] Examining Chaos or corporality (Chapters 1, 6, and 7); that part of us that is animality and that will be changed to humanity (Chapters 2, 4, and 7); and eros always already included in agape (Chapters 3, 6, and 9)—and claiming the contemporaniety of these topics today—is not simply a question of following fashion or rhetorical tricks, because these topics have been neglected in philosophy and even more so in theology. It is rather a question of yielding to necessity—that which arises from the thing itself being studied and not from the categories we impose on it. It is a question, as we have already seen, of "the projection of the world from the perspective of the animal and animality. The fundamental experience of the world as 'chaos' has its roots here."[65] Christ himself seems to have taken this way, a way that is so difficult to articulate and to come to terms with. He took the place of the animal (of animality) that was biblical, and he did so in a way that is not often questioned because it is so astonishing. That is not to say that he was incarnate in or through the animal (a pagan notion justly condemned at the Council in Trullo, in 692 AD). Rather, in taking on our humanity, he also took on and took into his care our animal origins. For a start, we find his icon, or his representation, in a certain form of animality: in the figure of the sacrificial lamb.[66]

Presented (*mise en scène*) in the form of a sacrifice in Judaism, the lamb is presented to the Last Supper (*mise en Cène*) through Christ in a Christian Passover. Going from the sacred (*sacer*) to the shared meal (*Cena*), the sacrificed lamb comes to be entirely eaten (flesh and blood), which marks the important seal of animality in the great Passage undertaken by God. This is not *bestial*—a form of animality that would precisely mark the dimension of sin (§13)—but it is nonetheless the *animal* in humankind

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

that God takes on, and metamorphoses, in a kind of staging of the Last Supper (a *mise en Cène*) on the great day of Holy Thursday. The philosophical gives way for the first time to the theological here, not to juxtapose the two, and even less to muddle them together, but to let them be seen on the stage of our humanity, inhabited by Chaos and animality. What is staged at the Last Supper is a God embodied with the lineaments of a God sacrificed, ready to accept responsibility for all and ready to transubstantiate all.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

3

Eros Eucharisticized

§9. The Body Eucharisticized and the Body Eroticized

We can find confirmation in the tradition of the Church for what has been suggested here—relating the banquet and the *consumption* of the eucharistic body at that banquet with the *consummation* between spouses through the body ("consummation" being the term used to confirm the sacrament of marriage).[1] We could cite in this connection one of many examples in the commentary on the Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs) written by St. Bernard, along with his brother Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, for the Abbey of Clairvaux, when the two shared a sick-room in 1124. "I must ask you to try to give your whole attention here," says the Abbot, commenting on the opening of the Song. "'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth'" (Song of Sol. 1:1). "The mouth that kisses signifies the Word who assumes human nature; the nature assumed receives the kiss; the kiss however, that takes its being both from the giver and the receiver, is a person that is formed by both, none other than 'the one mediator between God and mankind, himself a man, Christ Jesus.'"[2]

Certainly this is not, or not directly, a question of the eucharist (*this is my body*), but rather of the incarnation (the person of Jesus Christ). But the references to the erotic in the Song of Solomon are extensive. To water down this fact would be to make light of a tradition of mysticism that was able to explore eroticism, even at the risk of shocking readers or of leading to the suppression of books devoted to it. I shall hold to the idea that we

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

have, in the Bible, "fragments" of "a lover's discourse" and maintain that the *this is my body* of the eucharisticized body has analogies with the *this is my body* of the eroticized body.[3] Benedict XVI underlines, by way of paradigm, how "the mutual consent that husband and wife exchange in Christ, and which establishes them as a community of life and love, also has a eucharistic dimension."[4]

The text of the New Testament confirms both this analogy and the direction our argument has taken so far—the writings of St. Paul, in particular. It is worth pointing out that the great *theological* discussion of the institution of the eucharist in the first Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10–11)—the sacrifice (10:23–33), man and woman before God (11:1–16), and the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)—retraces exactly the *philosophical* route that we have been following in preparation for (1) the animal and meat, (2) eros, or the difference between man and woman, and (3) the body and bodily life. As we shall see in what follows:

(1) To insist first of all that "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are beneficial" is to give a ruling on what has been "offered in sacrifice" (1 Cor. 10:23, 28).

(2) To say that "woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God" (1 Cor. 11:12) is to make sexual difference originary and willed by God for humanity (see §21).

(3) To institute the *this is my body* that is "given for you" as *the* message of God that was handed on to us (1 Cor. 11:23–24), is profoundly and definitively to implant the human eros previously expressed in the bodies of sexuality into the divine agape that is now celebrated (the body of the eucharisticized bread). The wedding feast or the "nuptials" of the Lamb are not *just* a question of the animality that has to be accepted in humankind (§5). They are also, and indeed above all, the nuptials of God with humanity, which perhaps bring the human out of simple animality. "'For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready: to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure'—for the fine linen is the righteous deed of the saints" (Rev. 19:7–8).

§10. Charitable God

The modality of eros—*this is my body*—is then the *modality* of the eucharisticized body insofar as it can also be an exchange of speech in the act of sexuality. But I would not want to suggest a complete "univocity" (Marion) between eros and agape (i.e., that the words are used with the same meaning and in the same sense), nor that there is a complete "equivocity" (Nygren) (i.e., that the words are used with different meaning and

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

in different senses). I do not agree with the latter (equivocity) because it risks separating divine charity and human love to such an extent that nothing remains in common between them. On the other hand, univocity reduces the form of divine love so thoroughly to its model of human love that nothing remains in it that is specific to God. The danger in the past was that of equivocity: "The difference between them [agape and eros] is not of degree but of kind."[5] The danger today is that of univocity: "God loves like we love."[6] We need then to substitute, or counterbalance, the erotic phenomenon, which certainly describes and is founded upon a true experience of the body (see Marion, as well as Bataille or Artaud), with that of a charitable phenomenon (§33).

It is not simply that eros can be identified with agape (a first practical movement where experience of the body serves as a model for the encounter with Christ and the Church in the eucharistic bread). Eros is also transformed, or metamorphosed, by the divine agape that gives it meaning (a second didactic initiative where the encounter between God and humanity in the eucharist is established in reality, transforming the simple human meaning of the bodies bound together). An encyclical of Benedict XVI underlines this even in its title: *Deus Caritas Est* [God is love]—*agape* and not *amor* (*eros*) or *dilectio* (*philia*). Although the term "love" is said, quite appropriately, in the text to be one of the most "frequently used and misused of words" (§2), the reciprocal transformation of eros by agape is what is principally considered: "*eros* and *agape*—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. . . . the element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *eros* is impoverished and even loses its nature [§7]. *Eros* is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with *agape*" (§10). The phrase "unity of love" (as agape) (*unitas caritas*), used in the title of the first part of the ecclesiastical document, does not refer to a single meaning of the term "love" (as eros): *univocitas amoris*. Recent analyses have used a double substitution—from the univocal to unity, from charity to love—that a consideration of eros and agape cannot in reality support.[7]

A philosophical reading of the famous recommendation of St. Paul to the Ephesians is more convincing (see §23). St. Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). The thought is more radical here, authorizing not simply an analogy between the erotic *this is my body* of the espoused couple and the charitable *this is my body* of God and humanity. Paradoxically, it makes the second (the charitable body) the model for the first (the erotic body), a move that indicates, moreover, how it is an analogy—of attribution, not simply of proportionality.[8] Certainly in heuristic terms, for research pur-

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

poses, we had better go from *eros* to *agape*; conjugal experience and the erotic experience of a couple through their bodies can and must serve as the "existential" of the eucharistic that makes sense of "Take, this is my body given for you." But from a didactic point of view, or in terms of teaching that respects the order of things, agape may be said to integrate and transform eros. In this way, the integration of the bodies of the spouses, united with the body of God in an act of love (eucharist: this is my body [of God] given for you), precedes and also integrates the exotic interplay of humans among themselves (sexuality: this is my body [of man or woman] given for you). To love one's wife as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for the Church, reminds us precisely of the precedence of God's bodily love for humanity over man's fleshly love for woman, rather than the inverse. Whether it is a question of encountering Chaos (§2) or accepting bodily drives (§4) or taking responsibility for animality (§5), the eucharistic associated with the altar linen is the basis for, and encompasses, the erotic we associate with our bed linen—such that there is not in reality a fulfillment of the erotic for a couple except within the "hand" of he who contains and transforms them in his *agape*.[9] An artist who understood this—or at least brought it into view so that others could consider its implications—was Auguste Rodin, in his work *The Hand of God*. In this sculpture, the entwined couple is contained within the hand of God, which holds them together.[10] The eros is thus eucharisticized in that it is transformed—from animality to humanity in its filiation, as well as from the erotic to love, or charity, in a transubstantiation. Benedict XVI tells us, in *Sacramentum Caritatis* [The sacrament of charity], "The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within Creation the principle of a radical change." He talks of the transforming power of the eucharist that we need to think of as "a sort of 'nuclear fission,' to use an image familiar to us today, which penetrates to the heart of all being—a change meant to set off a process that transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28).[11]

§11. From Birth to Abiding

The eucharistic sacrifice—philosophically interpreted—possesses, then, its content (bodily life; §1 and §4), its inheritance (animality; §9), and above all, its form (eros, or *this is my body*; §6). But we need still to consider its finality, apart from its habitus (i.e., customs unconsciously associated with it by those who participate) (§12). We need to think of it in terms of *abiding here*: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

in me [*en emoï*], and I in them [*kagô in autô*]" (John 6:56) (§11). Looking at what it is to "abide" is in a sense the ultimate goal of my triptych of books, and I should perhaps explain my overall plan here. (1) First, in *Passeur de Gethsémani* [The guide to Gethsemane], I examine the bodily form of what awaits us, or the anxiety of death that is reflected back onto the present. The Son of Man is he who "suffers" the world in his own corporeality and takes on the burden of its finitude, as both suffering and mortality. "His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father" (John 13:1). (2) Next, in *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, I look at the bodily form of our past, or rather, the "birth" that has taken place. I examine how the philosophical birth from below (phenomenology of birth) clarifies and is transformed by the theological renaissance from on high (theology of the resurrection). Here I take the road that leads from "suffering" to "passage": "'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?'" (John 3:4). (3) Now, in *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb*, I finally come to our bodily form in the present, with *this is my body* as viaticum, as proposed today to the believer in espousals where we take full responsibility for our humanity, but where we are waiting still to be asked "'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'" (John 6:52).

Past, future, present (dimensions of time); suffering, birth, flesh (existentials); dereliction, resurrection, eucharist (theological statements from the individual point of view, not dogma); suffering, passage, the act of eating (transformations)—these are modalities in a triptych where suffering is found along with birth and living or abiding here. In this triptych we are always returning to the same story: "come into the world" (John 6:14); "come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2).[12]

What I have in my sights is to *abide* [Gr. *menein*][13] instead of the *hoc est corpus meum* that we still consume today. I do not want to be reductive, even if that entails certain breaks, sometimes arbitrary, with phenomenology. I want to avoid interpreting *bodily substance* as a simple condensation of the "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida), or as what has been called the pure "reification" and "objectification" of corporeality (Nancy).[14] Perhaps, as we shall see later (§36), we have philosophically narrowed down *abiding* or *remaining* too far, to an *objectifying* or *reifying*, as though all abiding were a kind of substantializing that was decidedly impossible to inhabit. Stanislas Breton warns severely, "There is in this attitude (which only sees in Aquinas' notion of substance [or transubstantiation] a simple 'thing') not just a sign of ingratitude, but a lack in their culture, which is expressed in the enthusiasm of our young philosophers, after the arrival of phenomenology, first for Husserl and then for Heidegger."[15] We cannot tar all

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

phenomenology with this brush; far from it. In particular, the corpus of theology resists very directly the objectifying of substance found in phenomenology.[16] But it remains important to ask if the eucharisticized bread really does give access to an "abiding" place where we can live ("Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them" [John 6:56]). And we might ask whether it is really necessary to indict all "abiding" as a form of "substantializing"? The question "Where do you abide?" is relevant, (1) certainly and philosophically, to phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and others), but also (2) theologically, to the gospels (John 1:38).

(1) We may answer the question ("Where do you abide?") by saying that the Earth can become habitable for us: "The Originary Ark, the Earth, Does Not Move."[17] Or we may answer that we live "as poets" to cope with the intrusions of technology: we live in the quadripartite (of the Earth and sky, divinities and mortals).[18] Either way, the challenge for humanity now is that of dwelling, or abiding (as ecology tells us today), rather than withdrawing from or dominating (as in the conquest of space proposed in the recent past). Heidegger tells us, "*ich bin, du bist* mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth is *Bauen* dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell [*bauen*]."[19]

So, is Christianity first of all a way of dwelling here? Or rather, if it is a *way* of dwelling here, is it also where we *can dwell*, in these times when many people denounce Christianity as having lost itself in the process of modernizing? To reply, we don't have to hold forth on the pseudo-topic of the end of Christianity, or evoke the cliché of passing from one millennium to another, or develop all the worries that arise from quibbles over a Western faith that is always trying to establish its identity. The habitable depends not upon adaptability, but upon its foundations. It holds within itself its own establishment and its abode: the eucharistic viaticum as a place to "abide" (§34).

(2) Moreover, the question "Where do you abide?" (Or "Where are you staying?") is one that can be addressed—theologically this time—to he whom John the Baptist describes simply as "the Lamb" (John 1:36) without any reference this time to sin ("who takes away the sin of the world" [John 1:29]). Posing the question helps us see the dimensions of *our* animality in the Son, the one who recapitulates, as he comes to convert and transform. John starts by saying, "Look, here is the Lamb of God" (*Ecce agnus Dei*). We might recall Pontius Pilate: "Here is the man!" (*Ecce homo* [John 19:5])—the phrase taken up by Nietzsche.[20] The whole of the narrative of the Gospel of John is in reality consecrated to this question of

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

abiding; it is as though it were, right from the start, his leading concern. The eucharist, as I have already pointed out, gives us the response in its discourse on the bread of life: to eat "my flesh" and drink "my blood," to dwell (*menein*) in him and he in us (John 6:56). What abides (*menein*), rather than what merely subsists (*subsistere*) (see §36), is what truly gives meaning to presence. The descent into the abyss—Chaos and Tohu-Bohu rejoined in the bodily life of the eucharistic bread and exhibited through the animality of the sacrificial lamb—does not reach either "substance" or "subsistence," because they would be *sure* and *stable*, simply to protect us from danger. The house "built . . . on rock" (Matt. 7:24), the heritage of those who "stand firm in faith" (Isa. 7:9), is often wrongly interpreted as a search for something firm and constant, as in the *cogito* of Descartes (Second Meditation), as though one could distance thought as well as faith from the attacks of doubt that can provoke and that question us.[21] In theology, then, even more than in philosophy, we cannot expect reassurance, or even simple security, from "abiding in his presence" ("abide in me, and I in them" [John 6:56]). That is not at all what is envisaged in the act of the eucharist. It does not, in its viaticum, disguise any of the dangers of existence—nor even see them in another way. We need not simply to abide there, me in him and him in me; we need to strive together to abide. The dwelling has no substance as "subsistence," but is "an effort to sojourn in the presence."[22]

What should be apparent, although not yet fully developed, is that the eucharistic bread—if it becomes part of my embodiedness, encounters my animality and descent into the depths of Chaos—reaches and expects its "dwelling." This is not by a door opened to paradise, in flight into the distance. It is, as I see it, in the true sense of *abiding*, that the viaticum keeps us in our humanity in God incorporate. We could say that every day that passes we not only make our way through our animality (Chaos, drives, the passions that make up the eros), but also make an effort to take on our animality and to transform it into a humanity recognized in its *filiation* (Chaos, drives, passions lived and transformed by the agape). "Wisdom, (including that of God toward man)," according to the remarkable humanist Charles de Bovelles, Canon of Noyon, "is the virtue capable of setting man on his feet [*hominem sistit*], of sustaining him and consolidating him in his humanity [*continet figitque in Homine*] or, if you like, of stopping him going beyond the bounds of the human [*vetat ex liminibus excedere humanis*]."[23] God does not call us to angelism, as if we were illicitly to go beyond the limits of our created being, but invites us to a new kind of humanism: a humanism that was finally lived and changed by divinity, as far as and including the transformation of our own animality

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

(§28). We should not expect mistakenly to become "angels" in heaven, but simply "*like* angels [*ôs angellos*]" (Matt. 22:30). The attractions of angelism do not stop us being part of humankind, or rather, "husbands and wives at the Resurrection." On the contrary, we have to acknowledge ourselves *as such* before God, in an irreducible sexual difference that the angelic attitude of praise comes simply to indicate as well as to respect (§21).[24] *Abiding in Christ*—such then is "the fundamental act of Christian being" that the philosophical approach finds in the theological abode of the eucharisticized bread. It is its proper end, and it is in the form of a viaticum, such that we do not have to quit the common humanity that we share.[25]

§12. The Reason for Eating

If we have covered the action of the eucharist philosophically with regard to its content (the body or bodily life), its inheritance (animality), its expansion (Chaos), its form (eros), and its finality (abiding here), it remains now for us to look at its habitus, at how it is disposed: to "discern." We cannot escape a diacritical position at the moment when we communicate. St. Paul tells us, "Examine yourselves [*dokimazetô eauton*], and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning [*diakrinôn*] the body, or the Lord's body, eat and drink judgment against themselves" (1 Cor. 11:28–29). I shall be discussing later the transubstantiation of the bread into body, its "real" presence, which is also "real" in the consciousness in another sense (§19). It is not simply a question of something that we *eat* in order that the sacrament is operative. In fact, it is necessary for us—for us also—to *cooperate*, as is the case with any meal duly shared. Thomas Aquinas says, very seriously, "Even though a mouse or a dog were to eat the consecrated host, the substance of Christ's body would not cease to be under the species, so long as those species remain." But, he adds, "it must not be said that the irrational animal eats the body of Christ sacramentally; since it is incapable of using it as a sacrament. Hence it eats Christ's body 'accidentally,' and not sacramentally, just as if anyone not knowing a host to be consecrated were to consume it."[26]

Eating the "bread" sacramentally or drinking the "wine" sacramentally—in other words, recognizing that they are "body" and "blood"—is then something that necessitates a judgment, or at least an act of discernment. Does this mean that one has to prove one's "understanding" in order to take communion? Certainly not, if that implies an act of reasoning; however, necessarily yes it if is a question of heartfelt participation

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

and a belief stemming from faith. St. Matthew tells us, "When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go: first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23–24). Against all tendencies toward Gnosticism, and whatever the level of comprehension, *all* Christians are invited to the eucharistic table. The Christian's approach to the altar, no matter the degree of rationality involved, nonetheless requires a discernment in faith, a "belief" that definitively distances us from the mouse (*mus*) or dog, or the person who is ignorant of what he or she eats (*nesciens*)—in other words, from those who never see anything but bread (when it is also a question of the "body") or wine (when it is also a question of "blood"). But is that to say—taking another tack, starting all over again—that the Host is not in itself consecrated, and that it is through us that the transubstantiation takes place? Certainly we cannot think that. Because the bread may not necessarily be seen as "body" from the point of view of the one eating, but is necessarily so, Aquinas tells us, in terms of "the thing eaten."[27]

The situation, then, should be clear. There is a habitus (i.e., a custom unconsciously associated with it by those who participate), or, we could say, there are *reasons to eat* in the act of the eucharist. As St. Paul says, you must "examine yourselves [*dokimazetô eauton*]" before eating and drinking, while "discerning [*diakrinôn*]" what you eat and drink (1 Cor. 11:28, 29). There are no shortcuts here, and this participation in the eucharist is not something that can be defined in isolation. Everything depends on the angle from which we look: (1) in subjective terms, or (2) in terms of objective reality.

(1) *From the subjective point of view*. To communicate with the body and blood of Christ is not simply to eat them. The believer aspires to, or discerns, exactly the body of the Lord, when communicating with the bread, and aspires to, or discerns, the blood of the Lord when communicating with wine. To eat and drink one's own condemnation—"judgment against themselves [*crima eautô*]," as St. Paul puts it (1 Cor. 11:29)—is not simply to confuse the eucharistic bread with the other parts of a meal, as might have wrongly been done in the early agape, or communal meals; rather, it is "not to appreciate what is necessary for the reception of the body of Christ."[28]

St. Augustine was right when, like Aquinas later (in his example of the mouse and the dog), he was not satisfied that the full meaning of the communion was given simply by talking of the *reality* of the conversion of the eucharistic bread into body or wine into blood. He tells us "there is a certain manner of eating that Flesh and drinking that Blood, in which

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

whosoever eats and drinks, 'he dwells in Christ and Christ in him.'" And, as a kind of warning, he says that "he does not 'dwell in Christ and Christ in him,' who 'eats the Flesh and drinks the Blood of Christ' in any manner whatsoever, but only in some certain manner, to which He doubtless had regard when He spoke these words."[29]

The habitus, or the subjective disposition, of the communicant—that of discerning—counts above all in the act of the eucharist, but not more (in the Protestant point of view) than the objective reality of he who is present when we communicate (a necessary condition for Catholics). The way or the manner in which the believer approaches the table of the communion meal is part of the act of communion ("examine yourselves" and "discern"), as much as that which is its objective (the aforementioned transubstantiation): "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. . . . If we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world" (1 Cor. 11: 27, 31–32).

We ought to make things plain here, once and for all, because unless we accept it we are lying to ourselves: the cultural formula (Nancy), as much as the Christian formula (Magisterium of the Catholic Church)—of "the body of Christ" (*Corpus Christi*)—when we go up to the table every week, says nothing, or says remarkably little, to the believer or unbeliever today, unless that formula is based on a contemporary anthropology of the body. We will always be haunted by "avatars of cannibalism," which we do also need to confront (§25).[30] "Eating the body" does not simply sound for us today like something from the world of ancient Palestine (I shall return to this subject later, discussing the *flesh* taken as the whole human being); first of all, it is within the framework of our inheritance of Greek or Hellenic culture that we already find the Capharnaite world suspect (the meat). "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52). Certainly some people will respond that it is part of the "mystery" and that it is better not to think too much about it; perhaps some will say that such questions only cause confusion.

The ancients were not, however, taken in by this. All of them, from the greatest to the not so great, confronted the question, with a courage that nobody dares to imitate today. St. Augustine did so (talking of the crime and the horror that the Savior seems to demand), and Thomas Aquinas certainly did (talking of the permanence of the species—bread and wine—that they are "commonly used by men" because "it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood"—"lest this sacrament might be derided by unbelievers, if we were to eat our Lord

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

under his own species" [see §25]).[31] We find even more of this in the Venerable Bede, the eighth-century monk, where the cruelty borders on a kind of carnage that one cannot, however, avoid imagining: "The Jews thought that our Lord would divide his flesh into pieces [*particulatim carnem suam divideret*], and give it to them to eat: and so mistaking him, strove."[32]

In short, the *musterion* of the eucharist is not a question of something "mysterious" or "numinous"—a kind of Gnostic secret revealed only to initiates, or that we can never approach head on. This "Christian mystery," like all the Christian mysteries, is in large part already revealed, and we are all called to enter into it. We cannot, of course, cease looking into its depths. But we need our intelligence once again to dare to enter into it. Without that, we are renouncing what is purely and simply our humanity, in a kind of blind faith.[33] The hypothesis of the eucharist containing bodying life (§4) might in this sense shock us, as might equally that of the inheritance of our animality (§3), or the conversion of animality into a humanity that recognizes its filiation (§7), or the extension of Chaos (§2), or the form of eros (§9). All of these philosophical approaches, however, seen in existential terms, clarify the contemporary for us as well as pointing to what there is in it of our humanity. They show us the possibility of its conversion and accommodation of divinity—as far as and including the viaticum of the eucharist. We still need terms like "conversion," "transubstantiation," "manducation," "operation," "species," "substance," and "accidents"—terms that have been found necessary and will continue to be used—but their use now is meant to integrate them in a reformulation through which doctrine becomes philosophically "actualized." It is not simply a question of adjusting to the tastes of our times (actualizing), but of deploying the terms in all of their potential (*actualitas*). Apart from the essential address by the organic to the organic in the *this is my body* of the eucharist (§1), there remains a reason for us in "eating" it whereby faith ensures at least that we are already transformed or have understood. Berengarius of Tours says, in his letter to Adelmann, that St. Augustine "did not say 'into the hand, into the mouth, into the teeth, into the belly,' but 'into one's thought' [*Non ait 'In manum, in os, in dentem, in ventrem,' sed 'in cogitationem'*]."[34]

(2) *In terms of objective reality* of the body subsequently consumed here, I am very far from suggesting that the act of the eucharist depends solely on the subjective disposition of the communicant (see §29). Nor do I suggest that we should deny the reality of the eucharistic conversion and attribute everything to communal symbolism. The way that the sacrificial lamb takes on our animality and humanity—which it will be important

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

to look at again in detail (Chapter 7)—comes precisely to show the *real* presence of the body of Christ in the act of transubstantiation. It is not simply a figurative intention that is signified. The mouse or the dog, as we have already seen, going toward the sacrament from the point of view of "the one who eats" (*ex parte manducantis*), but not from the point of view of "the one who is eaten" (*ex parte manducanti*). There is thus a kind of eating that does not depend solely on chewing, or "manducation," but that also brings in transubstantiation. Abiding in the act of the eucharist does not, as we have seen (§11), stem from the metaphysic of presence that has so often been rejected, but from the act of being, newly interpreted (by Thomas Aquinas) as an "effort this time to abide" and not as an "enclosure, or reification, in the thing."[35]

Is the presence then *real*, as the traditional expression has it? We can certainly argue this insofar as the presence here is the act of making present and not simply a reduction to the thing. The distance of God apart from me, remaining *there* when I am not (in the tabernacle of the so-called reserved sacrament), has less to do with its being there than with the donation or gratuitous transfer always active in its charity. We can then go along with tradition. The doctrine of transubstantiation does not imply the subjectivization of the present of humanity as its condition. Rather, it implies the objectivization of the charity of God as a movement of donation or transfer: "In the eucharistic present, all presence is deduced from the charity of the gift: all the rest in it becomes appearance of a gaze without charity: the perceptible species, the metaphysical conception of time, the reduction to consciousness, all are degraded to one figure (or caricature) of charity."[36]

If we take account now of the absolute gift—not regarding the consecrated bread simply as thing (objective reality)—and we put this along with the examination of the self, or discernment, at the time of communicating (subjective disposition), then in the transubstantiation of the bread into body, and the wine into blood, there will be a "real presence," in the two senses of presence as the body of Christ and as presence in the consciousness of humanity. It is real insofar as it does not depend upon humankind that the body of Christ is here converted and made present. It is also real in that the thing transformed becomes here for us "the thing itself" (*Sache selbst*), this time truly in "flesh and bone" (*leibhaft gegeben*), as organic calls to organic and takes on itself each day the Chaos of our animality to convert it into humanity. It makes of, and with, him an eternal offering, so that we may obtain our inheritance. This is done not through angelism or a kind of otherworldliness (something we should definitively renounce) but through a new mode of what is human—and

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

both filial and Christian. It is an appropriate way of living in the world, in which an other takes on Chaos and is also metamorphosed by it.

All the same, we are left with questions that threaten to nullify what is here proposed: Is there no humankind if we are not eucharisticized? Is animality so important that nothing remains of the human if we are not saved in this particular way? Obviously, it would be wrong to suggest that. For the *eu-charis*, or the *action of grace*, is not simply restricted to the agape. We can put forward two reasons here: First, the human being is always already humanized, once created, although nonetheless never dissociated from that animality that Adam had to name (Gen. 2: 18–20). Second, the whole of humanity is included in the *hoc est corpus meum* of the Holy Thursday, and this is the dynamic of humanization in filiation as well as hominization in our genesis (Teilhard de Chardin) to which all humanity is called from our origin (§28). Christians, in this sense, cannot simply be content with loving one another, even though it is the golden rule of Christianity that was expressed in that way (John 13:34). They must also, and particularly when it is a question of the eucharist, look forward with one another—certainly to eat, but also, above all, to be incorporated in the resurrected Word. It is neither an individual nor a community that is called upon to be humanized in the resurrected Son, but the whole of humanity—to go, in other words, from that Chaos that is rightly brought to light in the eros, to the cosmos that is also lived by the agape. Paul tells the community at Corinth, "So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another [*allê-lous ekdechesthe*]" (1 Cor. 11:33). The reason for eating, or the act of discernment, operates less on our reason per se (where there is always a problem about dictating everything) as on that which is actually given in the act of the eucharist. As Irenaeus says so impressively at the heart of *Against Heresies*, "Our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion."[37]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

PART III

God Incorporate

Nothing involves (in reality) a man so much as the eucharist.

—François Mauriac, 1931[1]

Like birth or resurrection, the eucharist denotes first of all a passage. It is a passage of body to body in a transubstantiation (of bread to body and of wine to blood), an assimilation (of God in man through manducation), and an incorporation (of man in God through the mystery of the Church, of spouses). It brings about a Passover (*pèsah*) on the day of the Passover, or rather, it speaks the Passover. After that time when everything centred solely on the assumption of the body of Christ in the consecrated Host, we have now come to a time for the expansion of the Last Supper—expanded to the incorporation of humanity into all divinity. The incorporation *of* God, or God incorporate, is not simply that of God to the human through the consecrated bread, but also that of the human to the divine by the Host that is eaten. Everything was certainly in humankind and in humankind first of all, even when God abided here—from the descent into the abyss (Part I) to the "sojourn of man" (Part II). Nothing, however, even after the fact, was to remain strange to his nature, apart from sin, once the Son as man had come to be incarnate and to "incorporate us to him" by the manducation of the eucharisticized body (Part III). Perhaps it is only Montaigne who opens a pathway for us here—a pathway entailing a possibility for human beings, not without God or against God but *starting off from* our need for depth and autonomy at the level of our existence, or our humanity: "Let us then, for once, consider a man alone, without foreign assistance, armed only with his own proper arms, and unfurnished of the divine grace and wisdom, which is all his honour, strength, and the foundation of his being. Let us see how he stands in this fine equipage."[2] The petition of "man alone" contains, as I see it, his own consistency, at least in laying bare the depths of his conscience, as well as in his dialogue with contemporary humankind, which is imbued with a sense of finitude.

But, as I have tried to show elsewhere,[3] the closed horizon of our existence as part of humankind is not satisfying (at least in Christian terms) for this man alone, even if he is "armed only with his own proper arms."

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Because "divine grace and wisdom" remain the "honour, strength, and the foundation of his being" as a human being, as Montaigne makes clear; moreover, no humanism can be founded without recognizing a certain transcendence that also belongs to the spirit of humanity, if only to be recognized after the event (in the vision and the prospect of the Resurrection). But—and we confront here a certain tendency in theology that sets itself up, wrongly, as a form of liberation (Christian as well as political)—neither humanization nor hominization can constitute in themselves the purpose of the act of the eucharist, since they risk neglecting the act of filiation as also that of re-creation. Certainly, without God, man is still a being worthy of existence, and is even, up to a point, capable of taking responsibility for himself. And it is part of the desire of God that we should be able to take responsibility for our humanity and offer a true vis-à-vis for his divinity. In attributing too much to man, however, we forget God, especially if the filiation in the Trinity does not come to integrate and transform the weight of our humanity. But through the figure of the Completely-Other—in fact, only through this figure—we see the other, or our neighbour, who is always derived from such a figure. A certain form of transcendence, seen in phenomenology as openness (Husserl) and in theology as an elevation (St. Augustine), is always and ineluctably found in immanence.[4]

Anxiety, suffering, and death are not self-sufficient in this sense, and they wait in some way for the Son to consecrate his offering so that they do not remain definitively confined (see *Le Passeur de Gethsémani*). The burden of finitude—of the world, or time, as also of man—can hope for some kind of transformation, if not an alleviation, in the act of transition to the Father in the Resurrection of his Son under the power of the Holy Spirit: a new birth and the transfiguration of the flesh of man (see *Metamorphosis of Finitude*). What remains to us is the "body" as such, in which drives and animality are rooted, and in which we see organic composition and erotic tensions. It also desires wholly its own act of transubstantiation, something that only God can carry out and where only God is the model in the moment of consecration. "The eucharist is not simply an application of the *vinculum substantiale* [substantial bond] of Leibniz," Blondel maintains in his Latin dissertation on Leibniz, "but . . . the perfect example, the *total and perfect realization*. . . . By this first vital taking into possession [of the Word made flesh by the supreme incorporation of all that there is in the incarnate Word] the *vinculum proprium Christi* [what is the characteristic property of Christ] prepares, as far as the domain of the subconscious, the spiritual configuration that, without confusion and without consubstantiation, is realized in a *transforming union*. . . . The 'universal binding' is not a transnaturalizing embrace for spiritual beings, but an embrace that binds

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

them while respecting their nature."[5] Transubstantiation, once again, does not deny or go beyond the body, but takes on the body in transforming it, making our interior Chaos the property of the divine, and not, or at least no longer, solely a site for the human's debate with himself.

I should like to emphasize that animality (the eucharistic legacy), embodiedness (the content of the eucharist), and eros (the modality of the eucharist) wait for and hope for their *translation* in the act of transubstantiation, so that the response to the appeal of a transformed humanity (the simple proclamation of humanism) will be echoed in a filiation that has been acknowledged (difficult but necessary in Christianity). The incorporation of God, or the God incorporate (Part III), after the "descent into the abyss" (Part I [Chaos and Tohu-Bohu, sacrificial lamb, eros eucharisticized]) and the "sojourn of man" (Part II [the organic body, animality, and differentiation in the embrace])—all this does not simply incorporate God to man and man to the bread in the particularizing movement of kenosis (a subjective genitive), but also, and even more, integrates man with Christ and Christ with the Church in the universalizing project of eschatology (an objective genitive). The ultimate meaning of transubstantiation is not solely corporal; it is also related to the Trinity—or rather, it is corporal in that it is of the Trinity, once the Son goes so far as to offer his body to the Father ("Not what I want, but what you want" [Mark 14:36]) and it is inspired by the Holy Spirit ("through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without blemish to God" [Heb. 9:14]). "The eucharist is not *simply the concern of the Son*, otherwise he would bind himself alone with mankind," as Adrienne von Speyr so aptly suggested. "It is equally the *concern of the Father*, and that is why the Son communicates with his Father, and remains united with him in the making of the eucharist."[6] In centering everything on the Son, we leave things with Christ, and we confuse the celebration of the blessed Last Supper with a simple "shared bread" (*cum panis*) or a companionship (with bread) in which his incorporation in God himself is completely forgotten. But what is known as the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6: 25–29) insists on this. Neither what made up the meal nor the well-being of the community on the day of the Last Supper could express the basis of the act of the eucharist (one drift of certain symbolic theology). Only a return to the Trinity (in that it also must be integrated into the dynamic of the eucharist) justifies the rationale of he who comes to be given (Trinitarian monadology). "I am the bread of life. . . . I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 6: 35, 38). We need to understand this because the faithful, to say the least, too often forget it; they stick too closely to Christ alone at the time of communion. The epiclesis (invocation of the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Holy Spirit) and the preface (communion with the Father) belong wholly to the eucharistic liturgy, and it is thus not simply as Christ but as a person of the Trinity that the Son comes to give himself in the eucharist.

In the Last Supper, then, and in the ultimate Trinitarian and Christly motion that it is up to us now to perform, our animal passions in their driven force, our bodies in their organic dimension, must also be completely accepted and transubstantiated—not only in order to constitute a new humanity, but principally to bring us into a kind of Trinitarian perichoresis (relationship among the persons in the Trinity) where blessedness as *pleasure* also contributes a true happiness: "The happy life is joy based on the truth," according to St. Augustine in his *Confessions* (10.23.33). "It is therefore pleasure that is something like the weight of the soul," he adds in *De Musica* (6.11). "There where your pleasure is, *there* is your treasure; *there where* your heart is, *there* is beatitude and misery."[7]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

7

The Passover of Animality

The first movement of incorporation of God corresponds to humankind's initial stage of animality. I am referring to the introduction and transformation of *our* animal part—made up of interior Chaos, or passions and drives (Chapters 1 and 4)—into the Word himself, who takes responsibility for all our humanity as far as and including the preserve, or district, of "that which can no longer be said" (Chapters 2 and 7). Our animality, present and offered in the bread of the eucharist, also awaits its Passover; indeed, it awaits its metamorphosis into a humanity that will recognize its divine filiation. Christ himself is not identified with any particular animality (Council in Trullo; §5), and does not fall into the sinful errors of bestiality (animality and bestiality; §13). As Christ incarnate, he makes what we have of animality in us the site of an offering, specifically in the bread of the eucharist. Since he is the Word incarnate, nothing in our constitution escapes him, and all that we are as sons of the Son comes from the Father, under the power of the Holy Spirit, "in him" incorporating and transformed in the crucible of the Trinity: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love become what we are [*factus est quod sumus nos*], that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself [*uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse*]."[1]

From the question posed by Nicodemus when he opens the topic of Resurrection (*Metamorphosis of Finitude*)—"Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" (John 3:4)—we move now to the question, raised by the Jews of Capernaum, that brings us to the eucharist:

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52). In both cases there is the same outrage, stemming in fact from the same misunderstanding: that of fetal regression in the obscurity of the Resurrection (Nicodemus), and that of cannibalism in the misinterpretation of the eucharist (Capernaites). We can dispose of these problems easily, at least on the subject of the eucharist, but at the risk of over-spiritualizing; there is also a risk of overlooking the radical strangeness of what is given to us to eat. The great mystics realized this, and St. Augustine in particular showed how this act of communion should initially repulse us: "It seemed that it was madness [*furor*] and extravagance [*insania*] to give men his flesh to eat and his blood to drink," Augustine says in his commentary on the Psalms. "Doesn't it seem that it was a piece of extravagance to say: eat the flesh and drink my blood? And in saying: 'Whoever does not eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you' (John 6:54) doesn't it seem that Jesus was raving [*quasi insanire videtur*]?"[2]

§25. Return to the Scandal

In philosophical terms, "the strangest thing"[3] is that we have lost the sense of what is revolting in the part of Christianity that is the mystery of the eucharist. Nobody, in fact, except young children, dares to question out loud what everybody questions silently: What are we to make of this act and its meaning, indeed of its "autophagy," where humans have problems devouring each other—or *eating the flesh of the other*? Accusations of cannibalism with regard to the eucharist have been abundant, from the start of Christianity (the Montanist crisis) up to the present day (ethnology, psychoanalysis, anthropology . . .), even though Christian theology has chosen to believe that such accusations have been definitively overcome. John Chrysostom, in his hyperrealism (like that of his contemporary, St. Augustine), provides some dazzling testimony; he anticipates that the tongue is reddened by the colour of the blood in the eucharistic potion, and he sees the mouth full of flesh as the place for a Host that must not be chewed in case the body of the Resurrected One is crushed. "In order that we may become this not by love only, but in very deed [*non solum per dilectionem sed reipse etiam*], let us be blended into that flesh," he says forcefully. "He has given to those who desire Him not only to see Him [*vivendum modo*], but even to touch [*tangendum*], and eat Him [*comedendum*], and fix their teeth [*dentibus terendum*] into His flesh, and to embrace Him, and satisfy their love."[4] Chrysostom continues, "What then ought not he to exceed in purity that hath the benefit of this sacrifice [*manum illam quae hanc carnem secat*], than what sunbeam should not that hand

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

be more pure which is to sever this flesh, the mouth that is filled with spiritual fire [*os quod spirituali replectur igne*], the tongue that is reddened by that most awful blood [*linguam tremendo sanguine tinctam*]?"[5] It would be nice to think that this problem is finished with, or that it was simply a passing—indeed, an isolated—error. However, the spectre of anthropophagy has continually been reactivated during the history of the theology of the sacraments and of the practice of ritual (not chewing the Host); "Eat, this is my body" has, unsurprisingly, had difficulty escaping from it. In wishing to fight against accusations of cannibalism, Christianity has quite often only reinforced them, substituting a realism that is necessary in order not to spiritualize everything. And it has often lost the sense of what is the basis, for us now as well as throughout the Catholic tradition, of the eucharistic assumption: the taking on and transformation of the whole of the human being, up to and including his organicity, his passion and his drives—indeed, his part of animality.[6]

Aquinas himself is not exempt from such fears, or from the obsession with autophagy. His famous argument on the permanence and change of species, at the heart of his doctrine of transubstantiation, is there precisely to curb understandable feelings of repulsion at the taste of blood to be drunk, or the smell of flesh to be chewed, at the time of communion. It would be useful, then—*theologically* apart from anything else—to ensure that the bread remain bread and the wine remain wine, though the one and the other *really* become the body and the blood of Christ, as far as substance is concerned. The discussion of the eucharist in the *Summa Theologica* underlines how "It is evident to sense that all the accidents of the bread and wine remain after the consecration."[7] In other words, the persistence (*remanence*) of the bread and the wine justifies believers in continuing to eat bread when they eat the body and to drink wine when they drink the blood; however, this is a matter of *accidents*, rather than of substance or essence. The bread remains bread but connected to the body, and the wine remains wine but brought back to the blood. When I communicate and receive the body and blood of the Lord, I *truly* eat his body and *truly* drink his blood, but I do this under the species of bread and wine that are not suppressed, but only converted. The substance of the bread has become, through the consecration, an accident connected to his body, which constitutes its true substance, and the substance of the wine is an accident connected to his blood, which is its true reality.

Nonetheless, the question remains, and it is significant: Why is there such a persistence, or *remanence*, of the species? In other words, doesn't the doctrine of transubstantiation stem from some barely acceptable, or ulterior, motives that lie underneath or at the heart of the *Summa Theologica*

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

itself? According to Aquinas, there are two further reasons for the persistence of accidents, given in the form of answers to objections in the treatise: "First of all, because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood. And therefore Christ's flesh and blood are set before us to be partaken of under the species of those things which are the most commonly used by men, namely, bread and wine. Secondly, lest this sacrament might be derided by unbelievers [*infedelibus irrideretur*] if we were to eat our Lord under his own species."[8] Apart from the metaphysical reasons for the persistence of the accidents of bread and wine in the eucharistic sacrament (e.g., the solidity of the matter, the earthly and celestial nourishment, the fruit of the vine and the work of men, the shared meal), two motifs, one subjective and one inter-subjective, justify its retention. There is the necessity *for us* (in our heart of hearts) not to sink into a feeling of horror at the prospect of eating true flesh and drinking true blood. It has to reflect what we habitually eat and drink (bread and wine). There is also the importance *for others* (nonbelievers) of not exposing ourselves to mockery as cannibals, when we know very well that we do eat the "true body" of Christ and drink his "true blood" when we participate in his own sacrifice. It is fairly clear that the accidents of bread and wine persist also (though not primarily) as a way of camouflaging the scandal of anthropophagic flesh, which remains in some way behind these things, indirectly, even if the accidents come to be suppressed in their conversion through the act of transubstantiation.

St. Bonaventure—in the same period (thirteenth century), and this time strictly following the lead of Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*, in which the sacrament is theorized as a "vie" (*velum*), and no longer as "thing" or "sign of a thing" (*res signata*)—started and justified arguments for a prohibition on crushing the body of Christ "with the teeth." Prohibition was based on, first, a holy horror of the "meat" or "raw flesh" that the consecrated bread would nonetheless contain and, second, the necessity of not destroying Christ, who is there and always living. "It is also unseemly," Bonaventure says in his *Breviloquium*, "that the flesh of Christ be actually torn by our teeth [*carnem dentibus attrectare*], because of the loathsomeness of such crudity [*proptem horrorem cruditas*] and the immortality of his body. It was therefore necessary that the body and blood of Christ be imparted under the veil [*velatum*] of the most sacred symbols and by means of congruous and expressive likeness [*similitudinibus*]."[9] As with the doctrine of transubstantiation that is so impressive in the work of Aquinas, the thesis of eucharistic conversion in Bonaventure's work certainly has its own integrity—in particular, as we shall see (§30), insofar as it concerns the assimilation of the believer to Christ himself through this

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

act of transformation: "Whoever receives them worthily, eating not merely sacramentally [*sacramentaliter*], but also spiritually [*spiritualiter*] through faith and love, is more fully incorporated [*magis incorporatur*] into the mystical Body of Christ."[10] These deliberations on the "integrity of the body that has been chewed" and the "prohibition on crunching it" are found throughout the Middle Ages, and there are traces even in certain liturgical hymns: "The one and the other of these species are only pure *signs* [*signum*] and not things [*non rebus*], they veil the real divine," according to the Hymn of the Blessed Sacrament of Corpus Christi, composed by Aquinas for the festival instituted by Urban IV (1264). A translation from 1922 reads as follows:

> Though His Flesh as food abideth,
> And his blood as drink—he bideth
> Undivided under each.
> Whoso eateth It can never
> Break the body, rend or sever;
> Christ entire our hearts doth fill:
> Thousands eat the Bread of heaven,
> Yet as much to one is given:
> Christ though eaten, bideth still . . .
> The Saviour still abideth
> Undiminished as before.[11]

Such formulae would certainly seem slightly ridiculous today if we tried to follow them to the letter. The debate over realism in the eucharist is no longer concerned with the breaking or division of the body once it is chewed, its disappearance once it is swallowed, or its reduction in becoming contained in the Host in the eucharist. However, something engrossing, and eminently fair-minded, remains in these suggestions, making it inappropriate to mock them or simply ignore their concerns. Everything has a certain basis in fact and is thought through, at least in the Catholic tradition, so as not to lose the consistency of this body that is given to us to eat. Eucharistic realism consecrates the body of Christ "in the confined space of the consecrated host" (*hujus hostiae strictus angustiae*), as the site of a true *reality* and transformation: in a sense, the *something* of a *something to eat* that is not, or is no longer, our daily bread; or, the *something* of a *something to drink* that is not just wine drunk for pleasure. This does not depend simply on *we who eat* (*ex parte manducantis*); that would be an error of symbolism and an overdependence on the subject that would not help us understand all about the fleshly donation (see §12). Realism about eucharistic conversion comes also from *that which is eaten* (*ex parte manducati*)

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

and has a consistency, perhaps a phenomenological consistency, such that it cannot be satisfied solely with the illusions of subjectivity.[12]

From Chrysostom (the tongue reddened by blood) to Augustine (the folly and madness of a flesh given to eat), and from Aquinas (hiding under the species a repulsion at what we eat and warning us of the mockery of nonbelievers) to Bonaventure (not touching the consecrated Host with the teeth because of the horror we feel at raw flesh), the *eucharistic scandal* is in fact less hidden than embellished, although everything has been done to avoid showing it or bringing it into view. A deeper reading of the history of sacramental theology of the Fathers in the Middle Ages, or indeed of the period of the Counter-Reformation (reinforcement of eucharistic realism in a certain form of thing-ness), would bring out the full spectrum of a thought experiment in which the unimaginable becomes somehow imagined, even if only to be pushed aside—as in the piercing question from the Jews of Capernaum: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52). The horror at cannibalism remains the inescapable, and quite simply the philosophical, horizon of the transformation of bread into body and wine into blood, even though numerous theological attempts have been made to minimize it. Thomas Hobbes castigates priests in his *Leviathan*, insisting that when, by the words *this is my body*,

> the nature or qualities of the thing it selfe is pretended to be changed, it is not Consecration, but either an extraordinary worke of God, or a vaine and impious Conjuration. But seeing (for the frequency of pretending the change of nature in their Consecration,) it cannot be esteemed a work extraordinary, it is no other than a *Conjuration* or *Incantation*, whereby they would have men to beleeve an alteration of Nature that is not, contrary to the testimony of mans Sight, and of all the rest of his Senses. . . . [Priests] require men to worship it, as if it were our Saviour himself present God and Man, and thereby to commit most grosse Idolatry.[13]

Recent research in the human sciences has not put an end to such questions or suspicions, but rather the contrary. Yet it may help the believer wake up from "dogmatic slumber" (Kant)—or perhaps it should be called "liturgical" slumber—and avoid taking for granted his or her procession through the eucharist. As far as cannibalism in psychoanalysis is concerned (André Green), cannibalism with the economic order (Jacques Attali), or the distinction between the raw and the cooked in ethnology (Claude Lévi-Strauss), Christianity with its doctrine of the *body given to be eaten* cannot be ignored—far from it. As Green, writing from his psychoanalytic point

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

of view, says, "*Cannibalism in Christianity* allows us along with other things (cannibalism in art, in mythology or in psychiatry) a theoretical approach to cannibalism that introduces us to psychoanalytic theses."[14]

As we have seen, the transformation of the sense and of the threshold of cannibalism by Christianity is not enough to exempt the eucharistic mystery completely from the suspicion that weighs on it: that one is eating the man (anthropophagy) and, indeed, eating God (theophagy). This mutation of cannibalism does not suppress it, but gives it another significance. Surely the mystery of incorporation has its source in a symbolic assimilation with ancestors; the manducation of the body allows us to see the solid element in this transmission, while the wine sends us back to the blood that runs through our veins and thus also to the life of the tribe. Speech has here a performative effect, certainly, as it does in the act of recognition of two people who have been separated and then reunited. But in all of these examples, something cannibal and something of cannibalism still remains today, which the believer would be mistaken not to mull over—whether to reject it or simply to call it into question. René Girard stated in his *Dialogues on the Origin of Culture* (making reference to his seminal work, *Violence and the Sacred*), "To those who say that the Eucharist is rooted in archaic cannibalism, instead of saying 'no', we have to say 'yes!' The real history of humankind is religious history, which goes back to primitive cannibalism. Primitive cannibalism is religion, and the Eucharist recapitulates this history from alpha to omega."[15] Whether or not one escapes from the charge of anthropophagy (and it is probably important to find both a way out and a reply to the charge), the issue remains problematic in a consideration of the start of the eucharistic Last Supper, when it is no longer ethnological and anthropological (Girard) but becomes, in my view, a metaphysical and theological question.

§26. Getting around the Scandal

There are two ways of getting around, or at least reducing, the scandal in the eucharist of flesh given to humans to eat, or even to chew (*trogôn*) (John 6:56–57): (1) through exegesis, and (2) in philosophical terms.[16] These are both technical moves, but they also serve as an excuse for the believer not to be, or no longer to be, satisfied simply with what Péguy calls the "habituated" soul.

(1) *The exegetical objection to the notion of a scandal*. It is frequently said—and has been repeated constantly in sociological rereadings in historico-critical mode of the eucharistic Last Supper—that the body destined to be eaten (*this is my body*) or the flesh before being chewed (*eat my flesh and drink*

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

my blood) cannot show, at least as far as the Jewish sacrificial world is concerned, either the organic and material that the Greek *soma* would lead us to or the blood and its hemoglobin that the Hellenic *aïma* would point to and show us through the veins. Marcel Jousse, in his anthropology of gesture, says, "It is obvious that if you take these formulae 'crudely' (this is my body, eat/ this is my blood, drink) you will say: 'But these are cannibal processes or worse!' But we need to see what is said and done *in context*, to ask what were the reactions of those around and what reverberation there were."[17] We thus come back, so as not to confuse things with a major anachronism, to what is fundamentally justifiable and the basic principle of Jousse's enterprise: "When we study Iéshoua of Nazareth, if we don't bring into play Palestinian anthropology and ethics, we straightway risk misinterpretation."[18] In the Palestinian history "of man" as a "history of the mouth," as we have already seen in the context of the image of the sacrificial lamb (§5), the meaning of the sacrificial formulae "take, this is my body" and "drink, this is my blood" need to be resituated and thought through.[19] To employ the terms used by Jousse, in the "mime of the Bread and the Wine" it is the flesh and the blood, or "the entire being," that is designated.[20]

All this, along with what has become commonplace in the exegetical reading of the sacrifice, needs to be said and is solidly based in rationality. In the tradition of Jesus, that of Israel, flesh and blood point to "the man insofar as he is of the earth and mortal and not just two components of the organism." The body is not then entirely material, but "a way of pointing to the presence of the man who shows it in its entirety." And the blood is not primarily the fluid blood, but the "principle of life, that belongs to God and to him alone"—thus we find the prohibition, in Israel, of consuming the sacrificial blood. "To eat the *flesh*, that is to be *incorporated into the person*. And to drink the *blood*, that is to take communion with this life that is of God; it is to claim that life."[21] In eating his body, we are incorporated into the body of God and thus also the Church (to be "one body" [1 Cor. 12:12]), and in drinking his blood we receive his life, dedicated in such a way that it comes and flows in our own veins ("and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" [Gal. 2:20]). The analogy here is perfect and it is indeed what is performed in the eucharist. The assumption behind it is that one cannot understand *this is my body* except by the yardstick of the figure of the Galilean and the context that produced him.

Yet such a contextualization cannot, in my opinion, be truly satisfying for us today, because it risks imposing on us a reading of the Bible that is simply not of our time. Neither demythologization (Bultmann) nor de-Hellenization (Küng) nor Palestinianization can be applied any longer.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

There is no such thing as chemically pure Christianity, and wishing to reach it will only bring us back to, on the one hand, abandoning the effort of translation through the tradition and, on the other hand, abandoning the attempt to bring it up to date for the purposes of transmission. The difficulty for readers and interpreters of the biblical narrative, and the difficulty of the transcription of the message of *hoc est corpus meum* in the greco-latin tradition (Tertullian, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas), is not that God is incorporate in a human being and that we receive his life—as so much of the discourse that surrounds the eucharistic sacrifice has told us. Rather, the true *lectio difficilior* is in recognizing that the body given to us to eat is also—for us and in our culture (see §27)—a true body (*corpus verus*), or rather, "tru(ly) body" (*corpus vere*), and that the blood given us to drink is a true blood (*sanguis verus*), or more precisely, "tru(ly) blood" (*sanguis vere*).

In our Western tradition, and not just in the Palestinian outlook of the Hebrew Jesus, the body is (materially) body, and the blood is (materially) blood. The exegetic way around the scandal of cannibalism is certainly right in underlining the incongruity of such a scandal, but our point of departure remains the need to overcome the scandal *for ourselves*—that is, to take into account the mystery as it exists in our culture, and reckoning from our culture. Believers reply to the formula *Corpus Christi* ("the body of Christ") with an *Amen* that makes us see, or at least believe, that they are in accordance. But what are they saying yes to at the moment of communication, or rather, of eating? The way around the scandal through arguments from exegesis brings us back to where we started, even though its basis in history (the historico-critical method), justified in many respects, has tried at all costs to avoid this.

(2) *Philosophical objections to the notion of a scandal in the eucharistic sacrifice*. These may rely so heavily on the symbolism of sacrifice that they drain it of all consistency, or at least of all realism. Such a tendency is widespread today and is a result of basing all forms of sacramental theology simply on the distinction between sign and symbol. "Thus the sign is the union of a signifier and a signified," says Edmond Ortigues, following the lead of Ferdinand de Saussure. "The symbol is the operator of a relation between a signifier and other signifiers."[22] The ancient Greek sense of *sumbolon* as a "sign of recognition" (as in the case of shards or fragments of pottery) is cited in arguments for a eucharistic theology founded on a relationship between the bread eaten and the body of Christ identified with it—concerning which it is sufficient to say that it is registered by the believer. In the "good meal," action of grace (*eu-charis*), or the house of bread (*bethléem*), the symbolic aspect of the eucharistic bread becomes

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

more important than the reality of what we swallow. We even forget sometimes that the believer is incorporated, and that it is not just the believer who decides upon the symbol.[23]

In reality, the symbol signifies something quite different, at least in the context of medieval theology. Symbolic theology (*theologia symbolica*) should teach us the correct use of "sensible things" (*recte ultamur sensibilibus*), as St. Bonaventure insists in his *Journey of the Soul into God*.[24] The symbol is not the recognition of a meaning, but an acknowledgment of consistency—precisely that of a body, or of matter, that the sacrament must not give up easily. Maurice Blanchot echoes this in *The Book to Come*: "Symbol does not mean anything, expresses nothing. It only makes present—by making us present to it—a reality that escapes all other capture and seems to rise up, there, prodigiously close and prodigiously far away, like a foreign presence. . . . If symbol is a wall, then it is like a wall that, far from opening wide, not only becomes more opaque, but with a density, a thickness, and a reality so powerful and so exorbitant that it transforms us."[25]

Symbolic theology does not call into question the real presence—far from it—but it can also neglect what is strange, or indeed impossible to assimilate, in the reality of the eucharisticized body, precisely because it relates it to the overly familiar notion of a shared meal. The Last Supper, as we have seen, is not simply a meal, even if it is the transformation and conversion of the Jewish rite of the Passover. It is above all a gift of the body (*this is my body*), something that patristic and medieval theology constantly emphasized, though it also, in part, aimed to diminish the strangeness. We need then, once again, to dare to go beyond the figural to the literal. The *hoc est corpus meum* of Catholic tradition is not simply there to gather the faithful around the eucharistic bread. It gives us "some thing" or rather "some one" to eat. All our theological good intentions cannot disguise what lies at the base of the mystery: the body given to eat *is* truly body, if not a true body (§27). Under these conditions (and only under these conditions), *eating the flesh* finally loses its ethereal meaning and we are brought back to all that there is in us of animality, of passions and drives, with a presence that is so rightly called *real*, becoming transformed (§29).

A reading of this kind, of the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6), that is primarily literal—or at least philosophical—does entail the emergence of the scandal rather than an ordinary recognition of an easily digestible food. But perhaps it is enough to mention, and to read closely, the exact words of Christ: "Those who eat my flesh [*trogôn mon ten sarxa*] and drink my blood [*pinôn mon aïma*] abide in me, and I in them . . . whoever eats

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

me [*ô trôgen me*] will live because of me" (John 6:56–57). Whether it is a matter here of the exegetical reading (the flesh as the entire human being and blood as the life of God), or of using a symbolic reading to avoid the scandal (primary recognition of the community), or indeed of a theological justification (the permanence of accidents fixed to the substance), the same question remains—that posed by the Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum: "The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat [*tên sarxa auto phagein*]?'" (John 6:52). Further, "'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven?"'" (John 6:42). I would emphasize, once and for all, what can be (and what ought still to be) a cause of amazement to believers in the eucharistic sacrifice: that a man could thus *give himself to be eaten*.

The impossibility of getting around this scandal is what confronts us when we read *strictu sensu*, or start by reading the Greek, of the Bread of Life Discourse in St. John's gospel. A man—or worse, a God—claims or claimed to give himself to be eaten, indeed to be chewed and digested: "He who *chews* me [*trôgon*][26] will live because of me" (John 6:57); "For my flesh [*sarx*] is true food [*brôsis*] and my blood [*aïma*] is true drink [*pôsis*]" (John 6:55). This is not far from the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries or the placing of blood from sacrificed animals on the altar of the Great Temple in ancient Jewish tradition. There is also an obvious proximity between eucharistic sacrifice and ancient Dionysian rites (see §35). The conception of the eucharistic sacrifice in St. John's gospel does nothing to disguise its radical strangeness, something that some kinds of exegesis (contextualization) as well as some theology (symbolic) often try to obscure. The gospel writer himself emphasizes the unpleasant aspect of the affair instead, basing his whole argument on the objection of the Capernaites. Certainly, the bread "which comes down from heaven" does not resemble the "manna" that "our ancestors" ate (John 6:31–35). The former comes to satisfy hunger, while in the case of the latter, our hunger is insatiable. The difference lies not, or does not lie solely, in the way it was eaten (i.e., whether the eaters were insatiable or not); rather, it is in the reality of that which is eaten (bread or body): "*I am* [*egô eimi*] the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is *my flesh* [*ê sarx mou*]" (John 6:51).

It must be understood, then, that because they have become used to it, the "righteous"—those who are "habituated souls," so that "their moral skin, constantly intact, becomes their shell and armour of faultlessness," and they "do not offer to open themselves for grace" (Péguy)[27]—do not

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

understand the indignation that their procession toward the altar of sacrifice must provoke. Mauriac says in *Le Jeudi-Saint*, "Do not believe that communion is an easy gesture, a meaningless routine, or even a mere consolation, an emotion, a certain manner of closing one's eyes, or resting one's head in one's hands." It is rather the summit, or the ultimate stop, where "the Christian tastes, at that moment, the passionate life that Nietzsche values so highly, that 'purple life,' and infinitely better than what was ever relished by the Borgias and all those feeble enslaved brutes whose derisory example was given to us by Zarathustra. . . . Nothing involves (in reality) a man so much as the eucharist."[28] We can insist on this because simply reading the gospel has the effect of breaking up our habitual assumptions. From the Capernaites to the Fathers of the Church, and from the Fathers of the Church to Hobbes or to the human sciences, a single nagging question hangs over the eucharist—one that the philosopher must ask the theologian, either to get rid of it or to make it real without taking away its substance: What is it that believers eat when they are said to take communion with this body ("the body of Christ. *Amen*"), even if it seems as though they are just chewing bread? And a second question: What does a believer drink when he or she is said to drink blood ("the blood of Christ. *Amen*") but seems simply to be drinking wine? These questions may seem trivial, but they come up with an appropriately infantile naïvety to which we ought to listen. The force of the transformation in the mystery will be all the greater if we acknowledge it, in human terms, and if we also take stock of its impossibility.

§27. The Dispute over Meat

We are brought, then, in this historic debate concerning the eucharist, if not to a solution (to the difficulty that still exists over cannibalism) then at least to some attempts at finding a solution. If *this is my body*, as I have emphasized throughout (Parts I and II), tells us all about embodiedness, including its organic aspect (the eucharistic tradition), its element of animality (the eucharistic content), and the shared eros (the eucharistic modality), all of this must be borne in mind, and reconsidered, in terms of a theological dispute where *meat* keeps turning up like a bad penny.

I recall here Deleuze's words in relation to Francis Bacon, mentioned earlier: "Bacon is a religious painter only in butchers' shops."[29] In philosophy, in aesthetics, and indeed in theology, truth can't be measured simply against the yardstick of carnal realism, or indeed of its obvious cruelty. There is evidently something that revolts us and at the same time draws us toward *this is my body* that we can come back now to question, even at the

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

risk of somehow watering things down with an answer. If it is necessary to underline the thesis of eucharistic realism, one can first take the *body of Christ* literally. One can see it as *body* truly given to be eaten in the consecrated Host, whatever historical analyses we need to put forward to clarify the statement. Despite a theology of carnage (accidents on the doctrinal route and meat cut up in the eucharisticized body), which remains a threat today as it was yesterday, there is still something right, indeed, something existential, that can be read in the depth of the questions posed in the past. If it has become (quite rightly) unseemly to dare to think or even write that "the tongue appears reddened with blood" (Chrysostom), or that "the teeth risk breaking the flesh in chewing the bread" (Bonaventure), a middle way needs to be found between pure "sensism" (i.e., the view that there is nothing in the mind that has not been in the senses)[30] and strict symbolism. The consecrated Host is truly a body given to eat (the sensationalist path), but it is one that cannot be reduced simply to an organic body or to the physical body of the historical Jesus (the appropriate reaction from the point of view of symbolism). A rapid historical detour becomes necessary in this respect, since precision in relation to these questions helps largely to overcome the ensemble of approximations that follow on from them (transignification, transfinalization, and so forth) and that fail to express truly the reality of that which is given to us to eat.[31]

At the start of the ninth century, when the Carolingian Reform was in full swing, the emperor Charles the Bald kicked off the debate. It would take four centuries more for it to be fully opened (on the doctrine of transubstantiation): "Is what the mouths of the believers receive in the Church," Charles asked theologians in his palace, "*in mysterio* or *in veritate*? And is this the body that was born of Mary, suffered, died and was buried, and that after resurrection and ascension is seated at the right hand of the Father?"[32] It is difficult to imagine today how novel and original these questions seemed at the time (in 838). Deliberations over the eucharist among the Fathers of the Church were such during this Carolingian period, and according to major initiatives that we do not need to rehearse here,[33] that direct focus simply on the body given to eat (*caro spiritualis*) would progressively eclipse its connection with the flesh of the Resurrected One (*caro mystica*) as well as its connection with the mystic body of the Church in which the believer becomes incorporated (*corpus mysticum*). The consecrated bread (on the altar) would incidentally, as it were, take over the place and the trace of the Resurrected Son (at the right hand of the Father) and of the integration of the community (the ecclesiastical body) through the eucharist.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Despite all this, the questions remain open, demanding a wider examination of the "this" that we eat: Is it a body in the figurative sense and a mystery? Or a body in reality and in truth? And if the body is given here in reality and in truth, is it the historical body of Jesus incarnate that is eaten here, and/or the spiritual body of he who today is resurrected and sits at the right hand of the Father? Such questions may seem surprising, but they possess at least the merit of getting to the *thing itself*. They ask us, as in all good meals, what *it is* that we have actually been given to eat. The history of the concept (moving toward a so-called real presence in the eucharist) thus helps to clarify the *disuptatio*, or debate.

The problems expressed by Charles the Bald concerning the status of the body that is eaten stem in fact from the "triform body" described by Amalarius of Metz, Bishop of Trèves and successor of Alcuin, who talked of the "three bodies," or "three types of the body of Christ," distinguishing them according to the way in which the consecrated bread was considered in each case:

> The body of Christ is of three kinds, those that have tasted death and those that will die: first, the *holy body without stain* that is born of the Virgin Mary; second, the *body that wanders the earth*; third, the *body that lies in the sepulchre*. The portion of the host that is placed in the chalice represents the body of Christ now resurrected from the dead [*quod jam resurrexit a mortuis*]; the portion that the priest and the people eat is that which still wanders the earth [*ambulans adhuc super terram*]; and the portion that is kept on the altar represents that which lies in the sepulchre [*jacens in sepulcris*].[34]

We would then have three bodies—the immaculate body, the wandering body, the body that dies and is resurrected—and three states of the eucharistic mode corresponding to these three bodies: the immaculate body that joins the blood (the Host in the chalice); the wandering body that is eaten (the bread of the faithful); and the resurrected body that is conserved (the reserved sacrament and later the tabernacle). Apart from the complexity of the debate, which helps us grasp at least how the manducation of the eucharistic body remains obscure to us even today, one comes to understand from this how, at the very least, these things don't just go without saying. Because, if we eat the "immaculate body" it is not the historical Christ that is assimilated; if we stick to the "wandering body" we cannot avoid the danger of having to break and chew it; and if we conserve only the "Resurrected Christ," we shall forget the historical dimension of his humanity. The "full Christ" (*Christum totum*) will not

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

be found except at the price of a radical separation of the flesh really eaten in the eucharist and the body that remains intact in heaven: "If you ask how that could be done," Lanfranc says to Berengarius in a kind of surrender, "I shall reply briefly for the moment: it is a *mystery of faith* [*mysterium est fidei*]; it is profitable to *believe* it [*credi*], it is not useful to *explore* the matter [*vestigari*]."[35]

We need to escape from these ruts of "fideism"; it is not my aim in this book to explore them fully and I shall not pretend to retrace their paths completely. Nonetheless, two essential questions lead us toward the *content* of what is eaten. They concern the *status* of an organicity made up of passions and drives that the eucharistic body comes to take responsibility for, and to transform: (1) Is it in truth or simply figuratively that we eat the eucharistic body? (2) What type of body are we talking about when we speak of eating it—the historical body or the resurrected body? A brief reply to these questions should allow us to escape from the *aporia* of cannibalism (§26), after we have nonetheless given some appropriate attention to the matter (§25), so that we can use all this as a springboard for a line of argument that, after all, started off with an untenable strangeness.

(1) Is it the body in truth or figuratively? The arguments put forward by Paschasius Radbertus, then Lanfranc (advocates of realism), and then Ratramnus and Berengarius of Tours (advocates of symbolism) would appear to be all the more decisive insofar as the sacramentality of the body eaten here is undermined, or is at the very least called into question. The one side (the realists), already giving a reply to Charles the Bald's question, see in the consecrated bread a body *in veritate* and not *in mysterio*. That is, they see a true body to eat and not simply something that represents a body in our thoughts or our understanding. Relying upon the definition of the sacrament as a "sacred sign" (*sacrum signum*), Lanfranc maintains, "It is truly the invisible flesh and blood of the Lord [*invisibili Domini Jesu Christi carne et sanguine*] that remains under the visible appearance of these elements [*visibile elementorum specie*]."[36] We can see here a form of (philosophical) sensism, or at least an obvious realism. The two species simply "veil" (as *velum*) the reality of the body and blood of Christ, and in removing the vestment or the superficial appearance of the species, the true reality of a flesh to be eaten or a blood to be swallowed will be uncovered anew. On the other side of a debate so severe that it will lead to the double and definitive condemnation of Berengarius (Councils in Rome, 1059 and 1079), the symbolists insist that the presence of the body of Christ in the consecrated bread must be understood solely *in mysterium* and not *in veritate*—figuratively and not in reality.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

The symbolist argument is based on an Augustinian definition of the sacrament as sign or symbol (*signum aut figura*); the presence of Christ is considered as spiritual rather than fleshly or material. Berengarius insists in opposition to Lanfranc that "The bread and the wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ according to the intelligence [*intellectualiter*] but not according to the senses [*sensualiter*]." In other words—and without increasing the complexity of the *disputatio*—we can say that the transformation of bread into body and wine into blood is produced less in the bread and wine themselves than in "the one" who receives communion through the body and blood of Christ. The beliefs of the person communicating count more than what is eaten.[37]

In short, either the initial definition of the sacrament rests on the thing signified (*res sacramenti*, Isidore of Seville) and it is the bread itself that is transformed into body and the wine into blood, or it refers to the sign or symbol (*signum aut figura*, Augustine) and it is the believer who is transformed rather than the matter itself. As we know, Berengarius lost the debate in the Middle Ages against Lanfranc, and thus symbolism lost to realism. There was a return to the reality of what is eaten—a debate that we would be wrong to forget today—when symbols (e.g., the meal, the wheat, the work of humankind, the community) go so far sometimes as to obscure what is to be signified (the transubstantiation of the bread into body and wine into blood). Berengarius avows—unwillingly, one suspects—in the profession of faith that he was required to make at the Second Roman Synod of 1079,

> I, Berengarius, believe interiorly and profess publicly that the bread and wine, which are placed on the altar, through the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our Redeemer are substantially changed into the true, proper and life-giving flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. After the consecration, it is the true body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin, and which hung on the cross as an offering for the salvation of the world, and which sits at the right hand of the Father. And it is the true blood of Christ which was poured forth from his side. And Christ is present not merely by virtue of the sign and the power of the sacrament but in his proper nature and true substance as is set down in this summary and as I read it and you understand it.[38]

(2) What type of body is given to be eaten? The resolution of the conflict (*in veritate* vs. *in figura*) depends on how one *envisages* the body, once one has been invited to communion. The formula of "The body of Christ.

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

Amen" (*Corpus Christi*. *Amen*) frees us definitively from the aporia of cannibalism only under the condition that what is chewed is not cannibal flesh, in terms of either theophagy or anthropophagy. As I have already made plain, the consecrated Host is considered to be the flesh of the Resurrected Christ and not simply that of the historically incarnate Jesus. Charles the Bald's initial question amounted to asking not simply if what "is received in the mouths of the believers" is there in symbolic terms or in truth, but also if the body is the historical body born of Mary and/or the resurrected body that sits at the right hand of the Father. The emperor's question is a good one because it does not fix on one option; that is, he leaves it open for theologians to decide. And the limitation of Berengarius, as well as of, to a slighter degree, Lanfranc, is that they wished to decide too quickly. Either it was to be the resurrected body and not the historical body (in such a way that continuity from one to the other could not be assumed in the eucharistic consecration: Berengarius), or it was to be the historical body and not the resurrected body (so that a physicalism, or indeed cannibalism, remained always possible: Lanfranc). Is it really necessary to choose between the body in heaven and its presence on Earth? Don't we find in the New Testament both the recognition by the disciples at Emmaus of the presence of Christ in his eucharist, beginning with his appearance as the Resurrected One (Luke 24: 13–35), *and* the celebration of the Last Supper in the historic body of Christ on the eve of his Passion (Mark 14: 22–25)? It is when we put one directly in opposition to the other that there is either nothing to eat (where Berengarius takes us) or too much to eat (where Lanfranc takes us).

Nonetheless, the distinction (between the historical Christ and the Resurrected Christ) made in the course of this heated debate did lead in the eleventh century toward a certain resolution of the problem. The distinction was retained and recovered in the context of the doctrine of transubstantiation. "The true body [*verum corpus*] and the true blood [*verum sanguinem*] of Christ," Berengarius writes to Adelman of Liège, "cannot be identified with his *real body* [*corpus verus*] nor with his *real blood* [*sanguis verus*]." In other words, if "after consecration the bread and wine themselves become, in terms of faith and our intelligence, the true body and the true blood of Christ [*verum Christi corpus et sanguinem*]," this formula does not suggest that the body eaten is exclusively the historical body; it is also, and above all, Christ's resurrected body. *Truly body* (*corpus vere*) does not inevitably indicate his true body in the somatic meaning of the term (*corpus verus*), nor does *truly blood* (*sanguis vere*) strictly invoke the hemoglobin (*sanguis vere*).[39] Returning to the power of the body and its material organic aspect (§17) does not contradict the phenomenological

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

modes of apparition in flesh and bones (§19). It is simply that in thinking of the one (the flesh, *Leib*) too independently of the other (the body, *Körper*), phenomenology runs the risk of limiting its field too narrowly: to the significance only of lived experience (§3). And theology risks foundering in a form of Gnosis that to some extent turns away from the Incarnate One understood in his organicity (Introduction). Flesh and body hold together in the act of the eucharist. The matter is not more important than the manner (as for Lanfranc), nor the manner more important than the matter (as for Berengarius). We need to think of a kind of continuity, from the body to the flesh, or from the historic Jesus to the Resurrected Christ.

As I understand it, only Lanfranc can really help us, in this case with his *De corpore et sanguine Domine* (his treatise on the body and blood of the Lord). However, this treatise has drawn recent criticism for its over-realist tendency and because it has been found insufficiently symbolic. "The body of the (resurrected) Lord retains [*retinet*] some of its [historical] qualities," Lanfranc very rightly maintains. "[In] the sacrament of the body of Christ it is his flesh [*caro ejus*] that we receive, covered by the form of bread."[40] There is, then, according to the treatise, a kind of resemblance (*similitudo*) and a continuity or retention (*retinere*) between the body of the Resurrected Christ and the body that was the historic body, ensuring that in taking communion through the body of Christ on the altar, one communicates first of all with the resurrected body (which is why we can eat it and drink it without risk of breaking it or making it disappear). But at the same time, it inherits the qualities or forms that we can identify with the suffering (the *pathiques*) of the historic body (which is why it is truly [*vere*] the body of Christ that we eat and the blood of Christ that we drink). What is important here is no longer the *dispute over meat*—something from which we have extricated ourselves definitively with the distinction between the real body (*corpus verus*) and "truly body" (*corpus vere*)—but the fleshly continuity of the biological body with the resurrected body that ensures the presence of Christ in the eucharist. The eucharistic procession comes back to *eating* him when we assimilate him, and to *recognizing* him as we draw near. A kind of amorous empathy brings us in our own bodies to the body of Christ, in such a way that the organic leaves its trace in the phenomenological. At the same time, we communicate precisely with *his* life, made up of flesh and blood, given to us first of all in temporality and shed for us at Golgotha: "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe" (John 20:27). The "body [physique] of the eucharist" (Claudel) does not reduce Christ to *his* physique, but rather consecrates

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

what makes up and was in him, of *his* body as the basis of *a* body, or of a nourishment, that we today can assimilate and be incorporated in. Claudel writes, "Give us this day our super-substantial bread. I have had enough of that manna that changes into shadow and image. We have had enough of that taste of the flesh and the blood, of milk, of fruit and honey. Tree of life, give us the *real bread*. You yourself are my nourishment."[41]

We learn both from Paschasius Radbertus and Lanfranc of Pavia, on the one hand, and Ratramnus and Berengarius, on the other. From the former we learn not to give up on the reality of he who is to be eaten (realism, but still tinged with a certain sensism), and the latter assure continuity between the historical Jesus and the Resurrected Christ (symbolism, but with the added danger of spiritualization). Certainly, transubstantiation will provide a solution (see §29), but according to a definition of substance where, as I shall show, one cannot accept simply its "subsistence" (Aristotle) if we do not also include its "force" (Leibniz) as well as its "act of being" (Aquinas). We close here the dispute over meat, if such a debate could ever really come to an end, while noting that it has at least the merit of showing us in theological terms the place of the body in the resurrected being (Chapter 5). But it remains for us to think through the way in which our part of animality, of passions and drives, is still to be metamorphosed, to become in the eucharist completely hominized and filialized: "[The Son] shared our human nature in all things but sin," as the fourth Eucharistic Prayer reminds us. "To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation, to prisoners, freedom, and to the sorrowful of heart, joy."[42]

§28. Hominization and Filiation[43]

We saw in Chapter 2 how the wedding feast of the lamb classically came to celebrate the Passover of God with his people (Judaism) or of Christ with the Church and with humanity (Christianity). But it is my view that *this is my body* was originally to celebrate a Passover, or *passage from animality to humanity*, recognized in its filiation (in other words, from Chaos to cosmos) (§5). Nothing is optional, then, in the act of the eucharist, even if it is only considered as drawing humankind from their animality. Certainly—and happily—we do not remain animal (Chapter 7), even when we don't join the communion. But the reason for this—our humanity that cannot be reduced to a simple animality—is not, or is no longer, philosophical; it is theological. The aim of the eucharist is not achieved through the act of hominization if it is independent of the recognition of filiation. In the transubstantiation of our interior Chaos, of our passions

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

and our drives, through the body given for us, the eucharistic sacrifice does not take us back simply to humankind or to a transfigured cosmos (Teilhard de Chardin). Nor does it take us to a more advanced state of science (Martelet). It takes us to the Son who, in his relation to the Father, and under the power of the Holy Ghost, comes with their unanimous consent to incorporate us.

It is important to recognize the immense merit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's having opened up the liturgical Last Supper to the stage of the world. In a remote part of Asia, on August 6, 1923, when he was confronted by the cosmic proportions of the Ordos desert, the altar for the Mass became for him the whole Earth, and the offertory (the first principal part of the Mass) "the labour and suffering of the world." Enlarging, so to speak, the flesh of Christ to "the world of Matter," Teilhard de Chardin found that the universe changes into an "immense Host" and "is made Flesh." God consecrates the world as "his descent into the *universal species*," and a "new Humanity" is now born every day, in such a way that the Word, by the act of the eucharist, "prolongs the unending act of his own birth" through its "immersion in the World's womb."[44]

This perspective is tempting, not to say fascinating. I would point out that it recalls the *corpus mysticum* of the Fathers of the Church that was so convincingly explored and developed later by Henri de Lubac. But major questions remain. Is it really satisfactory to suggest that the act of the eucharist hominizes, or leads us to what Teilhard de Chardin calls a "new Humanity"? Can the cosmic and Christ-centred perspective on the Host really abandon in this way its Trinitarian formulation and identity? If there really is, as I have suggested, an organization of Chaos, or an assumption and transformation of our interior Tohu-Bohu through eucharistic manducation (§2), this process of humanization aims principally at the recognition of our filiation. It is "when we cry 'Abba! Father!' " that, addressing the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, we see ourselves as "[adoptive] children of God" (Rom. 8:15). And it is then that our humanity shows itself through our filial dependence as created beings. Our humanity is not simply a question of the deployment of our capabilities. No humanism is envisaged by Christianity, even in the act of the eucharist, unless it is integrated into the heart of the first and fully recognized mystery of the Trinity. As Hans-Urs von Balthasar says, developing the thought of Adrienne von Speyr (who so inspired him), "In the eucharistic surrender of Jesus' humanity the point is reached where, through this flesh, the triune God has been put at man's disposal in this final readiness on God's part to be taken into and incorporated into

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

men."[45] There is no hominization—even in the cosmic vision of the eucharistic celebration, independent of a filiation that it comes, newly, to bring to being in us.

As for Martelet, it has to be said that rarely has there been an account of the eucharist so bold and comprehensive (see his *Résurrection, eucharistie, et genèse de l'homme*). We can find everything, or almost everything, there, from Martelet's account of the eucharist as a meal to the medieval debate over the status of the body of Christ—and this last part is directed at Teilhard de Chardin. Still, as I see it, there is an important question that cannot easily be dismissed: Is all of this done at the price of the integration of everything in the act of the eucharist? The analysis of natural symbols (the bread and the wine) and, even more, of the cultural components (e.g., the Big Bang, the emergence of humankind starting from the animal) cannot in fact justify or clarify on its own the eucharistic enterprise. Neither an attempt at harmonization nor concerns of modernity can be used to cover up the mystery, or can aid us in grasping its full weight. Our questions remain metaphysical above all (and thus we have posed questions about animality rather than just about the animal), and indeed theological (the Trinitarian dimension), but not epistemological or scientific (the origin of the world, conformity with Darwinism, the history of humans in the universe standing upright, and the organization of the human body). I do not want to suggest that one learns nothing from science; however, one does not learn from science what science cannot teach: where we come from and where we are going according to the eschatological purposes of God rather than the scientific discoveries of human beings. The two (eschatological purpose and scientific discovery) are certainly not always in contradiction. But their non-contradiction does not imply or impose upon us their coincidence, and even less their concordance. We lose our grasp of the eucharist if we try to conceptualize it in epistemological terms, and we lose our grasp of science if we try to theologise it.[46]

Neither humanization (theologies of liberation) nor hominization, nor metabolism (Martelet), can give us the final word on transubstantiation. I would agree, without hesitation, with the Jesuit theologian François Varillon, who says, "It is when man becomes truly the *Body of Christ* that he becomes *fully man*."[47] Rather than a profession of faith in humanism, this is the recognition above all, and quite simply, of the weight of humanity that comes—in the eucharist, in Trinitarian terms, and in terms of human filiation—to offer itself and transform itself, going so far as the complete realization of our created nature. By the act of communion, our viscera

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California

address themselves to his viscera; or rather, that which makes *my life* becomes also and above all *his*—and this is what constitutes first and foremost the great strength of the act of transubstantiation. As the priest pronounces in the Ablutions of the old form of Mass: "May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received and Thy Blood which I have drunk, *cleave to my inmost parts* [*adhaereat visceribus meis*]."[48]

Falque, Emmanuel. *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eros, the Body, and the Eucharist.*
E-book, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb33780.0001.001.
Downloaded on behalf of University of Southern California