

In presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I agree that the Library of the University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to copy from, or to publish, this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written when such copying or publication is solely for scholarly purposes and does not involve potential financial gain. In the absence of the professor, the dean of the Graduate School may grant permission. It is understood that any copying from, or publication of, this thesis/dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without written permission.

Student's signature

Min-Ah Cho

Corpus Christi, To Be Eaten and To Be Written

Questioning the Act of Writing in Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

By

Min-Ah Cho
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Theological Studies

Mark D. Jordan, Ph.D.
Co-Advisor

Wendy Farley, Ph.D.
Co-Advisor

Don E. Saliers, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Pamela Hall, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Date

Corpus Christi, To Be Eaten and To Be Written

Questioning the Act of Writing in Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

By

Min-Ah Cho

B.A., Hyup Sung University, 1996
M.Th., Methodist Theological University, 1998
M.T.S., Duke Divinity School, 2003

Co-Advisor: Mark D. Jordan, Ph.D.

Co-Advisor: Wendy Farley, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Division of Religion
Theological Studies

2010

Abstract

Corpus Christi, To Be Eaten and To Be Written

Questioning the Act of Writing in Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

By Min-Ah Cho

This dissertation presents the Eucharist as both liturgical and discursive space, and the act of writing as an aid to sacramental practice. I first focus my attention on the uneasy paradox of the presence and the absence of Christ's body at the Eucharist. This peculiar mode of Christ's existence at the altar invites both individual Christians and the institutional church to appropriate the Eucharist as a site of struggle, productive of change and the redefinition of ideas of the divine. I then turn to the works of two women writers who represent distinct methods of engaging the body of Christ that are germane to women and ethnic minority believers in the present multicultural context. Hadewijch of Antwerp, the thirteenth-century Beguine mystic who lived in the space between the institutional church and the independent spiritual movement, addresses the inevitable conflicts and compromises that occur when individual spiritual practices and institutional systems exert influence upon one another. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, the Korean immigrant poet and performance artist who lived and died in North America, exemplifies the struggle to cope with a Christianity rooted in European and male-dominant ideological constructions. The two authors' writings suggest that whereas the institutionally circumscribed meanings of the Eucharist have converged to create metaphors by which Christians configure their identities as Christians, the referential and communal quality of the Eucharist has offered trajectories by which faith communities and individuals reconstruct the past and connect to others. At the level of theory, I examine the notion of sacramentality from Michel de Certeau's heterological perspective, in conversation with classical theologians, mainly Augustine and Aquinas, and contemporary literary theorists Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha. My dissertation opens up the eucharistic body of Christ to diverse and plural communities and describes it as the very place where different flesh and the desires of individual Christians interact with each other and with the institutional Church. Thus, this work aims to offer a way to explore a new path—a path directed toward networks of individuals and communities rather than a single authority, a path that renews the body of the institutional church by virtue of the presence of diverse, individual Christian bodies.

Corpus Christi, To Be Eaten and To Be Written

Questioning the Act of Writing in Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

By

Min-Ah Cho

B.A., Hyup Sung University, 1996
M.Th., Methodist Theological University, 1998
M.T.S., Duke Divinity School, 2003

Co-Advisor: Mark D. Jordan, Ph.D.

Co-Advisor: Wendy Farley, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Division of Religion
Theological Studies

2010

Acknowledgments

이 논문을 세상에서 가장 사랑하는 나의 엄마, 아버지께 드립니다. 지독하게 속
썩혀드렸던 유별난 딸을 믿어 주셔서 감사합니다. 오빠와 새언니, 장난꾸러기 나의
조카들 현석, 현준—당신들의 건강한 삶이 있었기에 이렇게 미약하나마 결실을 맺을 수
있었습니다. 값을 길 없는 사랑의 빛에 감사드립니다.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad, Wonsook Oh and Hyunjea Cho. I owe my deepest gratitude to their boundless love and trust. My brother, Hyung Rae Cho, and my sister-in-law, Jin Ran Kim, my dearest nephews, Hyunsuk and Hyunjoon—I love you all. Without all your loving support, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am deeply grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their contributions and good-natured support. I have no words powerful enough to express my appreciation to Mark Jordan for persevering with me as my advisor throughout the years. He saw my potential when I did not, and believed that I could attain it. It was an honor and pleasure for me to work with Wendy Farley, Don E. Saliers, and Pam Hall. Particularly, I give great thanks for Wendy's abundant laughter and encouragement, Don's musically tuned wisdom and compassionate heart, and Pam's therapeutic humor and our invaluable walks accompanied by her four-legged family members.

I must also acknowledge all the beloved people who shared their memories, inspirations, and experiences along my journey. I am grateful for the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters at Penn House for their warm and sincere care. I am indebted to the many teachers, mentors, colleagues, and friends from Emory University/Candler School of Theology, Duke University/Divinity School, Korean Methodist University, Hyup Sung University, and the PANAAWTM network, especially Joy McDougall, Bobbi Patterson, Susan Henry-Crowe, Ellen Purdum, the staff of Candler Office of Student Programming, the staff of Center for Women at Emory, Kazumi Hasegawa, Teresa Berger, Amy Laura Hall, Susan Keefe, Suk Mo Ahn, Suni Lee, and Miyoung Kang. I am grateful to my "Durham family," Yoonkyung, Chaho, Isue, and Koonyong. My thanks also go to my "Atlanta family," Jung Ha, Nami, David, Heejung, and Seong-Uk. All of them consistently helped me keep perspective on what is important in life and showed me how to deal with reality and maintain sanity.

Finally, I give my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the completion of this dissertation, but who are not named here. I am so grateful our paths crossed.

CONTENTS

Introduction

I. A Short Epigraph for My Writing about the Body.....	1
II. What about the Body of Christ?—The Body To Be Eaten.....	7
III. What Does the Body of Christ Matter?—The Body and Its Mode of Existence at the Altar... ..	12
IV. Why <i>Not Without</i> the Body of Christ?—The Body as a Communal Space.....	18
V. Why Must We <i>Write</i> the Body?—The Body’s Trajectory of Modernity.....	21
VI. Dissertation Structure and Main Interlocutors.....	25
i. Methodological Suggestion (Chapter 1 and 2): Michel de Certeau.....	26
ii. Two Distinct Examples of Writing the Body of Christ(Chapter 3 and 4): Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha	31
One: Quest for Heterological Sacramentality: Michel de Certeau.....	39
I. The Body, One and Unified: Henry de Lubac.....	43
II. The Body, Heterogeneous and Dispersive: Michel de Certeau.....	55
III. The Body To Be Eaten and To Be Written.....	68
Two: Writing the Body of Christ, Diversifying the Body of Christ.....	81
I. The Sacrament According to Thomas Aquinas: Suffering with the Body of Christ.....	87
II. Heterological Sacramentality and Mystical Writing.....	95
III. Writing: The Process of Diversifying the Body of Christ.....	103
IV. Challenges and Further Suggestions.....	110
Three: The Melancholic Body: Hadewijch of Antwerp.....	121
I. Painful Body, Joyful Body.....	127
II. Hadewijch the Melancholic: Insights from Judith Butler.....	132
III. Constitution of Hadewijch’s Writing Subject: Multilingualism.....	140
i. Latin Meets the Vernacular.....	144
ii. Spiritual Authority Meets Intellectual Credence.....	148
iii. Bridal Mysticism Meets <i>Minnesang</i>	154
Four: The Indigestible Body: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.....	162
I. <i>Dictee</i> : The Tongue, Daunted, Broken, and Confused.....	170
II. Indigestible Body.....	176
III. Dispersing the Body: The Body To Be Read.....	189
Conclusion: From Another’s Fable to My Fable.....	205
Bibliography.....	219

Introduction

May I write words more naked than flesh,
stronger than bone, more resilient than
sinew, sensitive than nerve.

—*Sappho*¹

I. A Short Epigraph for My Writing about the Body

Writing.

I do not know when it touched me or where I was when it arrived. I do not even know why I was so haunted by it. It is as though I have had a recurring dream, since it has always been a part of my life. When I write, I feel more. When I write, I feel beautiful. When I write, I feel I am finally partaking in reality. It is not because writing is something that I can do well or something that is easy for me. Writing is painfully difficult for me, and it always makes me feel inadequate. Writing is, for me, an experience of both love and hate.

Being a “non-resident alien” in the United States and speaking and writing in my second language, however, has drawn me into a totally different experience of writing.² As a second-language English speaker and writer whose mother tongue is Korean, I continually brace myself for a challenge that presses on me in every waking moment, at times even in my dreams. Struggling to express my thoughts and emotions as fully and fluently as I want, I have experienced deep frustrations because I do not speak and write

¹ Attributed to Sappho in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 1.

² According to the IRS, a non-resident alien is a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely. See IRS, “Topic 851—Resident and Non-Resident Aliens,” www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc851.html (accessed March 4, 2010).

in “standard English.” In my first couple of years in the United States, these frustrations were hard to bear. I wanted to speak, write, and communicate as I did when I spoke Korean, but I always failed. Moreover, the connotations and tropes of both literary terminology and everyday language were deflected and distorted before they reached me. The multiple senses that come to life in metaphors and similes—color, taste, texture, and smell—were lost somewhere between English and Korean. For quite a long time, the frustrations dragged me into the profound fear of uttering words.

Years passed, and I came to feel more comfortable with English. Although I still have difficulties penetrating the cultural meanings of some English expressions, my frustrations and fears have been moderately alleviated. I have not yet achieved perfect mastery of my second language, but I have become accustomed to the reality that speaking and writing always involve a process of learning and being challenged. Trinh T. Minh-ha’s statement resonates with me: “*Literacy and literature* intertwine so tightly, indeed, that the latter has never ceased to imply both the ability to read and the condition of being well read.”³ Interesting and unexpected experiences of writing have emerged as I have gained some familiarity with English. The more I have developed the ability to catch the nuances in the English language, the more I have found new dimensions in the sounds and meanings of some Korean words that had never sounded strange to me before. The two languages clash and interact with one another. They take me into a “third space” where my ideas are challenged, and my old convictions are dismantled.⁴

³ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 10.

⁴ The term “third space” was coined by Homi Bhabha. He argues that “[t]he intervention of the *Third Space of enunciation*, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as *integrated, open, expanding code*. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our

I am learning that being bilingual is like being an actor with two costumes, neither of which fits well. For the sake of the language other than her mother tongue, the bilingual writer “breaks through the decayed barrier of her own language,” as Walter Benjamin puts it.⁵ Instead of seeking and communicating the meanings of original words, a bilingual writer creates cacophony, destroys the conventional sense, and alters the original text with a new one. Benjamin’s understanding of the task of the translator applies to the task of the bilingual writer as well. The bilingual writer casts her own language into the “spell of another” in order “to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in [her] re-creation of that work.”⁶ What underlies the bilingual writer’s acts of speaking and writing is the conflict between the fear of allowing herself to be mistaken and the desire to bend herself to accepted norms—in order to be understood. This, of course, inhibits not only the bilingual writer but any writer who strives to “write herself”—write about herself and bring herself to writing.⁷ Perhaps such a venture of writing will always be marked by the inevitable failure to reach truth and certainty.

Stumbling over two languages occurs not only in my literal and linguistic activities. I experience similar struggles as I study theology, yet in a more metaphorical way. My ethnicity and gender have been considered marks of “otherness” in the long history of Christianity, and the ideologically constructed images of the Western male God

sense of the historical identity of culture as homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by an originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People.” *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 53.

⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ I allude to Hélène Cixous’ famous phrase “woman must write herself,” in her “Laugh of Medusa.”: “Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing.” See Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” in *The Women and Language Debate: A Sourcebook*, ed. Camille Roman, Suzanne Juhasz, and Cristanne Miller (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 78.

always make me feel impeded and abashed. On one hand, my speech and writing mumble with the language manufactured in the church tradition. On the other, the alienation at times wears a very friendly face both in the church and the academy. I have frequently been asked to “represent” my ethnicity and gender, by delivering “authentic” knowledge of Korea (or “Asia,” more likely) and even just by being present as a marker of “diversity.” I feel uncomfortable with such an inquiry because I often sense that it assumes that I speak authentically and purely as a “Korean woman.” I really have no idea about being and speaking as an “authentic” “Korean” “woman.” I rather believe that my national and linguistic identity is a product constituted by continual exchange with other human beings and social circumstances in public spheres and that therefore it never settles down. If my literal bilingualism is a trial that makes me perpetually uncertain of language, my metaphorical bilingualism is another trial that keeps me constantly questioning “truth.” And those two trials never separate from each other. Always traversing more than one occupied territory at a time, I am in search of a proper place but remain perpetually improper.⁸

As I fluctuate between two languages both literally and metaphorically, an unresolved question restlessly lingers: What does it mean to write the body of Christ, the Word made flesh, with my Korean female body and language? By “writing,” I primarily employ Michel de Certeau’s definition: a “concrete activity that consists in constructing on its own, blank space (*un espace propre*)—the page—a text that has power over the exteriority from which it has first been isolated.”⁹ Such a definition of writing is more

⁸ I resonate with what Trin T. Minh-Ha described about the diasporic identities of women in her book, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representations, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 4.

⁹ Michel de Certeau, “Scriptural Economy,” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Hoboken,

than a production of a text. It also is more than the act of speaking. Unlike speaking, writing forms a textual space. Writing is a particular kind of activity authoring and claiming one's own space. "Writing" thus includes both text as a cultural production and practice that construct a space that displays one's culture, languages, emotions, and anything else that defines one's context in relation to a larger society. By the "body of Christ," I mean both the original, historical body of Christ and the church as the sacramental community called me into being by the Eucharist. By the act of "writing the body of Christ," I mean therefore the act of making one's narrative space in relation to the church as the sacramental community. The act of writing the body of Christ includes the act of writing *about* the body and writing *with* the body, but it is more than the sum of its parts. In my act of writing, the body of Christ involves more than an object to be explained, more than a means for evolving insights. My very act of writing the body of Christ is what mixes my body, culture, emotion, and desire with the body of Christ, and thus it is what produces the body of Christ differently from the institutional church's production.

The project I present here is my response to the questions that arise when I write the body of Christ: How might I incorporate my narratives, which embed my culture and language as Korean female, into a body of Christ that projects the archetype of "generic," "standard," and "normative" humanity? How might I, as a woman and a member of ethnic minorities in the church, mediate the differences between the institutional church and my cultural heritages, instead of repeating the monologue of church language? How might I find my words to write the body of Christ out of my own fear and also out of the myriad ideological constructions of the body of Christ inhabited and privileged by the

institutions of churches and societies? How might I challenge the church to be the institutional space where the members of Christian communities accept difference and practice diversity?

My project neither tries to ease the anxiety over these questions, nor does it look for ways to avoid such situations. Instead, I seek a way to attend to these questions more closely, to make them more lively, and to voice them more loudly. By tracing a path to the writing about the body of Christ built in the margins of the Christian tradition, I call forth those who can relate to such anxiety, search the ways for Christians to make the body of Christ more troubled and troubling, expose the body to confusion, and therefore push it to draw more arduously on the motley desires raised by individual Christians in different life places. My project aims to find a way that the act of writing can be a practice of faith by which the fragmented individual believers can account for the body of Christ, in spite of—or precisely because of—the frailties and limits of their bodily locations.

I believe this project rejuvenates the body of Christ, particularly his body at the sacrament of the Eucharist. I argue that, as Christ's eucharistic body must signify radical inclusivity, the body of Christ given us to write sustains the process of unconditional speaking and writing of God. Suggesting a metaphorical connection between the acts of *eating* the body of Christ and *writing* the body of God, my dissertation proposes the act of writing as an assist to or an extension of the eucharistic liturgy, illuminating the inherent plurality of the body of Christ and further reinvigorating the plurality by emphasizing the body's dependence on diverse human lives and human narratives.

II. What about the Body of Christ?—The Body To Be Eaten

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

—Matthew 26: 26–28(NRSV)

I begin by situating my project in relation to current discourses about the body. When speaking of “writing the body of Christ,” I wish to bring attention to a particular form of the body: the flesh and blood of Christ in the Eucharist—the flesh and blood of which we eat and partake. Mine is a story about how this body came to call into question my passion for writing, a passion not just my own, but the passion of all those who struggle to look for a language to express the meaning of theology. The story appears to be set at the intersection of the modern and postmodern discourses of God.

Decades after Nietzsche’s madman proclaimed the death of God, some of the gravediggers who had buried the body of God, called “death-of-god theologians” and “deconstructive theologians,”¹⁰ meandered around the marketplace and churches where the madman had entered and sang “*requiem aeternam deo*,”¹¹ all the while obsessively sniffing the divine decomposition and making the noises of grave-digging. Drawing on the linguistic turn in Wittgenstein and Heidegger, and, most importantly, reflecting

¹⁰ In the 1980s a group of American theologians, schooled in the philosophy of religion, encountered the work of Jacques Derrida. They include Thomas J. J. Altizer, Mark Taylor, Robert Scharlemann, Charles Winquist, Max Meyer, and Carl Raschke. See Graham Ward, “Deconstructive Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Post-Modern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76.

¹¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 120. The English translation is “grant God eternal rest.”

Jacques Derrida's anti-metaphysical account of language, they brought the dead God back to the life.

However, the God resurrected by the death-of-God theologians and deconstructive theologians was now begotten of text. Derridean criticisms of logocentrism had served to evacuate the position of metaphysical presence and fill the hole with writing. Deconstructive critiques like Derrida's had liberated the idea of writing from logocentrism that presumes the presence of God as the "transcendental signified," the essential meaning that transcends all signs. According to Derrida, the referent of the Word can be interpreted and rewritten endlessly. By critiquing the metaphysical framework, Derrida scattered God's body into the never-ending play of words. God was reified as the radically incarnate word, who henceforth speaks to itself, not to any personages, revelations, or hierarchies above, beyond, or outside the text. The body of God is now dispersed into all words; the Spirit of God is the economy of endless deferral. Theology no longer offers us the comfort of a single truth.

The disappearance of the transcendental God not only closed the age of classical onto-theology, which is the idea that God is the highest being who is the key to the meaning of the whole of being. It also created the possibility of a free play of theological reading and writing.¹² The issue of writing thus emerges as the central theological topic.

¹² Martin Heidegger coined the term "onto-theology" to critique a tendency of Christianity. In his *Being and Time* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell), Heidegger argues that metaphysics is *onto-theo-logy*, and that Western metaphysics since its Greek beginnings has pre-eminently been both ontological and theological (74). In the onto-theological system, philosophy's project is to render the whole of being perfectly intelligible to human understanding, to have the world at its control. Merold Westphal, in his essay "Onto-theology, Metanarrative, Perspectism, and the Gospel" explains that the problem with this intermixing of ontology and theology is that, first, it deprives the world of its mystery; second, it gives humanity a God not worthy of worship; and, third, "it opens the way for the unfettered self-assertion of the will to power in the form of modernity, namely the quest of science and technology to have everything at human disposal." *Christianity*

For the theologians influenced by Derridean deconstruction, writing theology inscribes the disappearance of the transcendental signified.¹³ The act of writing is the act of ensuring the death of God and exhibiting the corpse as text. In this way, as Mark Taylor puts it, “scripture embodies and enacts the death of God, even as the death of God opens and releases writing.”¹⁴ Theologians from various fields, including feminist theologians and postcolonial theologians, see the potential of deconstruction for challenging the Christian tradition. The God in the old paradigm is renounced as an overwhelming metaphysical force, and the tenets of Christian theology are criticized as inherently ideological, patriarchal, totalizing, and even militant.

In spite of the numerous enchanting outcomes that deconstruction offers to the field of theology, the question arises whether deconstruction has conveyed more than a negative wisdom and therapeutic intervention to reading and writing theology. What might deconstruction suggest to individuals and groups who still believe in the body of Christ and want to deal with the body without losing their critical edge? How might those individuals and groups take accountability to the body of Christ, which is still effective as it exhibits and reproduces memories of God? This body is not of a transcendental dictator who always wins at the end, but of the Crucified One who is afflicted, who shares the burden of suffering in solidarity with humanity. The body still bears the wounds and scars inscribed by the complex web of power relations that constitute reality. The body still incorporates histories and subsumes human discourse. The body is still a reservoir

and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views, ed. Myron B. Penner (Ada, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 145.

¹³ Mark Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern a/Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 103.

¹⁴ Mark Taylor, “From Erring: A Postmodern A/theology,” in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence E. Cahoon (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2003), 441.

that enables Christians to record new memories and re-inscribe new grammars and vocabularies of theology.

While recognizing the legitimate challenges raised by deconstructive critiques, my project defends a way of speaking and writing about the body of Christ—not as a corpse or as a textual entity, but as a living body composed of flesh and blood. I argue that theology still needs the body of Christ, because the body is the configuring ground of the historical and theological imagination of God. The body of Christ is not necessarily equated to the metaphysical treatment of presence as immediate, direct truth, and self-authenticating-meaning. The particular mode of the body I will illuminate is the eucharistic body of Christ, and my project draws attention to this extraordinary body that graphically exhibits both the presence and absence of God.

“*Take, eat, this is my body . . . Take, drink, this is my blood.*”¹⁵ Since Jesus uttered this simple statement at the Last Supper, the eucharistic body has persisted in the Christian tradition as an inseparable means to mediate God to the faithful, differently from scripture yet and inseparable from it.¹⁶ God is enfleshed as a scriptural body in the Bible and as a eucharistic body in Christian bodies. The God who takes Godself down to the earth in the event of Incarnation now offers Godself not only in scripture but also in

¹⁵ The Word of Institution spoken by Christ at the Last Supper. The three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:19) as well as 1 Corinthians (11:24) give versions of the Word of Institution. John 6 is also interpreted in connection with the Eucharist: “For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him” (John 6:55–56, NIRV).

¹⁶ This belief is more evident in Catholic tradition. Hans Urs von Balthasar states, “there exist two means to effect incorporation [into Christ’s Body], two means which bring about the transition from the first to the second bodily form: The Eucharist and scripture. They mediate the one, incarnate Logos to the faithful, and make him who if himself is both origin and end the way (*via*); the Eucharist does so inasmuch as he is the divine life (*vita*), and scripture inasmuch as he is the divine Word and the divine truth (*veritas*).” Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology IV: Spirit and Institution* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 16.

the sacraments. The Incarnate God becomes disseminative and mobile through these two means. Christians not only read and interpret the bleeding, tortured, sacrificial, and life-giving body crucified at Calvary, but they also eat, digest, and become mixed with the body. Christians eat the flesh of God and incorporate it, as Thomas Aquinas later writes, “not only the flesh but the whole body of Christ, the bones and nerves and all the rest.”¹⁷

The scriptural body and the eucharistic body are one and the same, but they are differently experienced and meet with different fates. While God in the form of scriptural body was killed and reborn into a text for the free play of reading and writing, the eucharistic body survived and remained alive through the numerous bodies of believers. God in the form of eucharistic body was fused, united, and merged into the lives of men and women, of cities and nations.¹⁸ The eucharistic body of Christ has even metamorphosed when it mixed with various Christians in the church altar or in cult rituals in urban areas.

If the eucharistic body has a different mode of survival from the scriptural body that is caught within the metaphysical and ontological framework, the act of writing about the eucharistic body must have operated in a different manner and produced different effects than it did on the traditional theology. My project is to rethink the implication of writing theology on behalf of this eucharistic body.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III. 76.1, trans. Fathers of English Dominican Province and Daniel J. Sullivan (1952).

¹⁸ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ii.

II. What Does the Body of Christ Matter?—The Body and Its Mode of Existence at the Altar

[I]nstead of God leaving the world without a trace, the very sacramental character of religion lent itself copiously to developing the so-called secular forms of culture and . . . these are often thinly disguised sacramental cultural expressions.

—Regina Mara Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism :When God Left the World*

What is, then, the distinctiveness of the eucharistic body that matters in my project? It is the mode of its existence. The mode of its existence also explains how it survived into modernity and how it can still remain effective for Christian life. The body of Christ in the Eucharist has a peculiar mode of existence. It is present and simultaneously absent: The presence of the body is always accompanied by the lack of the body, the absence, because Jesus has ascended. The principle of understanding the mystery of the Eucharist is established by Augustine’s definition of sacrament: “outward visible signs of inward and invisible spiritual grace.”¹⁹ Augustine’s definition predicates the two principles of the sacrament: *the principle of medium* and *the principle of communion*. The principle of medium explains that God works through visible signs and physical acts. The medium is employed to reveal the invisible reality of the divine. The principle of communion explains that the employed medium must be recognized and celebrated by a community of believers. The end of God’s activity is to draw humanity into participating in divinity. Christian tradition names this particular mode of divine presence “sacramentality.” The word sacramentality expands the meaning of sacrament to designate all reality and all the community of believers as the bearer of the invisible presence and action of God. But sacraments are not God in God’s self. Sacramentality is a radical notion that every

¹⁹ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Gareth B. Matthews and ed. Stephen McKenna (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3:21.

creature is potentially a disclosure and an agent of the invisible God, without perfectly signifying God.

The Eucharist is the most significant exemplification of the Augustinian understanding of the sacraments. Together with the principles of medium and communion, the eucharistic body of Christ manifests a logic that overcomes the dichotomy of presence and absence.²⁰ In the Eucharist, the two modes of presence and absence are indissoluble and interdependent. The notion of sacramentality affirms that the eucharistic body of Christ cannot be captured by the language of either presence or absence alone. This notion is the key that makes a self-contradictory, paradoxical mode of existence viable. It also ensures that the eucharistic body of Christ cannot be dominated by a single person or system. It forcefully signifies the mystery of God via the communal recognition of the consecrated bread and wine. Here, all the laws of nature are suspended. On account of this bizarre logic, Christians believe that they eat and thus incorporate their bodies with the body of Christ, in spite of the fact that none of the normal sensory indicators affirm the process. Through the sacramental mystery, the body at the altar is understood as “a positive but not fetishizable arrival, in which signs essentially participate, but which they cannot exhaust,” as John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock observe.²¹

By describing the historical development of the understanding of the eucharistic body of Christ and also suggesting the distinct logic of sacramentality explained by theologians, my project highlights the ambivalence between the presence and absence of

²⁰ Richard P. McBriain, ed. *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 1148.

²¹ John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 92.

God. Manifesting both presence and absence, the eucharistic body never stops challenging the Christian tradition's fixed ideas of the divine and its confounding doctrines and systems. Through ambivalence, this body assimilates any human agency in faith, yet it belongs to no human agent or group. This body is an invincible safeguard that has sustained the institution, but it is also a fatal substance that has shattered all human-made constructions. This body has been appropriated by the church as the most powerful object for protecting the church institution from the "heretical" accounts, yet it also has planted the seeds for dangerous memories, speeches, and actions. This body erupts into a human subject, and it metamorphoses with the subject toward an end no one can foresee. This body always moves along with human agents. It always is in transit, in the form of action, in the form of a verb.

The ambivalence of the eucharistic body of Christ offers inexhaustible possibilities for Christians to renew and rewrite the tradition, particularly for individual Christians who have no authority in matters of the church's official position. In order to attest to the eucharistic body as a foundation of new possibilities, it is important to avoid two central misunderstandings about the eucharistic body of Christ: classical onto-theology and deconstructive theories. This dissertation examines a view of the body that overcomes the challenges raised by critics at both poles.

In this regard, my project shares a concern with theologians in radical orthodoxy. Although scholars practicing radical orthodoxy are heavily influenced by deconstructive theories in their approach to metaphysics and onto-theology, they also have been greatly dependent on more traditional theologians, such as Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Karl Barth. Thus, they differ from Derrida in their emphasis on the

ecumenical creeds and liturgy. The radical orthodox theologians Milbank and Pickstock argue that deconstruction, by perpetually postponing presence, “allows no mediating relationship between *différance* and the various appearances of meaning which it organizes or disorganizes.”²² According to the radical orthodox theologians, the universality of the flux of difference in deconstruction generates meaningless language. The Derridean sign consequently “relinquishes commitment to any specific epiphanies of meaning” and concedes the inability to make any ethical counterpoint.²³ Milbank and Pickstock conclude that true difference and openness to the other “demand a sensitivity to the fact that some things are more alike than others, or are driven by the provocation of preference or desire which celebrates that difference all the better.”²⁴ Milbank and Pickstock, with their radical orthodox fellows, find a way to overcome both classical onto-theology and Derridean secularism in the restoration of liturgy and sacrament or, more precisely, of a liturgical and sacramental world. The Eucharist is thus reinforced as the foundation of Christianity in the contemporary world. These theologians confirm the “*ecclesial* and *relational* context of the Eucharist,” by emphasizing that the words and events of the Eucharist only occur in the church.²⁵ In consequence, as Pickstock has written, “a trust in the eucharistic event inevitably involves trusting also the past and the future of the church.”²⁶

In the radical orthodox vision, modernity, characterized by the rise of liberal democracy and capitalism, has forcibly dismissed the church and its account of reality

²² Milbank and Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, 90.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

from its earlier and necessary public space wherein it shaped Christians according to the truth and beauty of God.²⁷ By critiquing the symptoms of secularism, radical orthodox theologians urge a return to the foundation of Christian teaching. They argue that the future of Christianity must remain connected with the Christian heritage. As Ashley Woodiwiss summarizes, radical orthodoxy seeks to “re-direct Christian loyalties and reform Christian affections away from the state (unlimited power) and market (unbounded desire).”²⁸ For that reason, radical orthodoxy bends Christianity toward the church, which exists in the world, through the Spirit, as the singular prototypical human community.

While my project partly aligns with Milbank’s and Pickstock’s approaches to both postmodern theory and classical theology, particularly with their reserved adaptations of deconstructive theory and also in their attempt to revive the sacraments, I propose a different trajectory. I share with the radical orthodox theologians my diagnosis that the church may no longer take charge in proclaiming objective and imperative statements effective in civil or moral realms, and yet I want to push this argument further. I assert Christians must thoroughly accept the secularized modern world. Yet to accept secularization does not necessarily mean that Christians need to serve the secularized world on its own terms.²⁹ Instead, Christians must form their own opinions and create their own lifestyles in secular society while keeping a relation both with their own tradition and with the traditions of others. The institutional church is not necessarily the

²⁷ For an introduction and criticism of Radical Orthodoxy, see James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2004).

²⁸ Ashley Woodiwiss, “What’s So Radical about Orthodoxy?” *Christianity Today*, May 24, 2005, www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/mayweb-only/22.0c.html?start=2 (accessed Dec 21, 2008).

²⁹ See Fredrick Christian Bauerschmidt’s remarks on de Certeau’s essay in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 212. For my argument about the relation between the church and secular society, I owe much to de Certeau and Bauerschmidt. De Certeau’s position is explored in more in detail in what follows.

center of such tasks.³⁰ I believe, unlike radical orthodoxy, that those charges of forming opinions and creating new lifestyles are not primarily a matter of church institution, but rather of individual Christians who live in both the church and the secular world. Instead of commanding the institutional church to take sole responsibility, my project suggests distributing the responsibility to individual Christians. It is individual Christians, I will argue, who create a new account of our time, in which the institutional church can no longer be the only site for Christian intervention in the world. Thus, Christianity may become able to communicate with a secularized society, make space for others, and open the now-closed systems to difference and plurality.

It is at this point that I rely on the eucharistic body as the foremost ground for my project. I suggest that the Eucharist invites and orients individual Christians to pursue their new task and also facilitates the conversation between the institutional church and individual Christians. My project describes the intrinsic and interdependent relation between the body of Christ and the multiplicity of individual bodies.³¹ It demonstrates that the body interminably allows and even necessitates individual Christians to partake

³⁰ By “institutional church,” I mean a visible and social structure of the church, represented as a “complex of positions, roles, norms and values” lodged in a particular type of social structure in time. Here I adopt Jonathan Turner’s definition of institution: “a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures.” Institutions, according to Turner, organize “relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment.” In other words, institutions are social forms or entities that reproduce themselves, such as governments, families, legal systems, human languages, universities, etc. See Jonathan Turner, *The Institutional Order* (New York: Longman, 1997), 6. I also adopt the definition of “Church institution” as defined by the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: “a visible and social structure of the Church” as a “sign of its unity in Christ.” Within the Roman Catholic Church, the church institution includes church law, the Catholic parish, the Catholic diocese, the hierarchy, etc. By “individual Christian,” I mean an independent person who identifies herself or himself as Christian, and a person who possesses her or his own needs and desires as well as the goals of being Christian.

³¹ For more on this topic, see Bauerschmidt’s remarks on de Certeau’s essays included in Graham Ward’s *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), 137.

in this task, regardless of their cultural location, regardless of their political or religious authority.

III. Why *Not Without* the Body of Christ?—The Body as a Communal Space

If secularism is thoroughly pervasive in our society, why do Christians still need *the* particular body, the symbol of old tradition? Put more straightforwardly, why should Christians take the body of Christ seriously? The body of Christ is necessary only because Christians, in the words of Michel de Certeau, “are not without communally born tradition from which they receive their language and to which they are accountable for their use of that language.”³² To live as a “Christian” is not simply to practice benevolence in the name of an anonymous god. It is to live in the midst of the specific others who make up communities that bear the name “Christian”: “No one is Christian without the others—it is impossible to be a Christian alone,” as de Certeau writes.³³ Furthermore, although Christians can no longer construct a discourse that theorizes a universal voice, they still remain in search of new trajectories for making opinions and creating new lifestyles.

These new trajectories inevitably require the sacramental sensibility through which Christian tradition has historically examined itself. This sensibility has been built particularly on the body of Christ by which various faith communities re-member the past and connect to others. By bridging the past, present, and future of Christianity, the body of Christ creates a communal space in which Christians in different contexts meet, share memories, and work together on new tasks. Through the eucharistic body of Christ,

³² Bauerschmidt, a chapter introduction to Ward, *The Certeau Reader*, 211.

³³ De Certeau, “How Is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in Ward, *Postmodern God*, 146.

Christians learn the ways they have understood themselves in relation to the divine, to other Christians, and to non-Christians. The body, also, makes individual Christians and the institutional church necessarily communicate with one another and exchange influences. The body of Christ is crucially important not because it is the Incarnation of transcendental being that guarantees the normality of the universe or the miraculous exception that enables us to explain everything else. Instead, it is because the body offers both the institution and the individual untiring possibilities through which to participate in exchanging influences with each other.

Where the institutional authority has lost its governing status, the sacramental sensibility is particularly important. In a secularized society where Christianity is no longer a predominant ideology, the institutional church and individual Christians can easily lose contact with each other. The Eucharist, however, can mediate between the institution and the individual. The sacrament has, in fact, always dwelt in between the institution and the individual. The Eucharist combines a highly institutionalized system of words, signs, and images with the very personal act of eating and digesting. As the believers eat the body of Christ, their flesh and identities also enter into the eucharistic system filled with symbols, signs, and regulations built by the institutional church. The Eucharist propels the interaction in which both the institution and the individual keep exchanging their bodies with each other.

The effacement of institutional authorities in the modern and postmodern context does not mean that the institutional church is to be discarded nor Christian discourse uprooted. On the contrary, the institution needs to be reshaped to be applicable in society and to invite individual believers to create Christian discourses from their own life

context. My project discredits not only the nostalgic (or illusive) impulse to reform the institutional church as an ideal Christian community, but also rejects the random, subjective appeal to an independent Christian spirituality. As Fredrick Christian Bauerschmidt points out in his reading of de Certeau, both positions hide certain fears: The former fears the latter that “announces the future”; the latter fears the former that “remembers the past.”³⁴ Insofar as they bear the name “Christian,” the institutional church and individual Christians are necessarily interdependent. No figure of authority in Christianity—whether the church hierarchy or the spiritual individual—can be the whole because the very foundation of Christian identity is not defined by a single structure or instance. Since its beginning, Christianity has built community.³⁵

The Eucharist emphasizes the communal nature of the Christian tradition. The body of Christ at the altar occasions dubious experiences and opens ongoing debates that entice both the institutional church and individual Christians. Then, the body of Christ encourages individual Christians to create their own space in the place dominated by the institution. In that space of interaction, the social and ontological specificities that identify Christianity are crossed and re-crossed. The Eucharist provides Christians with a connective thread to interweave the complexities and contradictions of their social and religious positions. The Eucharist puts those differences into operation. The Eucharist makes the tensions and conflicts visible. My project is to illuminate the tensions and conflicts even more vigorously by investigating how the eucharistic body works to gather Christian individuals and makes the discordant voices coexistent despite the cacophonies.

³⁴ Bauerschmidt, “The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology,” *Modern Theology* 12, no. 1 (January 1996): 12.

³⁵ De Certeau, “How Is Christianity Thinkable?” in Ward, *Postmodern God*, 148.

My project particularly explores the ways in which the Eucharist incorporates the margins of the Christian tradition, where the individual believers struggle with the ideological constructions of the institutional church. Those Christians at the margins are pressed by the effects of predominant theological discourses, even as they choose to live with them. This dissertation is an experiment designed to resonate with those individuals who want to claim a more tangible, attainable, and practicable body of Christ even while living in the obscure area between the institution and the individual. I aim to intensify interaction between the body of Christ and the diverse bodies of individual Christians, and make that interaction useful for both the individuals and the church institution.

V. Why Must We *Write* the Body?—The Body’s Trajectory of Modernity

The attempt to revive the community of believers through the Eucharist is nothing new. Theologians from diverse Christian traditions have recognized that the Eucharist is the locus in which Christianity finds both challenges and rewards. Particularly in the Roman Catholic tradition, notably in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, a number of literatures on sacramental theology emerged.³⁶ Karl Rahner’s and Edward Schillebeeckx’s approaches to the sacrament particularly strengthened new approaches to sacramental theology. Rooted in Thomas Aquinas and open phenomenological and existentialist approaches, the two theologians interpreted the Eucharist anew.

Rahner’s main argument revolves around the symbolic character of sacraments reflecting the fundamental relationship between the knowledge of God and human history.

³⁶ See Kevin Irwin’s articles in *The Thomist*: “Recent Sacramental Theology: A Review Discussion,” *The Thomist* 47 (October 1983): 592–608; “Recent Sacramental Theology,” *The Thomist* 52 (January 1988): 124–47; “Recent Sacramental Theology III,” *The Thomist* 53 (1989): 281–313.

Rahner argues that sacraments, as “intrinsically real symbols,” express the “spatio-temporal, historical phenomenon, the visible and tangible form” of human life in which the grace of God works and intervenes.³⁷ By extending the notion of sacrament, Rahner enriched the subject of sacramental theology.

Schillebeeckx’s argument highlights the personal aspect of sacrament.

Schillebeeckx explains that the sacraments manifest the properly human mode of encounter with God. The sacraments are not “things” that infuse God’s grace but rather events that display the “encounter of men on earth with the glorified man Jesus by way of a visible form.”³⁸ Schillebeeckx argues that the sacraments fulfill a personal relationship with God, offering a distinct way in which Jesus as the primordial sacrament becomes accessible to us through bodily encounter.

Rahner’s and Schillebeeckx’s perspectives shifted the focus of sacramental theology from ontological causal language to a new view framed in the competent phenomenological languages and existential condition of human life. Their approaches particularly centered on Christ as the primary and fundamental sign of God’s grace as experienced in a human context. Given the influences of these two prominent theologians, sacramental theology increasingly acknowledges the personal, communal, and relational nature of the sacraments in their human context.³⁹ Scholars in sacramental theology incorporate the work of anthropologists and social scientists, recognizing that sacramental thinking and practice are rooted in the human condition.⁴⁰

³⁷ Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Hyperion Books, 1994), 37.

³⁸ Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987), 44.

³⁹ Susan A. Ross, *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 116.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, the group of theologians who have gathered for the project titled Postmodern Sacramento-theology (undertaken since 1996) have re-examined the quest for sacramental theology, while more directly coping with the problem of the metaphysics of presence in a postmodern context.⁴¹ These theologians integrate classical sacramental theology with continental philosophies and thus re-contextualize the basic structure and language of sacramental theology.⁴² By reflecting on modern sensibility in the late twentieth century, they bring attention to the possibility of a contemporary discussion about the sacraments in light of a newly defined transcendent. They argue that sacramental theology must not be discussed within a totalizing logic equal to a causal or legalistic language.⁴³ Sacramental theology is to be conceived in “accordance with the event of heterogeneity which confronts us with the particularity and contingency of our own (Christian) engagement with reality.”⁴⁴ Lieven Boeve summarizes the project:

In the postmodern context the Christian narrative can regain contextual plausibility only by recontextualizing and reconstructing itself as an open narrative. [. . .] The sacramentality of life, clarified and celebrated in the sacraments, is no longer considered as participating in a divine being, nor anticipation of a self-fulfilling development, but as being involved in the tension arising from the irruption of the divine Other into our human narratives, to which the Christian narrative testifies from of old.⁴⁵

These theologians emphasize the necessity of sacramental theology to be reinterpreted as a counterpoint to confronting such a homological tendency in theology.

⁴¹ Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leigseen, eds., *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2001), vii. From November 3 to November 6, 1999, an international group of about 250 scholars gathered in the second biannual congress of the Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology (LEST). The congress was an initiative of the project search group Postmodern Sacramento-theology. The volume titled *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* is a result of this project.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

I emphatically identify with these theologians, and I want to contribute to their efforts by drawing attention to a practical side of the Eucharist. My project considers the act of writing as an aid and extension of the eucharistic ritual. Its guiding metaphor is that the body of Christ is given to Christians to be *eaten* and also to be *written*. Both the Eucharist and writing God incorporate the bodies and desires of individual Christians in the body of God. Just as the eucharistic liturgy gathers scattered bodies of individual Christians together, so too the act of writing calls forth fragmented narratives of Christian lives into the discursive body of Christ. Since both are instruments of incorporating the body of Christ, the act of eating and writing God supplement each other. The eucharistic liturgy is a ritual that confirms Christians' union with the body of God, and the act of writing Christ's body subsequently is a practice that makes the incorporation of the divine and human a discursive form.

The significance of the act of writing as a sacramental practice has been explored by a number of theologians. For example, theologians such as David N. Power and Rebecca Chopp stress that the acts of speaking and writing God's words are fundamentally sacramental activities.⁴⁶ They argue that identification of linguistic activity as sacramental activity appreciates a human ability to make signs and express divinity through languages. By writing, the incorporation of the divine and human comes into sight and is made readable and discussable.

While pressing the link between the eucharistic liturgy and the act of writing, my argument particularly highlights, first, *the significance of the paradox of the body* in

⁴⁶ David Power, "The Language of Sacramental Memorial: Rupture, Excess, and Abundance," in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 135–160; Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God* (New York: Crossroad, 1991); Regina Schwartz's *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 2009) demonstrates a similar perspective.

sacramental activity and, second, *the procedural and participatory aspects of the activity*. I argue that in the matter of writing, just as of liturgy, the paradox of God must be a locus to challenge any human attempt to fix the divine in matter. The acts of writing and eating God remind us not only of the presence of God, but also of the absence. By eating and writing the body of Christ, Christians rejoice in the presence of God and, at the same time, suffer with the absence of God. While the presence displays the infinite accessibility, the absence marks the total unattainability. By oscillating between these two poles, the body of Christ opens up the process for reworking and rewriting the institution and tradition. Therefore, the liturgy of the Eucharist and writing the body of Christ are less instruments for claiming truth and more vehicles for shaping a communal space that allows different cultures and identities to mix with each other. Both practices deny that any adequate explanation of the divine could ever be consumed or written. They highlight not the consequences of the sacramental activity but rather the process and necessity of participation in the divine. They are the activities that enforce the process and ongoing participation and therefore undo any human attempt to exhaust and dominate the divine mystery. In so doing, they incorporate the concrete realities of individual Christians into a larger discursive body of theology.

VI. Dissertation Structure and Main Interlocutors

My dissertation follows two separate but interdependent threads. The first thread (chapters 1 and 2) draws a theoretical framework. My conversation with Michel de Certeau serves mainly, though not exclusively, as a ground for exploring the metaphor of eating and writing God. The second thread (chapters 3 and 4) engages with primary

literatures. I present the texts of two women writers as examples of the practice of sacramentality through writing: Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

i. *Methodological Suggestion (Chapters 1 and 2)—Michel de Certeau*

Michel de Certeau calls himself a traveler who offers itineraries to elsewhere in the search for truth.⁴⁷ While the limited space of this project will not allow a survey of de Certeau's vast corpus that combines history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, cultural studies, and social science, I pay particularly close attention to the discipline of "heterology" that he employs to interpret Christian tradition. I then apply heterology to discuss the matters of sacramentality and sacramental practice.

Heterology is a term coined by de Certeau to mean a discipline in which one examines oneself in relation to "otherness." De Certeau had a lifelong interest in the margins of society, particularly, the "zones of silence" marked by those who were categorized as "abnormal" for their eccentric and unconventional thoughts and behaviors, such as the mad, the possessed, the illiterate, and the mystical. By paying attention to untold stories and misrepresented events associated with them, de Certeau investigates the diverse forms in which otherness interrupts and influences society, and he argues that the way in which a society interacts and deals with otherness reveals how the society has identified itself. In doing so, de Certeau seeks to introduce alterity into familiar structure. Though richly varied in topics and subjects, his writings consistently engage with this heterological method as he seeks ways of noticing and privileging otherness within a locked system of society.

⁴⁷ See Ben Highmore's introduction to *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 16.

De Certeau has been criticized by theologians for his negative attitude toward the institutional church. Nonetheless, I believe that de Certeau's heterological perspective manifests a profound feeling for sacramentality, especially for the paradox of the body of Christ. De Certeau's theological writings are weighed and fueled by the desire for the lost body of Christ and display the stubborn details and memories of the body. For de Certeau, the body of Christ is to be taken seriously in the present, not because it preserves a truth outside time that supposedly has remained intact, but because it introduces various discoveries over time, and thus makes room for others.⁴⁸ Put in another way, by studying the way both the institutional church and individual Christians have related with the body of Christ, de Certeau is concerned with the body not as the truth that ensures the doctrines of the institutional church but as a reservoir of memories that generate untiring alterities/alterations within Christian tradition. The distinctiveness of de Certeau's sacramental sensibility is that he suggests multiple individual bodies as the resource for enlivening the body of Christ, instead of presenting the institutional church as the core of practicing the body. Such a sacramental sensibility renders no dogmatic statements. Instead, it cultivates the "fables" of the body of Christ—in other words, small stories, murmurs, gibberish, and peeps around the body produced by individual Christians in their concrete life contexts. Seen through this lens, the institutional church is no longer the center of sacramental practice. The body of Christ disperses into numerous individual Christian bodies.

Drawing upon de Certeau's insights, I suggest that if the center of the sacrament is reshaped, the way of practicing the sacrament must also be revised. The first part of my project builds the link between the act of eating Christ's body and writing Christ's body. I

⁴⁸ De Certeau, "How Is Christianity Thinkable?" in Ward, *Postmodern God*, 144.

particularly focus on de Certeau's designation of writing as a process of embodying otherness and revealing diverse relations that had been cached by mainstream theological and doctrinal constructions. The act of writing is instrumental to heterological discipline. By writing her cultural and historical specificities, an individual Christian is textualized and known to others. She can then be posited as a part of larger socio-historical divisions. Writing instigates alteration within a familiar discursive structure by revealing differences among individuals and within groups in society. I also associate de Certeau's suggestion of the act of writing with my metaphor of the act of eating the body Christ: Individual Christians eat and write the body of Christ and thus locate themselves within Christian tradition. Through mixing their bodies and narratives with the body of Christ, they thus insert differences into the tradition.

My project offers a close reading and analysis of de Certeau's text, especially of *The Mystic Fable*, originally published as *La fable mystique* in 1982.⁴⁹ *The Mystic Fable* is de Certeau's heterological investigation of the lost body of Christ in Christian tradition. By "prowling" in late medieval and early modern mysticism, which he deems the "margin" or the "frontier" of the tradition, de Certeau notices the vestige of the lost body of Christ.⁵⁰ He maintains that the lost body of Christ produces deviations in Christian history. De Certeau suggests that the mystics in the early modern period were the individuals who had an extraordinary sensibility toward this loss.

For de Certeau, mystics are those who actively deal with the indissolubility of the presence and absence of the body of Christ and make from them a workable form. Their

⁴⁹ *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Ann Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 121.

writings are manifestations of the absent body of Christ converting to multiple languages and various expressions. De Certeau argues that the essential dimension in the study of mysticism is neither theological inquiry into a belief system nor scientific objectification of experiences. It is the examination of a space or apparatus of new types of discourses within the seemingly homogeneous system of the church. The body of Christ triggered the mystics in the early modern period to create another vision within the system. By spatializing the mystical texts as an imaginative matrix in which languages interact in many different ways, de Certeau invites us to see not the making of doctrine but the making of a heterogeneous ensemble of process that exposes those mystics' distinct performances in relation to the body. In doing so, de Certeau portrays the mystics as subversive individuals who make their own way of speaking and writing God, all the while reflecting diverse and distinct social particularities.

Turning his attention from the conceptual knowledge of mysticism to the space and the mode of producing and operating mystical languages, de Certeau sets a precedent for reading mystical literature as a mirror of today's plural contexts. This reading is most apparent in his texts dealing with contemporary cultures, particularly in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). In this book, de Certeau argues that individuals can be inventive in developing both discursive and non-discursive ways of practicing faith and that they exchange influences with the institutional system. While emphasizing not the consequences but the process and practice—the state and activity of constant attempt—de Certeau examines how to work through the normative force constructed by the dominant ideology and how to continue various challenges to the systems of institution. I argue that de Certeau's heterological project and his emphasis on

writing practices offer a new way to explore a sacramental sensibility as a faithful alternative to fundamentalist and other exclusive claims to truth.

Following de Certeau's guidance, chapter 1 of the dissertation traces a vestige of the body of Christ along the margins of the European Christian tradition. The first chapter offers a reading of the hermeneutics of the body suggested by de Certeau's former teacher, Henri de Lubac. I demonstrate how de Certeau's heterological study of the body diverges from de Lubac's more traditional way of investigating the body. Through a reading of de Certeau's description of the manner of mystical speech, the chapter discusses the way in which the body of Christ produces deviation and alterity in the Christian tradition. Chapter 1, then, shows the relationship between the eucharistic liturgy and the act of writing. Understood as a sacramental activity, the act of writing becomes instrumental for inviting and encouraging the silenced and ignored narratives lingering at the margins of Christianity to join the larger body of Christian discourses.

Chapter 2 examines whether de Certeau's heterology is applicable to the discussion of sacramental theology. By challenging any causal achievement of human signs that claims to perfect the body of Christ, heterology resists the traditional language of sacramental theology heavily influenced by a metaphysics of presence and instrumental causality. This chapter argues, despite the contradiction, that heterology rather renews and balances the traditional sacramental theology as it brings the significance of the Passion, the event of the death of God, into the core of the discussion. My reading of Thomas Aquinas's accounts of the sacrament in *Summa Tertia Pars* supports the argument.⁵¹ I illuminate, particularly, Thomas's treatise of the Passion

⁵¹ Due to its limited scope, my dissertation pays attention to only the sacramental theology shaped and developed in Roman Catholic tradition.

narrative and his emphasis on the necessity of participation in the sacraments. Thomas's emphasis on the Passion event in his discussion of the sacraments counterbalances the traditional sacramental language that overly emphasizes the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist by highlighting the importance of our desiring participation in Christ's sacrificial death. Based on Thomas's accounts, I argue that sacramental practices must be grounded by our suffering with the lack of the body of Christ and by communal participation in the body. This is an essential point that connects the Eucharist and the act of writing. As Christ emptied himself in the event of the Passion and made room for human cooperation through the Eucharist, writing as a sacramental practice must create room for the stories of individual Christians, especially for the small and weak narratives of Christians at the margins. Such a writing practice produces not a doctrinal claim about the body, but multiple fables of the body that embed individual Christians' bodies and desires. Chapter 2 closes with potential challenges in applying heterological perspective to the discussion of sacramental theology.

ii. *Two Distinct Examples of Writing the Body of Christ (Chapters 3 and 4)—Hadewijch of Antwerp and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*

Chapters 3 and 4 introduce examples of the writings I call fables of the body of Christ. These two chapters are my attempt to commune with the writers at the margin of Christianity through the body of Christ. They also demonstrate, by creating a conversation between these writers and contemporary theologians and philosophers, how the heterological practice of writing the body shapes the Eucharist as a space for mixing different voices and identities. I engage with two authors who write the body of Christ in the heterological tradition: the thirteenth-century Beguine Hadewijch of Antwerp and the

twentieth-century Korean American poet and performance artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. I examine how the heterological discipline of writing the body of Christ can be both challenging and effective in today's discussion of sacramental theology.

Chapter 3 and chapter 4 circularly invoke the alterity of the body of Christ. Hadewijch's and Cha's writings not only demonstrate de Certeau's notion of heterology "in the wild" but also modify it by extending it backwards to pre-modern material and sideways to non-European cultures. The two authors' ways of encountering the body of Christ are, however, different. Whereas Hadewijch more directly engages with the body of Christ through her blissful experience of the Eucharist, Cha is troubled by the Eucharist and interrogates the difference between the body of the male God and her own body. In spite of this difference, the two authors share commonalities in that they recognize and utilize the provocative nature of the body of Christ and that they insert new voices into the dominant religious discourses through contemplating the body. By illuminating the postulate of both the presence and absence of Christ's body that constantly resurge within the texts of the two authors, I look for the ways in which the body of Christ connects with the lives of individual Christians, not as a form of knowledge or doctrine, but as an invitation to the communal space of rewriting the Christian tradition.

Even though these two authors' texts reflect the concrete materiality of the historical contexts in which they live, I have no intention of drawing a certain factual frame or building a plausible correlation between their contexts. To invoke the past into the discourses of the present is one of the characteristics of de Certeau's discipline. As a historian writing in the heterological tradition, de Certeau finds the potential for altering

the present in past history. Unlike idealist historians who privilege their connection with the accumulated knowledge of the past, de Certeau stresses the historian's cultural location in the present through which she encounters the past. In this way, the heterological writer delivers the voice of the dead and seeks to render the alterity of the past, instead of absorbing it into the frame of conceptual knowledge. For de Certeau, the writing of history is a kind of burial rite that "attempts to exorcise death through its insertion into discourse."⁵² Following de Certeau's approach to the past history, I set out to break the hold of the obsession with determinate knowledge based on meticulous historical inquiry. Instead, I aim to suggest Hadewijch's and Cha's contexts as analogues of today's contexts. Through a parallel reading of their writings about the body, I invoke two authors from the past to influence writing about the body of Christ in our time. In doing so, I want to highlight the necessity of dealing with the body of Christ in our time and let the body be the linking point in which we communicate with the past in order to affect the present.

Despite differences of time and space, Hadewijch, as a Flemish Beguine, and Cha, as an immigrant believer, live in contexts that strikingly mirror those of women and ethnic-minority believers living at the margins of Christianity today. The two authors practiced the body of Christ not only through the liturgy but also through their writings, and I demonstrate the significance of the body of Christ in the formation of their writing subjects. For these women, the act of writing the body of God was a means, as much as the act of eating the body, through which they encountered and incorporated themselves with a larger part of the Christian communities and tradition. Their writings suggest that certain acts of writing assimilate the body of Christ with the embodied experiences of the

⁵² De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 120.

often daunted, fragmented believers at the margins. Thus, they show that the act of writing, when understood as a sacramental practice, challenges mainstream religious institutions and theological discourses to recognize and to join with the memories of these believers, precisely because their memories are bearers of the body of Christ.

Chapter 3 offers a close reading of Hadewijch's writings on the body of Christ. Hadewijch—a thirteenth-century mystical writer and member of the Beguines, a spontaneous and autonomous lay women's movement that flourished in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century—wrote in the Brabant dialect of Middle Dutch, mixed with French and Latin. Her writing attests to her knowledge of patristic theologies and familiarity with courtly literature. Her writing also tells us that at some point she was accused of false teaching and forced out of her community.

As a Beguine, Hadewijch belonged to neither a monastic order nor a clerical system. Yet her Beguine identity allowed her some privileges typically reserved for clergy. For example, she was granted teaching authority over the laity and frequent reception of the eucharistic sacrament. Thus her religious life was formed by absorbing influences from both the clergy and the laity.

I pay particularly close attention to Hadewijch's writings about her experience of the eucharistic reception. Like other contemporary female mystics, her spirituality and theology were shaped and nurtured by the Eucharist. By writing about the Eucharist based on her own experience, she created a form and style of writing that distinctively embodied her cultural identity as a Beguine. She was multilingual both literally and metaphorically. Literally, she wrote in both the vernaculars and Latin. Metaphorically, she wrote her experience of God by adapting both the teachings of the church and the

sentiments of courtly literature. While relying on the idioms and grammar cultivated by the institutions of the church, she also elaborated her personal experience of the body of God using the courtly languages. This combination allowed her to invent extraordinary symbols and images of the body of Christ. Hadewijch took and utilized the possibility of rewriting the tradition that the body of Christ offered her, and so she vigorously produced new interpretative tensions within the church tradition.

By reading Hadewijch's poems and visions in conversation with contemporary writers, notably Judith Butler, chapter 3 suggests that the formation of Hadewijch's writing subjectivity is profoundly affected by her devotion to the body of Christ in the Eucharist. By putting her sacramental sensibility into the practice of both eating and writing the body of Christ, Hadewijch magnifies the condition of alterity that she received from the body. By her writing, the eucharistic body is refigured as a vulnerable and malleable substance that produces new possibilities for both orthodox and heterodox practices and interpretations. The connections across different cultures and different languages are revealed, and they cooperate to make a new discursive construction within the Christian tradition. Her writings shatter the expectations of a homogeneous, unifying, authentic, and orthodox expression of the body—expectations that often stymie the writer's motivation to express her own desire for and experience of the body.

Chapter 4 investigates Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's engagement with the body of Christ. Cha was a Korean-American writer and performance artist born in Pusan, Korea in 1951. As a Korean immigrant writer and believer, Cha frequently reveals her conflict and negotiation with institutional languages in her writing and artwork, particularly in her

book *Dictee*.⁵³ Weaving together narratives from classical mythology, Korean history, and Roman Catholicism, Cha illuminates the female agencies that have been erased from patriarchal/nationalist discourses and calls forth the immigrant lives that have been fragmented and suppressed by cultural estrangement. The institutional language of Catholicism is closely tied to Cha's writing, involving not only the formation of her linguistic identity but also the inhibition of her desire to speak her mother tongue.

Exiled, fleeing from both her native country and the dominant colonial constructions, Cha thematizes dislocation, loss of identity, and confusion of languages. I explore the relationship between the writing subject of *Dictee* and the Roman Catholic ideas and language manifested in the text. Even though *Dictee* is not necessarily a theological text in a traditional sense, the Catholic influence is unmistakable in the ways the writer chooses subjects related to Catholic rituals and doctrines. *Dictee* demonstrates the process in which writer's subjectivity conflicts with, assimilates into, and yet also challenges the pressing influences of Catholicism. Her description of the questions of the catechism and the reception of the Eucharist reveals the seemingly solid and homogeneous construction of Catholicism to be full of inherent contradictions, gaps, and cracks.

Putting Cha's text in dialogue with contemporary thinkers, especially the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, chapter 4 highlights the prospects of the body of Christ for inviting Christians deemed as "strangers" or "pagans" to be a part of the making of Christian tradition. For Cha, who writes the body of Christ in non-standard language and with non-orthodox ideas, the body of Christ is not easily digestible and writable, because layers of ideological construction surround the body. However, as the

⁵³ Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

writer faces and deals with the fixed images of the body of Christ, the inherent ambivalence of the body is disclosed, generating an unexpected alterity. The chapter examines the distinct way this writer deals with the body of Christ. I focus attention to the way Cha blurs sets of binary distinctions between male and female, between cleric and laity, between standard and non-standard, in the process of coping with the dominant languages and ideologies of the body of Christ. *Dictée* shows that, even though institutional Catholicism suppressed and intervened in her subjective formation as a writer, the author found opportunities to create another vision within the system. Cha alters the dominant constructions of the body into a scaffold by which the unlocatable nature of her identity can be grounded. So she invites her readers to join actively with the practice of eating and writing the body of Christ.

* * *

My project, as a whole, is my own search to engage with the body of Christ. Through my project, I want to join others who also intend to engage with the body. I want to invigorate my own desire to engage with the body of Christ and to explore new expressions for the body of Christ that embed my being as Korean, female, bilingual theologian. Those expressions, I hope, are less a means of conveying information or ideas than a means of bursting forth new possibilities for constant re-signification of meanings, less a means of dogmatizing our faith than a means of examining the convention of emptying and crystallizing beliefs, less a means of normalizing the everyday than a means of calling forth emotions and passions for life.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ I am indebted here to Jeremy Ahearne's commentary on de Certeau's writing in *The Certeau Reader*, 153.

Furthermore, I hope my act of writing the body of Christ will always be a challenge to my own theology and life, just as the act has always been a challenge to my interlocutors. Through writing, I want to question the meaning of faith and theology for myself, and I hope my questions and my writings invite and encourage people like me on their own theological journeys. By people like me, I mean those who want to attend to life more intensely, who love God with more than just a sense of ethical responsibility, who have faith but desire more of God's tangibility, who feel the divine reality through a poetic sensibility that stirs up their hearts, and who want to write God with words, as Sappho is thought to have put it, "more naked than flesh, stronger than bone, more resilient than sinew, sensitive than nerves."⁵⁵

Before moving onto chapters, I need to mention that my project initially was designed to include a chapter on Simone Weil. The chapter would have taken into account particularly on an ineffableness of the body of Christ. By reading Weil's texts, I intended to examine how words and signs could negatively function in one's encountering with the divine and what the act of writing means in such case. I hope to carry this through to a future project.

⁵⁵ Cha, *Dictee*, 1.

Chapter One

Quest for Heterological Sacramentality: Michel de Certeau

The opening sentences of the introduction to Michel de Certeau's *The Mystic Fable* epitomize his project for investigating the body. In the manner of lamenting or conceding, de Certeau begins the book by noting:

This book does not lay claim to any special authorization. It stands exiled from its subject matter. It is devoted to mystic discourse of (or on) presence (of God), but its own discourse does not share that status. It emerges from a mourning, an unaccepted mourning that has become the malady of bereavement, perhaps akin to the ailment melancholia, which was already a hidden force in sixteenth-century thought. One who is missing moves it to be written.⁵⁶

These abrupt and cutting-back sentences intensify the sense of absence, which is, ironically, present in his writing. De Certeau is devoting the book to “mystic discourse of (or on) presence (of God),” yet he knows that he cannot write “about” or “on” the presence of God because the body is no longer present anywhere. De Certeau sets out, instead, to trace the path mystics follow in search of the presence of God and the exile they experience during the journey. *The Mystic Fable* is not about the presence of God, nor about the mystical knowledge of the presence. It is a study of how those distinct individuals called “mystics” are socio-historically situated and conceived in relation to the presence of God and to the larger society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is also an investigation of mystical literatures that display mystics’ embodiment of God through their own bodies.

⁵⁶ Michel de Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 1.

De Certeau's approach to the presence of God most suitably delineates my aim of tracing the body of Christ in this chapter: to suggest a methodology for a reading and writing of the body of Christ. I portray a different way to look at the eucharistic body, yet do not suggest constructing new doctrines of the body. I write about a theological constitution of the body, but do not claim an authorization or a "truth" about the body. I intend my writing to be an aperture through which other writings about the body travel. I explore, as de Certeau does in *The Mystic Fable*, the conditions of possibility that the body has generated in interacting with the church institution and with individual Christians. I provide a rubric for reading the evolution of the eucharistic body in Western Christianity, and in conjunction with that, offer my reading of de Certeau's consideration of the body of Christ. Ultimately, I argue that de Certeau provides helpful insights into sacramental theology.

This chapter illustrates a theological aspect of de Certeau's works, particularly the way he writes from within Christian discourses about the (absence of) the body.⁵⁷ De Certeau's theology is marked both by the Jesuit tradition in which he was trained and by distinctive themes such as alterity, paradox, rupture, opposition, and resistance. His unusual sensibility toward the absence of the body develops his distinct perspective on the Christian tradition. According to de Certeau, Christianity has had a special relationship with the body of Christ since its evangelical beginnings. After the body of

⁵⁷ By "body," de Certeau means the "historical and social existence [*être-là*] of an organized site." In a broad sense, the "body" de Certeau refers to in his work is a mortal site that both embodies and limits a social being in a specific time and space. The "body" includes an individual human body, an institutional body, a social body, a textual body and everything else that has a status of being in the world. De Certeau argues that the (absence) of the body of Christ results in the establishment of diverse other bodies in the history of Christianity. De Certeau, "The Weakness of Believing," in *The Certeau Reader*, 215. See also Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 5.

Christ disappeared from the tomb, the quest for the lost body of Christ haunted early Christians and produced institutions and discourses in an attempt to replace this loss.⁵⁸

The body of Christ, in spite of its physical absence, constantly intervened in shaping how Christians thought about themselves and about their world. While examining the ways in which Christians have dealt with this loss, de Certeau finds mystics who invented distinct ways to speak and write about the body, and he claims them as the forerunners who built a deviant tradition within Christianity, what de Certeau calls “heterology.” Heterology, briefly put, is a discipline in which one examines oneself in relation to otherness. Heterology investigates and traces “otherness” within a seemingly unified system of thought, and thus pursues a way of introducing alterity into familiar structure. By reading the mystical tradition from a heterological perspective, de Certeau invokes the body of Christ that has drifted in limbo, the third region, where presence and absence remain indefinable.

This chapter attends to de Certeau’s cultic invocation of the body. I begin by describing the significance of Christ’s body in the Christian West to see how the body exists in relation to members of Christianity. For this purpose, I bring de Lubac’s *Corpus Mysticum*—a study of the development of terminologies for the body of Christ in the Christian West—into the discussion. By investigating the evolution of these terminologies, de Lubac shows how the ways of naming the body have been influenced by changes in the larger society and reveals the Eucharist as a focal point by which the church finds its identity in relation to society. De Lubac argues that the Eucharist and the church have a co-foundation. The Eucharist establishes the church as a true community of believers, and the church shapes the Eucharist as its communal celebration.

⁵⁸ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, *Ibid.*, 80.

Even though de Lubac's study offers de Certeau a critical heading for his exploration of the body, de Certeau takes a different tack: While de Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* illuminates the altar area developed and garnished by the church authorities, de Certeau's *Mystic Fable* spotlights the altar area favored and worshiped by Christians at the margins and frontiers, particularly the mystics. While de Lubac emphasizes the liturgical significance of the Eucharist, de Certeau extends the notion of practicing the body. De Certeau calls attention to the mystics at the dawn of modernity for their expertise in inventing a distinct manner of practicing the body of Christ. These mystics en flesh and enliven the paradoxical nature of the body of Christ. The second section of the chapter traces de Certeau's examination of the relations between the body of Christ and believers.

My reading of de Certeau supports my argument for the act of writing as a sacramental practice. By analyzing the mystics' manner of speaking and writing the body of Christ, I suggest that the act of writing as a sacramental practice reconfigures ways of sensing the absence of the body as well as its presence. The heterological manner of writing the body enables both the presence and absence of the body to come to expression. The presence of the body that abides human languages and thoughts appears always along with the absence that dreadfully eradicates any totalizing effect of the presence. As the mystics' way of postulating the body suggests, the heterological manner of writing the body infinitely extends the condition of possibility in which a Christian can produce new signs and claim the authority of the Eucharist. With the liturgy, the act of writing perpetually invokes the paradox of Christ's body and stimulates Christians' hunger for the altar.

I. The Body, One and Unified: Henri De Lubac

“*L’Eucharistie fait l’Eglise.*”

—Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*

Henri de Lubac’s *Corpus Mysticum*, published in 1944, had a profound impact on the theology and practice of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church, and also had a remarkable influence on the works of theologians in his own day and in succeeding generations, including radical orthodox theologians.⁵⁹ De Certeau’s *Mystic Fable*, too, is heavily indebted to de Lubac’s hermeneutics of the body in *Corpus Mysticum*, though he eventually ended up diverging from de Lubac’s emphasis on the co-foundation of the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body. *Corpus Mysticum* is a historical inquiry and theological discussion of the development of the eucharistic terminologies in the Middle Ages. Throughout the book, de Lubac examines a genealogy of the meaning, language, and interpretation of the Eucharist since the patristic era.

What follows is my critical reading of de Lubac’s description of the influence of historical contexts in shaping the terminologies of the body of Christ. Though de Lubac aims to demonstrate the fundamental unity between the Eucharist and the church, he ironically reveals that the Christian understanding of the body is rooted in ambivalence

⁵⁹ Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds C.J., eds. Richard Price and Christopher Stephens (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 103. De Lubac had a great influence on the following church encyclicals: the “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *Dei Verbum*,” the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *Lumen Gentium*” and the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaundium et Spes*.” For more readings about de Lubac’s influence on Vatican II, see Henri de Lubac and Angelo Scola, *Entretien Autour de Vatican II: Souvenir et Reflexions, Theologies* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985). Many theologians across denominations are influenced by de Lubac’s historical theology and his emphasis on the liturgy and the sacraments. See Dean G. Peerman and Martin E. Marty, eds., *A Handbook of Christian Theologians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984); David Ford and Rachel Muers, *The Modern Theologians* (Malden, MA: Blackwell 2005).

and heterogeneity. Thus his holistic approach toward the historical construction of the Eucharist misrepresents the intrinsic nature of the eucharistic body, which is rooted in ambiguity and paradox. The Eucharist, through its complex and discordant nature, sets an unlimited condition of diversity in the Christian tradition.

Having lived in the midst of the Second World War, during which the moral and civil ground of the church was contested, de Lubac's consistent attempt was to restore the church by reinstating the co-foundation of the Eucharist and the church. De Lubac begins by examining the terminologies that the tradition developed to express the body of Christ. According to de Lubac, the Christian tradition has understood the body of Christ in three different ways: as the historical body of Jesus, the Eucharist itself, and the ecclesial body.⁶⁰ The three terms have always been ordered in relation to one another, and yet the internal relationships between the terms have changed over time.⁶¹ Moreover, the invention and evolution of the term "mystical" in relation to the threefold hermeneutics of the body mark changes in the theological and political stances of the church. De Lubac suggests that in the patristic and the early medieval tradition, "mystical" was the term that designated invisible action to re-member and to realize Christ's historical body.⁶² In this period, the sacramental elements were called the "mystical" body (*corpus mysticum*) while the church was called the "real" body of Christ (*corpus verum*). This early understanding of the body of Christ conformed to Augustine's sacramental theology. The sense of the invisible was maintained in both the terms "mystical" and "sacramental."

⁶⁰ De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 34–39; Michel de Certeau, too, explores this three-fold distinction in *The Mystic Fable*, 82–83.

⁶¹ De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 288.

⁶² The term "*corpus mysticum*" comes from the Pauline image of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16). De Lubac emphasizes the "mystical" aspect by noting that it is the mystery of the Eucharist that calls the church into being and founds its fundamental identity as the Eucharistic mystery.

The real presence of the body in this early formula is a temporal sort and realized by the communal celebration. The body is present when mystery and faith come together in the historical, sacramental, and ecclesial dimensions of the body.

De Lubac argues that these terminologies were reversed during the twelfth century. At some point in the Middle Ages the body of Christ in the Eucharist was increasingly described as if it was a visible matter or a particular thing. The eucharistic ritual, which used to be a communal celebration to invoke mystery, is replaced with a site that exhibits the particular thing commanding reverence and awe.⁶³ As William Cavanaugh puts it, the “technique of ‘showing in order to inspire belief’” remarkably develops around the eucharistic ritual, while eclipsing the communal meaning of the eucharistic liturgy.⁶⁴ Canon 1 of the Fourth Lateran Council (Lateran IV, which met November 1215) fairly evinces this change. The Council brought about a decisive concept of Christ’s body in relation to the church when it officially adopted the term transubstantiation, which affirms the reality of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. Canon 1 states:

There is one universal church of believers outside which there is no salvation at all for any (*extra quam nullus omnino salvatur*). In the church the priest and sacrifice is the same Jesus Christ Himself, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the figures of bread and wine, the bread being having been transubstantiated (*transsubstantiatio*) into His body and the wine into His blood by divine power, so that, to accomplish the mystery of our union, we may receive of Him what He has received of us. And none can affect this sacrament except the priest who has been rightly ordained in accordance with the keys of the church, which Jesus Christ Himself granted to the Apostles and their successors.⁶⁵

⁶³ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 210.

⁶⁴ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 89.

⁶⁵ John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to*

The theology of transubstantiation in Canon 1 confirms that the belief in the real presence of Christ takes its place as the official doctrine of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic tradition.⁶⁶ Transubstantiation teaches that the bread is turned into the actual flesh of Christ, and the wine into the actual blood of Christ, although they retain the appearance, odor, and taste of bread and wine. It means that the eucharistic elements are the real flesh and blood of Christ (*corpus verum*), the truth in an eatable form.

Just as the eucharistic elements described as a “thing” are equivalent to truth, so the “mystical” becomes understood as esoteric knowledge for realizing the truth behind the mystery of conversion, instead as a communal operation for celebrating the mystery. The term mystical comes to mean only vague—something hidden or less than real and knowable.⁶⁷ Theologians after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries believed that to call the sacramental elements *corpus mysticum* denied the real sacramental presence of Christ within them. The church, instead, adopted the word mystical for strategic purposes, in order to provide a mystical space within a hierarchical organization or to give a mystical status to certain texts endorsed by the church. Eventually, the church constituted itself as the mystical. In this new construct, the terminologies of the body of Christ changed. The eucharistic elements came to be called *corpus verum*, while the church was called *corpus mysticum*.⁶⁸

De Lubac suggests that the reasons for this shift may have come about, in part, as a response to the eucharistic controversies in the Middle Ages. These controversies the

the Present (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press), 57.

⁶⁶ Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (New York: Pueblo, 1982), 80. Also see Tom Streeter, *The Church and West: An Introduction to Church History* (New York: Authorhouse Press, 2006).

⁶⁷ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 82–83.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

nature of Christ's body in the Eucharist greatly influenced medieval metaphysics and occurred for the first time in the ninth century between Ratramnus (d. 868) and Paschasius Radbertus (786–860), and for the second time in the eleventh century between Berengar of Tour (1040–1080) and Lanfranc of Bec (1005–1089).⁶⁹ De Lubac pays particular attention to the latter controversy. The Berengarian controversy emerged from philosophical debates about the conversion from Christ's historical body to his eucharistic body. By amplifying the spiritual aspect of Augustine's eucharistic theology, Berengar asserted the necessity of the symbolic understanding of Christ's eucharistic presence and forced Latin theologians to confront the inadequacies of a crudely realistic approach to the Eucharist. Lanfranc, meanwhile, anticipated the concept of transubstantiation and insisted that the eucharistic conversion is truly a complete conversion between two bodies, and therefore the two bodies are identical. The church accepted Lanfranc's view.

What de Lubac finds problematic in Berengar's thought is a dualism between spiritualism and realism. Berengar failed to understand that, for Augustine, the real presence of Christ exists in both the sacramental elements and the church. Unlike Berengar's understanding of the Eucharist that eradicates the role of the church from the Eucharist, the Eucharist becomes realistic through the reality of the church and through the church's communal celebration. De Lubac observes that even though the Berengarian

⁶⁹ The ninth-century controversy was caused by debates attempting to explain the distinction between the Eucharistic body of Christ (*veritas*) and its exterior, sensible appearance (*figura*). In opposition to Ratramnus who insisted that the body of Christ in the sacred host is not the real body but present by spiritual mode of existence, Paschasius claimed the sacred host is actually the real body of Christ hidden under the Eucharistic species and accidents, and that, despite the distinction between *figura* and *veritas*—or precisely because of the distinction—the way for a deeper understanding of the Eucharistic species or accidents was confirmed. The victory went to Paschasius. See Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 138; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter 1.

position was proved wrong, Berengar's challenge led his opponents to emphasize the real, almost biological presence of the body. De Lubac argues that a certain kind of rationalism, exemplified by Berengar's thought, provided the medieval Christians with the basis of theological thinking and eliminated the liturgical ground of the Eucharist. De Lubac's overcoming of dualism may have been connected to the restoration of the liturgy in which the spiritual and realistic aspects of the Eucharist consolidated with one another.

Corpus Mysticum reflects de Lubac's belief in the inseparable tie between the Eucharist and the church. For de Lubac, the best way to emphasize eucharistic realism is to stress an ecclesial realism that sees Christ's real presence in the elements as a dynamic and communal mystery working toward the edification of the church.⁷⁰ The phrase "*L'Eucharistie fait l'Eglise*" is profoundly true.⁷¹ These two realisms "support one another, each is the guarantee of the other. Ecclesial realism safeguards eucharistic realism and the latter confirms the former."⁷² While challenging the dichotomy between spiritualism and realism in the eucharistic theology, de Lubac attempts to reiterate the patristic sense of *corpus mysticum*. He asserts that *corpus mysticum* must not be understood as an invisible, interior church that has a mere symbolic presence. Nor is it a social institution that holds the Eucharist as one of its activities. It is the mystical body of Christ that makes the church the sacramental community celebrating the Eucharist. By the church's priestly consecration of the Eucharist, Christ's real body becomes incorporated into the church, and the church becomes the eucharistic indwelling of

⁷⁰ Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1995), 57; Rudolf Voderholzer, *Meet Henri De Lubac: His Life and Work* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 54–55.

⁷¹ De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 103.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 251.

individual Christians calling forth participation in the world.⁷³ In order for *corpus mysticum* to be reinvigorated as a co-foundation of the Eucharist and the church, the liturgical ground of the Eucharist should be restored. De Lubac's eucharistic theology is based on his hope and belief in it as the church's liturgical ground, since for de Lubac the Eucharist helps the church to engage with the world. The mystery of Christ's body is realized by the communal performance of the liturgy. Through the Eucharist, the world is made to participate in the life of Christ.

When we consider de Lubac's strong advocacy of the church's engagement with the world, it is surprising to find his generous, almost naïve attitude toward the church's vulnerability to secular power. Even in his historical survey of the terminologies of the body, de Lubac only hesitantly acknowledges that changes in the usage of *corpus mysticum* may have been magnified by the church's growing desire to build its political security on the Eucharist. The shifts in the hermeneutics of the body are indeed closely related with the church's strategic position to employ the body as a disciplinary tool.⁷⁴ This is evident in Lateran IV's proclamation of *sola ecclesia*, which immediately follows the official approval of the theology of transubstantiation in Canon 1. Innocent III's intention of constituting the Eucharist as the foundation of the church, and of founding the ultimate authority of the church hierarchy on the body of Christ,⁷⁵ is emphatically stated in the *sola ecclesia* phrase: "There is one universal church of believers outside which there is no salvation at all for any (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)."⁷⁵ The church

⁷³ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1993).

⁷⁴ Gary Macy explains the relation between the Eucharistic theology and church hierarchy in *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period: A Study of the Salvific Function of the Sacrament according to the Theologians c.1080–1220* (Wotton-under-Edge, UK: Clarendon Press, 1984).

⁷⁵ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 70.

professes that the salvific union with the body of God is achieved by means of the eucharistic reception itself. Thus the pope established the body as a focal point at which the invisible reality becomes identified with visible truth performed and decreed by the cleric. The church is to be seen as both the sole path to salvation and the pedestal of the earthly kingdom. The church employs the Eucharist as a visible institution of a theoretical authorization and a pastoral tool for controlling the medieval Christians.⁷⁶ For this purpose, the body of Christ has to be manifested. The body must be present in a manageable size.

Furthermore, the church uncompromisingly confined the authority to enact the conversion of the eucharistic hosts to the clergy. The truth was to be administered and represented by the cleric. No one could affect this sacrament but the church authority, which Jesus Christ himself gave to the apostles and their successors. If the real presence of Christ is to be held and distributed by the ecclesial office, the unrestricted power of God's body is also to be endorsed for the church. In addition to the affirmation of the theology of transubstantiation in Canon 1, Canon 21 of the council added to the eucharistic body's societal rapport, ordering the commandment of the yearly reception of the sacrament of penance and the holy Eucharist from one's parish priest.⁷⁷ Canon 21 meant that everyone who had attained the age of reason was obligated to the yearly reception of the Eucharist, and those who received the Eucharist must also confess all their sins at least once per year to their priest.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁷ Canon 21 states: "Everyone who has attained the age of reason is bound to confess his sins at least once a year to his own parish pastor...and to receive the Eucharist at least at Easter. A priest who reveals a sin confided to him in confession is to be deposed and relegated to a monastery for the remainder of his life." Leith, *Creeds of the Churches*, 59.

Through the pronouncement and enactment of these two canons, the church constructed a eucharistic symbolic system and a sacramental worldview within medieval society in the thirteenth century. Medieval society was organized around the body of Christ, and thus around the church, and the church used the Eucharist to modify the social relations both in public and private arenas.⁷⁸ As Nancy Jay comments, eucharistic practice and theology never changed without corresponding changes in social organization and the church's deep involvement with politics:

The Eucharist as “blood sacrifice,” the Christian clergy as a specific sacrificing priesthood, and the unilineal organization of that priesthood as exclusive inheritors of apostolic authority, all came into being together and developed together; and the rejection of one entailed the simultaneous rejection of the others.⁷⁹

The church appropriated the body to acquire a panoptic and classifying power in the late medieval era so that it solidified a social hierarchy, controlled the spiritual life of medieval Christians, and thus dominated both the most sacred and the most illicit groups of people.⁸⁰

My critical interrogation of de Lubac's theological framework focuses on his ontological concern with the presence of the body.⁸¹ De Lubac's insistent belief in the co-foundation of the Eucharist and the *ecclesia* is a reflection of his theology, which

⁷⁸ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, chapter 1.

⁷⁹ Nancy B. Jay, “Sacrifice as Remedy for Having Been Born of Women,” in *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Castelli (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 187.

⁸⁰ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 19.

⁸¹ By ontology here, I mean the Greek ontology in Plato and Parmenides based on the metaphysics of presence: for Plato and Parmenides, the concept of Being is veridical. Adopted and explored by the Patristic theologians, ontology claims that there is a fundamental divide between the sensible world and intelligible/spiritual world. The Being, which is fundamental to every other being, progressively unfolds through various stages of increasing plurality and multiplicity, culminating in the lowest realm of isolated and fragmented material objects observed with the senses.

intends, as recapitulated by the proponents of radical orthodoxy, a careful extension of “Christianized ontology and practical philosophy consonant with authentic Christian doctrine.”⁸² Because this Christianized ontology is founded on a metaphysics of presence, the hierarchical structures both between God and humanity and between the church and the members of the church are essential. God is considered the ultimate source of and point of origin for all that comes below, and so the church too is regarded as the ultimate ground and point of origin for all Christians. The church as the body of Christ is the most solid and fundamental point that unifies all Christians within an ordained hierarchy.

By problematizing this Christianized ontology, I do not mean that sacramental theology, or any theology, should liquidate ontological premises or foundational beliefs in the presence of the body. I maintain that ontology is not only unavoidable but also necessary, because it is the study of the existence and reality of being as well as the inquiry into the relations between beings. Ontology investigates a condition of being, which gives a more profound density and stability to bodies, art, languages, culture, and politics.⁸³ My concern is instead with a hierarchical and reductionistic tendency of ontology cached in de Lubac’s eucharistic theology. The language of ontology, as it presumes a highest being that determines every other being, tends to recast all exterior forms into a likeness of itself and to reduce all the complexities of nature into the evidence for the highest being. The ontological framework in de Lubac’s theology, furthermore, assumes a kind of church narcissism, as if all that the church can be certain of in the world is the church itself. In de Lubac’s framework, put in Levinasian language,

⁸² John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.

⁸³ Mark Dooley, “The Catastrophe of Memory: Derrida, Milbank, and (Im)possibility of Forgiveness,” in *Questioning God*, eds. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 128.

the church becomes the body of Christ and thus becomes God, by making its metaphysical powers the determinants of everything different. The world becomes an extension of the church, even its property. This framework induces de Lubac to condone the church's tendency toward manipulation of the body.

The problem with de Lubac's eucharistic theology is that the body of Christ cannot be explained in the language of presence alone. On the contrary, the body must be described by the language of both presence and absence, and so it always generates ambiguity, ambivalence, and indeterminacy. Susan Ross brings attention to the ambiguity and ambivalence of sacramentality:

Sacraments are dimensions of finite human existence and thus sacramentality is, by definition, fluid, in that the concrete reality at issue points both to itself and beyond itself. These are both an opacity and a transparency to the sacraments.⁸⁴

The bases of Christian sacramentality are, Ross continues, not without the "potential to undermine their very power."⁸⁵ The social and institutional character of the eucharistic celebration does not necessarily entail that the institutional church holds the single authority to perform and practice the sacrament. When the institutional church seeks to defend itself by identifying with the presence of the body and by solidifying the uniformity and validity of the church through the body, the sacrament inevitably becomes detached from the mystery and from the ongoing and developing life of the community.⁸⁶ As far as the Eucharist ignores the paradox of the body of Christ and clings only to the presence, the phrase "*L'Eucharistie fait l'Eglise*" remains inevitably reductionistic.

⁸⁴ Ross, *Extravagant Affections*, 39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

My criticism of de Lubac does not entail a new eucharistic doctrine based on the language of absence. The tendency to cling to presence is problematic, but so is the tendency to evaporate everything out of respect for absence. On the other extreme side of totalitarian presence exists nihilistic absence, which temptingly lures us to leave everything to be a matter of preference and to nullify any gesture of meaning making. I suggest, instead, that we take the ambiguity and paradox as conditions of possibility in which new voices rise for speaking and writing about the body of Christ. Our task is to discover and study these new voices.

The Christian tradition, indeed, shows that the ambiguity and paradox of the Eucharist have always generated immense possibilities through which Christian individuals engage in the various dimensions of the theology, spirituality, and even institutional politics of the sacrament. As a site of sense and mystery, the body of Christ is open for Christians to feel, desire, taste, eat and even manipulate the sacred. The Eucharist stimulates the eternal craving for a Christ who suffered and died for all Christians. The body stimulated not only the political aspiration of the ecclesia, but also the desires of individual believers.

Throughout Christian history, the eucharistic body has functioned as a unique trope that allows religious logic and preternatural belief to claim a place in the everyday life of Christians. The laity was taught a sacramental worldview in word and image and was offered a symbolic and ethical system that culminated in the eucharistic ritual. The body of Christ penetrates into people's way of thinking—their language, their fantasies, their guilty consciences, their morals, and their piety. The body offered the laity the same access to the sacred as it did to the cleric, and the laity found more and more inventive

ways of savoring the body for its own sake. For example, the overwhelmingly multifarious forms of the eucharistic devotion outside the Mass were the result of the needs of the laity, and the flourishing of the eucharistic cult outside the Mass since the Middle Ages in turn fostered a lay-centered spirituality throughout the urban landscape. Mostly centered on the devotion to the host itself, the eucharistic cult prompted local customs such as devotional visits to the reserved sacrament, eucharistic processions, eucharistic expositions, benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament, and production of sacred objects.⁸⁷ Such lay-centered eucharistic piety was indeed, as Nathan Mitchell puts it, the “evolution of the liturgy itself,”⁸⁸ reflecting the laity’s appropriation of the conditions of possibility by which they projected their desires toward the body of Christ. The body of Christ practiced in those urban areas, in those profane and obscene realms, is precisely what attracts de Certeau, as I describe in what follows.

II. The Body, Heterogeneous and Dispersive: Michel de Certeau

The “kenosis” of presence gives rise to a plural, communitarian language. A series of places, works or historical formations which the absence of Jesus has made possible are the only traces of the incarnate God, and may leave free, within the present, a different place for the inventions which we risk.⁸⁹

—Michel de Certeau, “How Is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*

De Certeau’s study of the body is greatly influenced by de Lubac. In *The Mystic Fable*, de Certeau provides his reading of de Lubac’s hermeneutics and takes his argument as a point from which to conduct his own research. Yet while de Lubac relies on church-

⁸⁷ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 168–183.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ De Certeau, “How Is Christianity Thinkable Today?” in Ward, *Postmodern God*, 147.

sanctioned theologies of the body to ground his doctrine of the Eucharist, de Certeau focuses his own attention on writings and records about the body at the margins of the Christian tradition. Here, a radical difference between de Lubac and de Certeau is noted. In his need to make the body of Christ ontologically effective, de Lubac attempts to establish the ground through the ontological reality of the church. De Certeau, however, orients his work not toward the church, but toward individual bodies like those of mystics. Unlike de Lubac's reductionistic approach, de Certeau portrays the Eucharist as an aperture making room for others. De Certeau points out that every figure of authority in the Christian tradition is marked by the absence of the center, the loss of the body of Christ.

De Certeau discovers that the body has been understood and represented at the margins often in perverted and even heretical ways. Those discontinuous and divergent appropriations of the body are, for de Certeau, desiderata in which Christians can still be innovative in thinking about and practicing the body of Christ. The study of these deviations is not intended to reconstruct the historical body of Jesus of Nazareth as attempted by historical Jesus scholars. Instead, it serves as a means of challenging the present-day knowledge about the body of Christ by investigating the various ways in which Christians relate with the body of Christ in their time. De Certeau suggests that the study of these deviations may challenge the totalizing effect of the doctrinal presentation of the body.

De Certeau's starting point is the absence of the body. He deliberately argues that Christianity is founded upon loss. The loss of the body of Jesus Christ is compounded

with the loss of the body of Israel, the loss of a nation and its genealogy.⁹⁰ Far from focusing on the historical origin of the body, de Certeau describes successive stages of the lost body that affected Christianity and asserts that the essence of Christianity is a return of the lost body to the present.

Although the body was lost, it never disappeared from the Christian tradition. Like the Freudian repressed, the body of Christ never stopped haunting the living and lingering around their lives: “His ‘death,’” as de Certeau writes, “has placed him in that limbo.”⁹¹ The Eucharist is a visible sign that most obviously exhibits the Christian obsession with the body. The Eucharist reveals the lack of the original body and simultaneously shows the attempt of Christians to fill the empty site. In de Certeau’s words, the body of Christ for Christians is like “a bottomless hole, endless excess, like something that is not there per se, like something that is in a perpetual movement of confection and defection.”⁹² Between the eucharistic body at the altar today and the historical body in the gospel narratives lies the reality of what “no longer is,” the empty tomb where Jesus commanded “*noli me tangere*.” To eat the body of Christ at the altar is to be constantly reminded of its absence.

According to de Certeau, “mystics” were people whose unusual bodily sensibilities made them suffer severely from an awareness of the absence. He challenges the conventional view of mysticism as a form of transcendental knowledge or as a wisdom elevated by a full recognition of mystery. Mysticism, for de Certeau, is a science that manifests a very distinct manner of speaking about and responding to the Other. The mystics are those who practice mysticism, those who specialize in distinct discursive

⁹⁰ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 81.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*

styles of speaking and writing about the other. During the Middle Ages, as we learned from de Lubac's study, the word "mystical" was gradually separated from the liturgy and became indefinable. The ambiguity of the word "mystical" was, on the one hand, employed by the institutional church to mystify its status; the same ambiguity was, on the other hand, employed by some particular mystics themselves to express their disagreements with the doctrines and dogmas of the institutional church.

De Certeau separates the uncanny character of mystery manifested in mystical writings from the category of the metaphysical knowledge of God. Instead of focusing his attention on analyzing the nature of the uncanny, he illuminates the mystical writers' textual representations of the uncanny that display their extraordinary manners of responding to it. Whether the uncanny was the Christian God or a demonic spirit, the language and lifestyle of those mystics denaturalized the conventional. By this unusual manner of contacting and utilizing the uncanny, confidence in the doctrinal basis of sacramentality, scriptural piety, and the ecclesial role of the contemplative were challenged and shattered. What was "mystical" was that which was no longer inscribed within the social community of faith. Instead, it was that which was engaged by the groups and individuals at the margins of an increasingly secularized society.⁹³

Mysticism, in this respect, is neither a religion nor a philosophy. Nor is it reducible to regular practices such as meditation, prayer, asceticism, or public service.⁹⁴ It is, to de Certeau at any rate, a particular kind of science that denotes the uncanny. It is a discipline that does not pursue a stable or durable form. Yet it continues to fabricate the

⁹³ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁴ Marsanne Brammer, "Thinking Practice: Michel de Certeau and the Theorization of Mysticism," *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 29.

itinerary of the uncanny Christian's desire to follow, because it is perpetually disturbed by the uncanny that denies and transgresses a single representation. De Certeau writes:

[Mysticism] is never anything but the unstable metaphor for what is inaccessible. Every "object" of mystical discourse becomes inverted into the trace of an ever-passing subjectivity. Therefore, mystics only assembles and orders its practices in the name of something that it cannot make into an object (unless it be a mystical one). [. . .] Mysticism vanished at its point of origin. Its birth pledges it to the impossible, as if, stricken by the absolute from the very beginning, it finally died of the question from which it was formed.⁹⁵

For some mystics of the early modern period, the body of Christ mattered. While many of their fellow Christians adapted the Pauline figure of Christianity and articulated a general structure of universality based on the Spirit's ubiquitous and cosmopolitan character,⁹⁶ these mystics were obsessed with the physical and personal quality of the body of Christ and pursued a private encounter with the body. Their distinct sense of the body, as de Certeau describes, eventually led them to react to their time in a different way from the rest. They dreamt they could encounter the body in the same form and shape as the first Christians experienced it. In pursuit of this impossible dream, these mystics established a space to await the visitation of the lost body—within their own bodies.

These mystics' unique way of responding to the body of Christ is deeply related with the body's changing status in the early modern, a period during which the presence—the presence of scripture (Reformed Christians) or of the sacrament (Catholic Christians)—was decisively defended and during which the universal character of the Holy Spirit needed to be displayed through the visibility of either a text or consecrated bread. But this period also saw rapid social and religious changes, represented by both

⁹⁵ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 77.

⁹⁶ See Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

modernization and the Reformation, which overtly threatened the authority of the Catholic Church. Secular social institutions, too, extended their territories and eventually overtook a shrinking Christendom.

To respond to the Reformation and secularization, Pope Paul III (1534–1549) initiated the Council of Trent (1545–1563). The Council kept up the appearance of the medieval church while changing the nature of its power by solidifying the sacramental system, strengthening doctrine, and reconfiguring ecclesial structures and religious orders. The church's fortification of the Eucharist was more than a symbolic gesture. In the midst of the rapid secularization of society, the post-Tridentine reform represented the Catholic response to Reformed Christianity, which sought a reliance on the spoken Word instead of corrupt ecclesiastical institutions. The Council of Trent unyieldingly reaffirmed transubstantiation, and the Catholic Church fortified its confidence in the institution by identifying the institution with the body of Christ—a body that would be expected to function as an effective safeguard to defend the church's political power.

The mystics, however, were lost in the midst of the conflict and unable to assimilate with either Reformed or Catholic Christians. They were tormented with the awareness that faithfulness to their inner inspiration was often not agreeable to either the Reformed Christians' compliancy with scripture or the Catholic Christians' conformity with the institution. They were often suspected of being not only extraordinary but even heretical.⁹⁷ Some of them were later called holy people; others were condemned or simply forgotten.

⁹⁷ James A. Wiseman's book review on de Certeau's *Mystic Fable* in *The Catholic Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (July 1993): 536.

These mystics' faithfulness to inner inspiration went beyond the mere positivity of bodily presence. The body of Christ at the altar was a unique manifestation of the uncanny that wore a shape of bread and wine. However, those mystics saw something more than bread and wine. They sensed the eternal lack of the presence through the bread and wine. They grew obsessed with the absence of the body, which constantly generated what de Certeau calls an "unaccepted mourning."⁹⁸ Their confidence in this inner inspiration was so strong that they were not able to compromise with any kind of replacement. Instead of submitting themselves to the often fetishized presence, they chose to stay with desire, lacking an object, and the lived sense of the unknown divine.⁹⁹ Like sleepwalkers, they repeatedly returned to the site of loss, the source of inner inspiration, where the absence was tangibly present. They "[could] not stop walking, with the certainty of what [was] lacking, [they knew] of every place and object that it [was] not that," writes de Certeau.¹⁰⁰

The task given to the mystics was to claim the God of "not without" (*Nicht ohne*).¹⁰¹ They believed they must prove that their desire was directed toward God, even if God was unseen and unknown. They were inspired by nothing else but God. They felt God through their bodies. Lacking the ability to prove the source of their inspiration, the mystics' manner of expressing it constitutes a double negative, "the God of not without." For the mystics, the presence of God was something that cannot be caught by the positivity of bodily presence alone. God was certainly there, but the God was not without their bodies. De Certeau epitomizes the mystics' cry—"May I not be separated from

⁹⁸ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 80.

⁹⁹ De Certeau, "Mysticism," *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 15.

¹⁰⁰ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 299.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

you.”¹⁰² The mystics had to give credence to the uncanny that was invisible to others, but drove them to uncontrollable aspiration. Since they had no other means to display the space, they started to write (or have their words dictated). In their desire to live with this God of “not without,” the mystics invented a unique way of incorporating the body by *intextuating* it. They began to build their own space by writing their experience. They knew that the lost body might no longer be found, but they also knew that they were destined to affirm the body.¹⁰³ The gesture of mystics was “to pass beyond” the positivity of bodily presence that always risked being taken for the thing itself. Insofar as they sought to pass all those things, the mystics could not stay with any static presence, and they were increasingly separated from the ordinary. They oriented themselves toward developing a distinct manner of living closely with the body that bore the uncanny.

De Certeau explains that the mystical manner of speaking and writing is cannibalistic, just to the extent that mystics must have the uncanny in their bodies in order to speak and write about the uncanny. Since their own bodies are the only instruments they can use to experience the presence of God, they consume the uncanny. They incorporate the source of inspiration and have it speak or write through their own bodies. The logic of a mystic’s speech may be formulated: “*I* speak, says *God*, and there is no one but me.”¹⁰⁴

Since the Speaking Word *must* exist even though it may become inaudible, [she] temporarily substitutes [her] speaking *I* for the inaccessible divine *I*. [She] makes this *I* into the representation of what is missing—a representation that marks the place of what it does not replace.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

In the mystical form of speaking, the speaking *I* takes the position of oracle. Mystics speak (or write) themselves, but in the name of God. Mystical speech is a possessed speech. For some mystics, whose devotion to God is related with the Eucharist, their act of eating the body of Christ (the Eucharist) entails the act of writing the body. Once their devotion centers on the Eucharist, their manner of witnessing to the uncanny appears to convey a literal sense of cannibalism. They eat the body of Christ present in the form of bread and thus enable the body of Christ to speak or write through their bodies. They incorporate the body, and so they intextuate the body.

De Certeau finds that the writings of the early modern mystics display a distinct manner in which the paradox of the body of Christ assimilates with human experiences. The mystics reveal the body of Christ only by concealing it in their own bodies. The body of Christ is expressed only through the mystics' manner of referral, and yet it is neither confined in presence nor vanished in absence. It is present and yet simultaneously absent. Nothing is "obvious" in mystical speech, but, as one oracle said, it is "harder to get much more obvious than that."¹⁰⁶ When the uncanny body hides in mystics' bodies, the mystical manner of speaking and writing focuses on the act itself in which God performs through human bodies. This act is invisible, making itself heard by faith. The paradox of the body is maintained in the mystical way of revealing the body.

De Certeau studies mysticism through the discipline of heterology, or the "discourse of the Other." I want to adapt heterology as an interpretative tool to further examine the resonance between mystical writings and sacramental theology. According to de Certeau, texts within the heterological tradition construct a discourse about the other,

¹⁰⁶ See the Oracle's speech in *The Matrix* (Andy Wachowski, 1999).

and they are reversely authorized by the other.¹⁰⁷ In other words, a heterological text reveals the voice (“orality”) of the uncanny hidden in the text and lets the other affirm the authority of the text. In this respect, the heterological text has a circular relationship with what it discloses. The text aims to show the other because the author’s experience of the other ensures the text’s credit. The text does not focus on affirming a set of statements organized in the truth category of a system. Instead, it focuses on the textual space that demonstrates “the relation of the speaking subjectivity to what [she] says.”¹⁰⁸ With this characteristic manner of operating textual authority, heterology introduces a foreign space into a familiar system of thought.

De Certeau’s major works analyze writings that contain the voice of the other and focus attention on the hidden voice within texts written by such men as the French Jesuit Jean-Joseph Surin, who participated in the exorcisms of Loudon in 1634–1637,¹⁰⁹ and the French Reformed pastor Jean de Léry’s (1536–1613), who encountered the Tupinambous Indians,¹¹⁰ and of course mystics in the early modern period themselves. De Certeau suggests these texts are inscribed in the heterological tradition, haunted by an unknown other. The utterance of the other, whether demonic possession (*The Possession at Loudon*), native customs (“History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil”), or mystical ecstasy (*The Mystic Fable*), haunts the author who does not fully understand what he is writing about. The author describes the event, but the play of discourse and words the author adapts for describing the event does not have an authority or truth of its own.

¹⁰⁷ De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), 68–69.

¹⁰⁸ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 176.

¹⁰⁹ De Certeau, *The Possession at Loudon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹¹⁰ De Certeau, “History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil (1578),” in *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 212–215.

What authorizes the author and the text is the voice of the other that exists outside the text. The position of the author can be described as a cry such as: “I would not know how to replace with a text what only a voice that is other could reveal about the place in which I am writing.”¹¹¹ The author of a heterological text constitutes language in relation to that which it is “unable to appropriate, that is to say, in its relation to a (t)exterior [*un hors-texte*].”¹¹²

What de Certeau finds interesting in texts of the heterological tradition is the way in which the uncanny other utilizes the writer’s body in the construction of a textual space. De Certeau does not mean that the others consciously authorize the author to write them into being or define them through a collaborative writing project because they themselves could not do the writing.¹¹³ Instead, he pays attention to the ways in which the writer interacts with the other and loses his own authority in the process of writing. The writer’s experience of the other offers him an infinite possibility for speaking and writing while concealing the other in the text. The source of inspiration clearly exists, but it cannot be revealed without the writer’s own body that encounters and conceives it. The uncanny differs from the logic of the metaphysics of presence in that it always is in need of the writer’s body. The uncanny also differs from nihilistic emptiness in that it exists, affecting and even controlling the writer from outside of the text. The heterological uncanny has its peculiar logic of existence that always work through the human agent. De

¹¹¹ De Certeau, *Writing of History*, 212.

¹¹² De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 73.

¹¹³ This form of representation morphs easily into colonialism. Lery’s works, for example, were problematic because they almost certainly contained outright misinterpretations of the other. The difference between writing at the urge of the divine uncanny and in an attempt to make sense of a people one would soon colonize must be maintained in de Certeau’s works.

Certeau explains the function of the uncanny in two categories: first, the *extension of authorship*, and second, the *organization of communitarian structures* through writing.

The primary function of the uncanny in textual construction is that it gives permission to speak and write to anyone who experiences it. Whereas objective truth is known by data received from and constructed by a tradition through observation and training, the uncanny in the heterological tradition is brought close primarily through “an appeal to the senses (hearing, sight, touch, taste)” and a “link to the body (touched, carved, tested by experience).”¹¹⁴ The particularity of the heterological construction of texts therefore calls forth any author who has a sensibility toward the uncanny and a willingness to take a risk of losing herself in it. Heterology no longer dictates the “correct” way of presenting the other, nor whom may speak, but it extends conditions for all as far as they want to partake in the event of the other.

The other important function of the uncanny in the construction of a text is its organization of communities through textual space. Even though the other allows no one to access its pure or original form, it marks a referential point that cannot be erased from the text once it is written. As far as the authors refer to the same event, they all speak of the same other, even though they efface the original by their own way of receiving and elaborating it. No matter how their descriptions differ from the original, the authors in the heterological tradition *manifest* the nature of the other. The referential quality of the other, according to de Certeau, initiates the organization of groups, sects, and communities. The authors must bind together by virtue of the fact they refer to the other “as that which ‘permits’ new possibilities.”¹¹⁵ Even though their representations of the other are

¹¹⁴ De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 74.

¹¹⁵ De Certeau, *Postmodern God*, 144.

different each time and in each context, these authors interact with one another through networks of expression that would not exist without the event of the other.¹¹⁶ By the principle of heterology, no one can claim that her representation is complete and authentic, because no one can present the other as whole or original. The other is known most closely through community, albeit imperfectly.

Heterology extends possibilities for speaking and writing the other, and also collects the scattered pieces in which the other becomes manifest. However, it destroys a center. It negates unity and universality because it allows no one to claim the single authority to deliver the other. Heterological speech does not unveil the truth through supposed transparency. Nor does it expect the restoration of the original through an organized collection. As de Certeau puts it, one must “give up the fiction that collects all these sounds under the sign of a ‘Voice’ or a ‘Culture’ of its own—or of the great Other’s.”¹¹⁷ The truth must remain yet to be disseminated.

Heterology further directs attention to the process of collecting the vestiges of the other, instead of to the facts or to the accuracy of the information yielded by the vestiges of the other. It appreciates the mode of operation of the speech and writing, by giving a space to a collectivity of subjective authors who speak and write on behalf of the other. At the sacrifice of unity and universality, heterology carries irreducible localities and suggests a network of those localities. Just like an endless quilt composed of small patches, heterologies collect and weave small stories that insist on no single authority, nor a certain complete picture. Heterology, then, demonstrates a distinct way of

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 146.

¹¹⁷ De Certeau, “The Scriptural Economy,” in *The Certeau Reader*, 159.

practicing sacramentality that reveals the body of Christ in hybrid, plural, fragmented, and discontinuous forms—which I will explore in what follows.

III. The Body To Be Eaten and To Be Written

In this section, I press the link between heterology and the Eucharist and push forward my proposal that the heterological act of writing aids and extends the act of eating the body of Christ. I also argue that the heterological discipline is inextricable from the Christian practice of embodying the paradox of the body of Christ. The point of arguing for the act of writing as a sacramental activity is to initiate a constructive discursive practice in Christian tradition since the body of Christ disappeared. I suggest that, by the act of writing, the ambiguity and precariousness of the body of Christ come into contact with the multiple and yet specific locations of diverse human bodies. To understand writing as a sacramental practice consequently helps us to see the eucharistic space as a heterological space. To understand writing as a sacramental practice furthermore helps us to see excess, fusions, and ruptures within the eucharistic space created by the conflicts of multiple individual bodies and desires—and to see those as necessary for the health of the Christian community.

The attempt to identify the act of writing as a sacramental activity has been made by a number of theologians from various disciplines. David N. Power, for example, argues that because the eucharistic body is the same body as the Word Incarnate linguistic activity already has its place within the process of participating in the Eucharist. The Incarnate Word, which is now given the form of bread, was a “narrating and narrated

flesh”¹¹⁸ in the discursive environment of the early Christians. Power further claims the sacramental sacrifice is realized in the practice of writing just as it is in the Eucharist. All the power of the living Christ, Power writes, is “emptied into the written Word, the Word handed on through writing.”¹¹⁹ He continues to emphasize the intrinsic connection between the Eucharist and writing by noting that the process of Jesus’ self-emptying “gives rise to new life, to newly inculturated expression continues, for ritual as for writing. It is in the emptying that allows for saying that the excess of sacramental language emerges.”¹²⁰

However, the identification of a sacramental action as a linguistic event has also invited criticism. In responding to Power, Werner G. Jeanrod points out that such a gesture runs the risk of linguistic reductionism. Jeanrod states that Christian sacramental actions include more than linguistic activity: “Although any interpretation of sacramental action necessarily involves language and acts of signification, the sacraments’ very potential of rupture owes itself to an activity deeper or, if one prefers, larger than language.”¹²¹ Jeanrod concludes that Power’s predominantly linguistic heuristic seems to be in need of amendment.

Although my proposal, too, must admit criticisms like Jeanrod’s, to understand the act of writing God as an aid to the ritual of the Eucharist is not, in fact, to reduce the richness and profundity of sacramental activity to linguistic activity. It is, instead, to extend the possibilities of practicing the body of Christ by employing the organizational

¹¹⁸ Power, “Language of Sacramental Memorial,” in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 149.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹²¹ Werner G. Jeanrod’s response to Power’s essay “Language of Sacramental Memorial,” in Boeve and Leigseen, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 164.

and conjugative power of writing. The act of writing, alone amongst all sacramental activities including nonverbal activities, most directly relates with the Word Incarnate and most pervasively delivers the sacramental effect. Rebecca Chopp accurately points out:

As the perfectly open sign we may say what Word is, in our best approximation, but also how it sustains the process of speaking. Here the Word is not that which breaks into discourse, or one that governs it, rather it is the full inclusivity of discourse; it creates and restores speech, it both allows symbols to have meaning and pushes against any fixed meaning. The Word/God is the sign of all signs, connected, embodied, open, multivalent, all the things a sign can most perfectly be [. . .] and thus, in full openness, creativity and gracefulness creates, sustains, and redeems all words in their ongoing process of signification.¹²²

Such excess is enabled when the writing act is understood as a sacramental activity—particularly a practice of the paradox of the body. The eucharistic body made to be written, on the one hand, enfleshes the languages of others and, on the other, empties out as an “open sign into the words, actions, lives of this, that, or other community, in this or that time and place,” in Chopp’s words.¹²³ The body manifests its presence at the altar and breaks up into individual bodies. Likewise, the body calls forth the narratives of those who “have been excluded or at best left on the margins of the symbolic code” and disperses into the lives of those individuals.¹²⁴ The communal space and ongoing processes within the Eucharist allow Christians to relate and interact with each other.

De Certeau’s investigation of the significance of writing in Christian practice supports my argument about the intrinsic relationship between the act of eating God and the act of writing God. De Certeau’s essay “How Christianity Is Thinkable Today” is one

¹²² Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 31.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Power, “Language of Sacramental Memorial,” in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 150.

of his rare essays in which he explicitly articulates his attempt to rethink Christian theology in light of modernity. In the article, he shows how deeply involved the act of writing has been in forming Christian tradition and how effectively it has generated communal processes of embodying the paradox of God. Taking up themes drawn from his heterological perspective, de Certeau focuses his attention on how Christian practice has developed since the death of Christ. According to de Certeau, the writing of the event of Jesus, along with the Eucharist, was instrumental for the evangelical beginning of Christianity. The development of the practice of writing in the Christian tradition precisely recapitulates that of the Eucharist. Christian practice is not possible without God who gives Jesus up to the form of Incarnate Word. It is not possible without Jesus who effaces himself and gives rise to the testimony of different faithful communities. It is not possible without the dissemination of the communities and individuals who issue from Jesus and bear the words of Jesus.

The early Christians shaped the foundation of Christianity on their practice of writing about the life and death of Jesus, who left his traces in their bodily experiences. The event of Jesus is incorporated and takes on meaning in a plurality of Christian writings, writings that were the consequences of their lived experiences of the event and that allowed room for oral transmission of the gospel. From the beginning, believers fashioned what they heard and learned about the event of Jesus. The event opened their hearts to new possibilities for encountering Jesus—through writing. They expressed not the event itself, but that which the event made possible in themselves. The event of Jesus was both revealed by the differences in relation to the original event and hidden by new expressions. However, the truth is never identical with what is written about the truth,

and what these believers wrote about the truth is not a proof but an effect. It was the effect of the event of Jesus that the early Christians delivered. They write of an event that they then efface by substituting different consequences arising from it. The Christian tradition is built on these “quotations.” The event is “lost precisely in what it authorizes.”¹²⁵

The foundation of the gospel narratives, in this respect, lies in the heterological tradition. The event of Jesus functions in the constitution of the gospel narratives as the uncanny does in heterological texts. The event of the God-man Jesus remains exterior to the Christian tradition. Since Jesus is lost, it belongs to the past, and therefore resides outside of the construction of narratives that take place in the present. Here, the circular relations among God the Father, Jesus, and the disciples become dependent on each other.

De Certeau writes:

[I]n the Gospels, Jesus is not without the Father (who speaks in him), nor without the disciples (who will perform other works—and greater than his), though he is different from the Father (“greater than me”) and though the disciples cannot be identified with him.¹²⁶

The gospel narratives cannot be constituted without the body of Jesus or the bodies of disciples, necessarily entailing the risk that the narratives will differ from the event of Jesus’ life itself. Since the authorizer of the tradition disappeared, the narratives about God and God-human are constructed without the center and yet always with the bodies of Christians who witnessed the event. It is this heterogeneity that marks the beginning of Christianity. Early Christians relied only on the event of Jesus as they remembered and wanted to bring it to their own time. Voiced from the past, the event still manifests

¹²⁵ Ibid., 145.

¹²⁶ De Certeau, “How is Christianity Thinkable,” in *Postmodern God*, 146.

“stubborn details” about a “particular, historically situated person” who is believed to be a God-human.¹²⁷ However, it is inevitable that Christians will fashion the voice in their own account and that the Voice will be invoked by the collectivity of people who deliver it.

The foundation of the gospel narratives further shows how the heterological discipline of writing mirrors sacramental practices by epitomizing the sacramental principle of medium and communal practice. The gospel narratives are constituted by the principle of medium (the body of Jesus and the bodies of the disciples) and communal practice (the process of collecting the scattered narratives of Jesus).

First, the “utterative markings (‘I saw,’ ‘I heard,’ etc.) and modalities (it is obvious, doubtful, inadmissible, etc.)” in the gospel texts confirm the principle of medium.¹²⁸ The gospels show that Jesus exists beyond reach and yet constantly needs human bodies as a medium to convey his words. Just as the absence of the body perpetuates the presence of the body at the Eucharist, the absence of the original author, Jesus, authorizes the gospel authors. The absence, both in the Eucharist and the act of writing God, has a permissive function. The absence enables the gospel authors to be heard and believed even though they write always on behalf of Jesus, the true authorizer of the event. De Certeau states:

The Christian language begins with the disappearance of its “author.” That is to say that Jesus effaces himself to give faithful witness to the Father who authorizes him, and to “give rise” to different but faithful communities, which he makes possible. There is a close bond between the absence of Jesus (dead and not

¹²⁷ De Certeau, “White Ecstasy,” in *Postmodern God*, 156.

¹²⁸ De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 276.

present) and the birth of the Christian language (objective and faithful testimony of his survival).¹²⁹

The readers of the gospels are committed to delivering the voice of Jesus because Jesus is absent. The simultaneous production of “an image of the other” (God or Christ’s body) and the “place of the text outside the mechanism of the written” are characteristics that the Bible shares with heterological texts.¹³⁰

Second, the process by which the gospels were written reflects the principle of communal practice. The gospel narratives have a communitarian structure and have reached us in different versions. While the gospels tell stories which cannot be harmonized, the versions are interconnected and stand for each other. Following Ernst Käsemann’s terminology, de Certeau describes the textual construction of the gospel as a “*complexio oppositorum*.” The gospel narratives reveal a connection of opposites. In other words, the surface of the gospel narratives are related but not unified. As the uncanny in a heterological text is known by a testimony of the author, God is known by Jesus and Jesus is known by the testimonies of the community of believers. Each testimony contains the voice of Jesus, but a single testimony cannot present the whole truth. The process of the gospel constitutions vividly reminds us that Jesus no longer is known to us without the communities that willingly gather together to share what they heard from the voice of Jesus.

De Certeau believes that mystical literatures rapturously remind Christianity of its heterological nature. Since the twelfth century, the attempt to unite diverse Christian communities into the one unity of the *ecclesia* has prevailed in the tradition. The emphasis on the materialistic presence of the body in the altar is one expression of the

¹²⁹ De Certeau, *Postmodern God*, 145.

¹³⁰ De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 68–69.

church's rigor for building unity and universality. The Eucharist became a citadel of the Catholic Church that wanted to confront changes in society by restoring its own political status. To be one with the body of Christ came to mean being one with the *ecclesia*. De Certeau suggests, however, that early modern mystics counteracted the church's attempts to totalize the tradition. Through their unique manner of practicing the body, these mystics restored the heterological tradition.

The mystical manner of speaking and writing about God shows authorship that derives directly from Jesus. It results in challenging ecclesial authority. In particular, mystical ways of utilizing the eucharistic ritual are innovative and thus threatening to church authorities. Some mystics intuitively find that the Eucharist is the most effective reminder of the uncanny character of Jesus' presence because by invoking the body it brings the dead God into contact with the living. This impossible task is at work as the mystics give their bodies to the body of Christ by eating and writing the body of Christ. Even if the liturgy of the Eucharist is controlled and administered by the cleric alone, the moment of invocation would never happen without the recipient, the mystical oracle. The threshold is granted for the sake of God since the mystic has the body of Christ speaking through her body. Here, a secret exchange between God and the mystic occurs through both the act of eating and writing the body of God. The mystic has her body to be taken by God: "Give me your body and I will give you meaning, I will make you a name and a word in my discourse."¹³¹ By practicing the Eucharist through writing, the mystics created an entrance through which to intervene in the system.

Furthermore, in a peculiar way, the heterological act of writing reconfigures the manner of practicing the body of Christ so that it is a communitarian structure. While the

¹³¹ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 149.

mystic's experience is only personal and temporary, it involves the body of Christ that invites and offers room for all Christians.¹³² Yet whether the mystic's experience is "Christian" or not must be determined by others, the mystic's contemporaries, including her fellow Christians, the church, and succeeding generations. If the mystic's writing fails to win the recognition of her contemporaries, it becomes merely the record of an individual search: "Only by recognition" can a particular experience be changed into a "Christian testimony."¹³³ As de Certeau puts it, it is the "echo of others [. . .] brought to the intimate experience of each individual by the testimony of the crowd [that] changes the private hallucination into a thought of the infinite."¹³⁴ The communitarian structure of mystical writing is constructed by a triangular relationship between the body of Christ, the mystic, and others. The body of Christ that communicates with the mystic is known first by the body of the mystic and secondly by other Christians. Without the mystic's body, the body of Christ cannot be written. Likewise, without the bodies of other Christians, the mystic's body cannot be acknowledged. The body of Christ authorizes the mystic. The mystic utters the words of the body. Other Christians listen to the mystic and join the mystical experience.

De Certeau's heterological perspective advocates the link between the act of eating the body of Christ and the act of writing the body of Christ by demonstrating the fundamental relationship between the Eucharist and the practice of writing in the Christian tradition. Writing is a sacramental practice that, just like the liturgy, calls forth the participation of individual Christians and locates them in a communal operation. By

¹³² De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," *The Certeau Reader*, 196.

¹³³ De Certeau, *Postmodern God*, 142.

¹³⁴ "The Gaze of Nicholas of Cusa," *Diacritics* 17, 12. Quoting from Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," in *Michel de Certeau in the Plural*, ed. Ian Buchana (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 355.

intextuating the body of Christ through her own body and through her own cultures and identities, the writer is positioned as a part of larger socio-historical divisions within the Christian tradition. The writer, furthermore, allows herself to be vulnerable in the presence of her fellow Christians to them. As the gospel narratives and mystical literatures display, once the writer writes the body of Christ, the scattered and fragmented stories of her life enter into the web of meaning. Writing the body first draws up the edges of different social groups and then puts them into a process of mixing and metamorphosing. In other words, the writer's body becomes transparent to an interpretive recognition by other Christians. The writer's writing about the body of Christ is open to being challenged and edited by others. No one claims a singular authority in this process, because no one knows the original as it was. One writer is corrected by another writer. Every writer relies on the previous writer's writing. This is tradition, which itself is constituted by, in de Certeau's words, "the accidents of translation," "the tricks of memory," and "the mediation of a writer or a priest."¹³⁵

* * *

Interpreting the eucharistic site from de Certeau's perspective suggests a heterological way of practicing the Eucharist. With the assistance of this new practice, we can challenge the totalizing tendency of the metaphysics of presence and Christianized ontology without denouncing the impact the body still produces in its encounters with Christians. The act of writing, as a way of practicing heterological sacramentality, generates possibilities of writing and rewriting the body of Christ to the infinite degree. It

¹³⁵ De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 70.

invites Christians to utilize these possibilities and add the concrete reality of their lives to the Christian tradition.

To prepare for further discussions of heterological sacramentality, I here sum up de Certeau's analysis of the mystical manner of practicing the body. First, as we have observed in the case of mystical speech, heterology affirms the sacramental principle of medium. The invisible becomes an audible and visible sign through a medium, which is the mystic's body. However, mystical speech expeditiously saves room for absence as the mystic hides Christ's body in her body by experience. Second, heterology is tied to the sacramental principle of communal operation. To be something "Christian," the mystic's personal experience of the body always needs to be heard and recognized by other Christians. The linked relations between the body, the mystic, and others creates a communitarian structure within the Eucharist yet keeps a distance between each operator. The body of Christ is never subjected to the mystic's body because the mystic must wait until the body of Christ operates within her body; and the mystic utterance of the body is never subordinated to conceptual category of others because the body is absent in the place they seek.

A provocative aspect of heterological sacramentality is that it complements the sacramental principle and yet does not essentialize the metaphysical presence or confine the body in ontological fixity. When heterological sacramentality is practiced by writing, it is impossible for anyone to write the body of Christ in whole or with a central authority. The body of Christ invites believers who admit this and, nonetheless, still are willing to make the signs of the body afresh each time they incorporate themselves into the sacrament. The eucharistic site is not an archive storing factual information and

knowledge of Christ's body, nor a manifestation of the absolute truth that clarifies anything ambiguous. Only an irreducible plurality of Christians can discover meanings from the site and make it significant.¹³⁶ One cannot seek a higher identity through the eucharistic body. The body of Christ is precisely that which "in principle makes such identity impossible."¹³⁷

While renouncing the reductionistic tendency of the metaphysics of presence, heterological sacramentality disseminates the body of Christ into numerous finite bodies—finite human bodies, institutional bodies, social bodies, scriptural bodies, and so forth. The multiplicity of finite bodies, in the heterological perspective, is the point of departure as well as the point to which one wants to return. "There is no body other than the body of the world and the mortal body," said de Certeau.¹³⁸ These finite bodies may shatter the panoptic status of the Eucharist established by the institutional church. This challenging result would not be a consequence of individual Christians' unorganized motion of demolishing the hierarchical structure built on the body. It is, instead, an effect of their ability to reshape the body to be more livable and permeable. Thus, the living contexts of individual Christians and communities become the foundation of practice in which sacramentality is made viable to contemporary society.

Seen from a heterological perspective, sacramental practices, both of eating and writing God, work on behalf of the desire to believe the quotations of Christ transmitted by fellow Christians, instead of the scientific rigor to prove truth. In other words, Christian belief is not about facts, but about the narrated body of Christ, the quotations of

¹³⁶ Ibid., 148.

¹³⁷ Boeve and Leigsean, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 20.

¹³⁸ De Certeau, *Certeau Reader*, 229.

the body delivered by others.¹³⁹ The radical distance between the original body and the quotations of the body is to be overcome only when a believer wills to trust the quotations and joins the reenactment of the quotations. To confess one's belief in the body is to disavow one's political or spiritual will to "hear," "believe," and "persuade." It is fundamentally impossible for any Christian individual or group to claim absolute or unified authority. Instead, the sacramental practice perpetuates the process of reconceiving, rewriting, and retrieving old images and languages and predominant symbolic orders. It converts any authentic construction of the body into a quotation and simultaneously lets all the quotations—quotations in heretical, illiterate, and foreign expressions—flow back into the discourse.

However, questions still remain: If heterological sacramentality puts the body in an endless distribution, what keeps the sacramental practice from falling into a meaningless gesture of making signs? What perpetuates the practice in any sort of recognizable form? How can the instability of the paradoxical body motivate us to seek faith in God? How can heterology respond to the suspicion that accuses it of attempting to remove our belief in Christ's risen body? The next chapter is my attempt to answer these questions.

¹³⁹ Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," 325–328.

Chapter Two

Writing the Body of Christ, Diversifying the Body of Christ

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body was laid.

—Mark 15:42–47 (NRSV)

A fragile and floating text, witness to itself alone, yet lost in the innumerable murmur of language, and hence perishable. But this fable heralds the joy of obliterating itself in what it figures, of returning of the anonymous work out of which it was born, of converting itself to this other which it is not. The writing of belief, in its weakness, appears on the ocean of language only to disappear, taken up into the work of uncovering, in other writing, the movement by which, ceaselessly, they “come” and “go.” According to an expression of the mystics, it is a “drop in the ocean.

—De Certeau, *The Certeau Reader*

Those people who met, heard, and ate with Jesus hungered for his body. It was a strangely strong craving. It was a hunger that could never be satisfied. It was a hunger that gathered Christians together. This hunger haunted Christians as if they were experiencing an uncanny, which was terrifying because they could not adequately explain their experiences. This chapter is about the stories of those Christians who were devastatingly inflicted with such a bizarre hunger. It investigates how that hunger influenced their pursuit of remembering the event of Jesus and producing stories about him.

Let me begin with the stories of two early Christians. They were known as Joseph, a native of Arimathea, and Mary Magdalene. Their obsessions with the body of Jesus had started even before the body had risen from the tomb. The hunger overtook them on the day Jesus was killed. The man who claimed to be the son of God was hung upon the cross. His death took away the vision he had shared with people. The hope of the Messiah was severed and torn with the body. In spite of the terrorizing event, evening came back like nothing had happened. The sky turned black. The night was filled with fear and desperation. It was a night when one could not see even a flickering particle of hope. Total darkness was all over the earth, and it did not look like the light would come back. Cowering in fright, those who called themselves his disciples scattered. We cannot blame them. The disciples were not yet ready to grieve. They were full of fear and trembling, just like us.

Joseph arrived at the cross. He was coming from Pilate's. Unmindful of all personal danger—considerable under the circumstances—Joseph had requested from Pilate the body of Jesus, despite the fact that he might have trembled before the cross while staring at the corpse of the man named Jesus, that he might have wondered why he was doing this. He was not even one of his disciples. He was not even sure if he believed all the strange things the man had said. He had no idea. Nothing was sure. What he was certain about was that he did not want to let the corpse stay in the darkness. Joseph took Jesus' body from the cross. He wrapped up the body in fine linen and grave bands. He moved the body to a tomb he had prepared, and laid it there.

When Joseph left, having done what he wanted to do, Mary Magdalene came. She saw the body removed from the cross. Like Joseph, she did not want to let the body

decompose without respectful treatment. She came back to the tomb to adore the dead body. She found, however, that the body had disappeared. She had no expectation of the body risen from the tomb. Beholding the absence of the body, she was puzzled. She was devastated. Then she raised a question—where had the body gone? That question has never been answered and has never been absent from the Christian tradition.

Joseph and Mary were haunted by their hunger for the body when all expectation for the Messiah disappeared. They came for the body at the time before the Resurrection, before the disciples' faith was rejuvenated by the appearance of the risen body. What caused their hunger, indeed? What was this hunger for? Joseph and Mary were instilled with the absence of the body. Their hunger for the body was based upon lack, as not-attaining and not-reaching. They hardly sought to satisfy their hunger in the risen body. They, instead, chose to live with the hunger by suffering with the dead body. They had no idea what would happen next. What led them to the body was their desire to suffer the absence of the body of Christ.

Joseph and Mary are the prototypes of the mystics. While hunger for the body of Christ never left the Christian tradition, the mystics re-invoked the hunger by writing the body. The hunger motivated the mystics to write the body, but it never satisfied them. Instead, it made them suffer even more severely. I argue that this kind of insatiable hunger is the desideratum of heterological sacramentality. Heterology invites people like Joseph, Mary, and the mystics in the early modern period—those who do not leave the empty tomb, those who do not claim to possess the risen body, those who had rather turned their hunger into an irresistible desire to suffer the lack of the body.

Interestingly, while the disciples who regained their faith by the presence of the risen body became the major figures of the gospel and their stories took the center of the gospel message, people like Joseph, Mary, and the mystics, those who lingered around the dead body with burning compassion, pass through the gospels and the Christian tradition only briefly. Removed from center stage during the first Christian mission, they enjoyed a lively role in marginal, even “heretical” accounts of the body of Christ,¹⁴⁰ and then they were absorbed into a mass of legends and folktales— heterological textual spaces. De Certeau names such weak and unorthodox narratives of the body “fable,” meaning a narrative written by technically incompetent and unorthodox writers compared to the writers of doctrines and dogmas. For de Certeau, fables create another vision that challenges the dominant tradition and the institutional church.

By spotlighting such margins of the Christian tradition and listening to those fables, this chapter explores the ways in which heterological perspectives can be employed as an alternative method for discussing sacramental theology. The chapter affirms that a heterological perspective can help collect those forgotten stories about the body. My presentation of heterological sacramentality consequently responds to the questions I left unanswered in chapter 1. What differentiates heterological practice from pointless sign-making? What are the resources of the practice that enable it to continue?

I begin this chapter by discussing the significance of the Passion in sacramental practice. The Passion is the event that generates insatiable hunger for the body of Christ, because it eradicates the positivity of the body’s physical presence and, instead, generates a perpetual desire for the body through remembrance. In order to argue for the relation

¹⁴⁰ Since the second century, a mass of legendary detail has accumulated around both Joseph and Mary.

between the Passion and heterological sacramentality, I first challenge the idea of instrumental causality embedded in traditional sacramental theology. Theologians in a more traditional framework of sacramental theology highlight the sacrament's causal instrumentality. The fundamental link between the original Being and all subsequent beings remains essential in the sacramental discussion. The successive structure between God and humanity is strongly defended. This chapter argues that such a traditional framework does not, however, illuminate the significance of the Passion. Sacramental practice serves not only to signify the life and Resurrection of Christ but also to represent the death of Jesus and the rupture of the Messianic hope. Just as Jesus empties his transcendence through his death, so the sacramental practice too commands us to empty all human attempt to claim adequacy in God's salvific work. The sacrament requires not only faith in the risen body but also willingness to participate in the suffering caused by persevering despite the lack of the body. At the heart of the Eucharist is the paradox between presence and absence.

Thomas Aquinas's discussion of the sacrament of the Eucharist is particularly helpful for my argument. His theology of the Eucharist stresses that the sacrament most perfectly signifies the Passion event, which means that sacramental discussions must be grounded in not only Jesus' life and resurrection, but also his suffering and death. Sacramental practice must remind Christians of the suffering of Christ in which they are painfully aware of the absence of Christ. By articulating the negativity of the presence manifested in the Passion, Thomas's account of the Eucharist emphasizes that what is most important in sacramental practice is the desire to participate in Jesus' self-emptying.

By emphasizing the participatory nature of sacramental practice, Thomas's eucharistic theology invites heterological method to the discussion of sacramental theology.

The chapter moves on to discuss writing as a heterological sacramental practice. I demonstrate that, from a heterological perspective, writing the body of Christ must be understood as the act of shaping a communal space in which individual Christians remember and suffer the lack of Christ's body together. In the empty space where the original body disappeared, the bodies of individual Christians are the instruments by which they invoke the body of Christ. Only by incorporating and intextuating the body of Christ can Christians sense the presence of the body. Calling Christians to join this practice, the body of Christ constitutes a communal textual space in which different bodies and desires of Christians cross and re-cross one another. Such a writing practice values the participation itself, instead of consequences of the practice. The heterological process of writing the body of Christ, therefore, produces diversity and alterity within the system dominated by traditional signs of the Eucharist. Finally, I offer the writings of early modern mystics as examples that display the constitution of sacramental textual space.

The chapter evinces heterology's ability to facilitate conversation between the dominant institution and the individual Christians. I suggest that the heterological perspective further enables Christians to be accountable to the secularized world while keeping with the body of Christ. Heterology particularly helps marginalized Christians cope with dominant institutional construction of Christ's body and rewrite the body of Christ in their own lights. The Eucharist as a communal space generates and encourages the interaction between the institutional church and the individual Christians. Through the

conflicts and negotiation that follow the interaction, the signs and symbols of the body of Christ are renewed and revived. De Certeau's discussion on the relation between place and space in his *Practice of Everyday Life* rightly describes the kind of dynamics the institutional church and the individual Christians create in the communal space.

The chapter ends by discussing the challenges to heterological sacramentality raised by contemporary philosophers and theologians. De Certeau's heterology has been criticized by both Christian theologians and postmodern theorists. While his argument is hardly categorizable into either discourse, it offers helpful insights and holds a profound potential for rethinking and reviving sacramental theology. The sacrament of the Eucharist in heterological perspective does not express doctrines, but untiringly produces possibilities for renewing and rewriting what has already been written about the body of Christ. By inviting unorthodox narratives shaped from the lives of individual Christians, heterology propels sacramental theology to include small but numerous "fables" that connect the body of Christ with the lives of individual Christians. The peculiar stance of heterology also suggests a hope for the body of Christ, a kind of hope that is insinuated by our craving for the body in our everyday life, a kind of hope that is renewed and rejuvenated ever.

I. The Sacrament According to Thomas Aquinas: Suffering with the Body of Christ

I am still at the scene of the death of Christ, with Joseph, Mary, and others whose names I do not even know. These forgotten people's compassion for Jesus grows to an active desire to share and so alleviate his suffering even to the point of risking their own safety. Their desire to suffer with the dead body was more vigorous than the disciples' hope for

the glorious Messiah. The story of these forgotten people's attachment to the death of Jesus suggests an angle for re-examining sacramental theology. Now the focus of receiving the body of Christ is not only the hope for the risen body. It is the desire to suffer with the crucified body. It brings the essential point of sacramental discussion into a closer relation with the Passion event that forever posits the body of Christ in the paradox between presence and absence.

Before I look into the significance of the Passion in the sacrament of the Eucharist, a brief introduction to traditional sacramental theology is necessary. Traditionally, the discussion of sacramental theology has been based on the concept of "instrumental causality," which explains sacraments as instruments of God.¹⁴¹ The theologians in more traditional frameworks adopt the language and logic of Incarnation to explain the sacraments: In the Incarnation the human body of Jesus is employed to convey his divinity, and thus the humanity of Christ becomes the instrument of his divinity. So in the sacraments matter is employed by God, and thus it becomes an instrument to convey grace. The matter, like the human body of Christ, does not create or possess spiritual power itself. In other words, the sacraments are employed by God for God's specific purpose. The effectiveness of the sacraments is made possible only through their relation

¹⁴¹ "Instrumental causality" is exemplified by the Incarnation. In turning to the human composite to figure the relation of humanity and divinity, Thomas notes that "the soul is related to the body in two ways: as form is related to matter, and as to an instrument. The former cannot be in play here; divinity is not the form of humanity." Thomas explains that "in linking the humanity-divinity relation to that of body and soul, one must think in terms of instrument. The body is the instrument of the soul; humanity is the instrument of the divinity. The body is conjoined to its soul, of which it is the instrument; the humanity of Christ is the conjoined instrument of the divinity." See Joseph P. Wawrykow, *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005). Brian Davis offers a close reading of instrumental causality: In Christ, the subject is always the Word; the Word incarnate employs its humanity to bring about human salvation. Sacraments, too, are instruments. They do not of themselves possess spiritual power. Rather, they convey the power of Christ on the cross. The sacraments are separate instruments, employed by Christ and the Holy Spirit to convey grace. See Brian Davis, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993), 350.

to God. They are instrumental causes that prepare the recipient for the infusion of grace. They must be efficient and manifest something proper under the influence of the primary agent God.¹⁴² They are the permanent signs, speaking in an enduring way of Christ's work for humanity.¹⁴³

Theologians working in this traditional framework argue that the incarnational character of the sacrament presupposes the purely spiritual, ahistorical, and transcendental God. Such God enters into a concrete historical and geographical context and therefore takes up into himself all the servitudes of finitude. The foundation of this framework is classical ontology, which shares its roots with the metaphysics of presence. It explains that all creatures are derived from the same Being, which is God, and thus are located in a continuum flowing from God and returning to God. Based on the idea of the same, or homology, ontology teaches that everything is a consequence of the emanation of being from the original Being. Every being depends on the first cause of Being, or the source.

Classical sacramental theologians typically emphasize causal analogies. Every being fundamentally has an analogical relation with the original Being. The Being is the cause of every other being. While each being is not identical with the original Being, the analogical relation leads every being eventually to return to the original Being by imitating and participating in the original. As employed by God, sacraments are created and designed for this specific purpose. To find the unity and harmony between the original and every other being is the end of sacramental theology.

¹⁴² Kenan Osborne, *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1952). 52.

¹⁴³ Bernard Leeming, *Principle of Sacramental Theology* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1956), Introduction, xxxiv.

While the principle of sacramental theology is founded on the analogical relation between God and human beings, an explanation of the sacrament based exclusively on this causal relation is criticized by a number of theologians, particularly those who seek to reconcile classical sacramental theology and modern philosophy. The theologians who gathered for the Postmodern Sacramento-theology in the Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology (LEST), for example, argue that classical sacramental theology has violated the mystery of God by reducing God to a being or first cause.¹⁴⁴ Insofar as God is understood within the framework of metaphysics of presence, sacramental theology must fall into the scheme of mechanistic reproduction of what has been traditionally proved as the general, universal, and archetypal sacramental signs. In the attempt to bypass the mediation of specific and diverse cultural locations of human beings, classical sacramental theology consequently ignores humanity's profoundly corporeal and historical nature. In such traditional frameworks, there is no place for us to discuss the participatory nature of the sacrament. Yet Jesus showed this participatory aspect of the sacrament, the LEST theologians claim, by radically emptying himself from the primordial center of the sacrament—an event that sacramental theology in traditional frameworks, confined to legalistic and obligatory language, is too inflexible to accommodate.

Thomas Aquinas' account of the sacraments in general (Questions 60–65) and the Eucharist (Questions 73–83) in *Summa Tertia Pars* are useful for examining such challenging voices. Admittedly, Thomas's eucharistic accounts provided Roman Catholicism with the foundational ideas and language to set the doctrine of sacraments.

¹⁴⁴ See introduction to Boeve and Leigseem, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 3–38.

His definition of a sacrament as “*signum rei sacrae in quantum est sacrificans Hominess*” was adapted by later theologians to support the principle of instrumental causality.¹⁴⁵ However, the philosophical and theological contexts of Thomas’s arguments open the Eucharist to more nuance and complexity than are expressed in the Catechism.¹⁴⁶ The traditional sacramental theology stresses instrumental causality as the essence of sacramental discussion. The traditional view highlights that God infuses grace through the sacrament. However, Thomas’s discussion of the Eucharist challenges the view of the sacrament as a mere instrument.

In spite of various interpretations of the implications of the sacrament, most theologians agree that Thomas’s sacramental discussion eventually points back to the memorial of Christ’s Passion. Thomas affirms that the cause of the efficacy of the sacrament does not come directly from God the Father. The value and efficacy of the sacrament depends instead upon Christ’s Passion. Thomas stresses that while the sacraments flows from Christ himself and they have a “certain likeness to him,” they must be made effective by the death of Christ: “[The sacraments] obtain their effect through the power of Christ’s Passion.”¹⁴⁷ Thomas affirms this in his account of the sacrament in *Summa Tertia Pars*.

[B]ecause without faith in the Passion there could never be any salvation, according to Roman 3–25: “Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood.” It was necessary accordingly that there should be at all times among men something to show forth our Lord’s Passion; the chief sacrament of which in the old Law was the Paschal Lamb. Hence the Apostle says (1Corinthian 5:7): “Christ our Pasch is sacrificed.” But

¹⁴⁵ “The sign of a sacred thing in so far as it sanctifies human beings.” Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III. question 20, article 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, part 2: “Celebration of the Christian Mystery,” section 2: “Seven Sacraments of the Church.”

¹⁴⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III. 60.6 and 61.1.

its successor under the New Testament is the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is a remembrance of the Passion now past, just as the other was figurative of the Passion to come.¹⁴⁸

Thomas firmly states that the Eucharist should always represent the event of Passion. The Passion event surpasses the validity of the ceremonial precepts of the old law. In Thomas's account of the Eucharist, the sacrament's instrumental causality is subordinated to the Passion. Without the death of Christ, any degree of causal relation between God and humanity cannot exist. In particular, the Eucharist is the summit of all the sacraments, because the sacrament is the means by which we remember not only his resurrection, but also his death.

At the very heart of Thomas's sacramental theology is the Passion event, and this emphasis invites us to explore an alternative way of practicing the sacrament distinguished from the sacramental practice framed by the instrumental causality. I propose two important key words to reframe the essential points of sacramental practice: first, Christ's self-emptying at the event of his death; and second, the necessity of human participation entailed by Christ's self-emptying.

The Passion is the event of God's self-annihilation. Christ's love is expressed by his self-emptying. His love for humanity results in sacrificing his own transcendence. To root the sacrament in the Passion event demonstrates an ironical aspect of sacramental practice. Christ founds himself as the primordial sacrament by negating himself. Christ set us his example of self-emptying, instead of building an objective category of sacramental signs. Thomas affirms this negativity in the sacramental presence:

In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and therein lies the perfection of human salvation;

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 73.5.

hence the Apostle says (Roman 5:8): “God commendeth His charity towards us; for when as yet we were sinners . . . Christ died for us.”¹⁴⁹

Following Christ’s step in the sacramental practice is to empty ourselves. The primordial sacrament radically evacuates the center of the sacramental practice, and therefore returns the sacrament to initial empty structure. What remains in the sacramental place is the act of emptying.

Thomas’s discussion of the Eucharist also accentuates the necessity of human participation in Christ’s suffering through sacramental means. The Eucharist is an unfinished story that requires human participation, instead of a simple instrument that delivers the divine grace. That is to say, through the death of Christ, God opens up to the collaboration of humanity. The death of Christ should be regarded as the call for humanity to participate in his suffering. The event not only permits infinite freedom but charges humanity with the responsibility to come and join Christ’s act of self-emptying. By the event of the Passion, the human assumption of the mechanistic succession between the divine history and human history is broken. Now human beings are called to take an active role in God’s salvific work. Thomas also stresses that human participation must be motivated by their desire to suffer with Christ. He affirms that the earnest desire for the body of Christ is the primary condition for the sacrament. Thomas writes that one cannot be saved “without the desire of receiving this sacrament.”¹⁵⁰ It is from this desire, he stresses, that we procure the efficacy of the power of the sacrament. The power of Christ’s Passion is united to us by faith and the sacraments,” so that its “continuation” (*continuatio*) will result.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.3.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 79.8.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 62.6.

Thomas's description of the relation between the Passion and the Eucharist demonstrates his theological affirmation of heterogeneity in negativity. The Passion event is a "rupture" of the human expectation for a political Messiah or salvific evolution, and it reorients humanity to become active participants in God's work. Christ's self-negation must be activated by multiplicity of human bodies. Without our act of giving our own bodies to the body of Christ, we cannot witness the presence of Christ at the altar. While the center of the sacrament should remain open and empty, the sacrament must be filled with individual Christians' ongoing participation in the act.

By illuminating the participatory nature of the Eucharist, we may understand that, for Thomas, the instrumental character of the sacrament of the Eucharist is not simply to infuse God's grace to us. It is to connect the concrete realities of human lives with the divine. As he grounds the sacrament in the Passion event, Thomas highlights the fundamentally human aspect of the sacrament, instead of subsuming it. The sacramental signs not only point toward something beyond human comprehension but they must remain vulnerable to human realities and human desires. Sacramental instrumentality does not bring human beings into an ahistorical and purely spiritual realm, but works through everyday life where Christians make meanings on the model of Christ's self-emptying love.

Thomas's emphasis on the connection between the Passion event and the sacraments may acknowledge heterological perspective as one of the various ways of discussing sacramental theology. By rooting the sacraments in the event of Christ's death and human participation, Thomas leads us to contemplate the communal and participatory natures of the Eucharist, which link to the features of heterological

sacramentality, a perspective that helps to draw the theoretical implications and practice of the Eucharist in a different way from instrumental causality. The Eucharist does not merely offer Christians insight into some foundational homological order behind the heterogeneous nature of human lives. Instead, it invites human beings to interrupt such homological ways of representing God and further generates the moment of interruption to an infinite degree. The Eucharist points to the interdependency between Christ's body and human bodies. In the modality of the Eucharist, Christ who negated himself still remains in contact with the human bodies who participate in the sacrament. The sacrament disseminates the original body into multiple individual bodies. The broken body assimilates with multiple human bodies, so with the multiplicity of human reality and with multifarious human desires.

II. Heterological Sacramentality and Mystical Writing

The previous section suggests that as far as the sacrament is founded in Jesus' self-emptying in the Passion event, the sacramental medium must negate any adequate causal achievement to express the divinity. The paradox of the body can only be appreciated by ongoing practice on our part that oscillates between the affirmation and negation of the given signs. The constructive aspect of heterology that facilitates sacramental practice is its capacity to foster polyvalent signs ever renewed through new human bodies. By intextuating Christ's body, heterology distributes Christ's body into a constant proliferation of languages, beliefs, and experience.¹⁵² Heterology thus mobilizes the body of Christ and mixes the body with concrete human histories and cultures.

¹⁵² Bauerschmidt, "The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology," in *Modern*

De Certeau's heterological perspective does not take the causal explanation as something accomplished or authoritative in a discourse about the body of Christ. What makes sacramental activity meaningful, that is, is not causal instrumentality endorsed by presence, but the infinite possibilities of speaking and writing God ensured by the absence of Christ, the original authorizer. The practice of heterology reminds us that the body of Christ is always missing and radically contiguous at the same time. Heterology reactivates the memory of the suffering body and relocates and reconnects the memory with our daily life.

The absence of Christ's body gives everyone authority to speak and write about Christ, while radically eradicating the center of sacramental activity. Heterology resists the attempt of a single authority to dominate it and assumes that neither scripture nor the institutional church can claim the authority of the body. In the heterological framework, theoretically speaking, an individual's authority to speak and write the body of Christ can be as effective and authentic as that of the church institution. Both the institutional church and individual Christians produce "rumors" of the body. For both sides, the best that they can do in their attempts to approximate the body of Christ is to produce more rumors without the guarantee of the original. The "heightening of unharmonizable difference," in the words of Frederick Bauerschmidt, is what characterizes the heterological practice of the sacrament.¹⁵³

What might be controversial in heterological sacramentality is found when one heeds the consequences of conflicts among those polyvalent signs that arise from heterological practice. As the "original" is put into brackets, the signs and symbols about

Theology 12, no. 1 January 1996, 12.

¹⁵³ Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 2001 100(2), (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 328.

the body of Christ float around forever without any guaranteed hierarchy of proximity.¹⁵⁴ Everyone stands in equally close relation to the body of Christ. There is no absolute truth to instruct each process of sign-making, nor are their legitimate categories to validate signs. There are only “oceanic rumors” of the body of Christ and each rumor claims authenticity.¹⁵⁵ According to de Certeau, these abundant rumors of Christ constituted the community of Jesus’ disciples and have sustained the Christian tradition. These rumors, of course, are always discordant. The disagreements and conflicts in representing the truth of Christ’s body underlie even the process of making doctrines in the institutional church. Under the pressure of dissonance, the old belief in harmony and unity in human life is challenged. As far as heterology is taken as a hermeneutical method, one cannot construe a discourse that theorizes a universal voice underlying that rumor. As Bauerschmidt aptly puts it, heterology “at best may gather those rumors” of Christ and enable us to “better hear them.”¹⁵⁶

One could argue that heterology contradicts the essential point of sacramental theology, that God is revealed to human beings through mediations. These mediations are recognized within a faith tradition as the special places or events in which the presence of God is to be found. If one values only the principle of mediation in sacramental theology, such challenges are legitimate. However, sacramental theology is not about judging the appropriateness of the medium. It is not so much about the accuracy and validity of the sign as about the human desire to express the invisible reality through a medium celebrated in community.¹⁵⁷ The attempt of heterology to abolish the center of

¹⁵⁴ Bauerschmidt, “The Otherness of God,” 361.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Richard P. McBriaen, ed. *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (San Francisco:

sacramental activity does not mean that it makes the desire to participate in the body and express the mystery void. Nor does it expunge all the given and established signs accumulated in the tradition. Instead of building object categories to protect the efficacy and legality of traditional signs, heterology looks rather at the sign-making process wherein multiple human bodies and various human desires gather together and assimilate with one another. The process invites both old and new signs of the body of Christ and lets them mix with one another. Heterology, in this respect, not only offers insight into sacramental theology but also retrieves the balance between the principle of mediation and of communion in traditional sacramental discussions.

This discussion of heterological sacramentality brings us back to de Certeau's study of mystical writing. De Certeau suggests that the writings of early modern mystics stand as examples of sacramental practice and constitute a communitarian structure in speaking and writing about the uncanny. He points to the writings of Jean de Labadie (1610–1674) as an example. A nomad, wanderer, and mystic, Labadie is an epitome of the writers and, I would say, a model of the heterological practitioners, at the heart of de Certeau's project. Labadie was a Jesuit, a Jansenist, a Calvinist, a Chiliast or Millenarian, and, finally, a "Labadiest."¹⁵⁸ Banished from one city after another for his controversial ideas and utterances, Labadie's writing records geographical and institutional alterations. Following the voice of God, Labadie dwelled in no one land but only in his unstoppable journey.¹⁵⁹ His writing, too, is, as de Certeau puts it, "pervaded with a nomadic inbetweenness."¹⁶⁰

HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 1148.

¹⁵⁸ A quietist sect founded by Labadie himself.

¹⁵⁹ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 271.

¹⁶⁰ Marcel Cobussen, *Rethinking Spirituality Through Music* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing,

Labadie's writing constructs no system and makes no claim. Yet it constructs a space in which diverse social locations, ideas, and languages interact with one another as he writes about God. He produces a "literal and literary ec-stasy," blending fragmented ideas in different languages.¹⁶¹ Describing the characteristics of Labadie's writing, de Certeau writes:

His writing developed essentially as a way of walking. There is not, properly so called, a Labadie "doctrine." It is a *patchwork*, weaving together references and theoretical fragments from all sources.¹⁶²

Labadie demonstrates passages, itineraries, through which he moves in his journey tracing the voice of God. He does not dismiss the traditional ideas and expressions of God, but reshapes them in his journey. Introducing differences into the familiar system of Christianity, his mystical writings display ruptures, drifts, deviations, and diversions. The style mirrors the contents as it spells the words in constant shift. His writing, thus, opens up a new linguistic space that bears God, and yet expresses God in a new manner. The mystic delivers the signs of God to his contemporaries, while confusing prevailing ideas, putting dominant discourses on trial, and undermining certainties.

For de Certeau, Labadie's writing stands as an example of writing that practices sacramentality. The fundamental condition of his writing is the absence of the body of God that permits him to speak and write God. The mystic is haunted by the lack of the body that commends him to write until that final hour. The mystic lives with the desire for and the task of oscillating between affirmation of new signs and negation of given signs. Because the given religious terminology can no longer be applicable to express his

2008), 77.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 78.

¹⁶² De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 290.

extraordinary experiences, the mystic must develop his own terminologies to articulate “the ‘unsayable’ [*indicible*].”¹⁶³ While seeking a language that tangibly delivers his experiences of God, the mystic keeps wandering. His itinerary constitutes a textual space mixing all the narratives he has collected and made. What Labadie shows us in this space is the mixture of old and new signs of God and his desire to find meaning through the mixture. The mystic’s writing, then, is the “interminable exercise,” in de Certeau’s words, of the divine appearance and disappearance.¹⁶⁴

De Certeau focuses his attention in Labadie’s writing on the constitution of a site of interaction. For the mystic, writing of God is not a matter of constructing a particular, coherent set of statements organized according to truth criteria. The mystic has no interest in expressing God in the form of a general and universal account that makes personal experience of God irrelevant. Instead, his writing is a space in which fragmented ideas and different languages interact with one another. By embodying his itineraries in relation to God, the mystic mixes his narratives into the discourses constructed in the tradition. He actively performs the authority given from God through his own body, and thus he inserts alterity into the tradition. Through his writing, the prevailing symbolic order is constantly varied by experimentation, discarded, altered, torn, and wounded.

Like Labadie, mystical writers in the early modern period, for instance Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, set themselves on a perpetual search for God. They kept wandering while repeatedly crossing and re-crossing from the presence of God to absence of God, from affirmation of new signs to negation of old signs. They repeatedly moved back and forth along the outer edge of the institution, ever changing in their own

¹⁶³ Ibid., 143.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 46.

movement, and confusing, deviating, and altering the institution as they went. In this respect, de Certeau says, mystical writing is fundamentally “trans-lational”:

They shuttled (trans-lated) violent, consolatory or inspiring words from one site to another. They enabled multifarious kinds of transformation at the cost of many kinds of distortion: a ‘language of “the other”’ was generated by the vast labor of these alterations. Mystic speech was fundamentally “translation.”¹⁶⁵

Mystical writing is a textual space filled with a complicated mixture of language, culture, desire, and morality about God. The space is fluid. Within the space, mystics assimilate their bodies, desires, languages, cultures, and morality with the given and predominant languages and ideologies of the body. The mystical space is for fabricating given meanings, for inserting foreign tones into familiar expressions, and even for making familiar tones sound strange. The interaction within the space directs the mystics toward the initial zero-structure of sign-making because their object, the body of God, always remains absent even at the moment they tangibly experience God. The mystics are destined to depart only.¹⁶⁶ To be sure, only a burning and insatiable drive, the desire for the absent body, is what makes mystics capable of continuing in their practice.

Mystical writing is typically the kind of writing de Certeau names “fables.” Fables are “weak narratives” set aside by both authorized regimes of truth and the official and conventional rhetoric of delivered truth (that is, such rhetoric that is adopted for constituting doctrines and dogmas). In other words, to call a written work a fable is first to denote that the writing cannot be analyzed based on fact or conceptual knowledge and second to announce that it is written outside of the accustomed system. Nonetheless, de Certeau affirms that fables contain important truths. They provide the dominant tradition

¹⁶⁵ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 118.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 299.

and the institution with a certain style and content that cannot be made accessible in any other meaningful way. Particularly, fables have a distinctive ability to collect scattered rumors of the body of Christ and to present those rumors in relation to other rumors. In doing so, fables keep a “hidden kernel” of the truth in these rumors and create another way to experience the body of Christ. In de Certeau’s words, a fable presents the body of Christ in a form of “drift—an adjunction, a deviation and a diversion, a heresy and a poetry” that reflects individual Christians’ relation to the body of Christ.¹⁶⁷ In the fable, the body of Christ is taken up into the work of inviting and collecting new visions and new voices into the tradition.

De Certeau’s emphasis on the linguistic space of mystical speech and the process of making fables is a reflection of his hope that the body of Christ must remain not as a fixed object but as an instigator of communal movement. The body for de Certeau must reshape languages and ideas of Christianity and also be reshaped by the multiplicity of concrete realities of human life. For de Certeau, Christianity is not a “matter of the transmission of an uncharted ‘content’ of faith.” It is a matter of a “certain practice of transmission itself, a practice rooted in Jesus’ practice.”¹⁶⁸ Relying on the foundational lack, Christians pass the event of Jesus from a past to a future in a manner that makes way for differences in a mode of creativity that opens a new series of experiences.¹⁶⁹ In doing so, Christians practice the body of Christ in a way that is local, communal, diverse, and transformative.

¹⁶⁷ De Certeau, *Writing of History*, 225–226.

¹⁶⁸ De Certeau, *Postmodern God*, 144.

¹⁶⁹ Bauerschmidt, “Abrahamic Voyage,” in *Modern Theology* 12:11.

III. Writing: The Process of Diversifying the Body of Christ

My proposal that the act of writing is a sacramental practice shares de Certeau's vision. In suggesting that the act of writing is a way of shaping the communal structure within which Christians must throw their own bodies on the altar to suffer with the body, I illuminate the process by which multiple social relationships and unfamiliar cultural heritages assimilate with one another and become a part of Christian narrative. Instead of emphasizing the truth claims produced in the process, I focus attention on the process that refills and renews the old signs with new and unfamiliar stories, unauthorized fables, and ignored testimonies of individual Christians. The process makes the dominant tradition and the institutional church a place open and vulnerable to individual Christians' participation in the sign-making. In the following section, I discuss the possible effect of writing brought about by the process of interaction, and demonstrate how the interaction changes both the institutional church and individual Christians. De Certeau's description of the different types of social dominance in societal interaction provides insights for exploring the relation between the institutional church and individual Christians in their practice of writing the eucharistic body. The section shows how the institution and the individual influence each other at the eucharistic site.

As we observe in the case of mystical writings, the act of writing as a sacramental practice emphasizes the process of interaction rather than outcome, so that it resists a polar model of domination. In the practice of writing the paradox of the divine body, neither the institutional church exercises dominance over a mass of Christians, nor do individual Christians perform their activities free from institutional influences.

Constructing the site of interaction and trans-lation, the act of writing the body of Christ

interrogates the binary distinction between the dominant tradition and the marginalized tradition, between the institutional church system and individual Christian lives.

The mystical works also remind us that the act of writing the body of Christ shapes both the institution and the individual. In creating new stories and discourses about the body of Christ, individual Christians need to adapt the signs and symbols built into the tradition. Individual writing must share the old path with the institution and deal with customized rules and grammars. Yet the institution and dominant tradition inevitably are challenged and shattered by individual sacramental practice.

As a historian, de Certeau brings attention particularly to the margins of Christianity where tradition was muted, silenced, and ignored—the zone of the early modern mystics. De Certeau pays particular attention to the lives of those who make neither policy nor history but must participate in the making of history and policy. De Certeau demonstrates how those Christians practice “making-do,” how they escape imposed ideas without leaving, and how the body of Christ functions in the course of their movement. De Certeau’s argument is that even though individuals in the field of power seem passive and guided by established norms, each of them struggles for identity by mixing the divergent plurality of social determinations. For de Certeau, individual Christians are not only passive objects inscribing the power of the dominant system but are also the subjects appropriating and manipulating that power. Such individuals create their own spaces within the system and present a different vision of seeing society. De Certeau’s study on the margins of the tradition highlights the role of the individual Christians in making the body of Christ accountable to secularized world.

In modern society, according to de Certeau, the institutional church alone can no longer be the only site for Christian intervention in the world because Christian belief and practices have become associated with individuals armed with “weakness of faith.”¹⁷⁰ By “weakness of faith,” de Certeau means (in)flexibility with respect to the norms and doctrinal forms of faith. This weakness is expressed by inventive forms of practicing faith beyond the narrow confines of institutions and dogmas. Just as the mystics found unique faith practices by virtue of their weak connections to the institutional church, individual Christians in modern society, too, by their very weakness, loosen the obsolete confines of the institutional church and make a space for others within Christianity. With a lack of certitude and authority, they challenge the beliefs shaped by dominant ideological constructions that claim to reflect the whole “real.” This type of faith admits the indissolubility of individual agency working within and around institutional systems and norms. It inscribes, as Richard Terdiman points out, “an injunction to look for capability on the margins to practice faith in their own lights,” while keeping relation with the institutional church.¹⁷¹ Though not radically defiant, nor decidedly counteractive, it ascribes the unexpected resonances that affect both the institution and the individual.

In that it distributes the authority of speaking and writing to Christians at the margins, heterology shares its purpose with public theologians. The contribution of public theology is, as Peter Matheson argues, that it pointedly faces the contemporary Christian church’s failure to communicate with the culture. Public theology brings Christianity down to earth, emphasizes awareness to context for its transformation, as it

¹⁷⁰ De Certeau, “The Weakness of Believing, From the Body to Writing: A Christian Transit,” in *The Certeau Reader*, 214.

¹⁷¹ Richard Terdiman, “The Marginality of de Certeau,” *Michel de Certeau in the Plural* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 417.

operates “on the cutting edge between the church and the lives of individual Christians, the global and the local.”¹⁷² One of the crucial tasks of public theology is to broaden the context of theology to include the public dimension of human life and the everyday life of Christians dwelling at local, national, and global levels.¹⁷³ Challenging the institutional church’s tendency to silence small narratives, public theology brings theology into dialogue with contemporary culture. It advocates that truth can be different things for different people, and it can be celebrated and witnessed in multiple different ways. Theologians such as Andries van Aarde further propose that public theology is not about “theologians or pastors ‘doing theology’ in the public square,” but “the film directors, artists, novelists, poets, and philosophers” who facilitate “a dialogue between the theological discourse of academics and the public theological discourse.”¹⁷⁴ By blurring the boundary between the institutional church, the academy, and the lives of individual Christians, public theologians pursue theology on a “grassroots level to benefit the marginalized in society.”¹⁷⁵

De Certeau’s project not only resonates with public theology in many ways but also enriches it by bringing attention to the interactive process between the institutional church and the individual Christians. By illuminating the process, rather than the truth claims themselves, heterology presses public theologians’ arguments further and makes

¹⁷² R. Robertson, “Globalization: Time Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in Scott Lash, Roland Robertson, and Mike Featherstone, eds., *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995), 25–44. Cited in Peter Matheson’s “Public Theology” in Ferguson Lecture, 19 August, 2005, www.saintdavids.org.nz/FergusonLectureAug2005.pdf (accessed May 2008).

¹⁷³ Richard Robert Osmer and Friedrich Schweitzer, *Religious Education between Modernization and Globalization: New Perspectives on the United States and Germany* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003). Cited in Andries van Aarde’s “What Is Theology in ‘Public Theology’ and What is Public’ about ‘Public Theology’?” *HTS, Theological Studies, 1220–1222*, <http://ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/viewFile/41313/8693> (accessed December 2006).

¹⁷⁴ Van Aarde, “What Is Theology?,” 1213.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1227.

them even subtler. Heterology brings attention to the “contact zone,” the point at which the institutional church and individual Christians exchange influence with each other. The contact zone instigates the interaction between the institutional and individual, which is necessary in making the Christian tradition available and useful to contemporary context.

The tense but mutually workable relationship between the institution and the individual is extensively explored in de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In that book, de Certeau makes a distinction between place (*lieu*) and space (*espace*). Place is a concrete “locatedness” within which multiple historical and cultural contexts get settled and cross with one another. Space is “composed of intersections of mobile elements.”¹⁷⁶ Metaphorically, de Certeau describes place as a “street,” “geometrically defined by urban planning.” It is defined by its orderliness, internal stability, and univocity. Space, on the contrary, is only temporal. It exists “when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables.” Space is composed of “intersections of mobile elements.”¹⁷⁷ Space is unpredictable and only temporarily defined by the individuals walking on the street. Whereas place is constituted by systems of signs, the rules and conventions of society, space is a “practiced place,” in which this place reveals its intrinsic gaps and slippage.

Place and space, however, cannot exist without the other. While a place is actualized by “successive, multiple, and even irreconcilable spaces,”¹⁷⁸ space cannot manifest itself without the order and stability of a place that grounds it.¹⁷⁹ In other words, place cannot be realized without the space that makes its social relations possible. Space

¹⁷⁶ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Act* (New York: Routledge), 5.

¹⁷⁹ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 103.

cannot exist without place because space is in need of a place that it can use as a reference to assign. It is a place that enables the variable spaces to anchor in time, even if for a passing moment. In order to make space visible and effective, place is necessary, because it holds the ground upon which space operates its activity.

In the process of participating in the Eucharist, the institutional church and individual Christians manifest forms of interaction that reflect de Certeau's tropes of place and space. Even though the paradox of the divine body at the altar cannot be expressed by either presence or absence alone, the institution tends to shape the Eucharist as a place that holds the authentic presence of the body of Christ. Individual Christians, meanwhile, must remind the church that the center of the Eucharist should remain open. Individual Christians do this by their constant intervention in the institution. They create temporal and fluid spaces within the eucharistic place constituted by the institution. While the institution inscribes eucharistic norms and regularities inherited from the Christian tradition, individuals adapt the institutional norms and yet appropriate them for making their opinions and reshaping the eucharistic space.

Once scattered individual bodies enter the institutional place of the Eucharist, the bodies bring hybrids into the ecclesiastical body and shatter the illusory unity. The multiple spaces of the Eucharist tend toward a confusion of the place. They manifest "excess, fusion, and finally absence of language" in the place of the Eucharist.¹⁸⁰ What these spaces mark is "differentiation." They reveal the conflicts and disagreements inherent in the seemingly solid construction of the church. They draw the borders and limits of the Christian church into the church itself, so that the church can see itself in contact with others in society.

¹⁸⁰ De Certeau, "The Weakness of Believing," in *The Certeau Reader*, 223.

The relationship between the institutional church and individual Christians is inseparable as the relationship between place and space is indissoluble. As far as the paradox of divine body remains affective, Christianity is a field of perpetual negotiation between the institutional church and individual Christians. They exchange influences. Although the institution tends to conserve familiar systems and languages, once it is violated by individuals, it unavoidably comes to loosen its exclusive and self-regulating system of rules. Meanwhile, even if the individual tries to escape from institutional confines, she cannot be free from the institution once she bears the name “Christian.” The individual activity of making space within the institutional place is like an action of “lack[ing]” the place. The individual activity embodies a space within place, and those floating spaces distract, disturb and weaken the prevailing constructions of the place.

The eucharistic practice forces the institutional church and individual Christians to interact with each other. Through liturgy and texts, this practice not only enables but makes the two bump into and impact each other. Writing, in particular, creates textual alterity within the place of the Eucharist. By propelling linguistic exchanges within this place, writing drives the institution and individual together in the procedure of interaction—and sometimes facilitates crashes.¹⁸¹ Therefore the Eucharist reveals the rupture and break, which is intrinsic to itself and now invites more challenges. These erratic, ticklish new bodies create erosions, ruptures, and fissures within the stable, homogeneous body of the institution.

Yet writing the body of Christ as heterological practice does not attempt to fill up the cracks. It does not want to ease the tension within the Christian tradition, nor to reconcile the conflict easily. Instead, it vigorously creates more revelations of hidden

¹⁸¹ Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, 59.

conflict. By repeating the constant labor of adapting and creating signs and symbols, writing perpetuates the interaction without losing the tension. It pushes the institution to provide a stable ground upon which individuals revise and create new signs, and it stimulates individuals to bustle, to scratch the constructs of the institutional church. Then the interaction instigates them to suffer and express what they experience at the conflict. Writing the body of Christ thus joins the Christian narrative to the discursive body of the church and at the same time participates in the conflicts between the institution and the individual.

IV. Challenges and Further Suggestions

De Certeau's heterological approach to both the Christian tradition and the act of writing has won him allies as well as adversaries. One reason that he invites criticism might be the ambiguous and sophisticated character of his writing style and ideas. His writing is highly poetic and yet hardly conceptual. His ideas are difficult to categorize. By decentralizing the logic of presence, de Certeau is not a characteristically Christian theologian. Yet by emphasizing the orality and uncanny nature of the body over text, he is not typically a thinker of postmodernism either. His challenging approach to liturgical and dogmatic theology earns criticism from Christian theologians. His careful approach to deconstructive theory seeds doubt among post-structural writers and theorists. In what follows, I argue that even though these criticisms prove that de Certeau's thoughts cannot be linearly aligned in any category, the indeterminacy of his ideas nonetheless helps develop a sacramental theology that can work for contemporary Christians.

The most vigorous critiques of de Certeau have been raised by his Christian fellows. Theologians who feel uneasy about de Certeau's heterological perspective find his melancholic attitude toward the body problematic. They argue that de Certeau, by describing the tradition in relation to the lack and absence of the body of Christ, destabilizes the foundation of the church traditionally nurtured by the presence of Christ's body. They contend that de Certeau denies the liturgical and dogmatic unity of the church and thus makes the Christian faith an aimless and meaningless gesture. The radical orthodox theologian Graham Ward is one of the scholars who offer a charitable but finally damning reading of de Certeau. In his essay "Michel de Certeau's 'Spiritual Space,'" Ward writes that "[De Certeau], in describing the body of Jesus as lost and the foundation of the Christian church as an attempt to recover that lost, original body, makes the Eucharist into substitutes, acts of bereavements, signs of an absence."¹⁸² Ward continues that in de Certeau's frame, the Eucharist becomes the site that announces only a "necrophiliac obsession."¹⁸³

According to Ward, the problem with de Certeau's heterological approach is his relegation of the Eucharist and, consequently, his withdrawal of the church's role as a sacramental community. While de Certeau successfully challenges the "hegemony of one story, of the Christian grand narrative" and explores the meanings that are not caught in the doctrines and rhetoric of church tradition, he makes the church "an arbitrary actor in history" (i.e., in de Certeau's heterological perspective, the church that has been situated in a specific time and space loses its purposeful state). Ward argues that de Certeau seems to privilege history and has it institute his work, but his position toward the actual church

¹⁸² Graham Ward, "Spiritual Spaces," in Ian Buchanan, ed., *Michel de Certeau in the Plural*, 511.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

makes his work “nostalgia arbitrary.” Because it is arbitrary, “meaning lies forever outside of history, and the endless wandering it installs is meaningless.” For Ward, discharging the Eucharist from the faith community is de Certeau’s “failure.” He comments:

But perhaps there lay the problem; Christians seek not a space for belief, but allow a practicing belief to produce the space. In *La faiblesse de croire*, [de Certeau] states that the church can no longer provide such a place. But then this is a church operating within modernity’s thesis again . . . For Certeau, space is opened and organized by praxis; it is closed and policed by institutional authorities. The Church as place has to collapse, but the Church as that space for communal living characterized by eucharistic practice? This can remain.¹⁸⁴

Ward’s criticism reflects his concern for restoring a discursive space that incarnates a theology of history inseparable from practicing faith communities. For Ward, the garnering of this space is important because it is a space of “the embodied believing” and of “the worship that constitutes and performs the *corpus mysticum*.”¹⁸⁵ Ward argues that de Certeau’s project, “though concerned with praxis, fails to engage” directly with this participatory practice of Christian believing.¹⁸⁶ In this regard, Ward finds de Certeau’s treatment of the eucharistic space incomplete. Even though de Certeau’s works repeatedly announces the importance of the sacramental space, Ward writes, he “refuses to examine” it. For Ward, this is “a denial of incarnation and community and an appeal to death.” He continues, “Once again, the body called and longed for by Certeau is a body to be lost, forsaken for salvation. A certain pathology might be evident here; Certeau seems unable to shake off the melancholy that so easily besets him.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 514.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 515.

Although Ward's criticism is incisive in pointing out de Certeau's lack of attention to the constructive aspect of the Eucharist, it remains to be seen whether de Certeau's project is a failure or a new departure. Ward's criticisms notwithstanding, de Certeau does not seem to disclaim the liturgical significance of the Eucharist nor to disregard the importance of practicing communities. His writings, in spite of his retraction from the liturgical significance of the Eucharist, always are weighed and fueled by the eucharistic site, which offers a communal space for speaking theology. De Certeau repeatedly returns to the body in which the faith community re-members and connects to the past and tradition. For de Certeau, the body of Christ still provides Christians with a resource for their belief.

What distinguishes de Certeau's eucharistic site from Ward's is that de Certeau's space is not defined by the presence alone, nor held by the institutional church. The body of Christ that de Certeau wants to invoke is not the body stipulated as a fixed presence on which one can establish her identity. Rather, the body of Christ generates tension and dynamism from both presence and absence. The body of Christ escapes fixity. The body constantly recontextualizes and reconstructs Christian narratives so that they regain contextual accountability to others. The body keeps a particular speech from dominating the discourse about the body. The body keeps Christians from speaking the "transparent" God and "universal" discourse of God.¹⁸⁸ The body always prepares for a new theology of history. The heterogeneity of the discourses of the body always lies in relation with this body.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Bauerschmidt, "The Otherness of God," 328.

¹⁸⁹ Boeve and Leigseen, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 20.

De Certeau suggests that in the place where institutional authority has lost its governing status, the sacramental sensibility is particularly important. The body of Christ draws individual Christians into the place where they inevitably encounter the institutional church and dominant ideological constructions. The body of Christ draws, too, the narratives of individual Christians, which otherwise float around, into the narrative of Christ's life and death. When the individual is drawn into the Eucharist, her "narrative that has the nowhere (*non-lieu*)" or the "event of an event that does not take place (*qui n'a pas lieu*)" finally takes a space within the system of the Eucharist, which is predominantly filled with traditional signs and languages. The small narrative of an individual becomes a part of the discursive body of Christianity. At the same time, the small narrative inserts alterity into the tradition. Once brought together, there is no exit for either side but only the endless play of fabrication.¹⁹⁰

Ward's critique is based on his radical orthodox position. Through the eucharistic presence of the body, he hopes to collect fragmented individual Christians into a unified theological culture. Ward trusts the institution's ability to restore the practicing faith community. However, de Certeau's passion is directed toward exploring the potential of fragmented individuals who practice secular believing and create new theological opinions in secularized society.¹⁹¹ De Certeau is concerned about the risk posed by fixity that always threatens the mobility of the Eucharist when the institution dominates the eucharistic site. De Certeau's attempt to resolve this risk is expressed by his deliberate effort to disseminate the eucharistic center. He wants to enliven the eucharistic space through the practices of individual Christians because the body is realized only by the

¹⁹⁰ De Certeau, "Scriptural Economy," in *The Certeau Reader*, 173.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

bodies of others, the bodies of multiple individual Christians. One particular narrative about the body, even if it is established and endorsed by the dominant tradition, cannot fully present the fundamental heterogeneity of the discourse of the body.¹⁹² De Certeau writes: “[W]e do not yet know what to make of other, equally infinitesimal procedures that have remained unprivileged by history yet which continue to flourish in the interstices of the institutional technologies.”¹⁹³

Meanwhile, postmodern critics, particularly those under the influence of Derrida, present de Certeau with a different kind of challenge. Deconstruction and heterology share the same roots. Both were the consequences of the reflection and criticism of logocentrism. Like heterology, deconstruction dismantles traditionally held beliefs in the Logos. Deconstruction illuminates the radical particularity of a human context and the irreducible heterogeneity of all manners of human thinking.¹⁹⁴

The diverging point between deconstruction and heterology is the difference in their way of ordering speech and writing. The deconstructive project is epitomized in Derrida’s well-known phrase in *Of Grammatology*: “There is nothing outside the text” [*Il n’y a pas de hors-texte*].¹⁹⁵ To explain, Derrida argues that one never reaches a truth beyond text. Everything is a text, which means that “everything must be interpreted in order to be experienced.” The role of texts is to mediate our experience of the world, and interpretation is an essential part of experiencing the world. What one experiences is subject to interpretation, and as such, it is subject to multiple interpretations.¹⁹⁶ Thinking

¹⁹² Boeve and Leigseen, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 20.

¹⁹³ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 191, 189.

¹⁹⁴ Boeve, in Boeve and Leigseen, 17.

¹⁹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158.

¹⁹⁶ James K. A. Smith, “Nothing Outside the Text? Taking Derrida to Church,” *Perspective, A*

and experiencing the world are both determined by text and one's interpretation of the text.

Seemingly contrary to Derrida, de Certeau places the speech act at the foundation of his understanding of writing, history, subject, and the practice of everyday life. De Certeau argues that there is a certain exteriority that gives authority to texts. Like the body of Christ has always existed outside the texts and discourse of the Christian tradition, a presence of certain otherness (orality) exists outside of textual constructions, though it never appears without the text. As a form of the utterance, the other interrupts the process of human thinking and writing. The other remains uncaught and keeps returning through texts.

I would suggest that de Certeau's return to the voice (and to the body) is not a return either to "subjectivity as autonomous agent with a stable identity" or to an "unmediated access to the truth and presence of the other." Although de Certeau locates the voice of otherness at the "site of an exteriority," this voice is not an immediate truth that facilitates the metaphysics of the transcendence. The voice for de Certeau is never available except through texts. The site of the voice is therefore always pullulating with the written. Yet this voice is not subsumed by the written either. What de Certeau emphasizes is not the content of the utterance but its form and manner. De Certeau's essay "The Gaze: Nicholas of Cusa" describes the function of the voice by saying it is: "marked by an empty place which is at once, in each case, the vanishing point of its undertaking (a 'surprise,' a 'hole') and, between them, the breach of a 'believing'."¹⁹⁷ In other words, the "empty place" where the voice once was no longer imposes meanings,

Journal of Reformed Thought (March 2006), www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=3003 (accessed April 2008).

¹⁹⁷ Certeau, "The Gaze: Nicholas of Cusa," 27.

but it still forms a hole or a break in our discourses, potentially allowing alterity to intervene.¹⁹⁸ Likewise, for de Certeau, the body of Christ is not the transcendental condition of our thought. Having a form but no content, the body is indeed “the site which makes possible the economy of difference as it operates within the written” tradition of Christianity.¹⁹⁹ De Certeau’s return to the body is an attempt to evoke a threshold, perhaps multiple thresholds, across which difference may flow into the Christian tradition.

In this way, de Certeau’s return to orality is not a rejection of deconstruction but a supplement that connects deconstruction to the concrete locality of the subject. While Derrida’s criticism of the spoken word is “lodged against a sense of the immediate, onto-theological being that exists beyond the text,” his deconstructive project inescapably falls into a depersonalization of language and the writing subject.²⁰⁰ The words, once they are released from any intentionality and passion of an agent, belong to no one and come from nowhere. The economy of difference is anonymous and random. “Speakers,” he writes, “are simply an effect of language.”²⁰¹ De Certeau recognizes this possibility. While coping with the postmodern removal of the subject, he suggests that heterology can still attribute a subject to the text and open the closed system of the text, without summoning metaphysics.

While de Certeau writes to incorporate both traditional theology and the deconstructive project, he rejects much contemporary discourse about God. De Certeau’s God is neither fixed in presence nor vanished into absence. As Fredrick Christian

¹⁹⁸ Bauerschmidt, “The Otherness of God,” 357.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Graham Ward, “The Voice of the Other: Certeau’s God,” in *New Blackfriars*, November 1996:519 (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publisher).

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Bauerschmidt puts it, de Certeau lets God “[haunt] the interstices of thought and speech, appearing in the middle ground of believing that lies between self and other.”²⁰² De Certeau’s God speaks from the eucharistic altar. God offers Christians the infinite space of sign-making. The God breathes with discordant plurality and thus encourages different determinants of faith to keep contesting with each other and yet without suppressing each other.

* * *

By illustrating the sacramental aspect of heterology, this chapter has suggested that the paradox of the divine body is an unconditional invitation for individual Christians at the margins to join the discursive body of Christianity. Once Jesus’ self-emptying at the Passion eradicates any human dominion of the center of the eucharist, it conditions and necessitates human participation, because the body of Christ can be experienced only by human bodies. Heterological sacramentality pushes individual Christians to join Jesus’ self-emptying.

Heterology further suggests that what is important is the process of joining the paradox of the divine body is not the truth claim but the communal space for speaking and writing the body. Heterological sacramentality ensures that the Eucharistic space is governed by a law of “conflict” instead of the validity and legitimacy of given signs. Heterological sacramentality, therefore, anticipates accounts of the body of Christ by recognizing and incorporating a multiplicity of individual narratives at the margins of Christian tradition. Heterological sacramentality acknowledges that those marginalized individuals like Joseph, Mary, and the mystics, even though they lack their own

²⁰² Bauerschmidt, “The Otherness of God,” 359.

ideologies and institutional means, find plenty of opportunities to speak and write about the body of Christ.

For de Certeau, the body of Christ is profoundly important, precisely because it constantly reminds us of the paradoxical nature of the body of Christ that both entices Christian to remember the body and at the same time prohibits them from any attempt to fix the divine in an objective category. As mystical writings evince, the eucharistic body signifies the interminable exercise of its presence and absence. The eucharistic body repeatedly allows believers to suffer together and exchange influences with one another, while it remains unconsumed and unexhausted. The members of Christianity must work together to utilize the powerful effect of the body and take account of the contemporary context on behalf of the body. As de Certeau's tropes of place and space make apparent, it is only through the communal structure and process that the body of Christ comes to be connected with the everyday life of Christians. The eucharistic body is to be looked after and to be pursued by community. This body wants to move, to join numerous bodies and cultures, to stimulate emotion and passion, and translate everything into ambiguity and uncertainty. This body, most of all, makes Christians speak together and find themselves in relationship with others. The Eucharist is a practical form of heterology that connects with the concrete materiality of individual Christians' everyday experiences.

Chapters 1 and 2 have attempted to get rid of all obstacles that prevent weak, or institutionally disconnected, and unheard stories of Christ's body from intervening in the discourse of the body. Together, the two chapters construct a space where Christians with "weak faith" pass by.

Now, in the space that follows, I invite “weak” individuals in—those who write the body of Christ without authority, those who seek authority only through the paradox of the divine body. The next two chapters introduce the writings of those weak Christians. Put in de Certeau’s terminology, the chapters are about “fables” of the body of Christ that reveal how heterological sacramentality works through individual Christians’ acts of writing the body of Christ. The writings I introduce in the chapters are transmitted from the margin of the Christian tradition. They are selected from the myriad of unrecognized and untold stories that have worked on the body.

Chapter Three

The Melancholic Body: Hadewijch of Antwerp

Then He gave Himself to me in the shape of the Sacrament, in its outward form,
 as the custom is;
 and then He gave me to drink from the chalice, in form and taste, as the custom is.
 After that He came Himself to me, took me entirely in His arms, and pressed with
 the desire of my heart and my humanity and all my members felt his in full
 felicity, in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity.

—Hadewijch, *Visions*

Never was so cruel a desert created
 As Love can make in her land!
 For she impels us to long desiringly for her
 And to taste her without knowing her being,
 She shows herself as she takes flight;
 We pursue her, but she remains unseen:
 This makes the miserable heart ever exert itself.

—Hadewijch, *Poems in Stanzas*

This chapter tells *a* fable of the body. It introduces a local reflection on the body of Christ, instead of a universal discourse about the body, composed by a person who lived near the cutting edge of the institutional church in the thirteenth century. It is a story about the medieval poet and mystic Hadewijch's personal accommodation of the body.

We know very little about Hadewijch. What we do know, we gather only from her writings. She wrote in a variety of genres: letters, visions, poems in stanzas, and poems in couplets.²⁰³ Her writing also shows that she was knowledgeable about patristic and

²⁰³ All Hadewijch quotations are taken from the English translation of Hadewijch's works by Mother Columba Hart, O.S.B.: *Hadewijch: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980). For necessary modification, I refer to the original Dutch versions of Hadewijch's works, edited by Jozef van Mierlo, S.J.: *Hadewijch: Visionen*, 2 vols. (Louvain, Belgium: Vlaamsch Boekenhalle, 1924, 1925), *Hadewijch: Strophische Gedichten*, 2 vols. (Antwerp: Standaard, 1942), *Hadewijch: Brieven*, 2 vols. (Antwerp: Standaard, 1947), and *Hadewijch: Mengeldichten* (Antwerp: Standaard, 1952). Hadewijch wrote in four different genres: "visions," "poems in stanzas," "letters," and "poems in couplets" (or "poems in mixed forms"): hereafter cited as *Visions*, *Poems in Stanzas*, *Letters*, and *Poems in Couplets*, each by number and line and the page number of

monastic theologies, Augustine in particular, and also the theologies of Bernard de Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry. She seems to be familiar with chivalry and courtly literature, which suggests that she might have grown up in a noble family. She appears to have been a mistress of a Beguine group and to have had a number of young Beguines under her authority.²⁰⁴ Her audience was, supposedly, a group of young Beguines. She may have composed the *Poems* perhaps for the Beguines to sing in liturgical settings and the *Visions* and *Letters* for their education.²⁰⁵ She wrote her theology and experience of the Eucharist in a variety of genres and languages, including Latin, the vernacular Middle Dutch, and French.²⁰⁶

As with most medieval mystical female writers, Hadewijch makes the Eucharist the center of her religious life. As a member of the Beguines, she had an extraordinary relationship with the body of Christ, for Beguine spirituality was characterized by vigorous desire and devotion toward the sacrament of the Eucharist. The feast of *Corpus Christi*, which contributed to the creation of the cult of the eucharistic body outside the

Hart's translation, for example: (*Visions*, VII.64:72)

²⁰⁴ Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 174–180.

²⁰⁵ Paul Mommaers, *The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2003), 168.

²⁰⁶ Many scholars, particularly feminists, have been intrigued by the emergence of a female voice out of Hadewijch's text. See for example Carolyn Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*; Elizabeth A. Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ulrike Wiethaus, "Sexuality, Gender and Body in Late Medieval Spirituality: Cases from Germany and the Netherlands," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7 (1991): 35–52; Saskia Murk-Jansen, *Brides in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Beguines* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998); Mary Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler, eds., *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). Although feminist scholars have made remarkable contributions to the exploration of female authorities in late-medieval contexts, some scholars demand caution toward the making of such binary oppositions between the institutional church and the female leadership because doing so creates the risk that readers will see only one side of Hadewijch. While built on the feminist portrait of Hadewijch, my research focuses more on the Beguine's unsettled status within the system.

Mass, was initiated by the Beguine Juliana of Cornelio.²⁰⁷ Liège, the birthplace of the feast, is also the birthplace of the Beguine. Hadewijch was one of the Beguines who wished to assume religious rigor, to live a life of poverty and chastity, and most importantly, to devote her life to communion with the eucharistic body of Christ. Although her writing does not record that her eucharistic reception took on dramatic forms like stigmata, bleeding, visions, trances, levitation, and the extreme asceticism common among many of her contemporary female mystics,²⁰⁸ the strong emphasis on the Eucharist is found everywhere in her texts. In one of her letters, she says to young Beguines, “[In the Eucharist] there is greater disproportion between the point of a needle and the whole world with the sea thrown in. One could taste and feel incomparably more fruitfulness from God—as he would rightly experience from him—if he sought him with desirous, loving confidence.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ The feast of Corpus Christ is celebrated in the Latin church on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday to solemnly commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist. St. Juliana of Mont Cornillon was born in 1193 at Retines near Liège. She was educated by the Augustinian nuns of Mont Cornillon. Juliana had a great veneration for the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and she always longed for a special feast in its honor. This desire is said to have been increased by a vision of the church under the appearance of the full moon with one dark spot, which signified the absence of such a solemnity. She made known her ideas to Bishop of Liège, to the learned Dominican Hugh and to Archdeacon of Liège (later became Pope Urban IV). Bishop called a synod in 1246 and ordered the celebration to be held in the following year. The feast was celebrated for the first time by the canons of St. Martin at Liège. The Pope Urban IV ordered the annual celebration of Corpus Christi in the Thursday next after Trinity Sunday, at the same time granting many indulgences to the faithful for the attendance at Mass and at the Office. For more information about the feast of Corpus Christ, see the New Advent website: www.newadvent.org/cathen/05295b.htm (accessed March 2007). For more information about St. Juliana, see Catholic Encyclopedia, available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04390b.htm>, and also Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, *Lives of the Anchoresses: The Rise of the Urban Recluse in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

²⁰⁸ For the reference to these female mystics’ relation with the Eucharist, see Carolyn Bynum, *The Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

²⁰⁹ Hadewijch, *Letters*, XXII.285:100.

Hadewijch's writing both fits and departs from de Certeau's description of the work of the early modern mystics. Her writing is not only a precursor to theirs but also a consequence of the medieval belief in the transubstantiated body of Christ at the altar. Hadewijch's, moreover, demonstrates a specific point of contact with de Certeau's reading of the early modern mystics: an invention of a distinct treatment of the body. By demonstrating a mechanism for dealing with (the loss of) the body in the very midst of the eucharistic symbolic system, Hadewijch's writing illustrates a way to treat the doctrinal forms of the tradition that graphically affect Christian belief. In this way, her presentation of the body suggests a unique way of entering the tradition and of making it amenable to one's own experience. It therefore supplements de Certeau's inquiry into the mystical tradition.

This chapter investigates the distinctiveness of Hadewijch's writing on the body of Christ. Reading classical and contemporary texts alongside Hadewijch's writings, I look at the way Hadewijch incorporates her identity into the body of Christ and constructs her own space to write within and around the eucharistic discourse of her time. In particular, I emphasize two characteristics for understanding Hadewijch's writing subject: its melancholic foundation and its multilingual quality. I argue that these two motifs cooperate with one another, informing the character of Hadewijch's writing subject.

To clarify, any emphasis on Hadewijch's attachment with the Eucharist and the body of Christ should be treated carefully. Many feminist scholars who read medieval women's writings have been concerned with the tendency of other scholars stressing the bodily aspects of these women's spiritualities. According to them, to read medieval

women writers' works as a record of the firsthand experience of the Eucharist could misrepresent them as mouthpieces of God.²¹⁰ As Gordon Rudy points out, such "experimental" interpretation "overlooks the intellectual and formally conceptual contributions of medieval women to theology in its abstract, speculative aspect."²¹¹ Taking the feminist concerns into consideration, I do not claim that the eucharistic significance in Hadewijch's writing is an artifact of her "bodily knowing." Instead, I observe the way in which the Beguine constructs herself as a writer in relation to the Eucharist and shapes her theology through her interaction with the given languages and understandings of the Eucharist in her time.

I begin this chapter by discussing the melancholic foundation of Hadewijch's writings. Referring to Paul Mommaer, I pay special attention to two contrasting aspects of Hadewijch's description of the union with God: *ghebruken* and *ghebreken*. While I connect the two contrasting aspects with the paradoxical nature of the sacrament that I explored in the previous chapter, I also engage with poststructural theorist Judith Butler's notion of melancholy as an interpretative lens to read the contrasting pair of *ghebruken* and *ghebreken*. I argue that melancholy is a foundational disposition in the formation of Hadewijch's writing subject that prepares her to be open and vulnerable to the body.

²¹⁰ Arguing against scholars who argue that Hadewijch's use of somatic languages describes what she actually experiences in the union, Amy Hollywood writes in *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Maguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995) that accounts of holy women written by men often celebrate those women's somatic and highly visible piety, but when the women write for themselves, their writings tend to emphasize theological concepts about God, the nature of Trinity, and the spiritual life of the soul. See, especially, chapter 2; Gordon Rudy also writes in her *Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge) that no narrative self is identical with the author in Hadewijch. Rudy criticizes the tendency to read the writings of medieval women as autobiography, since such "experimental" interpretation "overlooks the intellectual and formally conceptual contributions of medieval women to theology in its abstract, speculative aspect," 73.

²¹¹ Rudy, *Mystical Language*, 73.

Hadewijch's writing subject, which at times appears as the soul or the knight of Love, is a fictional agent in her writing. The mystic's writing subject continues to see herself in relation to Christ's body, to examine the conventional ideas and expressions, and to search out new languages and vocabularies to describe the body.

Secondly, I suggest that Hadewijch's multilingualism, both literally and metaphorically, is a character that distinguishes her writing from the writings of her contemporaries. Her cultural identity as a Beguine, who resides in between the church institution and the lay individual, also effectively enhances her capacity to collect new ideas and vocabularies to describe the body of Christ across different cultures and realms. As a way of calling attention to the particularity of Hadewijch's multilingual subject, I bring examples of linguistic and cultural mixtures in her writings and compare them with the writings that influenced her ideas and languages: the writing of Bernard of Clairvaux and of the hymn of Corpus Christi.

Toward the end of this chapter, I present Hadewijch's writing as a text demonstrating the possibility of adding another vision of otherness to medieval Christianity's representation of Christ's body. In a way that is distinctive from both her contemporaries and the early modern mystics, Hadewijch's writing exemplifies a certain type of Christian life at the margins of the institutional church. Like many of us who experience the body in a manner differently from the representations of the institutional church, she draws us into questions about living at the margins of the institutional religion.

I. Painful Body, Joyful Body

In one of her *Poems in Couplets*, entitled “The Paradoxes of Love” by her editors, Hadewijch sings the joys and pains of being one with Love (*Minne*). For Hadewijch, Love is a name for God, for Christ, and simultaneously for the relation between God/Christ and the soul.²¹² The mystic records that the most intimate union with love is always associated with a loss of the object.

What is sweetest in love is her tempestuousness
 Her deepest abyss is her most beautiful form
 To lose one's way in her is to touch her close at hand
 To die of hunger for her is to feed and taste;
 ...
 Her great wealth bestows pauperism;
 Her largesse proves to be our bankruptcy;
 Her tender care enlarges our wounds;
 Association with her brings death over and over;
 Her table is hunger; her knowledge is error.²¹³

In the poem, a sense of presence, expressed in adjectives such as sweet, beautiful, intimate, and sated, is immediately altered by a sense of absence expressed in contradictory images of tempestuousness, abyss, loss, and hunger. The soul feels the presence of Love intimately; yet she is constantly reminded of the absence of Love lying on the other side of its presence. Hadewijch records the despair of beholding the absence of Love that comes immediately after the tangible experience of its presence. The

²¹² In Middle Dutch, *Minne* is both a noun and a verb designating the nature of the relationship between God and the soul and also the performance between God and the soul. *Minne* also implicates the dynamics of the Triune God. See Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism 1200–1350* (New York: Crossroad, 1998) 201–211; Mommaers, *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2003), 163–189.

²¹³ Hadewijch, *Poems in Couplets*, 344–345.

presence and absence of Love incessantly cross each other and onerously stimulate the soul's desire to chase Love. Hadewijch expresses both ecstatic joys and tormenting pains in her description of the union with Love.

For Hadewijch, union with Love occurs when we become one with Christ through the reception of the Eucharist. The union with Christ at the moment of eating and drinking his body is an intimate exchange between two pieces of flesh. This exchange transposes the soul to unfathomable bliss. Yet the bliss returns to her as an acute loneliness and aching pain after the reception. The soul is left with a grave hunger. Hence, the soul experiences Christ in two successive stages that are mutually inclusive of each other: the joy of experiencing the presence of Christ at the moment of reception and the sorrow of facing his absence immediately following it.

This paradoxical pairing is one of the distinctive figures of Hadewijch's description of the soul's union with Love. Paul Mommaers explains these contrasting aspects of the union by paralleling the two words Hadewijch repeatedly uses: *ghebruken* and *ghebreken*.²¹⁴ According to Mommaers, *ghebruken* and *ghebreken* are two intrinsic and inseparable moments of Hadewijch's understanding of the union.²¹⁵ *Ghebruken* is translated as "to have fruition," "to enjoy" or to "possess,"²¹⁶ whereas *ghebreken* signifies "to fail" or "to fall short" "to miss" or "to lack."²¹⁷ In the state of *ghebruken*, the soul feels the fullness of the presence of Love. *Ghebruken* is an intense presence that

²¹⁴ Mommaers, *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience*, 102.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 171–172.

²¹⁶ "enjoyment" (*ghebruken*); "to have fruition of him in unity" (*sijns te ghebrukene in enechiden*); "you desire to possess (*ghebrukene*) me." *Visions*, I.1:288.

²¹⁷ "[T]he experience of being lost in the fruition of Love" (*verlorenheit van ghebruken*); "the suffering of being deprived of this fruition" (*passion van ghebrekene dies ghebrukens*). Hadewijch, *Letters*, XXIX.61:115. See citation from Mommaers, *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience*, 110.

completely shatters the soul as soon as she is touched by Love. The soul feels so close to Love that she “holds” and “possesses” it. However, the intimate experience of Love disappears soon. What follows *ghebruken* is *ghebreken*, the opposite side of the bliss. In the state of *ghebreken*, the soul falls into despair and feels destitute of all the joys of fruition. *Ghebruken* and *ghebreken* are contradictory emotional and spiritual qualities. In Hadewijch’s writing, the two are complementary and reciprocally interconnected.

Mommaers adds:

However strong and permanent the contrast between *ghebruken* and *ghebreken*, they complement each other intrinsically. Far from indicating a succession of exaltation and depression, or a construction made up of loose component elements, these opposites appear as interacting elements of an organic unity. For Hadewijch there can be no ‘enjoying’ independent of ‘failing,’ and ‘failing’ is essentially connected with ‘enjoying.’ Moreover, these two contrary feelings intensify each other within the mystic’s single experience of the being-one.²¹⁸

Hadewijch’s description of the paradoxical state of union indicates the eucharistic foundation of her spirituality. The overriding somatic expressions that always come with the pairing of *ghebruken* and *ghebreken* suggest that the union is more than a visionary perception.²¹⁹ Visionary images are “mediated knowledge” that require mental “means” to perceive them.²²⁰ *Ghebruken* and *ghebreken*, however, describe the states in which the soul is affected by the immediate perception and experience of Love. Such a Love touches the mystic without any intermediaries. For Hadewijch, the union with Love is not the elevation of the soul detached from the body. The paradoxical pairing involves a sense of touching, tasting, and eating. To be one with Love, she writes, is “to understand

²¹⁸ Mommaers, *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience*, 171–172.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* In *The Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2002), Gordon Rudy analyzes the use of somatic and immediate languages in Hadewijch’s mystical knowing.

and *taste* [Christ] to the full.” She desires that “his Humanity should to the fullest extent be one in fruition (*sine menscheit ghebrukelekee*) with her.”²²¹

Hadewijch’s frequent adaptation of gustatory metaphors for describing this union also fits with the ritual of the Eucharist.²²² Poem 16 of *Poems in Couplets* explicitly articulates the resonance between Hadewijch’s paradoxical pairing and her understanding of the paradox between the presence and absence of Christ in the Eucharist:

This is the chain that binds all in union,
So that each knows the other thoroughly and through
In the anguish or the repose or the madness of Love,
And eats his flesh and drinks his blood:
The heart of each thoroughly devours the other’s heart,
One soul assaults the other and invades it completely,
As he who is Love itself showed us
When he gave us himself to eat,
Disconcerting all the thoughts of man.²²³

The reciprocity of love between the soul and Christ is completed only by the soul’s and Christ’s acts of sharing bodies with each other in the Eucharist. This highly sensual and, in a way even violent, expression of exchanging bodies suggests that the mystic understands the union as both a physical and spiritual oneness, a state that can be explained only by the peculiar logic of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. Christ gives the

²²¹ Hadewijch, *Visions*, I.56:48, emphasis added.

²²² The significance of the Eucharist in Hadewijch’s writing has been highlighted by Carolyn Bynum’s studies of the relationship between food and medieval women writers. While stressing Hadewijch’s Christ-centered spirituality, suggested by Hadewijch scholars Mommaers and J. Reynaert, Bynum further argues that what Hadewijch means by “union” is the union with Christ at the Eucharist. Bynum’s emphasis on the relationship between the Eucharist and medieval women writers has been criticized by feminist writers who say that Bynum portrays medieval women as mere passive mouthpieces of God in her concentration on the bodily aspects of women’s spirituality. Although Hadewijch’s Trinitarian theology more articulately reveals her distinctiveness as a theologian, the criticism is legitimate. Bynum reads Hadewijch’s exposition of the union this way as well. Hadewijch repeatedly writes that to be one with Love is to be like “him,” to follow the noble serves and suffering of the human Christ. She hears Christ saying in Vision 1: “If you wish to be like me in my Humanity . . . you will desire to be poor, miserable, and despised by all men.”

²²³ Hadewijch, *Poems in Couplets*, XVI:27–37:353.

mystic both his divinity and humanity through the Eucharist and lets her consume it.

Through “eating” Christ, she is eaten by Him. By eating each other’s bodies, “the heart of each devours the other’s heart. One soul assaults the other and invades it completely.”²²⁴

The contradictory poles of *ghebruken* and *ghebreken* match with the paradoxical mode of Christ’s sacramental presence. Just like *ghebruken* and *ghebreken* cannot exist without their opposites, presence and absence are inseparable modes of experiencing Christ on the altar. *Ghebruken* is the state of Christ’s presence. In the state of *ghebruken*, the soul consumes the humanity of Christ by eating and drinking the consecrated bread and wine. *Ghebruken* is achieved as the soul “relishes [*smakene*],” “devours [*etene*],” “drinks [*drinckene*]” and “swallows [*verswelghene*]” Christ. Meanwhile, *ghebreken* is a state of absence. *Ghebreken* is an aching pain. It is the soul’s suffering, initiated by her experience of the absence of Christ’s body in the Eucharist. The soul finds it impossible to own Christ even if she eats his body. The more she eats the body, the more she feels hungry. No matter how real the soul feels the body in the Eucharist, she is left with even greater hunger. The Eucharist draws her into a sensible experience of pleasure, the vision of making love with Him, and yet it gives her the harshest pain and most unbearable suffering. The tangible feeling of intimacy is followed by a dreadful distance. Hadewijch writes, “We cannot come at what we wish to know or enjoy what we desire; that increases our hunger over and over.”²²⁵ The presence of Christ’s body does not promise consolation, certitude, and peace in the mystic’s heart. The union with Love is, for Hadewijch, like a “terrible and implacable” hunger that she cannot predict from moment

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Hadewijch, *Poems in Stanzas*, XXXIII.40:223.

to moment.²²⁶ At the moment when she is assured by the promise of love, she is frightened by threats of loneliness. Love, the Humanity of Christ, remains unattainable.

II. Hadewijch the Melancholic: Insights from Judith Butler

The ambivalence of Christ's presence makes the mystic feel anxious and unstable. Her attempts to hold Christ only fall apart. Her spiritual life fluctuates up and down.

Hadewijch is forced to come to terms with that one and the same Love that "lifts her up into fruition [*ghebruken*] only to strike her down again into wanting [*ghebreken*]." ²²⁷ This troubled and precarious state of mind seems severe for the mystic who cannot give up seeking with her whole soul and body for a holistic union with her love. Hadewijch, however, chooses to cope with this tenuousness by eating the body of Christ through the Eucharist, and thus identifying herself with God. The mechanism of Hadewijch's management of the loss resonates with a symptom of melancholy.²²⁸ In what follows, I juxtapose the melancholic sentiment in Hadewijch's writing and Judith Butler's theory of melancholy. The Butlerian reading of melancholy suggests an insight into a formative aspect of Hadewijch's melancholic disposition.

As seen in her overriding use of paradoxical pairings to describe union, Hadewijch seems to know precisely the hardship of living in such a relentless state. Crossing and re-crossing between extreme pleasure and deadly despair, her writing expresses the restlessness of her spirituality. To be distrustful about the presence of Love

²²⁶ Hadewijch, *Visions*, XI.121:291.

²²⁷ Mommaers, *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience*, 129.

²²⁸ Admittedly, my attempt to read Hadewijch's writing with reference to modern psychological terms could misrepresent the historical significance of Hadewijch's works for the readers who expect a historically situated reading.

is an unbearable pain that even exceeds the ecstatic bliss of the union. Hadewijch thus writes that the highest name for the pain of living without Love is, to express it truly appropriately, “Hell.”²²⁹ However, the mystic looks for a way to stay with the pain, without losing the memory of the presence. Hadewijch chooses to deny absence as a total loss. Instead of letting the pain go and seeking a stable state from which to manage the loss, she decides to bear the pain that comes along with her memory of the Christ. The mystic develops a unique mechanism in dealing with this dichotomy between pleasure and pain. Determined to eat Christ’s body, which is the resource of both joy and suffering, she incorporates the dichotomy into her bodily ego.

She repeatedly returns to the Eucharist, because the Eucharist perpetuates an ambivalent state. The Eucharist is the place where Hadewijch can conjure the presence of Christ, if only in absence. She knows that the final rest of the soul, the full and perfect satisfaction in *ghebruken* is impossible in this life, yet she also knows that the union is tasted only by the momentary encounter with the humanity of Christ in the Eucharist. The expressions Hadewijch adapts to describe the eucharistic union manifest the state of her mind. Once the soul internalizes the body of Christ into herself through the Eucharist, she is other than herself. She sees the body of Christ “completely come to nought and so fade and all at once dissolve.” She “could no longer distinguish him within [her].”²³⁰ The act of “eating” Christ’s body is the act of mutual engulfing and “dissolving” that takes Christ inwardly into her bodily ego.

The mystic’s way of dealing with loss resonates with Judith Butler’s notion of melancholy. The connection between Butlerian melancholy and medieval women writers

²²⁹ Hadewijch, *Pomes in Stanzas*, XVI.149: 356.

²³⁰ Hadewijch, *Visions*, VII. 64: 281–282.

has already been suggested by Amy Hollywood. In *Sensible Ecstasy*, Hollywood employs Butler's subject formation theory to interpret the case of medieval women mystics' attachments with the cross of Christ.²³¹ By associating melancholic identification with these mystics' obsession with the cross, Hollywood opens a new way to interpret medieval women's idiosyncratic psychological behavior. She suggests that the mystics' psychological symptoms are a form of bodily practice by which they integrate the pain of Christ into their ego and therefore repeat Christ's suffering on earth. While I build upon Hollywood's Butlerian reading of medieval women mystics, I believe that Hadewijch's writings display a further nurturing aspect of melancholy. While making Hadewijch's writing subject vulnerable to Christ, melancholy also shapes her to be constantly moving, searching, and growing toward Christ.

Although the issue for Butler was not Christ's body but same-sex desire in gendered society, she provides an alternative way to read Freudian melancholy as a symptom that appears in the formation of subjectivity. Melancholy, as originally suggested by Freud, results when a subject is unaware of what she has lost in the loss of the other and is unable to cope with the pain and anger.²³² In his essay "Mourning and Melancholy," Freud recognizes two different types of responses to loss—mourning [*Trauer*] and melancholia [*Melancholie*]. Both mourning and melancholia begin with a denial of the loss of their beloved. However, whereas the mourner soon enough realizes the call of reality and lets go of the lost object, the melancholic remains sunk in her loss, unable to accept it. The melancholic, in a self-destructive loyalty to the object,

²³¹ Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, the Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 261–270.

²³² Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholy," *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 584–589.

internalizes the lost object into her ego. The lost object continues to exist as a part of the subject. The melancholy is no longer able to define clearly the border between herself and the lost object that becomes part of herself.

Butler challenges the Freudian distinction between mourning and melancholy. In Freud, melancholy is perceived as a pathological process of dealing with loss. Freud suggests that, unlike a person in the normal process of mourning, the melancholic unconsciously feels profound anger and hatred for that which she has lost.²³³ Because she cannot overcome the guilt of losing her beloved, Freud's melancholic stays in a delusional state in which she thinks she deserves the pain. Butler thinks that the melancholic obsession with the lost object is not merely a failure to overcome the loss. Instead, the melancholic's attachment of the lost other shows that the clean-cut distinction between the subject and the other remains impossible in formation of subjectivity. Whereas Freud considers the internalization of the lost object to be the symptom of mental illness, Butler values this psychic preserve as the key to shatter the rigid boundary between the self and other. For Butler, what initially characterizes melancholy is not a mental illness but ethical consciousness related with the subject's severe guilt and inability to separate herself from the other. Melancholy prevents the self from declaring the loss, and consequently, the indirection of intensive morality emerges and leaves its trace in the subject's voice of conscience. Butler argues that this voice of

²³³ In his later writing "The Ego and the Id," Freud corrects his own view. In this article, Freud describes all ego formation as a melancholic structure. He writes, "the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and . . . it contains the history of those object-choices," Freud, "The Ego and the Id," *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay; Butler pushes Freud's self-corrector forward. While Freud argues that a melancholic structure is established because the infant is forced to give up his or her desire for his or her parents in order to respond to the taboo against incest, Butler argues that the taboo against incest is preceded by the taboo against homosexuality. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 63.

conscience is a reminder that the self is always formed in relation to others.

In her critical inquiry into the process of subject formation, Butler argues that all stable gender identities are melancholic, founded on a forbidden desire toward the same-sex parent.²³⁴ Prohibited by heterosexual culture, the original homosexual attachments to the same-sex parent must be lost. Yet the subject cannot let her loved object go. As the subject “postpones the recognition and suffering of loss,” the lost other “stays” as part of the ego.²³⁵ The inability to declare such a loss, paradoxically, is to refuse the loss as a complete loss. If the lost other can no longer exist in the external world, it will then exist internally.²³⁶ The complaints and intensive guilt toward the same-sex parent are absorbed into the subject’s body and internalized into her ego. Melancholy therefore denotes a condition of interminable self-impoverishment. The subject’s homosexual desire is then grieved by being cloaked inside her, constituting the disavowed ground of gendered identity.²³⁷ In this respect, Butler argues, a subject is the product of a complex play of desires that never settles down but opens the condition of vulnerability to others. From its start, the subject is other than itself. It is a site of “desire and physical vulnerability,” a “site of publicity at once assertive and exposed.”²³⁸ For Butler, the account of melancholy is an “account of how psychic and social domains are produced in relation to one another.”²³⁹ As the ambivalent state of melancholy keeps the subject unable to declare the loss, her complaints and the intensive guilt are internalized and leave their traces in the

²³⁴ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 63.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press), 135.

²³⁸ Butler, *Prearious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2006), 20.

²³⁹ Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, 167.

subject's conscience.²⁴⁰ In doing so, melancholy precedes a subtle but heightened state of mind through which we can examine our interdependences with others:

If I do not always know what seizes me on such occasions, and if I do not always know what it is in another person that I have lost, it may be that this sphere of dispossession is precisely the one that exposes my unknowingness, the unconscious imprint of my primary sociality.²⁴¹

Just like the melancholic who for Butler denies the loss and instead embodies the lost other in her ego, so too the soul in Hadewijch's writing denies the absence of Christ's body. The loss of the concrete presence of God bitterly torments the soul, but she cannot admit the loss as final. Instead, she chooses to stay with the pain. She is determined to eat his body. By incorporating Christ into her ego, she stays with the lost body. The soul falls into melancholy. Unlike the mourner, who recognizes the call of reality and eventually lets the lost object go, the soul remains sunk in her loss. But once she internalizes the body of Christ by partaking of the Eucharist, the soul is other than herself. In a description of her union with God in the eucharistic reception, Hadewijch writes that Christ and the soul are mixed with one another and become inseparable:

They penetrate each other in such a way that neither of the two distinguishes himself from the other. But they abide in one another in fruition, mouth in mouth, heart in heart, body in body, soul in soul.²⁴²

The inability to acknowledge such a loss, paradoxically, allows her to absorb the loss into the ego. The lost object continues to exist in her as a part of the subject, who can no longer clearly define the borders between her own self and the existence of the lost object within it. Instead of accepting the loss, Hadewijch is convinced that the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 196.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 20.

²⁴² Hadewijch, *Letters*, IV.4: 66.

contradictory poles of joy and sorrow are both created by Love. *Ghebruken* and *ghebreken* are one and the same. She writes, “Inseparable satiety and hunger are the appendage of lavish love.”²⁴³

The truest bliss is thereby gained through the pain of desire that increases her hunger, since the pain is the way she feels most intensely the existence of Christ inside her. She takes *ghebreken* not as a destructive feeling that empties her of the fruition of *ghebruken*. *Ghebreken* is, instead, a “demand (*eysschen*)” of Love that awakens a “violent longing” in the soul.²⁴⁴ The deeper the soul falls into *ghebreken*, the more she hungers toward *ghebruken*. The two poles of experiencing Love are two aspects of one single relation to Love, both parts of the union. She states, “With this unity in love I have felt constantly, since then, the experience of being lost in the fruition of Love and the suffering of being deprived of this fruition (*passien van ghebrekene dies ghebrukens*).”²⁴⁵ Therefore the mystic declares, “No matter how Love has disappointed me, I must yet follow her; for she has utterly engulfed my soul, from the depth of my heart.”²⁴⁶

For the soul in Hadewijch’s writing, it is the horrible loneliness that she senses in both flames and shadows that awakens her to God’s love. It is in the bottomless melancholy that the soul recognizes her lost other *alive* within her. Despite the unrequited love, the soul wants to keep the painful longing that returns over and over. For once she is touched by the love of God, she cannot cut off the “holy affliction,” and her hunger for love increases without satisfaction. She is always co-existent with Christ. The body of Christ is preserved in the mystic’s spirituality and continues to haunt her as a psychic

²⁴³ Hadewijch, *Poems in Stanzas*, XXXIII.22:222.

²⁴⁴ Hadewijch, *Poems in Stanzas*, VII.60:146.

²⁴⁵ Hadewijch, *Letters*, XXIX.61:115.

²⁴⁶ Hadewijch, *Poems in Stanzas*, XXX.75:215.

voice, ringing in her ears: “You are all mine, Beloved, and I am all yours.”²⁴⁷ By retaining Christ within herself, she is placed in a state of indeterminacy in defining herself. The ambivalent mode of Christ’s body in the Eucharist robs her of herself. She writes, “I am not mine; [Love] has engulfed the substance of my spirit.”²⁴⁸ If the pain of feeling absence is the way she can feel closer to the presence, she cannot let it go. His absence is an evident reminder of his presence. She stays with it.

A Butlerian interpretation of melancholy applies to the soul’s depleted condition. The soul turns melancholy from self-destructive rage to a point where she realizes that she is always in relation with Christ’s body. This keeps her alive to desire and attentive to the search for new experiences of Christ. At the price of giving up constituting a self-determining subject, Hadewijch remains vulnerable to Christ. The uncertainty and precariousness of melancholy render some chances of altering the fixity of self.

Melancholy, ironically, becomes nourishment for the mystic. The body of Christ, the internalized lost other, occupies a primary role in the formation of Hadewijch’s writing subject, which no longer belongs to either subject or object, since the two are now intrinsically confused. The body of Christ accentuates the mystic’s desire to hold the memory of tangible presence, without ever allowing her to attain it. Hadewijch aims for destination that she cannot reach. By keeping the mystic mindful of the ambivalence, melancholy draws her writing subject into a process of perpetual searching. Melancholy operates in the mystic as a heightened reminder of the demand to look for the other and to question her identity. Hadewijch’s writing results from this confusion and constant

²⁴⁷ Cf. Song of Songs, 2:16, Hadewijch cites the passage in her *Poems in Stanzas*, XIII.50:161; *Poems in Stanzas*, XXV.9–10:196; *Poems in Stanzas*, XXXIV.47:225.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

struggle. Melancholy shapes the distinctiveness of Hadewijch's language and writing style, as it cooperates with the mystic's social location.

III. Constitution of Hadewijch's Writing Subject: Multilingualism

The melancholic way of dealing with the loss of the body is hardly exclusive to Hadewijch. As we have already discussed, it is symptomatic of the Christian tradition in many different ways. Mystics, whether in the Middle Ages or the early modern period, are those who have an extraordinary sensitivity to the lost body. They are haunted by the lost body. They are forerunners of the writers inscribed in the heterological tradition. With the inability to declare the loss of Christ's body, some of these mystics experience an identity crisis. Pressed by an unstable and relentless state of mind, they look for new ways of identifying themselves. For them, the reference point is, unlike most others, the absence of the body of Christ. As their reference point always speaks of a lack, they are sent into a perpetual search. They are destined to be journeyers. They are both committed to find a new language and style for the lost body.

This is the condition of mystical discourse that Hadewijch shares with early modern mystics. Yet though Hadewijch shares the same purpose and the same destiny with the early moderns, her ways of managing the conflict with her surrounding social circumstances differ markedly. The contrast between Hadewijch and the early modern mystics is first notable in their relative social positions. The early modern mystics had to struggle with an impoverished social status. They were isolated from both secular society and the institutional church. They were "locked within the confines of a 'nothing.'"²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota,

They had “nothing left but present exile.”²⁵⁰ The early modern mystics, thus, began by creating an imaginary space where God spoke to them. Their writing was the apparatus of this imaginary space. To the contrary, Hadewijch was a Beguine. Unlike those modern mystics who rely solely on their isolated bodies and writings in order to speak about the body, the Beguine Hadewijch had to manage conflicting constructions imposed upon her by her society and the institutional church. Her social position as Beguine, in many ways, was fluctuating and undetermined.

The Beguines lived in a contact zone in which several different cultures intersected.²⁵¹ On the one hand, they kept a relation with the church institutions filled with clerics and masters of school; and on the other hand, they worked for the laity and exchanged influences with independent spiritual movements. They were ultimately supported and sanctioned by established religious orders like the Cistercians and the Dominicans, and yet they were not an adjunct to any of these orders, nor were they approved as an independent order.²⁵² They shared with the mendicant orders the ideals of poverty and chastity, and yet they also exchanged influences with lay spiritual movements. They were knowledgeable about Latin theology and had a limited teaching authority over the laity, yet they were also familiar with courtly literature and remained in

1986), 85.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 174–180. Many religious groups, for example, the Waldensians, Lollards, Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit, Spiritual Franciscans, Albigensians, and Joachimites, sprang up at about the same time as the Beguines.

²⁵² Various kinds of religious movements in the later Middle Ages attracted a number of lay Christians. Women were able to contact and participate in these movements more than any other time in the past. There were many kinds of pious women in later medieval Europe: Canonesses, nuns of old and new orders, Beguines, tertiaries, recluses, Cathars, Waldensians, pilgrims, ordinary laywomen in shops and kitchens. Since reading and studying scripture was limited to lay Christians, eucharistic devotion took an important place in their religious practice. See *Caroline Bynum*, 23–30.

contact with the vernacular tradition. The liminality of Beguine life resulted in two different images of Beguines: the ecclesiastic bigwig or the devious heretic.

Their unusual relationship with the eucharistic liturgy, moreover, made their social position more complicated. As they took the Eucharist as the heart of their religious practice, they had to comply with the clerics. Inevitably, the Eucharist kept Beguines in the contact zone where sets of oppositions crossed each other, causing the Beguines' cultural identity to drift between the ecclesiastical office and the laity, the monastic and the independent spiritual, the Latin and the vernacular culture, constantly clashing and negotiating with them.²⁵³

De Certeau's metaphor of "the medieval transcriber and the Renaissance translator" in *The Mystic Fable* is helpful for describing Hadewijch's contrast to the early modern mystics. De Certeau adapts the metaphor in order to explain the condition of writing for modern mystics that had been changed from that of the Middle Ages:

[T]he copyist transformed his body into the spoken word of the other; he imitated and incarnated the text into a liturgy of reproduction. Simultaneously, he gave body to the verb (*verbum caro factum est*) and made the verb into his own body (*hoc est corpus meum*) in a process of assimilation that eliminated difference, to

²⁵³ The relationship between the Beguines and the church was ambivalent. Though the Fourth Lateran Council prohibited the establishment of any new religious orders, the Beguines were allowed to continue for the sake of Jacques of Vitry's appeal. Even though the Beguines strongly supported the ecclesiastical needs most of the time and were considered as a "bulwark against heresy," their spiritual zeal often overwhelmed the church and caused conflicts with the authorities. Their status in relation to the institutional church ranged from independent spiritual movement to co-optation by the church authorities—though they were never actually acknowledged as an established order. Eventually, Hadewijch was named heretic in the Council of Vienne (1311–1312). In the years following, the Beguines had their property confiscated and were forced to marry. In 1421, Pope Martin V ordered the archbishop of Cologne to search out and destroy any small convents of persons living under the cloak of religion without a definite Rule. By this time, beguinages were already poorhouses, not busying themselves with theological concerns. Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 173–75; Ernest W. McDonnell, *Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 6, 37, 67, 159, 479, and 573; Robert Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

make way for the sacrament of the copy. The translator, who sometimes also exercised the profession of printer or typesetter, was an operator of differentiation . . . The transcriber and the translator had the same reckless devotion, but the former more contemplatively, in a rite of identification, and the latter more ethically, in the production of otherness.²⁵⁴

The task of the medieval transcriber was to dictate, to imitate and to reproduce what he was told, what he was given. The apparatus was given; his body followed the rule of the system. He gave his body to the given apparatus and incarnated it as a text. To the contrary, the task of the Renaissance translator began with an imaginative space in which the word alone spoke. The translator had “none but that of the other.” De Certeau argues that the history of mystics converted the transcriber into this translator.

Hadewijch’s writings show the transition between the two. Hadewijch has double tasks: She needs not only to construct a new space but also to communicate through given constructions. She needs to rely on the doctrinal and institutional languages already established around the body; however, in writing her personal encounter with the body, she is not able to find appropriate languages in the institution. She must create a new space for the body beyond the domain of given language. As far as she writes about the body, she inevitably shares the estate with the church institution in which it claims the “ownership” of the body.

Disposed to melancholy and also stationed in a liminal zone, Hadewijch’s writing subject is not a determined inhabitant but a journeyer in search. She is, using Julia Kristeva’s terminology, a “subject-in-process.” Taking her own experiences as a resource to counter the established ideas and languages of the Eucharist, Hadewijch constantly calls into question the given system and troubles institutional attempts at totalizing the eucharistic worldview. She seeks new languages that express a potential for alteration.

²⁵⁴ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 119.

One of the important aspects of Hadewijch's writing of the body is the inception of multilingualism initiated by herself and her contemporary vernacular mystics. Her multilingualism is a conspicuous example of a language experiment resulting from such a confounded and indeterminate condition. The interaction of multiple languages reflects the mystic's attempt to form her identity in relation to others, and it also loosens binary oppositions set within and around the eucharistic system. Hadewijch's multilingualism is evident in three examples of language interaction: the literal assimilation of Latin and vernacular Middle Dutch, the access to multiple resources that help her claim distinct authorship, and a metaphorical multilingualism manifested through the assimilation of monastic bridal mysticism and the courtly genre *Minnesang*.

i. *Latin Meets the Vernacular*

The interplay of Latin and the vernacular Middle Dutch is the most remarkable language experiment Hadewijch performs in her writing. While she uses Middle Dutch for the basic syntax of her writing, she adopts Latin vocabularies for describing the eucharistic elements and the theological aspects of the liturgy. Consequently, the interaction between Latin and Middle Dutch occurs not only literally but also metaphorically. Her adaptation of the two languages is extended to the adaptation of the cultures to which each language belongs.²⁵⁵

In the thirteenth century, Latin and Middle Dutch represented different cultures. Latin pervaded a mostly male dominant elite world, as it possessed distinct advantages

²⁵⁵ She seems also to have been familiar with French and Provençal. Paul Mommaers and Elisabeth M. Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2004), 8.

for representing sacrality, scholastic precision, homogeneity, cultural universality, and the consistency between past and present. However, the strict regulation set in “inherited models of linguistic propriety that made innovation difficult” was a drawback of Latin.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Middle Dutch was favored by the vernacular world. It possessed an ability to touch on the area of everyday life.²⁵⁷ New styles and the variety of cultural and emotional purports were the privilege of Middle Dutch.

Hadewijch seems to have been fluent in both languages and aware of the strength and weakness of each. Her struggle in recording and composing her visions and poems hardly seems to be caused by her lack of the mastery of the Latin language or dissatisfaction with any intellectual deficiency of Dutch. She was, instead, frustrated by the ineffableness of her experiences and ideas, for which she found no single language perfect enough to deliver. For Hadewijch, the Eucharist is a complex act that requires spiritual, emotional, and physical engagement. It is an act of eating, of unmediated bodily contact with her lover, and of intimate emotional exchange, and eventually of becoming one with God. Any human language is hardly appropriate to deliver the mystery of the Eucharist. She writes:

[W]ords enough and Dutch enough can be found for all things on earth, but I do not know any Dutch or any words that answer my purpose. Although I can express everything insofar as this is possible for a human being, no Dutch can be found for all I have said to you, since none exists to express these things, so far as I know.²⁵⁸

In order to express the amazing things she has seen, experienced, and pondered, the mystic has to apply all the languages that she knows. Tellingly, against norms and

²⁵⁶ McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 19.

²⁵⁷ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 69–70.

²⁵⁸ Hadewijch, *Letters*, XVII.112:84.

conventions, Hadewijch gives priority to her mother tongue Middle Dutch. Then she employs Latin to assist, frequently using Latin words and translating Latin texts into the vernacular language. Thus Hadewijch's writing about the Eucharist contains an innovative trait in which the languages and ideas are mixed and confused with one another.

Hadewijch's bilingualism is profuse both in a literal and metaphorical sense. In her writing, the intellectual quality of Latin language becomes mixed with the liveliness and emotional richness of Dutch. The Latin provides the vernacular with a conceptual tool, and the vernacular language offers the Latin language different linguistic matrices.²⁵⁹ Besides providing a set of technical terms, Latin also functioned to draw Dutch into the realm of intellectual discussion by revealing the capacity and necessity of the vernacular in dealing with spiritual matters. The mixture of the two languages gives birth to an understanding of the body of Christ that was not bound to the professional schools or to the cloister, nor limited to the "vulgar" expression of courtly love or vernacular life. Hadewijch's bilingualism modifies the way in which both Latin and Middle Dutch were used and shatters the limit of each other.

Hadewijch's writing about her vision on Pentecost Sunday shows the effects of language interactions. The scene of miraculous conversion is an outstanding example that demonstrates how powerfully this language assimilation could bring different perceptions of the Eucharist. Below are both the original Dutch version of the vision and the English translation:

²⁵⁹ McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 19.

Doe gaf hi mi hem seluen in specien des sacraments in figuren alsoe men pleghet
 [Then He gave Himself to me in the shape of the Sacrament, in its outward form,
 as the custom is];

Ende daer na gaf hi mi drinken vten kelke ghedane ende smake alsoe me pleghet
 [And then He gave me to drink from the chalice, in form and taste, as the custom
 is].

*Daer na quam hi selue te mi, ende nam mi alte male in sine arme ende dwanc mi
 ane heme; ende alle die lede die ic hadde gheuoelden der siere in alle hare
 ghenoeghen na miere herten begherten na miere menscheit*
 [After that He came Himself to me, took me entirely in His arms, and pressed
 with the desire of my heart and my humanity and all my members felt his in full
 felicity, in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity].²⁶⁰

The linguistic construction of this vision shows Hadewijch's non-hierarchical way of adopting different languages and cultures for making new theological expressions.

Middle Dutch builds the basics of each sentence, and Latin is used for the conceptual nouns. Latin words such as "*specien*," "*sacraments*" and "*figuren*" pointedly connect the reader to the familiar signs and symbols of eucharistic theology constructed by Latin theology. However, the emotional profusion of the vernacular language, which sustains the Latin nouns, evokes a new tension in understanding the nature of the eucharistic union. In other words, the two languages exchange influences with each other and cooperate to create unexpected effects. By combining the technical vocabularies of the Latin language and the emotional fertility of the vernacular language for the body of Christ, the theology of the Eucharist brings new images. In this eucharistic theology, the bodily and sensual aspects of spirituality are included. The intervention of the vernacular language into a place filled with Latin theology blurs the boundaries between the sacred and secular. It also gives Hadewijch the authority to present another understanding of the body of Christ. Hadewijch's experiment with languages demonstrates that theological

²⁶⁰ Hadewijch, *Visions*, VII.64: 281.

deliberation about the Eucharist requires scientific accuracy, emotional profundity, and spiritual rumination.

ii. *Spiritual Authority Meets Intellectual Credence*

Hadewijch's innovative and experimental use of language also gave her access to the multiple resources of different cultural locations. While Latin language and theology provided Hadewijch a credibility with which to step into the realm of sacrality and allowed her to deal with theological matters, Dutch provided her with the ability to find new expressions for the body that surpassed institutional confinement. Put in a different way, Latin grants her communicability with "*auctoritas ex officio*," the official clerical authority sanctioned by the institutional church. The vernacular language furnishes her with the expression of the "*auctoritas ex gratia*," the authority on the basis of divine grace of women and lay people that is often accompanied by visions and supernatural experiences.²⁶¹ Hadewijch's proficiency in both languages seems to help her to perform those different authoritative roles.

Hadewijch's vision on a Pentecost Sunday is an example. The vision shows Hadewijch's confidence in speaking through multiple authorities. It also demonstrates the challenge her writing poses toward the clerical privilege embedded in the traditional eucharistic liturgy. The vision describes Jesus as a celebrant of the Eucharist and the altar space as a private room that allows her, exclusively, to enter:

Then he came from the altar, showing himself as a Child; and that Child was in the same form as he was in his first three years. He turned toward me, in his right

²⁶¹ Veerle Fraeters, introduction to Mommaers and Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2004), V.

hand took from the ciborium his Body, and in his left hand took a chalice, which seemed to come from the altar, but I do not know where it came from. With that he came in the form and clothing of a Man, as he was on the day when he gave us his Body for the first time.²⁶²

The child Jesus appears to be taking from the ciborium his own body in his right hand and a chalice in his left hand. Without the aid of a priest, the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ happens in an instant. Hadewijch attributes the miracle of conversion solely to God. The child Jesus suddenly changes his form and clothing into that of a young man, as if “on the day when he gave his body for the first time.”²⁶³ Then, the ritual of the Eucharist changes into Hadewijch’s personal encounter with Christ, and the liturgical setting of the ritual transforms into a room as if for courtly love. The Eucharist is prepared only for Hadewijch’s private encounter with Jesus and is guarded from any intervention besides Jesus’. Astonished by the beauty of the young man Christ, the mystic approaches him. The altar space now is secretly kept for the lovers to exchange their bodies and desires.

Hadewijch’s presentation of Christ as the sole celebrant and a lover is provocative if we consider the hierarchical constitution of the eucharistic liturgy in her time. During the later Middle Ages, the distance between the clergy and the laity significantly grew, as the education of clergy became much more privileged. The liturgy of the Eucharist engendered clerical power as it was linked to the priest’s sole authority to administer the liturgy.²⁶⁴ Accordingly, the laity was left to silent meditation on the awesome spectacle or to restricted ways of paralinguistic responses.²⁶⁵ The priests were seen as if “another

²⁶² Hadewijch, *Visions*, VII, 64: 281.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 85–87.

²⁶⁵ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and the Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell), 214.

Christ” in their exclusive control of each and every area of the *ecclesia*.²⁶⁶ Within this confined setting, Hadewijch provides, quite boldly, an “alternative meditation of Jesus Christ” through her vision.²⁶⁷ Hadewijch’s vision is a remarkable example that shows how the Eucharist grants an individual an authority to speak about divine matters, and also how an individual who does not possess institution and ideology can work through the indeterminate nature of the eucharistic mystery. The Eucharist allows her to speak with irrefutable authority. Her God-given visions give her, as Mommaers puts it, “a confirmation and legitimation” of authority.²⁶⁸

We can compare Hadewijch’s writings about the body with some literature that reflects a more popular and conventional understanding of the body of Christ in her time. The hymn of the Mass of Corpus Christi can be a good example. The liturgy of Corpus Christi is an office significant in the eucharistic literature, offering an understanding of the nature of the Eucharist officially sanctioned by the church and spread widely throughout Europe since the thirteenth century.²⁶⁹ The hymns were composed and used as public settings for the purpose of celebrating the feast of Corpus Christi. The authorship of the office of the Corpus Christi feast still is arguable, though many scholars attribute it to Thomas Aquinas. The question of the authorship is not the scope of my discussion.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Carolyn Bynum also argues for the authority of the women mystics. See Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies of Spirituality in the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 16–21, 247–63. The innovative suggestion of a mediator for the Eucharist other than a cleric is shown in a number of records of women visionaries in the Middle Ages.

²⁶⁷ Shawn Madigan, ed., *Mystics, Visionaries, and Prophets: A Historical Anthology of Women’s Spiritual Writings* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 149.

²⁶⁸ Mommaers and Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic*, 47.

²⁶⁹ In 1264, after the consistent petition raised by the beuine Juliana of Liège, Pope Urban IV issued the papal bull *Transiturus de hoc mundo* in which Corpus Christi was made a feast throughout the entire Latin Rite. The feast of Corpus Christi is the first papally sanctioned universal feast in the history of the Latin Rite. See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, chapter I.

²⁷⁰ The tradition about Thomas’ authorship of the Corpus Christi office was established by the early fourteenth century, and was even represented in a number of contemporary works of art. See

Like Hadewijch's writings, the hymn manifests an understanding of the Eucharist deeply connected with the culture. The hymn also shows a similar poetic beauty and creative adaptation of scholastic language. Nonetheless, the hymn shows a remarkable difference from Hadewijch's writing in its point of emphasis. The stanzas below are cited from *Lauda Syon*, the best-known sequence of the Corpus Christi feast.

Stanza 8:

The Communicant receives the complete Christ,
 uncut, unbroken, undivided.
 Whether one receives, or a thousand receive,
 The one receives as much as the thousand.
 Nor is Christ diminished by being received.

Stanza 12:

Good Shepherd, true bread,
 Jesus, have mercy on us.
 Fee us, protects us.
 Let us see good things in the land of the living.
 You who know and can do all things,
 who feed us here as mortals,
 make us your table-guests there,
 your co-heirs and companions
 of the holy citizens of heaven.²⁷¹

This sequence strongly confirms the theology of transubstantiation. The reality of Christ's body is unmistakably present in the eucharistic elements. However, the emphasis falls on the membership of the community ensured by the eucharistic reception. Whether one receives a broken fragment or a whole host, all receive the same, complete Christ, and thus become members of Christ. While for Hadewijch the physicality of Christ became a personal entry that enabled the bodily encounter between her and Christ, for the author of *Lauda Syon* the physicality of Christ produces an undivided ground on which the believers become one in community. The hymn emphasizes that once the believers

Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 185. For the authorship of the Corpus Christi hymn, see Rubin, 185–191.

²⁷¹ Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 94.

join the body of Christ they grow together in spiritual life. Just as there is no division of the reality in the Eucharist, so there is no division of the members that unite in the one body of Christ.

What is significant in *Lauda Syon*'s description of the Eucharist is the foundation of the unity of the church on the one body of Christ. This is expressed in stanza twelve. The eschatological theme is heard in the stanza, as the author begs Christ to make believers his "table guests there, your co-heirs and companions of the holy citizens of heaven."²⁷² The union between the earthly church and the heavenly church is affirmed.²⁷³ The Eucharist unites the believers into the church and nourishes their growth together in one body. The author of the *Corpus Christi* hymns is explicit about the role of the Eucharist for the unity of the church and further stresses that the Eucharist founds a common ground for the believers' spiritual growth. The Eucharist invites all Christians into the community of believers, and makes them a part of the spiritual life of the community in which all are required to participate. It has a capacity to draw all Christians together into the community of believers, and it is open to believers who desire continued growth in the church. The hymn demonstrates the pastoral and educational purpose of the Eucharist.

The same body has a quite different significance for the Beguine Hadewijch. Unlike the author of the hymns who emphasizes the connection between the eucharistic body and the unity of the believers' community, the Beguine is more interested in the formation of her speaking and writing authority through the Eucharist. For Hadewijch, the Eucharist endorses the authority through which she can compete with the cleric and

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Owen F. Cummings, *Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 133.

challenge the ecclesial system of languages and understandings of the body. She needs more than a conventional teaching about the body to claim her authorship. For she wants to speak and write about the body something more than she was taught. The distinctiveness of her authorship also relates to her principle audience. Unlike the author of the hymns who composed the hymn for the purpose of public celebration, Hadewijch wrote her poems for the Beguine sisters and lay women to offer,²⁷⁴ as Mommaers points out, some spiritual guidance.²⁷⁵ The primary concern of these lay spirituals was to be confirmed as deserving Christians and to keep their faith in spite of their limited access to the body.

Dwelling in the arena between ecclesial and lay spheres, Hadewijch believes that the lay religious life can be pursued outside of ecclesial control and religious orders. She even advocates alternative forms of religious life. She writes in her letter, “[i]n keeping with a rule of life, people encumber themselves with many things from which they could be free.”²⁷⁶ For Hadewijch, faith is not a matter of formal obedience or intellectual assent as much as it is the expression of individual desire for a passionate and experimental life that lives out the teachings of Jesus. Apparently, Hadewijch’s own spiritual growth and innovation of church teachings served as a “mirror” to her audience. As Mommaers and Dunton put it, “by demonstrating the evolution of her experience of the Eucharist,” Hadewijch sets out a course for those who find themselves in the same ‘adventure.’²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Her vision and letters are often addressed to “dear child.” She even mentions the names of her sisters as a way of calling attention.

²⁷⁵ Mommaers and Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic*, 47.

²⁷⁶ Hadewijch, *Letters*, IV. 64:54, cited from Robin van Löben Sels, *A Dream in the World: Poetics of Soul in Two Women, Modern and Medieval* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003), 177.

²⁷⁷ Mommaers and Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic*, 47.

By comparing the author of the Corpus Christi hymns and Hadewijch, I do not mean to reinforce the binary distinction between the outside and inside of the ecclesia. Instead, I illuminate the indeterminacy and openness of the eucharistic space that allows Christians to shape and reshape their identities through their unique life contexts. While the author of the hymns shows an aspect of the Eucharist that gathers scattered believers into one community and nurtures them with the same spiritual food, Hadewijch shows another important aspect of the Eucharist as a source of authority through which even unorthodox individuals can speak and write about God.

iii. *Bridal Mysticism Meets Minnesang*

Along with her spiritual and social dispositions, Hadewijch's poetic gifts and passion for writing are responsible for the remarkable outcome of her writing of the body of Christ. The mystic's talents and skills are demonstrated by her way of combining bridal mysticism and the courtly genre *Minnesang*, which adds a dynamic and colorful tone to the description of Love.

The influence of bridal mysticism in Hadewijch's writings seems obvious. Bridal mysticism, used to express the relationship between God and believers, is one of the most favored metaphors of Christian tradition, and Hadewijch takes her use of erotic expressions from bridal mysticism's description of the love between Christ and the soul. Through an allegorical reading of the *Song of Songs*, bridal mysticism emerges as a marriage metaphor between Christ, the bridegroom, and the soul, the bride, and expresses the relationship with affectionate and eroticized languages.²⁷⁸ The erotic description of

²⁷⁸ Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Women and*

the union between God and soul is transmitted from the patristic tradition, and it was reiterated and popularized by Bernard of Clairvaux a century ahead of Hadewijch's time.²⁷⁹ Bernard's "Sermons on the *Song of Songs*" thematizes the intimate love between the Christ and the soul:

For no name can be found as sweet as those in which the Word and the soul exchange affections, as Bridegroom and Bride, for to such everything is common, nothing is the property of one and not the other, nothing is held separately. They share one inheritance, one table, one house, one bed, one flesh. For this she leaves her father and her mother and clings to her husband and they two are one flesh (Genesis 2:24)...For she who asks for a kiss feels love. She does not ask for freedom or payment of inheritance or learning, but for a kiss...She does not flirt with him as others do, and she does not beat about the bush. She tells him clearly what she desires. She uses no preliminaries. She does not try to win him around.²⁸⁰

For Bernard, the union with Christ is a pure "spiritual union" (*unitas spritus*) with the ascended Christ.²⁸¹ Bernard is persistent in claiming that true wisdom is obtained not through physical sense or from human actions, but from God through his word. The soul loves "in a holy way, because she does not love in fleshly desire but in purity of spirit."²⁸² He writes that Christ can be touched, but his understanding of touch is "*affectus spiritus*," which refers to a "transforming influence on the order of grace" and the "human capacity for that influence."²⁸³ For Bernard, affections and emotions are to be elevated to intellects.

Literature (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 138.

²⁷⁹ Hadewijch mentions Bernard in *Letters*, XV (L15): "Saint Bernard speaks of this: 'Jesus is honey in the mouth.'" Besides L15, Bernard's influence is found in a number of places in Hadewijch's text, including L4; L6; L12; L15; L20; L28; *Poems in Stanzas*, I (PS1); PS22; *Verses*, I (V1); V6; *Poems in Couplets*, III (PC3); PC16.

²⁸⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermons on the 'Song of Songs,'" in *Selected Works*, trans. Gillian Rosemary Evans (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 231–232.

²⁸¹ Bernard insists that Christ is touched "by a feeling or movement of the *affectus* (affect), not the hand; by desire, not the eye; by faith, not the [carnal] sense." Rudy, *Corpus Christi*, 5.

²⁸² Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermons," 232.

²⁸³ *Affectus* is a complicated term. It refers to a transforming influence on the order of grace, and also the human capacity or faculty for that influence. He uses it to refer to our active capacity to desire and love. Rudy, *Corpus Christi*, 59.

Affectio “overshadows” *intellectus*, and eventually “the two become identical.” It is *intellectus* that leads the soul to the knowledge of God.²⁸⁴

Hadewijch, however, does not merely adopt and copy the idea and expressions of bridal mysticism. She mixes it with the style and expressions of vernacular courtly genre *Minnesang*.²⁸⁵ The purely spiritual and faithful relationship between Christ and the soul now attires itself with the stories of chivalric adventure developed in the courtly genre. In *Minnesang*, the relationship between two lovers is not protected by wedlock. The soul is not a bride who patiently waits for her lover’s returning. The soul is, instead, described as a knight who never gives up pursuing her lady until he obtains her.

Barbara Newman’s *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist* suggests an interesting distinction between the “bridal self” developed by monastic theologians and the “courtly self” developed by the Beguines. According to Newman, while the monastic theologians understand love between God and the soul as a dutiful commitment like a conjugal relationship,²⁸⁶ the Beguines do not find the loving relationship to be a stable and secure one. Hadewijch’s writing evinces Newman’s argument:

I greet what I love.
 With my heart’s blood.
 My senses wither
 In the madness of Love.
 . . .

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ *Minnesang* is a term given to the twelfth- and fourteenth-century traditions of lyric poetry and song-writing in Germany and Switzerland . The term identifies the theme of love (*minne* means “love” in Middle Dutch) and points to the fact that these were songs (*sang*) intended to be performed to musical accompaniment. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/384329/minnesinger#ref258394 (accessed on October 2010).

²⁸⁶ Barbara Newman makes a helpful distinction between the “bridal self” developed by monastic theologians and the “courtly self” developed by the Beguines. See *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, 137–67, 143–148.

Oh! I am inflamed in mind, hoping for success
 In the blessing of belonging fully to Love.
 Oh! to be wise in violence, that is success—
 Yes, to be free in the violence of Love

I long, I keep vigil, I taste
 The things that seem to be sweet;
 . . .
 I suffer, I strive after the height,
 I suckle with my blood.²⁸⁷

Hadewijch's soul has a courtly self, instead of a bridal self. For her, Love is not always reciprocal. Love has frivolous and multifaceted characters.²⁸⁸ Love is erratic, unreliable and jealous in her character, and the knight's path in pursuit of Love promises no happy ending. The relationship between the knight and Lady Love is much more humane than the relationship between the bride and bridegroom in bridal mysticism. It fluctuates with doubts, madness, and violently severe longing. It includes excessive, erotic, physical, possessive and even sadomasochistic desires. Love repeatedly puts the lovers to trials and tests. The knight suffers an emotional alienation caused by his lover's capriciousness. Yet the knight cannot help but surrender himself to Love, because Love is inexhaustibly seductive and seducing. The knight cries, "However cruelly I am wounded/What Love has promised me/Remains to be accomplished."²⁸⁹

Hadewijch's assimilation of two genres produces extraordinary expressions in understanding the mystical union. The complex hues and tones of this vernacular expression of love add emotive, dynamic, and lively images to the description of the union between Christ and the soul. She understands that the nature of love is associated with the human experience of love that involves disquiet and fluctuating of heart and

²⁸⁷ Hadewijch, *Poems in Couplets*, XV.1–35: 351.

²⁸⁸ Mommaers and Dutton, *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic*, 4.

²⁸⁹ Hadewijch, *Pomes in Stanzas*, XVI.100:171.

body. Unlike the bridal mysticism that secures love through a covenant, courtly love shows that love cannot be successful without desire and intense pursuit. In Hadewijch's description of love, what remains most important is the untiring desire between lovers. The intimate union cannot be detached from physical sensation and burning emotion. Hadewijch never spiritualizes the relationship between God and the soul. Rather, she presents, through candidly emotional expressions of love, "an entirely new kind of sublimity, in which the everyday and the low were included, not excluded, so that, in style as in content, it directly connected the lowest with the highest."²⁹⁰

Adopting different languages, performing different authorities, and crossing different genres, Hadewijch shapes multilingualism as a distinctive character that reflects her spiritual and social identity. Whereas Latin language and theology help her to find her position within eucharistic discourse marked by church-sanctioned signs, vernacular language and ideas stimulate her to challenge the fixed and normative ideological constructions of the Eucharist. Hadewijch never stops competing for, negotiating with, and challenging given ideas and expressions of the body of Christ. She demonstrates that the reality of the eucharistic body is not defining one's identity within the medieval hierarchy. It is, instead, generating alterity that opens a condition of possibilities. It is providing a malleable and formative locus that remains radically open to those who take a part in it.

Hadewijch's language performance is one of the examples that realizes the capacity of the Eucharist to its fullest extent. Her writing shows that as long as the eucharistic site remains open, the subject who brings the body into language remains in a perpetual mode of search. In her cultural location as a Beguine, Hadewijch shapes the

²⁹⁰ McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, 19.

eucharistic site as creative and challenging. Her writings, which bear her body, are incorporated within the discursive body of the Eucharist, and they obscure a set of binary positions that differentiate her from the sacred, the intellectual, the clerical, and the institutional. These new expressions produce an “ironic compromise” between different arenas, while representing one sort of life at the margin of the institutional church.

* * *

The interplay of different languages and ideas about the Eucharist that manifested in Hadewijch’s writing is a peculiar phenomenon brought about by Hadewijch’s spiritual status and social location. By developing a distinctive mechanism for managing the paradox of Christ’s body, Hadewijch forms an efficient and subversive writing subject. The Eucharist functions as a reminder of the body’s physical presence, which is invincible enough to haunt the mystic’s vision.

Since it reflects the life of an individual who lives at the margins of the institutional church, Hadewijch’s writing sets a precedent for early modern mystical writing. Yet by epitomizing her struggle with institutional and traditional constructions, it also demonstrates a certain lifestyle distinct from that of early modern mystics. Unlike the latter, who further separated themselves from the institutional church, Hadewijch stayed in a liminal area where new language and expressions were constantly conflicting and negotiating with established ones. Her writing exhibits a discursive subject formation in which uneven hierarchical dispositions interact. It necessarily redirects attention to Hadewijch’s way of forming her writing subject within limiting conditions.

Hadewijch’s writing suggests a type of alterity that can be generated in the context of subordination. She shows how an individual works at the limits of the

historical configurations which they inhabit and by which they are inevitably influenced. She operates with the remnants of the tradition and institution, skillfully uses them, and redistributes them. Instead of rejecting or discarding these remnants, she casts them into unexpected settings and tweaks the meanings embedded in them. Therefore she loosens, extends, and restores the perimeter of these traditions. This type of communication admits an indissolubility of individual agency working within and around institutional systems and norms. It inscribes, as Richard Terdiman points out, “an injunction to look for capability on the margins,” while keeping all the ambiguity and complexity.²⁹¹ It seems passive, but it resiliently undermines the illusions of institutions that claim to reflect the whole “real” of tradition. It is not radically defiant, nor decidedly counterproductive, but it generates impacts that shatter the boundaries of both institution and individual.

Hadewijch shows the capacity of an individual to build a space of difference *within* a system filled with doctrines. The Eucharist constitutes a focal point through which her gestures become visible and meaningful. Through the eucharistic body of Christ, the Beguine becomes involved in a larger division within society. By authorizing the Beguine, the Eucharist grants her a space of alteration within itself. Writing about the Eucharist, she is absorbed in the communitarian operation of the Eucharist. Becoming a part of the system, she stealthily “displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives?”²⁹²

Hadewijch shapes the body of Christ to be more accessible and more ambivalent. The body of Christ then becomes more vulnerable to the bodies of Christian groups and

²⁹¹ Terdiman, “The Marginality of de Certeau,” *Michel de Certeau in the Plural*, 417.

²⁹² Henry A. Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures: Learning Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 60.

individuals who want to emerge through the body of Christ. Hadewijch shows that the body of Christ is subject to constant adjustment and shifts of positions. It anticipates multiple fables expressing the multiple desires of individual Christians. The Beguine Hadewijch eats the body of Christ, and she writes it.

Chapter Four

The Indigestible Body: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

Being Broken. Speaking broken. Saying broken. Talk broken. Say broken. Broken speech. Pidgon tongue.²⁹³ Broken word. Before speak. As being said. As spoken. To be said. To say. Then speak.

—Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

As a foreigner, leaning a new language extended beyond its basic function as communication as it is general for a native speaker, to a consciously imposed detachment that allowed analysis and experimentation with other relationships of language.

—Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

The colonial writer does not have words of his own. Is it not possible that he projects his own condition of voicelessness into whatever he creates? That he articulates his own powerlessness, in the face of alien words, by seeking out fresh tales of victims?...perhaps the colonial imagination is driven to recreate, again and again, the experience of writing in colonial space.

—Dennis Lee, “Writing in Colonial Space”

Here comes a woman. She is lining up before the altar in order to receive the Eucharist. She looks up at the naked male body hung upon the cross fixed on the wall behind the altar. She is a woman of color, and realizes that her body is different from the man on the cross. She looks at the priest, who raises a thin disk of unleavened bread over his head. The priest says, “This is my body, take and eat.” She realizes that her body is different from the priest’s body, too.

It is not only her body, moreover, that differentiates her from the male God and the male priest. She feels that she is different from others whenever she utters words. She speaks and writes in a foreign tongue. An immigrant, she is a foreigner in the country

²⁹³ “Pidgon” is intentionally misspelled by the author.

where she lives. She is a foreigner, too, in the home country where she comes from. Displaced, she does not belong to either country. She has no language of her own. She is never allowed to have her own tongue or body in this classifying world that never exerts its classificatory power without returning it to its own ethnocentricity.²⁹⁴ She has no place to which she can return. “Where are you from?” They always ask her “origin.” They never stop asking.

This chapter tells another fable about the body. It starts with the story of a woman. For all she has is a story.²⁹⁵ She is inscribed in her story, which otherwise only floats around the borders between countries and identities. Her story makes her audible and visible. It puts her in contact with others. In this chapter, I call attention to the contact zone where she encounters others through her story—in particular, the possible disfigurement and cacophonies that could arise from her contact with the discursive body of Christ.

Her name is Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. She was born in Pusan, Korea, in 1951. Her family immigrated to Hawaii and, two years later, to Northern California. Cha went to an all-girls high school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where she studied French. She attended the University of California at Berkeley from 1969 to 1978, earning a B.A. in comparative literature, and B.A., M.A., and M.F.A. degrees in art practice. In 1976, through the University of California’s Education Abroad Program, Cha attended the Centre d’Etudes Américain du Cinéma in Paris, France, and studied film theory and performance. Cha then returned to the Bay Area and continued making films and

²⁹⁴ Trinh Minh-ha, “No Master Territories,” in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (New York: Routledge, 1995), 216.

²⁹⁵ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Writing, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 119.

performing. She became naturalized as a citizen in 1977. She moved to New York in 1980. Tragically, she was murdered by a stranger in New York City on November 5, 1982, seven days after her book *Dictee* was published. She was thirty-one at the time of her death.²⁹⁶

The central themes of Cha's works are loss and displacement. Cha presents these themes through a number of filmic presentations, performance pieces, poems and essays, and article translations.²⁹⁷ Just as Cha's genre mixture confounds clear categorical classifications, so too the contents of her works dilute any attempt at defining the core meanings. The crossing-over manifested in both the form and content of Cha's work reflects her social status as an immigrant woman artist and writer. She spent her short life crossing different countries and switching different languages. She seems to have never felt a sense of home in any place. Cha's artworks and writings embody the precarious desires of living as a stranger and hybrid in a world that never stops demanding that one have an origin. Cha invites her readers to feel anxiety and confusion, frailty and uncertainty, as they read and see her works.²⁹⁸ For Cha, the question of identity is not about the displaced ultimately finding a way to an "origin" that is "safe." It is about an existential condition in which one must deal with ongoing fabrication of change. In this respect, the act of writing and creating artworks for Cha is a "border journey" into her

²⁹⁶ For more of Cha's biographical information, see Constance M. Lewallen, *The Dream of Audience* (Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University Press, 2001).

²⁹⁷ Cha identifies herself as a "visual artist and writer." She wrote in a 1981 summary of her work that she had been "working as a visual artist and writer since 1972." See Constance M. Lewallen's introduction to Cha's *Exilee/Temps Morts* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1.

²⁹⁸ Anne Alin Cheng argues that the very attempt to investigate a certain type of identity out of Cha's work is a colonial desire because it tends "to fact-check, to narrativize, to contextualize, to trace origins, "and eventually to see the "other" under the eyes of empire. *The Melancholy of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 150.

memory and imagination that negotiates between past and present, self and other, safety and danger.²⁹⁹

Questions arise: How does the body of this immigrant writer conceive the body of Christ? How might the writer who suffers from physical, emotional, and linguistic alienation, eat and write the physically, emotionally, and linguistically foreign male and Western God. How might the indigestibility of a male God be represented through writing? This chapter traces the immigrant woman writer's way of relating with the body of Christ and her struggle to cope with the impossibility of inserting difference and alterity into the discursive body of Christianity. The aim of this chapter is, like the previous chapter about Hadewijch, to demonstrate de Certeau's arguments about fable-making through literatures written and transmitted by a writer at the margins. The chapter extends de Certeau's arguments by presenting Cha's works as a contemporary form of mystical writing that intersects with postmodernity and postcoloniality.

Whereas the chapter on Hadewijch focused on the mystic's ways of dealing with the body of Christ in pre-modernity, this chapter examines a contemporary writer's ways of striving for and struggling with the body. Whereas the previous chapter extended de Certeau's ideas backwards, this chapter applies them forwards to a secular, contemporary, non-European, supposedly "non-theological" text. The gesture of employing a traditionally "non-theological" literature to a discussion of the sacramental implications of writing may raise some concerns. In what respect is such a gesture meaningful? Or, is it even fair? Is it not a kind of colonial desire of theologians to reduce all literature to a theological framework?

²⁹⁹ See Mae G. Henderson, ed., *Borders, Boundaries, and Frames; Essay in Cultural Criticism and Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

I must redefine the distinction between the “theological” and “non-theological.” If “theology” means a discipline that strictly insists upon the grammar and teaching accumulated in the tradition and handed down by the institutional church, Cha’s *Dictee* cannot be categorized as a theological text. If we define theology as reflection on the divine, we can agree that we can talk about God both inside and outside of the discipline of theology proper. Therefore, we may consider a text outside of the discipline as a “theological” one, though it may differ from texts written by professional theologians. The textual location of *Dictee*, in fact, shows the intersection between theology as traditionally constructed and secular literature. *Dictee* facilitates dialogue between the institutional church and public theological discourse. This chapter reads *Dictee*, therefore, as a theological text.

My presentation of *Dictee* as a theological text, however, should not be understood as an attempt to portray it as a Christian text written with the intention of spreading Christian messages in the public square. William Storrar’s and Andries van Aarde’s distinction between “voice” and “identity” is helpful here. Storrar and van Aaries argue that while the believers’ “identity” categorizes them as those who constitute institutional Christianity, their “voices” offer fluid reflections on the divine in everyday life.³⁰⁰ “Identity” is determined by professional theologians and the ecclesial office; “voices” flow from the mouths of “neighborhood saints,” “strangers,” and “fellow citizens.”³⁰¹ The presence of individual Christian voices in public does not necessarily mean the identification of the “Christian’s own identity” defined by the ecclesia and

³⁰⁰ Van Aarde, 1215.

³⁰¹ Exploring Storrar’s categories of “neighborhood saints,” “strangers,” and “fellow citizens,” Van Aarde suggests that these include “who could be a hospital nurse, a choir leader, a migrant, a professional artist, philosopher, poet, film director,” etc. Van Aarde, 1216.

academy.³⁰² Voices can overlap with Christian messages, but they do not proclaim particularly Christian messages. Voices, however, can lead Christians to meditate upon theological matters and develop either institutional or secular forms of (un)believing. *Dictee* is a kind of text that reflects the voice of “inarticulate longing” from a believer “who [does] not want to belong.”³⁰³ The attempt to identify such voices with the institutional or academic language of Christians could be classed a colonial desire, yet the attempt to contemplate these voices and translate them into theological insights is necessary. The latter attempt is a practice which de Certeau might call “collecting the rumors about the body.”

In the same vein, I focus in this chapter on a case in which a person finds the body of Christ indigestible to her own culture and discovers that her own voice, as that of the “stranger,” is never heard by the dominant culture. It is true that the voices of “neighborhood saints,” “strangers,” and “fellow citizens” often remain discordant and incommunicable with the discourses of the body of Christ. Hence, for those at the margins of Christianity like Cha, the institutional representation of the body of God—the “European male”—is an obstacle that keeps them from participating in theological discourses. As *Dictee* displays, the bodies of strangers are defined by Christians as “different” from the body of Christ and the “difference” is often considered as inferiority or abnormality. Consequently, even if these strangers speak and write about the body of Christ, their insights and their embodiment of Christ’s body are neglected, condemned, or forgotten. This chapter looks closely into the relation between the body of Christ and the

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Paul D. L. Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 108. Cited in van Aarde, 1217.

body of stranger. It also listens intently to the voice of a “stranger” who suffers from the violent exclusion caused by the ideological construction of the body of Christ.

This chapter also contends that reading practice supplements writing practice by gathering up “rumors” and constructing a heterological communal space. The attentive and charitable reading practice assists writing practice and helps unrecognized stories of the body enter the web of meaning. The limit of this chapter must be mentioned beforehand: The constructs heavily loaded on the dominant institutional construction of the body cannot be easily reshaped. The image of tenacious male body smothers these strange and different voices, and will remain indigestible to those outside of the institution. Nonetheless, the communication is critically necessary, especially because writing as a sacramental practice is destined to break off the fixity of the body and make it mobile. The kind of communication I seek in this chapter is a dialogue that challenges as well as attracts both sides without losing the tension between them.

The reader-centered perspective of *Dictee* demonstrates a possibility of such dialogue. *Dictee* requires a reader’s active involvement as a part of making meaning out of the text, as a part of communitarian operation of writing. Readers need to navigate within the text while remembering their own cultural location. Such a reading practice is helpful, either mitigating the painful process or even exposing the hidden wound of the immigrant life—though it cannot make the body fully digestible. Reading can create a midway path between the body of Christ and the bodies of those who are deemed strangers in the tradition. It may soften the stubborn body, as the chewing process breaks up the body and changes it into a substance suitable for absorption.

This chapter, first, offers a close reading of Cha's book *Dictee*. *Dictee* is a poetic presentation of Cha's journey into memory and imagination. Presented in a mixture of poems, photographs, official documents, translation exercises, journal entries, and filmic elements, it is a collection of several women's stories that have been erased in history.³⁰⁴ Over the course of nine chapters composed in a non-linear, non-thematic arrangement of narratives, Cha takes various references from Korean history, Greek myths, the Bible, Roman Catholic rites, and hagiographical readings, and reconstructs them through these women's narratives. The conditions of migration and displacement, which are the major determinants of Cha's subjective formation, emerge into the foreground in several sections of *Dictee* and flow around the stories of these women.

Attracting many scholars from different disciplines, *Dictee* is considered a challenging work that reveals the conjunction of feminism, postcolonialism, and poststructuralism. The following section is built on the feminist and postcolonial reading of *Dictee*, but focuses on the influence of Roman Catholicism, which immensely influenced both Cha's ideas and languages. Even though *Dictee* is not explicitly Christian, the Catholic influence is unmistakable in the ways that it effects the formation of her writing subject. Cha's work demonstrates the formation process in which she conflicts with, assimilates into, and yet also challenges the colonial and patriarchal constructions of Catholicism as a unifying category of a faith tradition.

I begin by illuminating the physical and linguistic displacement with which the writing subject of *Dictee* struggles. On both the material and symbolic levels, *Dictee* presents Cha's immigrant status as a manifestation of a border crossing and a sense of

³⁰⁴ It includes the stories of the Korean resistance Yu Guan Soon, Cha's mother Hyung Soon Huo, Joan of Arc, St. Therese of Lisieux, Demeter and Persephone, and Cha herself.

belonging nowhere. I spotlight the uneasy correspondence between the writing subject and Catholicism through the scenes in *Dictee* that depict the eucharistic reception and the questions of the Catechism. The mechanism Cha develops as she participates in Catholic rites displays her way of countering the indissoluble and yet uneasy relationship she has with the body of Christ, and I use postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's notion of colonial mimicry to discuss Cha's way of coping with the indigestible body.

Then I move into a discussion of the role of reading practices in the heterological discipline of writing. The practice of reading complements the practice of writing as it loosens and relaxes the boundaries between authorities. While de Certeau's remarks on the relation between reading and writing are helpful for exploring the subversive potential of reading practice that assists writing practice, I challenge de Certeau's hierarchical distinction between writing and reading,³⁰⁵ arguing that the reader-centered aspect of *Dictee* suggests multidirectional movements through which the writer and reader perform together. *Dictee* displays the way in which the writer and the reader at the margin of Christianity work together in order to make the body digestible in spite of the rigid and obdurate surface of the institutional construction.

I. *Dictee*: The Tongue, Daunted, Broken, and Confused

Being Broken. Speaking broken. Saying broken. Talk broken. Say broken. Broken speech. Pidgon tongue. Broken word. Before speak. As being said. As spoken. To be said. To say. Then speak.

—Cha, *Dictee*

³⁰⁵ His essay "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life" also suggests the significance of reading practice. Michel de Certeau, Fredric Jameson, Carl Lovitt, "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life," *Social Text*, no. 3 (Autumn 1980).

The writing subject of *Dictee* speaks in a broken tongue and writes broken words. She is an exile, an immigrant woman. If, as Gayatri Spivak says, “the will to explain was a symptom of the desire to have a self and a world,”³⁰⁶ the writing subject of *Dictee* cannot explain her “being” in the world. This is not because she has no desire, but because she has no “proper” language to describe her being in the world. She cannot construct a cohesive discursive body to tell her own story. She is deprived of the ability to articulate herself—for she has lost her mother tongue and not secured any other language as her own. Throughout the chapters of *Dictee*, the reader hears the narrator’s cries and frustrations over the linguistic dislocation that estranges her from both dominant foreign tongues and her own mother tongue.

A short fragmented story at the beginning of the text displays the uneasy relation between the subject narrator and her languages. The fragments are written in the form of a dictation assignment in both French and English. Both French and English paragraphs are interrupted by punctuation instructions literally marked as “guilemets/quotation,” “point/period,” and “d’interrogation/interrogation.”³⁰⁷ The subject, here the narrator, is a woman who Cha simply describes as a woman who had come from afar. She is an immigrant woman who has been freshly transported from her own homeland. She is sitting at a dinner table surrounded by multiple “families” (“les familles/the families”). She is being asked by the families about her experience on the first day in the new place:

[O]pen quotation marks How was the first day interrogation mark close quotations marks

³⁰⁶ Gayatri Spivak, “Explanation and Culture: Marginalia,” *Spivak Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 33.

³⁰⁷ Cha, *Dictee*, 1.

She tries to answer, “at least to say the least of it possible,” but she finds herself unable to do it:

[T]he answer would be open quotation marks there is but one thing period There is someone period From a far period close quotation marks.³⁰⁸

“The families” that surround the narrator perhaps represent the native people in allusion to the foreign languages and ideological constructions that besiege the immigrant woman. In response to the inquiries of native experts, the woman wants to give them an answer, but she cannot even make a coherent sentence. She is afraid of the inaccuracy of her language. She is ashamed of her speech breaking apart like words out of a “pidgon tongue.” The literal punctuation marks so disturbingly interrupt both French and English paragraphs that they give the reader a sense of the subject’s disquietude and insecurity. She is panting with physical and mental exertion to spit a word:

It murmurs inside. It murmurs. Inside is the pain of speech the pain to say. Larger still. Greater than is the pain not to say. To not say. Says nothing against the pain to speak. It festers inside. The wounded, liquid, dust. Must break. Must void.³⁰⁹

Feeling restless with foreign families, the writing subject endeavors to find her mother tongue. Her yearnings for the mother tongue are found in the chapters that she writes about her mother. The subject believes or *wants to believe* that the mother tongue is the word of “the very flesh and bone” and of “the core.”³¹⁰ To utter such a word is to infringe upon a given language and to shake colonialist structures; to write such a word is a “privilege” that she wants to “risk by death.”³¹¹ However, the subject is an exiled, immigrant woman. The mother tongue is unutterable and ungraspable to her, not only

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 3.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 32.

³¹¹ Ibid., 46.

because political and personal circumstances conspire to keep her from her tongue, but also because she herself feels disoriented in relation to it.

The mother tongue demands that she speaks it naturally and authentically, but she fails to fulfill the demand because she has forgotten the language. Having left her homeland years ago, she feels displaced in the use of her first language. The mother tongue is alive only in her vague and scattered memory. The grammar and syntax of the mother tongue is as unfamiliar as a foreign tongues'. Those native Korean speakers expect her to "speak" as fluently as they do.³¹² They judge her nationality based on her "inability or ability to speak."³¹³ Once their expectation is betrayed, the natives treat her like a foreigner. In the scene describing her return visit to Korea eighteen years later, the subject painfully confesses the loss of her confidence in speaking her mother tongue: "I speak another tongue, a second tongue. This is how distant I am. From them. From that time."³¹⁴ Without giving any authority or certainty, the mother tongue flows through the immigrant writer's veins, constantly ousting her from the dominant languages. It positions her outside of the constructions of colonialism, and yet brings her nowhere.

The writing subject of *Dictée* is located in a space where her linguistic activity perpetually places her in a state of confusion and fosters a lack of confidence. She has lost her mother tongue even if she is striving for it at every moment. She is forced to communicate in foreign tongues even as she knows that they will never shelter her. Both her mother tongue and foreign tongues put her into a sharply defined identity category, as if she is entering another country and requires "[d]ocuments, proof, evidence, photograph, signature." But the subject realizes that she is neither a native nor a foreigner. She is

³¹² Ibid., 56–57.

³¹³ Ibid., 57.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 85.

“neither one thing nor the other.” She is a “third thing,” “Tertium Quid neither.”³¹⁵

Whenever she opens her mouth, she finds herself murmuring inside. Whenever she speaks, she finds her words bouncing back from the languages and ideologies being imposed on her. Her words cannot find a home either in her motherland or in the land she lives in. She has a marginalized and broken tongue.

Since the 1990s, the impenetrable, unlocatable subject of *Dictee* has been strenuously investigated by writers in Asian-American feminist, film, and postcolonial studies.³¹⁶ The writers hold up *Dictee* as an exemplary text that reveals the intersection of postmodern and postcolonial subjectivities.³¹⁷ The greatest distinction between the postmodern project and the postcolonial project is the difference between their practices. Apart from theoretical similarities that challenge the logocentric and dualistic frames of master narratives of European culture, poststructuralism and postcolonialism are different in practice. Whereas poststructuralist practice “licenses a return to the canon and to traditional forms of literary criticism” and brings new theoretical insights of reading the worn-out texts, postcolonialist practice “precludes any return to a canon because the field

³¹⁵ Ibid., 20.

³¹⁶ For outstanding examples of feminists’ contribution to our understanding of Cha’s work, see *Writing Self and Writing Nation*, eds. L. Hyun Yi Kang, Norma Alarcon, and Elaine H. Kim (Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 1994); Anne Alin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race*. This chapter is particularly indebted to Lisa Lowe’s and L. Hyun Yi Kang’s essays. While highlighting the process of subject formation in *Dictee*, Lowe argues that the process is inseparable from the pedagogical and colonial systems that put the subject into the machine of interpellation. L. Hyun Yi Kang argues that in spite of the situation that allows only limited access to the colonial system, the subject of *Dictee* has an emancipatory potential.

³¹⁷ In the introductory remarks to the section titled “Postmodernism and Post-Colonialism” in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, the editors write that the main project of postcolonialism overlaps with postmodernism to a great extent; the postmodern project of deconstructing the centralized, logocentric master narratives of European culture, for example, is similar to the postcolonial project of dismantling the center/margin binary of imperial discourse. However, postcolonial critics challenge postmodernism by noting that Western postmodernism has had a subtle and undeniable effect upon the rest of the world, and this is only another way of saying that the imperial process of Eurocentrism is still active. Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, eds., *Post-colonial Studies Reader*, 117–118.

itself transforms what we understand literature to be.”³¹⁸ According to Bill Ashcroft, “Post-colonialism is not simply a kind of ‘postmodernism with politics’—it is a sustained attention to the imperial process in colonial and neo-colonial societies, and an examination of the strategies to subvert the actual material and discursive effects of that process”³¹⁹ What is remarkable about *Dictee* is that it displays an intersection of postmodern and postcolonial practices. Cha often cites Western, classical texts and yet assimilates them with narratives given from her experiences as one who is an immigrant and a colonized person. Cha successfully demonstrates the possibility of cooperation between poststructural and postcolonial projects without losing the tension between the two or reducing one to the other.

Critics drawn to the versatile character of *Dictee* highlight the distinctiveness of the text’s writing subject. They describe the subject as a protagonist who challenges identity politics and essentialism and at the same time features a resilient and subversive postcolonial character. The following section is founded on a feminist and postcolonial reading of *Dictee*, but it focuses on the role played by Catholicism, which stands as a dominant ideological construction with which the writing subject contends and negotiates. In the course of re-appropriating the rite of the Catholic eucharistic reception and the requirement of truth in the catechism, the subject reveals her ambivalent position in relation to the dominant structure. By using institutional constructions, the subject incorporates her distinctive bodily and linguistic location into the institutional church and reveals its gaps and cracks. My discussion of *Dictee* traces the subject’s interaction with the institutional construction of Roman Catholicism and looks at the ways in which

³¹⁸ Ibid., 118.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

Catholicism helps form the writing subject's linguistic identity but also inhibits her desire to speak and write.

II. Indigestible Body

Throughout *Dictee*, Cha explains that it is the physical body that bears the memory of being dismembered and disfigured. She often textualizes this painful memory through visual images and bodily metaphors. For example, she presents two sets of human anatomy pictures at the beginning and end of the chapter titled “URANIA—ASTRONOMY.”³²⁰ The dissected organs and tissues are labeled with both Chinese and English characters. The highly detailed images annotated in two different languages estrange the reader from the image of an organic body system. Just as looking at anatomy pictures defamiliarizes our perception of the body, so too speaking and writing, either in the dominant language or in her mother tongue, reminds Cha of the process of making words uncongenial. The immigrant artist cannot be natural when she speaks and writes. Every time she speaks, she feels the hard labor of each body part:

The entire lower lip would lift upwards then sink back to its original place. She would rather gather both lips and protrude them in a pout taking in the breath that might utter some thing (One thing. Just one.) But the breath falls away.³²¹

Language and ideologies are the “sign,” “alphabet,” and “the vocabulary”³²² that she needs to “think” before she utters. She cannot always place the elements of a sentence in the syntactically right position.

³²⁰ Interestingly, Cha titles the chapter “Astronomy,” even though she provides rather “anatomical” description about writing process and its relation to the body.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³²² *Ibid.*, 32.

This particular body—the exiled, dislocated, and bewildered body—hardly feels remotely organic when she speaks and writes. Cha articulates this pain in a statement she submitted for a postdoctoral project:

As a foreigner, leaning a new language extended beyond its basic function as communication as it is general for a native speaker, to a consciously imposed detachment that allowed analysis and experimentation with other relationships of language.³²³

Speaking and writing, for Cha, are not the types of actions that she is naturally inclined to make. She must face a self-consciousness that penetrates each and every word and deed. Speaking and writing are hard labors. They are painful. The choking feelings occur when she feels imposed upon in the reception of religious knowledge, and she gives an example of this uneasiness in her description of her reception of the Eucharist. The scene is a description of a piece of Cha’s memory in her school days. The dream-like memory consists of two different components. One is a dictation practice in “study hall,” and the other is the Friday Mass. The narrator is prepared for Mass, but she is required to finish a dictation first: “First Friday. One hour before mass. Mass every First Friday. Dicteé first. Every Friday. Before mass. Dicteé before.”³²⁴ The dictation practice requires her to translate several English sentences into French. For the foreign-language speaker, dictation is not a simple practice of writing the words down. She feels tense and becomes highly self-conscious trying to catch each sound and letter. The restlessness of the dictation practices continues with her participation in the Eucharist. At first blush, the eucharistic scene appears as a plain and veracious description of the Catholic rite. However, she learns that, just like dictation practices, so too the Catholic rite is not a

³²³ Cha’s personal statement and outline of independent postdoctoral project, submitted for Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellowship (Berkeley: Cha Archive, University of California, Berkeley, 1979).

³²⁴ Cha, *Dictee*, 18.

simple practice to follow. The female, immigrant, foreign-speaking-communicant displays the indigestibility of the “male,” “Latin,” “colonial” God:

The Host Wafer (His Body. His Blood.) His. Dissolving in the mouth to the liquid tongue saliva (Wine to Blood. Bread to Flesh.) His. Open the eyes to the women kneeling on the left side. The right side. Only visible on their bleached countenances are the unevenly lit circles of rouge and their elongated tongues. In waiting. To receive. Him.

Waiting. Nearing. Nearer and nearer to the altar of God. Infusion of the surplus perfumes, bee’s wax, in cense, flowers.

Place back the tongue. Now to the forehead, between the two brows or just above. Hands folded fingers laced expel all extraneous space. One gesture. Solid. For Him.

By then he is again at the other end. He the one who deciphers he the one who invokes in the Name. He the one who becomes He. Man-God. Places blessed leaves blessed ashes from the blessed palms in the left hand. Black dot of ash on the forehead. Through Hosannah Hosannah in the Highest. Through the Mea Culpa through my most grievous sin. Crucifixion to follow. Of Him. Of His Son.³²⁵

As Lisa Lowe points out, in the passage, the subject’s inherent conflict with the Catholic rite is indicated by her physical location.³²⁶ The female communicant is “kneeling on the left side,” at the margins, where she is barely seen.³²⁷ The frequent intervals of “waiting” during the distribution of the Eucharist augment the distant sense of the physical location. The communicant, however, patiently waits and compliantly follows the order, keeping the posture requested by convention. She wants to “receive. Him.” The discrepancy between the communicant and her desired object, the body of Christ, is accentuated by the repeated intervention of male pronouns to designate the property of the body: “He,” “His,” and “Him.” The body is His, the church is His. The

³²⁵ Ibid., 13.

³²⁶ *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, 59

³²⁷ In *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, eds. Kim and Alarcon, Lisa Lowe offers an insightful reading of the passage, emphasizing the distance and discrepancy between the colonial construction and the subjectivity.

female communicant receives “His” body, the male body, the body of Christ, mediated by “Him” the priest: “He the one who becomes He. Man-God.”

Depravation. Uncertainty. Fear. Loneliness. The writing subject of *Dictee* is muffled. She is dampened. The writing subject of *Dictee* tries to eat the body of Christ, and yet she cannot swallow it. She cannot digest the body. She cannot speak of the body of Christ, nor can she write the body of Christ. She cannot do it, not only because her female, Korean body is kept from identifying with the male God’s body. She also has no proper language to describe it.

All she wants to do is to express God for herself and to be heard. The writing subject of *Dictee* desperately wants to speak and write God for her own sake.³²⁸ Cha’s question is soteriological, a question illustriously posed by Rosemary Radford Ruether—“Can a male savior save women?”³²⁹ The proclamation that the redemptive power of God beyond gender eventually reaches to her as a member of the whole of humanity gives Cha an eschatological hope. It does not, however, ease her burning desire to speak and write the body of God at the moment.³³⁰ She has no “proper” language to describe herself as one who fits in the category of general humanity.

³²⁸ Gayatri Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” addresses the unique condition of postcolonial subjectivity that might resonate with Cha’s. See Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1988).

³²⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 137. In this work, Ruether challenges the Greek philosophical representations of Jesus as a transcendent Logos, and readdresses Him as a “representative of liberated humanity.

³³⁰ Ruether’s reliance on the full “humanity” of women has been challenged by many feminist theologians. Karen Trimble Alliaume’s essay “The Risks of Repeating Ourselves: Reading Feminist/Womanist Figures of Jesus” in *Cross Currents* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1998) well articulates problems and challenges of using the male image of Jesus. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza criticizes Ruether’s category of “humanity,” writing that the portrayal of Jesus as “paradigmatic human” fails because it reinscribes the banner of universal humanity and also renders Jesus’ historical particularity irrelevant. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus, Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*:

The writing subject of *Dictee* is a subject who can define herself only by negation—"not-not." She can figure herself only with contradictory images. She is not male. She is not European. She is not American. She is not black. She can identify herself only negatively—only with the terms of "non-generic humanity." There are no "original" terms for her.³³¹ She does not want to let others speak and write on her behalf. Letting others speak and write for her is like being an "honorary" human or hiding safely under the banner of universal humanity. That is not what she wants. She just wants to speak and write God in her "irrelevant," "inauthentic," "local," and "partial" language and be heard. Nothing is certain for her except for her desire, her hunger, her urge to speak and write the body of God.

In order to write for herself, the precarious subject first chooses to borrow others' language. That is her survival mechanism. The section titled "Disease" in *Dictee* reveals the subject's restless desire to speak and write, even without a "proper" or "original" language." "Disease" is a French noun, meaning a professional woman reciter. Disease speaks, but she always speaks on behalf of someone else. The section presents something like a manuscript of soliloquy for "disease." The manuscript, however, exposes what this performer suffers inside: The performer cannot speak a single word of her own. As she tries to speak, her speech becomes "[b]ared noise, groan, burst torn from words" that something resembling words.³³² What the disease can do for her performance is to "mimick" the speaking of others, in anticipation of that which "might resemble

Critical Issues in Feminist Christology (New York: Continuum, 1994), 47.

³³¹ Homi Bhabha addresses the difficulty of defining postcolonial subjectivity in his essay "Unpacking my library . . . again." See Iain Chambers and Lidia Curtis, eds., *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 210.

³³² Cha, *Dictee*, 3.

speech.(Anything at all).”³³³ She admits that she cannot communicate. She borrows other languages, dominant tongues, obtuse significations, foreign identities in place of her own language. For survival. In doing so, the *disease* makes her visible and audible.

She allows others. In place of her. Admits others to make full. Make swarm. All barren cavities to make swollen. The others each occupying her. Tumorous layers, expel all excesses until in all cavities she is flesh.³³⁴

The compliant relationship that the writing subject of *Dictee* makes with the dominant linguistic constructions calls to mind Homi Bhabha’s discussion of the “colonial mimicry.” Among postcolonial critiques, Bhabha offers a helpful analytical tool to read the subtle relations between the colonizer and the colonized within a structure where the two interact and share cultural influences. In *The Location of Culture*, he argues that the identities of the members of a postcolonial society are formed by their cultural and community history, which is interlaced with the history of the colonial power. A colonized subject assimilates her national and personal identity into the cumulative tradition of colonial society. Hence, in the process of subject formation, the colonizer and the colonized inevitably intersect, crossing the blurry boundaries between them. While destabilizing the binary position of the colonizer and the colonized, Bhabha challenges the tendency of liberatory literature to treat the postcolonial subject as a pure homogeneous agency and postcolonial culture as a single uniformed block.

“Colonial mimicry” is a unique form expressing how the colonized exist within a colonial space. Bhabha defines mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other as a subject of a difference that is *almost the same but not quite*.”³³⁵ Because the other is

³³³ Cha, *Dictee*, 4.

³³⁴ Cha, *Dictee*, 4.

³³⁵ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 122.

the site of both desires and disavowals, mimicry manifests in the behavior of the colonized to demonstrate, to imitate, and to repeat the colonial desire, the desire to be “authentic.” Bhabha argues that within the economy of colonial discourse, colonial mimicry renders an “ironic compromise” by which the colonizer and the colonized acknowledge as well as repudiate each other in their encounter.

Colonial mimicry, therefore, has an ambivalent effect: On the one hand, it coheres and intensifies the “dominant strategic function of colonial power”; on the other hand, it appropriates and registers the colonized within the colonial system as it visualizes the presence of the colonized. While the colonizer is affirmed by the mimesis of the colonized, the colonized are granted limited recognition through their mimesis. For Bhabha, “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformulation of the marginalizing vision of the Other.” He comments:

The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledge and disciplinary powers.³³⁶

In other words, mimicry is a desire “that reverses ‘in part’ the colonial appropriation by producing a partial vision of the colonizer’s presence.” Therefore mimicry performs and articulates “disturbances of cultural, racial, and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority.”³³⁷ Within the economy of colonial discourse,

³³⁶ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 86.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

colonial mimicry therefore renders an “ironic compromise” by which the colonizer and the colonized acknowledge as well as repudiate each other in their encounter.

What Bhabha offers for the discussion here is a framework for recognizing the complexities between *Dictee*'s writing subject, the dominant languages, and the ideological constructions. Cha indicates that *Dictee* is itself a performance of mimicry. She foreshadows that in the title, “*Dictee*.” *Dictee*, French for “dictation,” prefigures that the text is about dictation and translation, which are methods by which the colonized express themselves. In *Dictee*, the demands of dictating and translating repeatedly return to the text as if a recurring imperative voice cannot be forgotten even in a dream: “Ecrivez en francais.” “Traduire en francais.” However, Cha also reveals that the practices of dictation and translation are not simple repetitions of the original. These practices necessarily include distortion and subversion of the “original” meanings attributed to them.

The practice of dictation premises that reproduction of a speech in a written equivalent is the first step toward language mastery. The one who takes the dictation adapts to the rules of grammar and syntax of the language by simply repeating them. The irony is that although dictation is a method for learning a language, it also allows a space for “cultural comment” by the receiver once she wants to resist the role of passive recipient. In its “mutant forms, such as parody, quotation, collage, or sampling,” dictation turns from a “passive act that mimics brainwashing into an active one with its own, often political, agenda.”³³⁸ Likewise, translation is not a simple practice of switching languages from one to the other. It is a process of interpreting, editing, commenting, making and

³³⁸ Juliana Spahr, “Postmodernism, Readers, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee*,” *College Literature* 23, no. 3 (Oct. 1996): 34.

filling the breaks and gaps between languages. By shifting a word from one language into another language, translation defamiliarizes both word and meaning. Translation is a practice that enables “other,” “heterogeneous” positions to emerge. Throughout the text, Cha affirms that the practices of dictation and translation negate the essentialism of an “original” meaning. In performing dictation and translation, the text articulates “disturbances” of cultural and historical difference that menace the “narcissistic demand” of the dominant authority.³³⁹ By those practices, the inherent gaps and cracks within the dominant languages and ideologies are revealed and enlarged.

Another scene in *Dictee*, which describes a response to the questions of the catechism, demonstrates the mocking potential inherent in dictation and translation. At first blush, the scene seems a faithful dictation of the Roman Catholic rite. However, through ostensive irony, the “male-identification”³⁴⁰ of the female subject is laid bare in an almost pathological repetition of the male-God continuum:

Q: WHO MADE THEE?

A: God made me
To conspire in God’s tongue.

Q: WHERE IS GOD?

A: God is everywhere.

Accomplice in His Texts, the fabrication in His Own Image, the pleasure the desire of giving Image to the word in the mind of the confessor.

Q: GOD WHO HAS MADE YOU IN HIS OWN LIKENESS.

A: God who has made me in His own likeness. In His Own Image in His Own Resemblance, in His Own Copy, In His Own Counterfeit Presentment. In His Duplicate, in His Own Reproduction in His Cast, in His Carbon, His Image and His Mirror. Pleasure in the image pleasure in the copy pleasure in the projection of likeness pleasure in the repetition. Acquiesce, to the correspondence. Acquiesce, to the messenger. Acquiesce, to and for the complot in the Hieratic tongue. Theirs. Into Their tongue, the counterscript, my confession in Theirs. Into

³³⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 130.

³⁴⁰ Alarcon and Kim, eds., *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, 122.

Theirs. To scribe to make hear the words, to make sound the words, the words, the words made flesh.³⁴¹

By this obsessive multiplication of the concept of “likeness,” the subject both fulfills the demand and subverts the profession of the institution.³⁴² On the surface, the subject concedes the institutional norms and responds to the Catechism. The subject acknowledges the institutional demands that force her to “submit to the ritualized form” and avows “the requirement of truth.”³⁴³ Yet through this “faithful” response, the subject, ironically, “points up the impossibility of equivalence” between the Korea-American woman and the Western male God.³⁴⁴ Even at the moment of mimicking, the subject has an unhindered sense of noticing that what she is mimicking is only partial. It is “His” own likeness, “His” own resemblance, and “His” own copy. The subject is not a part of “His.” In this extreme form of repetition, the subject betrays the purpose of the repetition, revealing the absurdity of the demand itself. She claims, even with timid voice and inaudible murmur, that she is not “His.” There is more than “His.”

It is noteworthy that the subject chooses the eucharistic rite and the Catechism as the sites through which she both copies the property of the colonizer and finds her authority to claim that she is “not.” The subject takes the Roman Catholic representation of Christ’s body and appropriates it for her sake. The Catholic rites now serve the subject as what Homi Bhabha would call “*Inter Dicta*: a discourse at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed.”³⁴⁵ These rites deal with the body of Christ, the body of paradox and ambivalence. This body, on

³⁴¹ Cha, *Dictee*, 17–18.

³⁴² Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 59.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

the one hand, can affirm institutional teachings and doctrines, and, on the other hand, offer the unorthodox subject like *Dictee*'s possibilities to write and rewrite the body of Christ. The body is an interdicted entity located in the crossroads between sacred and secular, male and female, colonizer and colonized, and institutional and individual. The body invites Cha's writing subject to mix with the body of the male God, of the colonizer, of the institution. Yet the body also lets her speak for herself through the body. The demand to eat the body is the demand to partake in the body. By partaking, the subject immediately finds that the ideological construction of the body is not "hers." Even though she is not yet aware of what is hers, she knows that she is different from what the institution imposes. The uncanny body makes her aware of the differences. As soon as she takes the body, she is exposed to them. The writing subject utters *Inter Dicta*, and steps into the zone of the "prohibited."³⁴⁶ Now, the site of interdiction becomes the site of uneasy disclosure. Traditionally, interdiction is the prohibition against celebrating the Eucharist in particular territory that violates the ecclesial rules.³⁴⁷ Along with excommunication, the interdict is the chief spiritual sanction of the Western church.³⁴⁸ The interdict did not expel anyone from the church, functioning as the body of the faithful, but like "minor excommunication," it suspended the "spiritual benefits of membership" by excluding the accused from church services, the Eucharist and other

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 130.

³⁴⁷ In canon law, if a "certain altar or shrine is interdicted in a church, no Divine Mass and sacred functions can be held at such." Canon 2271, Stanislaus Woywod, *The New Canon Law: Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law* (NP: BiblioBazaar, 2009), 366.

³⁴⁸ In the medieval period, an interdict might affect an entire community for the faults of one or more of its members. Meanwhile, excommunication might be imposed only on individuals for their own sins. Peter D. Clarke, *The Interdict in the Thirteenth Century: A Question of Collective Guilt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

sacraments.³⁴⁹ However, in Cha's case the interdict is reshaped to be a site of provocation where the postcolonialists actively disrupt the boundary. Certain forms of subversion rise from the interdict and, in these cases, the distinctions between what is admitted and what is kept hidden, or between what is normal and what is abnormal, become noticeable. By exposing her differences through the interdicted body, the subject menaces "the narcissistic demand of colonial authority."³⁵⁰

The writing subject first "allows" the dominant ideologies and languages and lets their authorities "occupy" her body, instead of abandoning peremptory foreign constructions. Yet she also reveals her differences from the very foundation of colonial authority. In the process of mixing and competing with the colonial powers, the subject exposes the illusions behind seemingly original, orderly, and stable figures of this dominant construction. The subject's feeble reaction grows to the point of threatening these monolithic structures of institution, race, and gender. The very weakness of the ability to defy becomes the ability to mobilize another vision within the dominance, to reappropriate the artifices of the prevailing forms, and awake the hypnotized voices within.

While the writing subject builds up an alternative mode of resistance, it also reveals its own finitude at the same time. The subject's performance at the interdiction calls to mind that she is never free from the dominant construction, despite the fact that she tries to manipulate and subvert it. She is largely dependent on the constructed nature of religion. It is important to note that the normative and regularized character of the dominant construction cannot be easily dismissed, because it is the ground that bestows a space for the subversive individual to make herself seen and to distinguish herself from

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 59.

the dominant construction. The subject needs the institutional body in order to assimilate her own body that has been fragmented and scattered in the course of her immigrant life.³⁵¹ Put in Michel Foucault's terms, the institution gives a "limit," and the individual "transgresses" the limit: "The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess."³⁵² Without the limit that the institution creates in the eucharistic space, the subject has nothing to refer to, nothing to be different from. The subject would be "pointless" if it merely meandered around the fragmented and unsettled arena of immigrant life. In order for the writing subject to be differentiated, moved, and revived, the stability and predictability of the institution are necessary. The interaction affects the institution too. To remain adequately connected with the body of Christ, the institution must connect with the concrete practice of individuals such as the writing subject of *Dictee* because the body of Christ relies on the living bodies of individual Christians.

The subject of *Dictee* is in perpetual search of a place to land. To find one's ground, and therefore to encounter the body of Christ, the subject must rely on the norms and regularities of the language manufactured in the institutional church. Catholicism as a "place" offers the subject the languages and significations built in the tradition, and the subject creates "spaces" in the place by incorporating her body into the body of Christ. Catholicism enables the drifting subject to anchor in time, even if for a passing moment. The subject is in need of a stable site from which to speak. The result of this movement is that the fragmented nature of the immigrant subject overlaps with the stable nature of

³⁵¹ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

³⁵² Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," Donald Bouchard ed., *Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 34.

institutional religious constructions. As the writing subject of *Dictee* and the language of the institutional church meet at the body of Christ, the orderly and normative nature of the institution offers connective motifs that can weave through the fragmented nature of the immigrant subject. The body of the writing subject becomes intertwined with the body of the institution and therefore registered into everyday life and its religious images and motifs.

The writing subject of *Dictee* dictates, repeats, recites, and translates the body of Christ. She spits gibberish. She records it, as if scratching a bodily rash. Her “faithful” response to the institution performs imitation, yet it results in a promiscuous union with the body of Christ that shatters the institutional representation of the body. By fusing God’s flesh into her flesh, the writing subject of *Dictee* makes her uncertain, inauthentic body visible within the dominant construction. Thereupon she adulterates the body of the male God with her female body, Korean body, non-normative, non-standard body.

III. Dispersing the Body: The Body To Be Read

Nonetheless, the body of Christ remains indigestible for the writing subject of *Dictee*.

Although she has been disclosed to the system, which is the real foreign body, she has not been incorporated. Rather, the awareness of difference chokes her. The colonized subject cannot easily slip into the given communitarian structures for writing God. She still needs to penetrate the stubborn skin of the ideological constructions of the body. In this section, I therefore explore the role of reading practice as a supplement to writing practice for Christian writers at the margins. I argue that the practice of reading complements the practice of writing by loosening the boundaries between the center and the margins. De

Certeau's description of the relation between reading and writing is helpful for my argument about the subversive potential of reading practice in its assistance of writing practice.

Dictee contains various perspectives on the practice of reading. Depending on the reader's conscious or unconscious choices, the text reveals different faces. *Dictee* is a text that consists of stories of multiple women. It is a collection of different narratives, an assembly of different bodies. These women vary widely, from historical figures to fictional ones, from Greek goddesses to a Korean shamanistic matriarch. It includes a Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone, a story of Queen Min, who is murdered by a Japanese assassin, a biography of Yu Guan Soon, who resists against the Japanese regime and is killed, a journal of Cha's mother's who lived in exile, a description of a fictional wedding between Jesus and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a Korean folktale of "Princess Pari," who is the ancestress of Korean shamanism, and a film still of Renée Falconetti from Carl Dreyer's 1928 film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

As the subject's mimicking act opens up the possibility of re-imagining other relations, the body is eased of its "proper," "uniformed," and "authentic" façade. The body of Christ reveals its intrinsic ambivalence and so opens itself to other bodies. The eucharistic space is reshaped as a space in which a multitude of different float, looking for contact with other narratives. In this new space reshaped by different relationships, Cha invites the reader to engage in a complex process through which her narratives intervene in the reader's own context. The text demands, therefore, that the reader read and encounter the body of Christ through these other bodies.

Cha composes the whole text of *Dictee* as a collage. She is not interested in explaining the relations between narratives. As Shelley Sunn Wong points out, “in working outside of genres such as the autobiography or the *Bildungsroman* which are predicated on developmental narratives, Cha writes against interpellative narratives of assimilation and incorporation.”³⁵³ The narratives in the text have their own time and space, but they interfere with each other and fabricate alternative rubrics of reading. Cha’s mother’s story, for example, parallels the New Testament story of Jesus’ temptation in the desert, the Korean resistance Guan Soon invokes the name of Jeanne d’Arc, the canonized saint Thérèse plays the role of Jeanne d’Arc in a filmic presentation of her trial, Queen Min’s story slips into Guan Soon’s story, and Demeter’s myth overlaps with Princess Pari’s. The different voices of women narrators and performers sing, cast, and spell their own stories. They enjoin each other in unexpected ways. Without suggesting certain directions, without making certain closures or boundaries in between, the text lets each narrative continue its performance. The one imperative command that penetrates all the narratives is “Let them speak”:

Let the one who is diseuse Diseuse de bonne aventure. Let her call forth. Let her break open the spell cast upon time upon time again and again. With her voice, penetrate earth’s floor, the walls of Tartaurus to circle and scratch the bowl’s surface. Let the sound enter from without, the bowl’s hollow its sleep. Until.³⁵⁴

Then, the text leaves room open to the reader’s interpretation. The text’s strategy is anxiety-provoking. The text works in a manner inconsistent with the reader’s expectations. It is this manner that confounds and reverses the binary distinction of the colonizer/colonized, male/female, life/death. While the author’s writing practice

³⁵³ Alarcon and Kim, eds., *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, 106.

³⁵⁴ Cha, *Dictee*, 123.

dislodges the dominant and externally imposed ideas and ideologies embedded in these narratives, this distinctive writing practice, in turn, evokes a reading practice that dislodges them through the act of reading.³⁵⁵

Juliana Spahr highlights the reader-centered aspect of *Dictee*. Spahr argues that, in *Dictee*, the use of non-standardized secondary-language practices, untranslated texts, misspelled vocabularies, and different cultural narratives force the reader out of “linear,” “absorptive,” and comprehensive reading practices, into trans- and intra-cultural ways of reading that undermine the coercive aspects of dominant ideologies.³⁵⁶ Just as the writing practice stumbles over “rather than smooth[es] out the uneven textures of raced and gendered memory,” so the reading practice aggrandizes the unevenness and strangeness of the text.³⁵⁷ The text aims to confuse the readers and to estrange them from the text. Therefore it makes the reader aware of their own bodies, languages, and locations in relation to the Body, and invites their active engagement with the text.

Cha’s demand for self-conscious reading practice violently shatters the safety of the reader’s position. It not only compels the reader to see the conflicts and contentions between the text and their own contexts, but also effaces the meanings and ideas that the text owns for building its own apparatus. The last chapter of *Dictee*, titled “POLYMNIA—SACRED POETRY,” demonstrates how radically a reading practice can impact the text. The “POLYMNIA” chapter is about a story of a young girl who goes to a stone well to obtain some remedies for her mother. The girl meets a young woman who is drawing in the bucket. The child shares her stories with the woman, and the woman gives

³⁵⁵ Juliana Spahr, cited from Logan Esdale’s review, “*Every body’s Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity* by Juliana Spahr,” *South Atlantic Review* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 92–96 and 125–140.

³⁵⁶ Spahr, “Postmodernism, Readers, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee*,” 25.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

the child instructions on how to prepare remedies. The woman sends the child back to the village. The child remembers the woman's words on her way and starts to run.

When looking beneath the surface layer of the text, we find the "POLYMNIA" chapter consisting of several narratives whose exact points of overlap are difficult to identify.³⁵⁸ At least three different narratives mix with one another: the Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone, the Korean folktale "Princess Pari," and the biblical narrative of the Samaritan woman. From one angle, the chapter looks like Cha's rewriting of the Greek myth. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Demeter is the goddess of the earth and fertility, and Persephone is the goddess of spring and the daughter of Demeter. The story revolves around the kidnapping of Persephone by Hades, the ruler of the underworld. The mother is determined to get her daughter back, so she adopts the guise of an old woman and takes her stand at the well in Eleusis while making the earth turn cold and barren—until Persephone returns from the underworld.³⁵⁹

The chapter, however, can be also read as Cha's adaptation of Korean folktale "Princess Pari," an epic shamanistic narrative on birth and its tribulations. Pari is considered to be the first shamaness of Korea. The seventh daughter of a king, she is abandoned right after birth by her father simply because she is a girl. When she is fifteen years old she learns that her parents have fallen ill. Although she was abandoned, she volunteers to go on a perilous journey in search for medicinal water. On arriving at her destination, she is asked by a Taoist supernal being, as a payment for the medicinal water, to draw water for three years, to stoke up a fire for three years, and to cut firewood for

³⁵⁸ Ploymnia is one of the nine Greek muses. Her name was derived from the Greek words *poly-*, "many," and *hymnos-*, "praise" or "hymn."

³⁵⁹ Tat-Siong Benny Liew's *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics* also provides a very helpful reading of the inter-relationship among multiple narratives in *Dictée* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

three years. After serving him for nine years, she is urged to marry the supernal being. She also brings her parents back to life with the water and becomes the first shaman, who guides the spirit of the dead to the other world.³⁶⁰

The last narrative that the chapter calls to mind is the New Testament story of the Samaritan woman at the well. In the story, Jesus chooses to journey directly through the Samaritan region, instead of walking the long way around the region (the common route taken by those with an intense dislike of the Samaritans). Jesus arrives at the town of Sychar at about noon, when the heat of the day might have been most unbearable. Exhausted and parched, he sits by the well. A woman comes along to draw water. She is a Samaritan woman, a “half-breed” race despised by Jews, and one who is isolated by her own people because of her tarnished reputation. Meeting Jesus at the well, the woman experiences spiritual healing and rebirth. She hurries to run back to the town, to share her story.

The common motif of these narratives is the drawing of water from a well. Fetching water is a typical domestic task for women common in the ancient times of these three different cultures. However, depending on which culture the reader finds most familiar, the “POLYMNIA” will be read differently. The chapter first destabilizes readers’ conscious effort to conquer or master the text, making the reader’s relationship to the text an integral part of what is to be “read.” Yet it goes further than the accustomed practice of reader-centered texts, since it denies shaping its own apparatus and instead

³⁶⁰ Adapted from Kun Jong Lee, “Rewriting Hesiod, Revisioning Korea: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee* as a Subversive Hesiodic Catalogue of Women,” *College Literature* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 92–93. For other readings of Princess Pari, see Rob Wilson, “Falling into the Korean Uncanny: On Reading Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee*,” *Korean Culture* 12 (1991): 37; Ming Jung Lee, “Baring the Apparatus: *Dictee*’s Speaking Subjectivity Writes a Response,” *Hitting Critical Mass* 6, no. 1 (1999): 46.

provides multiple angles for reading the story. In this formulation, reading becomes an act that constantly resists any tendency toward identifying a meaning as a correct answer. The text is always being reshaped both by the writer and the reader.

The extreme point of the text's affirmation of the value of effacing its own apparatus and meanings is that it challenges any assumptions that the reader might bring to the text. As the multiple narratives confuse and disturb the text, the readers' expectations on both a mastery of reading and a purpose of reading are deployed. The text is in principle mutable, responsive, generative, and liable to change depending on the reader's own perspective. As intriguing as readers might find the text's innovative character, it is not necessarily the case that "multiple, alternate" narratives will be used for more "liberatory" purposes than dominant ideological constructions. If a liberatory rhetoric is unable to allow marginalized subjects to speak for themselves, it reproduces the same mechanism of dominant ideologies. As Jonathan Monroe states, "it is a myth to think that forms of any particular kind, whether normative, alternative, or otherwise, convey any particular politics independently of content and context" or stand as "liberatory" for their own sakes.³⁶¹ Cha unreservedly turns the responsibility of using the text to the reader. It is the readers' role to taste, chew, swallow, and digest. The boundary between textual body and reader's body becomes a blur.

Dictee's demand of active reading resonates with what de Certeau might call "oppositional practice," which is a mode governing interactions within heterological communal space. De Certeau's exploration of the subversive potential of reading

³⁶¹ Jonathan Monroe, "'Index and Symptom; 'Connective' Reading, (Post) Language Writing, and Cultural Critique," *Contemporary Literature* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 748–770.

practices appears in *The Practice of Everyday Life*,³⁶² where he contests the idea that readers are passively guided and molded by the text or media products that are imposed on them. De Certeau suggests that though reading is not a dissidence or resistance—in fact, he defines reading as an activity of receiving a text from “someone else without putting one’s own mark on it, without remaking it”³⁶³—he defines it as an “oppositional practice.” Unlike a writer who directly positions herself in the midst of society, the reader’s activity is circumspective. The reader positions herself “at equal par with” or “in (op)position” to the text, “by virtue of the very linguistic and conceptual power that the text has given them.” By being aware of her own “oppositional stance” through a text, the reader can enter into dialogue with the text and with other readers.

According to de Certeau, the relation between the writer (producer) and the reader (consumer) was constructed by the Enlightenment idea of making a text. During the Enlightenment the book was considered the perfect instrument for instruction. The idea still pervades in Christianity: “the reading of the catechism or of the scripture that the clergy used to recommend to girls and mothers, by forbidding these Vestals of an untouchable sacred text to write.”³⁶⁴ The idea of the reader as a passive consumer envisions the reader as unable to trace her own need on the text where the production of the other appears.³⁶⁵ The writer is like a priest who embodies the sign of the Word, or like a lay person who receives the sign embodied by the priest.

³⁶² De Certeau’s essay “On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life” also suggests the significance of reading practice. See Michel de Certeau, Fredric Jameson, and Carl Lovitt, “On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life,” *Social Text*, no. 3 (Autumn 1980).

³⁶³ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 169.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

The Enlightenment idea grants the writer a privileged status over the reader. While the writer is a producer, the reader is a mere receiver.³⁶⁶ De Certeau challenges the Enlightenment framework. He argues that reading is also a “process of creative production,” because the reader must actively construct a meaning “on the basis of a collection of signs that the text presents.”³⁶⁷ “To read,” he says, “is to wander through an imposed system.”³⁶⁸ The reader takes neither the position of the author nor an author’s position. She invents in texts something different from what the author intends. She detaches the text from its origin. She combines the fragments of information and creates something unknown in the textual space organized by her capacity for allowing an indefinite plurality of meanings.³⁶⁹ Eventually, through this practice, she experiences changes in desire and acquires desire as part of her practice (by, for instance, restructuring the given information, relocating the meanings, and re-evaluating the event).³⁷⁰

Yet De Certeau suggests that the domain of reading is not an empty vessel that awaits meanings. The relationship between readers is hierarchically constructed. An elite group of “official” readers, such as intellectuals, academicians, teachers, critics, clerics, and media producers, monopolize reading and impose the “true” meaning of a text. He states:

[Such an “official” reading] interposes a frontier between the text and its readers that can be crossed only if one has a passport delivered by these official interpreters, who transform their own reading (which is *also* a legitimate one) into

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Claire Kramsch and Thomas Nolden, “Redefining Literacy in a Foreign Language: Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German,” *German in the 21st Century* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 28–35.

an orthodox “literally” that makes other (equally legitimate readings either heretical (not “in conformity” with the meaning of the text) or insignificant (to be forgotten)).³⁷¹

These privileged readers perform the normative power of determining the meaning of the text and set up an “orthodox” category of reading.³⁷² However, despite the normative power of this privileged group, a reader who has no authority can “deterritorize” herself from the privileged readers’ domain by creating her own meanings. This inventive practice of the reader redefines the relationship between text and the reader’s social milieu.

The reader-centered aspect of *Dictee* not only agrees with de Certeau’s idea of reading as “oppositional practice” but also supplements it. *Dictee* challenges de Certeau’s classification of hierarchical relationships between the writer and the reader and between the authorized reader and the unauthorized reader. In de Certeau’s description, writers are “founders of their own place.” The writer works on the “soil of language.” The writer digs, accumulates, and stocks up meanings, while establishing a place and expanding her territories. The writer allies with select intellectual readers, in order to make a successful consumption of her product. De Certeau describes that this writer-reader pair composes the myth of the Enlightenment: There is a conceptual “truth” in a text to be written and read.

What de Certeau leaves out in the analysis is the fact that not every writer has the “soil of language,” or original words or their own with which to speak. Some writers do not have words of their own. In a colonial context, the control over language by the colonizer becomes a potent instrument of cultural control. The colonial center achieves

³⁷¹ Ibid., 171.

³⁷² Ibid.

its goal by “displacing native languages” or by installing the colonizer’s language as a “standard” against the colonized language. The colonized language is lost. It becomes an impure, immature, unlearned, or ineffective language.³⁷³ The writer of *Dictee* aligns herself with writers who have lost their own language. She is a writer who hardly owns her own soil of language. She is a *disease* who cannot speak her own tongue. Such a writer hardly works at the same soil as the priestly writers do. She is a lay writer. She is an immigrant writer who has no definite terms to describe her body in a certain demanded category.

Cha, without her own soil but with a desire to write, does not affiliate with “privileged selected readers.” Just like lay readers, the lay writer is a traveler. She “poaches her way across fields she did not write.”³⁷⁴ She “[moves] across lands belonging to someone else” and “[passes] each of the places established by priest-writers.”³⁷⁵ However, such an impoverished situation does not deprive the writer of her desire to write. The situation, instead, makes her aware of her own task as a lay writer. Grounded on the liminal space, the lay writer works to remove the barrier between the priest writer and the lay reader, between the authorized reader and the unauthorized reader. Her task is “shuttling the frontier.” Her task is sharing what she gathers from the frontier with her fellow laity called readers.

Dictee exemplifies how such a lay writer works on the soil of the priest writer and the authorized reader. Cha cites the writings composed by the priest writer, such as the biblical narratives, Greek myths, Catholic rites, and the catechism. She presents familiar religious images and motifs that have been implanted and normalized by centuries of

³⁷³ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, eds., *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 283.

³⁷⁴ Cha, *Dictee*, 174.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

religious teaching. Into that familiar ground, she assimilates the stories of these women erased from history. Then she disrupts the “original,” the “official,” and the “authentic.” On the body of priests, Cha implants the body of the marginalized immigrant. The two different pieces of flesh suffer each other in Cha’s writing. The language of the priest “makes words,” “identifies,” “answers,” “repeats,” and “acquiesces.”³⁷⁶ By contrast, the language of the laity “pauses,” aimlessly “moves,” “hardly rests,” “refuses,” and is refused.³⁷⁷

The lay writer hardly tries to reconcile the two languages, as if insisting that it is not her task to direct the readers. Instead, she vigorously creates occasions for the two tongues to continue the act of giving and taking, and for the readers to thus behold the limits of both languages. By the writer’s constant labor of writing, the two bodies repeat the performance of interacting without losing tension. When the lay body tries to flee, the priest’s body holds it down. When the immigrant body disturbs the “stability” of the dominant language, the institutional body reasserts solidity. When the immigrant body unties the bonds of the institutional body, the institutional body fastens them again with canonized words. The interaction keeps the two bodies moving, changing and crossing each other. It pushes the priest’s body to supply a footboard upon which the lay body can bounce, and it stimulates the readers to join the lay writer by bustling within the dominant constructions and scratching them.

For the lay writer, writing is not for “producing” or “building” her own space within the body. Instead, writing is making the body digestible for herself and for the readers by breaking, stroking and chewing the hardest part of the body. As a result of her

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 168–170.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 51–53.

writing, the body, protected by the priestly-writers and covered with institutional norms and regularities, comes to loosen and expose its living flesh. However, for the lay writer, the act of writing is also the act of effacing her own body. Because she lacks her own property, she yields her body for a time by revealing the wounds, scars, and marks of shame that she received from her life at the margins. As soon as she is registered into a system dominated by officials and institutions, she takes part in structures that pervade “a multiple account of exchanges of power through time” and hardly accepts herself as a qualified member.³⁷⁸ At the price of abandoning her freedom, she is granted the use of signs and language filled with the prevailing conventions and norms. She mimics them. She manipulates them. Writing in someone else’s body is like a condition of “lack[ing]” the body and, at the same time, lacking her own body. The act makes her painfully aware that her cultural and linguistic displacement cannot be easily resolved and that she can never be the same as the priestly writer. The writer writes in spite of her fear and insecurity: “She who writes, writes. In uncertainty, in necessity.”³⁷⁹

* * *

Dictee portrays a kind of life at the margins in which a Christian inevitably deals with the institutional church that often suppresses and threatens her basic desires and needs. The writing subject of *Dictee* practices on the body of Christ so that her writing takes her body into a eucharistic system filled with institutional signs and languages. The subject, then, disrupts the institution’s narcissistic obsession with the body. The subject also welcomes others who likewise feel troubled with the body of Christ and urges them to disturb and interrupt the institutional constructions. Such a heterological practice of the

³⁷⁸ Doreen B. Massey, *For Space* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2005), 25.

³⁷⁹ Tinh Minh-ha, *Women, Native, Other*, 8.

body does not entail that individual Christians, especially the marginalized “strangers” in the Christian tradition, are always in need of validation or authorization by the institutional church, nor that the unequal relationship between the institution and the individual must immediately be reversed. Instead, it emphasizes the need for the institutional church to communicate with believers and acknowledge that believers at the margin speak and write about the body of Christ, the same body that establishes the church. It tells us writing is the heart of heterological practice.

What is critical in the practice of writing, moreover, is not the truth claim, but rather the process of interaction and the exchange of influences. Individual Christians cannot discard the signs, doctrines, and languages built in the tradition. Nor can the institutional church ignore the new discourse about the body produced at the margins of the tradition. The process of sharing influences enables the two sides to realize the borders that have kept them from admitting each other’s limits. The process also allows them to see themselves in contact with and in fusion with other bodies within and around Christianity. *Dictée*’s textual presentation of the body demonstrates that the “flaws” and “crooks” of the believers at the margins are precisely the nudge that their power effects, as it reveals the illusion of the institutional church and calls into question its disguised reality.

Even though these marginalized individuals seem passive and guided by established norms, each of them is a writer of the body of Christ, an agent that brings pluralism to the institution and alters conventional determinations. Without individual bodies, the body of Christ remains unmanifest and fails to be disseminated. Both the institution and individuals are responsible for making the differences operate and act

upon one another, for it is the multiple bodies of individual Christians that make the body available, accessible and malleable. It is the austere labors of individuals that reveal their bodies within the body—perhaps the unseen and unguarded side of the glorious flesh, the fragile bones, sensitive nerves and even ugly wounds. The writing subject of *Dictee* does not beg favors for the institutional church or make doctrines congenial to Christians like herself. Rather, she displays a specific process in which the body of Christ is interrupted and enlivened by the uniqueness of her body. She exemplifies a kind of narrative that contains the rumors of the body, yet in a highly indigestible form.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha shows the possibility of this act and this process in *Dictee*. She then invites individual believers into this labor, particularly those who suffer from cultural and linguistic displacement and yet cannot easily detach themselves from the influence of dominant institutional religion. And she encourages them to spread the rumors of God, to produce the countless discourses tracing many different trajectories so that their writings create a huge inventory of differences that untiringly shatter the obtuseness of the institutional church.

However, Cha never promises her readers that the acts of eating and writing the body of Christ will provide writers at the margin with refuge or shelter. The process of eating and writing the body will always spur tension and conflict. Sacramental activity cannot bring us clear and certain direction or an end toward which we can claim the authority of writing God: “There is no future” she says, but “only the onslaught of time.”³⁸⁰ The only outcome that Cha can expect from these acts is to be able to keep “moving,” to move “toward the movement itself,” to “extend” the journey of the

³⁸⁰ Cha, *Dictee*, 140.

immigrant and colonized lives without ceasing.³⁸¹ Cha insists that the acts are a painful labor. Cha herself, too, writes in many places in the text as if panting, as if spitting intermittent words. She also describes the acts in highly abrupt sentences as if telegraphing survival signals: “I write. I write you. Daily. From here. If I am not writing, I am thinking about writing. I am composing. Recording movements.”³⁸²

The acts are exhausting and endless. To eat and write the body with fragmented bodies while keeping contact with the institutional church demands intensive labor. It is a labor which is never finished and yet can never be abandoned. However, *Dictee* suggests that such a labor invites fellows into the labor by building a textual space in which they suffer together. Though the labor is unavoidable and inseparable insofar as one lives near the territory of the institution, it can extend the body of Christ. The subject of *Dictee* patiently waits for the moment in which this slow and vague movement takes the shape of a body, the moment in which she is able to be pinned and integrated into a larger discourse about the body of Christ. This moment will be the one in which the rigid foundation of the dominant institutional representation of the body is broken into pieces. This is the moment Cha waits for in *Dictee*, a moment in which her voice is heard and mummified religious language comes to life.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 163.

³⁸² Ibid., 56.

Conclusion

From Another's Fable to My Fable

This project is my attempt to respond to questions I have grappled with for years since I began studying theology in the United States. Why do I still want to write the body of Christ, and what do I seek from the body? What do I write about the body, if not about its European, male, and logocentric personifications? Why do I write with the body, even if it means that my “foreign,” “female,” “non-standard” body and tongue are constantly disconcerted with it? Why do I, even further, want to *write the body*, rather than writing *about* the body or writing *with* the body? Why do I still remain in touch with the body of Christ in spite of devastating feelings of inadequacy, hurt, and frustration? Why do I feel the urge to deal with the body even though I have the freedom to write without it? How can I rejoice in my act of writing the body of Christ, if I do not use my pen for the power and triumph of the body of God? To answer these questions, I have attended particularly to the body of Christ at the altar—the body given us to eat and write.

But I also have followed the path of the body of Christ, navigating from de Certeau's text to Hadewijch's and to Cha's writings, asking what it means to write the body of Christ for Christians at the margins of Christianity. My desires and concerns about the body resonate with theirs. De Certeau's heterology offers a methodological framework for the study of the paradoxical nature of the eucharistic body. The paradox between divine presence and absence is a distinctive attribute of the practice of the body of Christ through eating and writing. The consecrated bread and wine invite every Christian to the presence of Christ at the altar, and yet the bread and wine also remind the

one invited of the absence of the original body. The presence calls Christians forth to join the body of God, and yet the original body must be absent in order to be eaten and to be disseminated into the numerous bodies of individual Christians. The liturgy of the Eucharist now implies the act of writing the body of Christ, just as in the Eucharist, the memory of the original body of Christ still haunts Christians through words and images, but it is the death and absence of the original body that encourages Christians to participate in the act of producing the body. The absence of the body provides Christians with the condition of incorporating the divine body with their own contexts and with their own historicized subjects. Once the panoptic presence of the eucharistic body is countered and balanced by the eternal lack and absence of the body, the necessity of the sacramental body is magnified. For the body is the locus in which scattered and dispersed Christian identities, particularly conflicting identities between the institutional church and individual Christians from myriad contexts, are collected and forced into contact with each other.

The paradox of the body also carries great significance for the communitarian structure of Christian discourses. It is a reminder that the sacrament of the Eucharist is found in the place where the original body is no longer present. The Eucharist is a sacramental sign that commands us to suffer the lack of the body and to fill the empty site with our own bodies. Just as the act of eating the body of Christ is a daily sacrifice through which we remember Christ's death, so the act of writing the body is a habitual practice for remembering the absence of the original body. The paradox of the body for Christians is a peculiar mechanism to deal with the latency of divinity. While the body left the site of its original presence permanently empty, it constantly intervenes in the

lives of Christians through memory, affecting their perceptions, experiences, and associations with others.

To invoke the presence of the body in the present, Christians must shape communitarian structures in which diverse rumors of and opinions about the body are collected. The sacrament of the Eucharist creates a space for Christians to gather together and interact with one another. Its function is not to confirm truth claims. Rather, the body of Christ integrates itself into the communal space in order to blend with the bodies of Christians. The body of Christ disseminates, scatters, flows, and changes with human lives and desires. Thus, it remains alive, connected to the concrete realities of living Christians. Once it comes into contact with myriad human narratives, the unorganized desires and motions of individual Christians create weak and small stories—what de Certeau calls “fables”—of the body.

In chapters 3 and 4, the trajectory of my argument shifted toward writers who composed fables of the body of Christ from their own social locations, giving rise to a view of the eucharistic body of Christ as a place in which Christians write and rewrite the tradition. Hadewijch and Cha, two authors whose voices were deemed unorthodox and unauthoritative in light of the Christian tradition, are exemplars of the process of interaction initiated by the paradox of the divine body. By describing the textual spaces of the authors’ writings, I have observed how individual narratives mix with larger Christian discourses across time and space. These authors’ writings display the subversive potential of the body of Christ that gathers together Christian narratives grown in different contexts. The conflict and negotiation between the institutional church and individual Christians shows the respective limits of each and their need for cooperation

with each other. In order to communicate with fellow Christians, individual Christians must rely on signs and symbols accumulated within historical tradition. In order to be accountable to the members of its community, the institutional church must let the body of Christ disseminate to the concrete locations of individual Christians. The communal structures supporting the writing of the body of Christ lead members of Christianity to see themselves in relation to others. This relationship is necessarily vexatious, anguished, and even painful.

Hadewijch's writings particularly appeal to Christians living at the border between the clergy and the laity. Her writings manifest melancholy, which she turns into a distinct mechanism to deal with the paradox of the body. Hadewijch utilizes the uncertainty of the divine presence to challenge conventional understandings of God. Both literally and metaphorically, the Beguine Hadewijch lived at the intersection where the spiritual rigors of the cleric and of the laity clash with each other. Hadewijch shapes her distinctive writing subject through her interaction with the different components of cultures, languages, and theological ideas at the border. The body of Christ offered the Beguine the privilege of absorbing various cultural, linguistic, and intellectual influences at this border, influences that thereafter competed with those of the church hierarchy. The process of using words to describe the paradox of the body of Christ cast her into a perpetual search for new ways of bringing it to expression.

Meanwhile, Cha's writings display the cases of "strangers" whose ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity alienates them from the Western Christian tradition, even while their identities are formed by it. In *Dictee*, these strangers and foreigners find their relations with the body of Christ to be ones of hurt and dismay, even if they inevitably

deal with it. For Cha, the body of Christ is an indigestible substance because of the institution's narcissistic obsession with the body that paradoxically keeps the individual Christian from accessing the body and from communicating with other Christians. However, Cha turns her fragility into an eagerness to seek allies. The text's reader-centered structure suggests, for Christians, a way to sense and problematize the tension and conflict at the frontiers of the Christian tradition. The communitarian reading of Christian symbols proposed in *Dictee* does not resolve the uneasy relation immediately. Instead, it encourages Christian appreciation of these strangers' challenges.

* * *

Let us now return to the questions this dissertation has posed and allow this conclusion tell a fable of its own. I give my own flesh so that this conclusion enters into a web of numerous fables of God's body and may, eventually become an invitation to call forth other unrecognized fables into the discursive body of Christ.

Why do I want to deal with the body of Christ? Why do I still feel the need and desire for it? For the body is inseparable from what I claim myself as Christian. To claim Christ means for me to be part of the tradition, to communicate with other Christians, and to relate with people of other faith traditions as a Christian. Universalized institutional presentations of the body employing a single standard for beliefs, practices, and morals in the body should be held as suspicious and removed. The paradox of the body of Christ, however, shows that to be part of a tradition is not simply to follow accepted norms and regulations. In writing the body of Christ, I add my voice to others' voices and connect established signs and languages to my own context. The body's uneasy but inseparable association with the institution can be useful because it first provides a communicative

tool among Christians and, second, reveals for Christians the cracks and holes in the system. Through the body, I can identify emphatically with my fellow Christians who also want to discover, recover, and uncover the fact that the Christian tradition cannot be dominated by a single standard. In the history of Christianity, the body has constituted a focal point that draws these tantalizing voices into the contact zone.

The paradox of the body at the altar, furthermore, teaches me that the core of doing theology lies in the search instead of in the stabilization of a static presence of metaphysical being. Writing the body of Christ is meaningful insofar as it maintains the body as something desirable and impossible, striven for and yet never attained. The foundation of Christianity is placed in the paradox between the divine presence that manifest hopes for life and the absence that commands us to negate what we have already achieved in terms of our understanding of God. The body of Christ is not only what identifies Christianity; it is also what nullifies its identity.

Furthermore, the heart of the Christian tradition, as far as it is founded on the sacramental body, is an openness to change and to be changed. The humiliated body at the altar reminds me that the Christian religion has a deeper root than its history of imperialism, patriarchy, and expansionism. The body of Christ, therefore, awakens my desire to live as a Christian and to be part of a tradition. It keeps me from the temptation to rest on any achievement. It also reminds me that what was just yesterday is always bound to be unjust today. Writing the paradox of the body creates a passage into the tradition that is alert to the risk of falling into false convictions. It assures me that my own conviction can never penetrate the truth. My effort is valued not because my

opinions are closer to the truth than others but because they are just as close to the truth as others.

What do I pursue by writing the body of Christ? To write the body of Christ is, for me, a commitment to join the communal activity of practicing the body of Christ. The body at the altar announces that the Christian tradition lost its center when the original body disappeared, and what we now call tradition is a system built by multiple communities of believers (including those who have not been recognized). Only in communal structures can the body of Christ be seen and heard. Scattered narratives and unorthodox stories about the body of Christ must be considered as important as the doctrinal representation of the body, because those small narratives and stories contain the pieces of the body as much as do the doctrines. This collection of “fables” comprises a collage making up Christian narrative. The collage, of course, cannot be completed, nor can anyone even see the whole. Yet the body of Christ speaks through this collage of weak and small narratives. The body of Christ provides me, as it does my fellow Christians, with a chance to create and spread fables of the body.

Thus, I join in sharing and enriching the tradition of Christianity as whole. Writing the body of Christ with my own tongue does not mean that the writings of individual Christians are always in need of validation or authorization granted by employing grammar and signs accumulated in the tradition. Neither does it beg favors for the church to take care of the believers at the margin or to make doctrines favorable to these believers. The body already verifies that the voices of “strangers” like mine are not tokens of diversity in the tradition, but critical components in making the tradition whole. The body testifies to the fact that my “foreign,” “female,” “non-standard,” body is a

hidden piece of the body. To stress the necessity of incorporating with the body of Christ is to emphasize, instead, the need for the institutional church to accept and acknowledge that the believers at the margin are part of the body of Christ. Marginal discourses allow the church to recognize its borders and limits and to see itself in contact with and in fusion with other bodies within and around Christianity. The “weakness” of the believers at the margin, their “flaws” and “crooks” are precisely the nudge that their “power” lodges, as they reveal the illusion of the homogeneous institution.

To write the body of Christ is, also, a commitment to expose myself to others. My act of writing the body of Christ effaces my flesh as I attempt to make it more available and accessible. As I write the body of Christ, I am located in part of its discourses. I am read by others, and my stories mix with others’ stories. Through my writings, my own situatedness within plural and diverse social, cultural, and political locales is embodied, read, and assimilated with others’. I pursue my writing to shape a space of sharing in which these strange and foreign voices come, pass by, and collaborate. Therefore, I can let my writing be filled with challenges from other visions—so that I can see myself in relation to others, to the institution, to the Christian tradition, to larger Christian communities, to the other faith traditions, and to the larger society. Writing leads me to observe attentively the emerging possibilities and also disquieting tensions during the process of interaction.

What do I write about the body? I write the body of Christ from my own location as a Korean, bilingual, feminist theologian. My cultural location will require me, along with other tasks that I share with my fellow Christians, to break through the barrier between different cultures and languages in reworking and rewriting the body of Christ.

Instead of avoiding the conflicts and trying to resolve them hastily, I may create cacophony, challenge the conventional sense, and translate emerging insights across different cultures. I write the body of Christ with my own historicized subject shaped in the distinctive history in which I have grown up. I write the body of Christ in a way that cannot be reduced to anyone else's. I write my frustration for often being unable to communicate with the church hierarchy. I write the indigestibility of the body that comes with institutional demands that force me to swallow even if my own body resists. I write my ongoing search for a proper language. I write my destiny to get lost repeatedly in the search. I write my struggle.

I claim, too, that each and every writer of the body of Christ must face this demand, because all are called to suffer the paradox of the divine body. This means that the writers who deal with the body of Christ must throw their own bodies on the altar to suffer with the body. The writers demand an expression that embodies their own encounter with the body of Christ. They must remember that they write the body of Christ from a corner of the Christian tradition that they are responsible to make visible. They are required to see farther into the body than any given languages have been able to describe because the given languages are embodiments of others' encounter with the body of Christ. The writers of the body of Christ need to move, cross, and re-cross between affirmation and negation of their fellow theologians' achievements. To write the body of Christ is to express the body of Christ in their own languages and with their own identities shaped by the time and place in which they live.

The writings of Hadewijch and Cha compellingly show how this demand works with the author's struggle to find languages. The two authors assimilate the body of

Christ with their distinctive historicized subjects, intellectual gifts, and emotional profundities. They reshape languages and images of the body of Christ by breaking off conventional and normative knowledge. They show the cracks in the seemingly homogeneous images and languages of the body by revealing the inherent multiplicity of the tradition and also the rigidity of institutional boundaries. While working within and around the institution and playing with its fragments, Hadewijch and Cha rearrange worn-out languages for the body and redistribute them in a new context. The two authors mirror my struggle to live as a Christian within and around the institutional church. For Christians like Hadewijch and Cha who accept the destiny of being strangers or journeyers within and around the established tradition, the act of writing the body of Christ is a border journey.

I am, too, a border journeyer. My writings disturb and conflict with the normative languages of the body of Christ that the institution imposes on me. In the course of my writing, I may hear and sense the cacophonies caused by the conflicts. The cacophonies may be hurtful, but they also are a distinct challenge to me. I am placed in the transitional space where I need to confront and even learn to enjoy the cacophonies. I need to let different languages and ideas of God bump into each other to see what new expression comes out of the collision. Just like Hadewijch's and Cha's, my language of the body of Christ highlights the kind of alterity that can be worked out in the complex web of cultural and linguistic interactions. In doing so, my writings of the body may reveal the illusion and disguised attempts of the institutional church that have suppressed visions that embody difference.

Why do I still write the body of Christ in spite of the destined miscarriage? I write, above all, because of the impossibility of grasping the ineffable mystery of the body. Writing the body of Christ is, for me, trembling with uncertainty. What underlies my writing as a Korean female theologian is the conflict between the fear of allowing myself to be mistaken and the desire to bend myself to accepted norms—in order to be understood. From de Certeau to Hadewijch, and to Cha, the writers with whom I have journeyed beckon all Christians to a space where the body of Christ never allows for certainty and complete accomplishment. The body must be written evermore, and only be rewritten. Wherever and whenever we pen the body, we are always starting again, because the act of writing must be renewed at each time, by each new contribution. One cannot claim any certain “normative” and “right” category that controls others’ needs and desires to create new expressions for the body. To write the body of Christ is to seek the impossible truth by desire through a perpetual search.

I must admit that I will never be certain about my identity, about what comes next, about which direction to follow. But I know that I will always be searching. I may learn that the miscarriage does not mean a failure. It only signals a new departure. I may learn that my search anticipates something more truthful than anything I have already done. The insecure and indefinite act of writing estranges my mind from familiar things. Yet when I write the body of Christ this estrangement can be converted into an intense enthusiasm toward the always-coming truth. The feeling of inadequacy is not merely an ordeal, nor does it mean that I am incompetent. Instead, this feeling is a demand for a distinct consciousness, a distinct sensibility to discern the concrete and the material

textual of my life and integrate it into the body of Christ. The impossibility of fulfilling the absence of the body keeps me from mediocrity and self-satisfaction.

What can I hope to rejoice in, if I do not write for the power and triumph of the body? As a stranger and border journeyer, my writing may display the situation of exclusion and disconnection. Writing the body of Christ at the margins of Christianity rarely rewards, if not punishes outright. My writings often painfully disclose that the final victory of the resurrected body is an illusion or at best a daydream for Christians who live around and outside the border of the institutional church. My wish that my correspondence with the body of Christ may heal and ease the pains of my being “inappropriated” is also far from reality. For Christians who accept the impossibility of bodily attainment, writing is co-suffering, suffering that we cannot abandon even if we never reach a point of satisfaction. So how can I maintain my commitment to engage with the body? What is my hope?

Hope comes from the communal space. Writing the body of Christ is not a solitary activity but one that requires collaboration among people. To write is to suffer with my fellow Christians who join the destined failure. The hope must be found at the passing moments of discovering others with whom I can share struggles, moments of correspondence with the body of Christ that are manifested in their writings. Into this search and struggle, I am compelled to invite the marginalized and dispossessed, those who are eager to connect with others and to integrate their bodies into the body, and those who cannot stop desiring to embody the body of Christ in their own languages. Even though they may seem unorganized, may seem to be guided only by established norms, each of them is a writer of the body of Christ, an agent who brings divergent plurality to

the tradition and alters conventional determinations. The hope I bear in my act of writing is the prospect of sharing this act of suffering with fellow strangers and border journeyers. By this co-suffering, I hope the body of Christ will be invoked in our contexts, and may become even more attainable as it become more diverse.

The act of writing the body of Christ is exhausting and endless. To write the body with fragmented bodies while keeping contact with the institutional church demands intensive labor. The act of writing the body of Christ is also only intermediary and not conclusive. However, the act is indispensable in our search for the body of Christ. For the labor builds a space in which we suffer together. The labor collects weak and tiny voices, so it enables the body of Christ to reveal its living flesh. The fear and trembling of those individuals reflects the unguarded side of the glorious flesh and recuperates the ugly wounds of the body. The labor of writing seems meaningless and hopeless, but it resiliently reproduces the illusions manifested in the body of Christ. It is not radically defiant, nor decidedly counterproductive, but it helps us face the reality. If this precariousness is the reality of Christian existence and thus of Christ faith and practice, these feelings of uncertainty can be used to sharpen consciousness and sensibility toward the truth. I hope, then, that the frustrations of writing will be redirected into the joys of discovering unorganized and unguided signs—that the fear of misusing words will be transformed into empathy for fellow journeyers.

Therefore, I patiently wait for the moment in which this slow and vague movement will take shape, the moment in which I am able to be connected and integrated into the larger tradition, the moment in which I can further renew and rewrite this tradition. This is the moment in which the rigid foundation of the dominant institutional

representation of the body is loosen and broken into pieces of rumors. This is the moment in which mummified religious language comes to life. This is the moment in which the body of Christ becomes to breathe again. This is the moment I long for in my act of writing. This is the moment when I can finally imagine resurrection, carefully and yet attentively, anxiously and yet rigorously. This is moment that must be seen clearly only if I never stop trying to write the body of Christ with my own body, because, as Cha says, “The ink spills thickest before it runs dry before it stops working at all.”³⁸³

* * *

It is time to close my project. But I know that this closure represents another departure. Now, I let my writing go and drift in the hope that it will flow with myriad individual Christian narratives, filled with deviations, diversions, heresies, poems, and whispers for the body of Christ. I hope my writing of the body, my own fable, conveys the expression of faith that willingly moves with my fellow Christians’ fables, gathering them up into the labor of writing.

Writing. I write because the act of writing keeps me from sleeping, from stiffening, from being hypnotized. I write because I know if I were able to write I could continue to relate with others. I write, and therefore I confront, neither avoiding nor dreaming. I write and so invite my fellow Christians into the perpetual labor, the act of writing and eating the body of Christ.

³⁸³ Ibid., 133.

Bibliography

- Ahearne, Jeremy. *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Fathers of English Dominican Province and Daniel J. Sullivan, trans. 1952.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Avis, Paul D. L. *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- Badiou, Alain. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Explorations in Theology IV: Spirit and Institution*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995.
- Bauerschmidt, Fredrick Christian. "The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology." *Modern Theology* 12, no. 1:12.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.
- Bernard of Clairvaux. "Sermons on the 'Song of Songs.'" In *Selected Works*. Evans, G. R., Ewert Cousins, and Jean LeClercq, trans. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Blankenhorn, Bernhard. "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet." *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 4, no. 2 (2006): 255–94.
- Boeve, Lieven, and Lambert Leigseen, eds. *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*. Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 2001.
- Bouchard, Donald, ed. *Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Brammer, Marsanne. "Thinking Practice: Michel de Certeau and the Theorization of Mysticism." *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 26–37.
- Buchanan, Ian, ed. *Michel de Certeau in the Plural*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- _____. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- _____. *Prearious life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Bynum, Carolyn. *The Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- _____. *Jesus as Mother: Studies of Spirituality in the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Caputo, John D., Dooley, Mark, and Scanlon, Michael J., eds. *Questioning God*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Cavanaugh, William T. *Torture and the Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Certeau Reader*. Graham Ward, ed. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- _____. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986.
- _____. *The Mystic Fable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- _____. "The Gaze of Nicholas of Cusa." *Diacritics* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 2–38.
- _____. "Mysticism." *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 49–61.
- _____. "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life," Fredric Jameson, trans. *Social Text*, no. 3 (Autumn 1980): 3–43.
- _____. *The Possession at Loudon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- _____. "La Rupture Instauratrice." *Esprit*, June 1971.
- _____. *The Writing of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung, *Dictee*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

- . Personal Statement and Outline of Independent Postdoctoral Project, submitted for Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of California at Berkeley, 1979, Cha Archive.
- Chambers, Iain, and Lidia Curtis. eds. *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Cheng, Anne Alin. *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*, New York: Oxford, 2001.
- Chopp, Rebecca S. *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.
- Clarke, Peter D. *The Interdict in the Thirteenth Century: A Question of Collective Guilt*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Cobussen, Marcel. *Rethinking Spirituality Through Music*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2008.
- Constance M. Lewallen. *Cha's Exilee/Temps Morts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Cummings, Owen F., *Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History*. New York, Paulist Press, 2005.
- Davis, Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. London: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Gayatri Spivak, trans. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *Jesus, Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- Ford, David, and Rachel Muers. *The Modern Theologians*. Malden, MA: Blackwell 2005.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Freud Reader*. Peter Gay, ed. and trans. New York: W. W. Norton, 1989.
- Giroux, Henry A. *Disturbing Pleasures: Learning Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Hadewich. *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*. Mother Columba Hart, O.S.B., trans. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- . *Hadewijch: Visionen*, 2 vols. Mierlo, Jozef van, S.J., ed. Louvain: Vlaamsch Boekenhalle, 1924 and 1925.

- . *Hadewijch: Strophische Gedichten*, 2 vols. Antwerp: Standaard, 1942.
- . *Hadewijch: Brieven*, 2 vols. Antwerp: Standaard, 1947.
- . *Hadewijch: Mengeldichten*. Antwerp: Standaard, 1952.
- Henderson, Mae G., ed. *Borders, Boundaries, and Frames; Essay in Cultural Criticism and Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1978.
- Hollywood, Amy. *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Maguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995.
- . *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, the Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Jay, Nancy B. "Sacrifice as Remedy for Having Been Born of Women." In Castelli, Elizabeth, ed. *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Kaye, Nick. *Site-Specific Act*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Kramsch, Claire, and Thomas Nolden. "Redefining Literacy in a Foreign Language: Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German." *German in the 21st Century* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 28–35.
- Leith, John H., ed. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1983.
- Lee, Kun Jong. "Rewriting Hesiod, Revisioning Korea: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* as a Subversive Hesiodic Catalogue of Women." *College Literature* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 77–99.
- Lee, Ming Jung. "Baring the Apparatus: *Dictee*'s Speaking Subjectivity Writes a Response." *Hitting Critical Mass* 6, no.1 (1999): 35–49.
- Leeming, Bernard. *Principle of Sacramental Theology*. Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1956.
- Lerner, Robert. *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
- Lewallen, Constance M. *The Dream of Audience*. Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University Press, 2001.

- Liew, Tat-Siong Ben. *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008.
- Löben Sels, Robin van. *A Dream in the World: Poetics of Soul in Two Women, Modern and Medieval*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003.
- Lubac, Henri de. *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*. Gemma Simmonds, C.J., trans. Price, Richard, and Chistopher Stephens, eds. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Lubac, Henri de, and Angelo Scola. *Entretien Autour de Vatican II: Souvenir et Reflexions, Theologies*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1985.
- Macy, Gary. *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period: A Study of the Salvific Function of the Sacrament According to the Theologians c.1080–1220.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- Madigan, Shawn, ed. *Mystics, Visionaries, and Prophets: A Historical Anthology of Women's Spiritual Writings*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Massey, Doreen B. *For Space*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2005.
- McBriaen, Richard P., ed. *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995.
- McDonnell, Ernest W. *Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture*. New York: Octagon Books, 1969.
- McGinn, Bernard. *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism 1200–1350*. New York: Crossroad, 1998.
- McPartlan, Paul. *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology*. Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1995.
- . *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri De Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*. Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1993.
- Metz, Johannes Baptist. *A Passion for God: The Mystical-political Dimension of Christianity*. New York: Paulist Press, 1997.
- Milbank, John, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds. *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Milbank, John, and Slavoj Žižek. *The Monstrosity of Christ*. Creston Davis, ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

- Minh-ha Trin T., *Writing, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- . *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representations, Gender and Cultural Politics* New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Mitchell, Nathan. *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*. New York: Pueblo, 1982.
- Mommaers, Paul, and Elisabeth M. Dutton. *Hadewijch: Writer, Beguine, Love Mystic*. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004.
- . *Riddles of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus*. Louvain: Peeters, 2003.
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B. *Lives of the Anchoresses: The Rise of the Urban Recluse in Medieval Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Monroe, Jonathan. "Index and Symptom: 'Connective' Reading, (Post)Language Writing, and Cultural Critique." *Contemporary Literature* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 748–770.
- Murk-Jansen, Saskia. *Brides in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Beguines*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998.
- Nelson, Cary, and Grossberg, Lawrence, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Champaign: University of Illinois, 1988.
- Newman, Barbara. *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955.
- Osborne, Kenan. *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.
- Osmer, Richard R. and Schweitzer, Friedrich, *Religious Education between Modernization and Globalization: New perspectives on the United States and Germany*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.
- Penner, Myron B., ed. *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*. Ada, MI: Brazos Press, 2005.
- Peerman, Dean G., and Martin E. Marty, eds. *A Handbook of Christian Theologians*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- Petroff, Elizabeth A. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

- Robertson, R. "Glocalization: Time Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity." In *Global Modernities*. Lash, Scott, Roland Robertson, and Mike Featherstone, eds., London: Sage, 1995.
- Ross, Susan A. *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*. New York: Continuum, 2001.
- Rubin, Miri. *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Rudy, Gordon. *Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.
- Schwartz, Regina. *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 2008.
- Smith, James K. A. "Nothing Outside the Text? Taking Derrida to Church." *Perspective, A Journal of Reformed Thought*, March 2006, www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=3003 (accessed August 10, 2010).
- Spahr, Juliana. "Postmodernism, Readers, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictee." *College Literature* 23, no. 3 (Oct. 1996): 23–43.
- . "Everybody's Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity." *South Atlantic Review* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 92–96.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia." In *The Spivak Reader*. Spivak, Gayatri, Donna Landry, and Gerald M. MacLean, eds. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Streeter, Tom. *The Church and West: An Introduction to Church History*. New York: Authorhouse Press, 2006.
- Suydam, Mary, and Joanne E. Ziegler, eds. *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Voderholzer, Rudolf. *Meet Henri De Lubac: His Life and Work*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008.
- Ward, Graham, "The Voice of the Other: Certeau's God," *New Blackfriars*, November 1996.
- Ward, Graham, ed. *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*. New York: Wiley-

Blackwell, 1998.

———. “The Voice of the Other: Certeau’s God,” in *New Blackfriars*, November 1996, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publisher., 1996.

Wawrykow, Joseph P. *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Wiethaus, Ulrike. “Sexuality, Gender and Body in Late Medieval Women’s Spirituality.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no. 1 (1991): 35–52.

Wilson, Rob. “Falling into the Korean Uncanny on Reading Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictee*.” *Korean Culture* 12 (Fall 1991): 33–37.

Wiseman, James A. Review of *The Mystic Fable*. Vol. 1, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, by Michel de Certeau. *The Catholic Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (July 1993): 535–537.

Woywod, Stanislaus. *The New Canon Law: Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law*. NP: BiblioBazaar, 2009.

Yi Kang, Hyun. L., Norma Alarcon, and Elaine H. Kim. *Writing Self and Writing Nation*. Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 1994.

Online Resources

Aarde, Andries van. “What Is Theology in ‘Public Theology’ and What is Public’ about ‘Public Theology’?” *HTS, Theological Studies, 1220–1222*, Available online at <http://ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/viewFile/41313/8693> (accessed December 2006).

Definition of the Feast of Corpus Christi, Available at Catholic Encyclopedia, “Corpus Christi (feast),” Catholic Encyclopedia, available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04390b.htm>.

Definition of Non-Resident Alien, Available at IRS, “Topic 851—Resident and Non-Resident Aliens,” www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc851.html (accessed March 4, 2010).

Information of the feast of Corpus Christi, Available online at the New Advent website: www.newadvent.org/cathen/05295b.htm (accessed March 2007).

Woodiwiss, Ashley. “What’s So Radical about Orthodoxy?” *Christianity Today*, May 24, 2005, Available online at www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/mayweb-only/22.0c.html?start=2 (accessed Dec 21, 2008).