COMMUNION WITH FAST FOOD

The Spirituality of Work and Sacrament

By STEPHEN HAPPEL

Smell this coffee.
Its molecules, as you bend your head to them,
Outwhiz the edge of space. Exciting, but
Why the incognito, and will it never
Be seen through?
James Merrill, from 'Menu', *The inner room* (1988)

PRIOR TO THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, the Midwestern church in the United States that our family attended offered holy communion outside of mass every ten minutes from six a.m. until the children's eucharist at nine a.m. A second priest was required even during the mass itself so that he could distribute communion at least twice while the other services were taking place. One of the assigned priests waited in the confessional until the appropriate time, completed a brief ritual facing an auxiliary tabernacle, and distributed the small white wafers of consecrated bread to anyone who might appear. And many hundreds did, especially during Lent. On their way to work, men and women would stop to communicate and then return to their public lives. As a brother recently reminded me, 'Isn't communion, after all, the ultimate in religious fast food?'

In contemporary western cultures, food has almost never been simply a matter of survival.[1] Food narrates the collective imagination of those who participate in its rituals of gathering, preparation, eating and drinking, and garbage disposal. It involves a set of images, dreams, tastes, choices and values. Food, particularly as advertised, speaks about the community's links with its own past, its (often not so hidden) sublimation of sexuality and gender definition, and the ideals of diet, bodiliness, and health in a society. Food was once associated with carefully segmented times and places; now, almost all occasions are associated with eating and drinking. Foods like coffee, once used as stimulants, are now experienced as a 'break' or relaxation from the

work routine. Snacks of all varieties (but especially sweet and salty) occupy the 'time between' while people are engaged in some other activity.

The semantic values of food have affected our religious sensibilities as well. In the pre-Reformation and subsequent Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity, eating and drinking have been the central ritual after initiation.[2] And although these meal rituals have taken many different styles, they nonetheless have focused the weekly Christian assemblies upon food. But the availability of fast food has shifted our cultures and their eating habits in significant ways. In the essay that follows, it seems appropriate to examine briefly, first, the development and goals of the fast-food culture; second, the routinization of food-work and the effects this has had especially upon women and adolescents; and, third, the interaction of fast-food culture and Christian spirituality, primarily with regard to the eucharist.

Fast-food culture: its development

The hamburger culture of McDonald's, Wimpy and other chains had its origins much earlier in human history. It is inextricably linked to the contemporary consumption of meat as the primary source for protein in the diet of the developed world. Unlike other cultures, Europe has a long history as a land of meat-eaters extending back to the Middle Ages.[3] Domesticated animals and game provided a 'riot of meat'. But this hegemony of meat declined after the seventeenth century. With the increasing population in Europe during the early modern period, cultivated cereal grains and vegetables dominated in certain classes until the mid-nineteenth century. Peasants and the working classes ate bread (often adulterated); but upper-class individuals continued to eat large quantities of meat, especially in the colonies of the Empire. Only with the advent of artificial pastures, scientific stock-raising and North American imports in the nineteenth century did the amount of meat (lamb, beef and pork) for the ordinary person rise in western Europe.

In the United States, the consumption of meat, especially beef, became not only a status symbol for immigrants, but a prime 'marker' for the male as the dominant wage-earner in the family.[4] By the turn of the century, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom, the technology of slaughtering and meat processing rapidly increased the production and consumption of meat.[5] The growth of a hamburger culture, dependent upon the beef industry, and the increasing use of the automobile among the middle class in the United States were directly linked. Indeed, as a symbol of America, 'the hamburger has surpassed

even the American automobile . . . becoming the quintessential symbol of the American dream and life-style'.[6]

The hamburger became popular at the St Louis World's Fair in 1904. It was useful because it could be quickly and efficiently prepared; it was easy to carry, and could be rapidly consumed without utensils. It was not the *first* 'fast' food, of course, in any culture. Other cultures, both ancient and modern, have made available to themselves either already prepared foods for journeys or quickly cooked meals at inns or grills alongside the road. But characteristically, fast food identified a population that wanted to be 'on the move'. Anthropologically, roasting ground beef may be also more closely tied to the history of the American frontier and to nature than first supposed. Boiled food such as cereal grains required receptacles; roasted meat demanded simply a spit and a fire.[7] Hamburgers trailed mythic allusions to the past for Americans, whether the food was cooked over the open flame of the suburban barbecue for a picnic or fried through mechanized reproduction at McDonald's for eating in a car.

In the United States, the quest for the frontier was replaced by the highway culture of the twentieth century. By 1925, Ford manufactured nine thousand automobiles a day; in 1927, there were twenty-six million cars using newly paved roads. In 1956, when the interstate highway system was commissioned, the goal was to connect every region of the United States by 41,000 miles of multiple-lane cement expressways. With 140 million automobiles now in use, the average American travels almost ten thousand miles each year.

Restaurants followed this expansive road system. Less formal cafés were added to full service restaurants in cities so that travellers could enter a town and exit quickly. By World War I, tea-rooms lined the major highways.[8] Tea-rooms were popular near larger population centres as the terminus for a day's journey or for travellers who wanted reasonable prices, a simple menu and prompt service. Diners, modelled after railroad cars, offered standardized foods in the 1930s. These roadside stands emulated the food services at the St Louis Fair: the ice cream cone, the hot dog and the hamburger. The first such stands that served motorists in their automobiles (with 'carhops') were in Dallas in 1921. The first A & W Root Beer Stand opened in 1923 and Howard Johnson began his chain of coffee shops in the 1930s. As an indication of how closely these restaurants were tied to the automobile culture, one should notice that all but twelve of Johnson's restaurants were closed due to gas rationing during World War II.

The growth of Drive-In Restaurants after World War II led directly to the development of the McDonald's chain. Prefabricated buildings

and low labour costs were the key to successful profits. In effect, Ray Kroc, the founder of the McDonald's franchising system, applied automation to purchasing, cooking and food delivery. Hamburgers were developed on an assembly line. The hamburger patty weighed exactly 1.6 ounces, measured 3.875 inches in diameter, and contained no more that 19 per cent fat. Even the exact size of the bun (3.5 inches wide) with its higher sugar content and the amount of onions (one-fourth of an ounce) were determined.[9]

Everything was centrally designed: the location of a franchise, training programmes for the staff, approved and supervised suppliers, carefully designed equipment, absolutely uniform specifications, and unannounced inspections. There are step-by-step instructions for every task to be performed. In the six-hundred-page 'Operations and Training Manual', full-colour photographs illustrate the proper placement of ketchup, mustard and pickle slices on each type of hamburger on the menu.[10] To deviate from the plan is to lose one's job.

This complete standardization of food preparation has been enormously successful financially. Americans now spend approximately 30 per cent of their restaurant dollars on fast food; McDonald's chain alone accounts for 10 per cent of the 'away from home' business. Over 42 per cent of the total population in the United States eats at a fast-food restaurant every day. In most major cities, no one is farther than a three-minute car ride from a McDonald's franchise.[11] In 1977 there were four thousand restaurants in operation; in 1978, 5,185; and in 1978 another 171 restaurants were under construction, including forty-five outside the United States. By 1990, there were 11,800 shops world-wide.

The culture of fast food: goals and effects on the work force

Fast food was invented as a convenience – initially as a way to allow the ordinary cooks and food-servers time away from their tasks. In this sense, fast food or ready-made food was a substitute for the servants that middle-class families could no longer afford. Without hired cooks, the housewife, more often than not, took the responsibility for food preparation and food distribution. Fast food provided a 'short-cut' so that women could 'enjoy' a warm meal along with their families.

Convenience, simplicity and trustworthy, uniform preparation – all accomplished for the goal of leisure. Tenements in New York without elaborate kitchens took advantage of Chinese 'take-out' – food that could be prepared quickly with fresh ingredients and transported in a simple fashion to the home table. Fish and chips must have functioned

in much the same way for the United Kingdom. TV dinners, with their 'balanced' meal programmes, were invented in the 1950s to invite families to congregate at the video altar in the evening, without the wives' having to prepare the ordinary evening meal.

The goals of the fast-food chains, besides enormous financial profits, were identical. They hoped to prepare food efficiently and to deliver it to customers quickly while it was still hot. The removal of the intermediate 'carhop' was essential to the completion of this food preparation circle. Too much food in 'drive-ins' arrived at the car cold and inedible. Only when the technology developed sufficiently could McDonald's develop the 'Drive-thru' lane so that people could serve themselves in their automobiles.

To achieve the goal of delivering the food quickly, the intermediate figure – the waiter – had to be carefully controlled. Work had to be completed with a smile. In turn, this required establishing a clear, orderly procedure for service – a routinization of the work force and the work process.[12] The establishment of a standardized workforce, however, also required teaching customers how to approach the product served. Not only the servers, but the customers had to gain familiarity with the overarching order of the process. Absolute standardization of produce, a finished food product, and uniformly cheerful service have become the marks of the hamburger culture. Every customer can depend upon the essential uniformity, no matter what the location. But in this process of standardization of the product and the routinization of the work, there is also a deliberate redesign of consumer demand. A cultural view of the world has been established with this shift in our consumption of food.

The workers at fast-food shops are significantly different from earlier service enterprises. Creating standardized routines for workers required labourers with low skills; there is little deliberative knowledge necessary to work at the fast-food restaurants. Everything has already been settled. Almost half of McDonald's US employees are under twenty years of age; more recently, they have employed housewives and senior citizens as part-time workers – without health or pension benefits. At one point, it was customary in McDonald's to continue gender differentiation *within* the workplace as well; men worked in the kitchen; women greeted the customers.

Not so curiously this reinforced the gender divisions and power relations in families in the United States. Although women do most of the food shopping, their choices are often dictated by men's food preferences. It was thought that women 'window-workers' would be

more appealing to men than men. The predominance of women and adolescents in this part-time work continues the gendered categorization of women as those in the society who are insufficiently prepared to take responsibility for 'real', professional work. What does one do when one has no marketable skills where highly paying jobs require such talents? One works in the fast-food industry. The ready-made food that started out to give women leisure from cooking has become their primary means of 'independent' support or the 'second income' for a working family.

The part-time workforce is also kept dependent upon the manager of the store since no straightforward work schedule is possible. No more crew is hired than is necessary to accommodate the flow of customers, measured in half-hour increments. Most workers have fluctuating schedules, working either beyond their shift or leaving early – but never beyond their part-time hours. There is often little ability to plan ahead for one's work schedule. The clientele, on the other hand, are mostly families; teens do not loiter at McDonald's. The money was to be made from the growth of suburban families and their children.

The goal of the training and work itself, whether behind the counter, cleaning, or frying hamburgers, eliminated any decision-making within the job. The systems have become so computerized, so carefully calibrated, that there is little room for human error. The ultimate standardization, however, was in the 'interactive' work that servers must perform with the customer. Even their language has been carefully controlled and prepared. There is a memorized script, punctuated by a smile.

Service recipients, however, must also undergo some standardization. Advertising teaches prospective customers their role in obtaining food: how to approach the individual who takes the order, how to complete the transaction, and how to dispose of trash. (It took almost fourteen centuries for the western world to develop even moderately common use of the fork in place of fingers for eating; it has taken McDonald's less than forty years to teach us how to eat with our fingers again!) In effect, many of the tasks completed by waiters in a classic restaurant are now serviced by the customer who has learned certain behavioural norms. As Robin Leidner says: 'The cultural influence of routinizing service work thus goes beyond its impact on workers and its requirement that service-recipients cooperate with organizational logic during service encounters'.[13]

Fast food has produced a culture not only in terms of the standardized material substances it offers for sustenance, but also, and at

least as importantly, in terms of the human relationships it established. Forced to respond to organizational manipulation, customers must contend with their sense of personal autonomy, supposed freedom, and understanding of self to submit to their need for food. Customers who know that the interaction at the counter or in the car is carefully scripted have deliberately or ironically attempted to subvert it. The general 'cultural cover' that is meant to avoid this is the mandated smiling friendliness that workers must maintain. For the worker or the customer to violate that friendly manner regularly or intentionally quickly distorts the social conventions, not just in this situation, but in others as well. The social world changes as both workers and customers learn to be suspicious about the overarching demeanour of public discourse.

In effect, fast-food culture has changed not only the food we eat, but our modes of interacting with one another. Modernity, that world from whose culture we are only just emerging, rejected our old, inefficient ways of past production, reproduced in repetitive fashion 'new' essential forms, and provided a hierarchy of experts to inform us how to do it. The new food was to be uniform, simple and efficiently constructed. But the fast-food restaurants have also tried to standardize the interaction of server and client, thereby creating significant ambiguities. How do I know that the smile that is preparing the hamburger I am about to eat is not poisoning me? Cynicism and withdrawal of cultural trust become the underlying irony of fast-food culture. Indeed, Joanne Finkelstein has recently argued that dining out has become a genuine incivility.[14] The careful ordering of the dining experience from room decor and waiter's script to polite conversation makes authentic human interaction very difficult, if not impossible, in that environment.

Fast-food culture and sacramental spirituality

Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, once said:

> I speak of faith in McDonald's as if it were a religion. And without meaning any offense to the Holy Trinity, the Koran, or the Torah, that's exactly the way I think of it. I've often said that I believe in God, family, and McDonald's – and in the office, that order is reversed.[15]

Rifkin points out that McDonald's creates a kind of sanctuary along the open road, a place to retreat from the roar of the automobile. 'Pilgrims could rest and be refreshed, knowing that everything would be orderly, predictable, and above all efficient, the secular catechism of the new suburban spirituality.'[16]

The goals of modernity – to establish order through rejection of the old chaotic inefficiency, to develop uniform patterns, and to provide clear directions by experts – have infected the spiritual malaise of the churches as well. Such cultural elements become the architecture of our desires. We inhabit the culture and thereby expect and anticipate particular results in religion. Religion can reflect the culture, replace it, or resist it. Catholic spirituality in the post-Vatican II Church has done all three, especially in regard to the eucharist.

Reflecting the culture. Many Americans experience their church as simply a bureaucratic clone of the social system. Large suburban congregations have been structured with multiple layers of functionaries who govern the services they attend, not unlike the business world they inhabit every day. Liturgical experts defined their celebrations. Post-Vatican II worship space and services were often experienced as sterilized results determined by 'others' who (however well-intentioned) mandated life for the community at large.

Sunday liturgies became 'sacramental delivery' systems, not very different from the older 'fast-food' eucharists. They were simply longer; and longer is not necessarily 'better'. Here it is important to realize that certain 'styles' of public worship have always developed in different cultures in which the Church struggled to inculturate itself. Basilicas mark the world of late antiquity, just as Romanesque fortress churches mark the early northern European Middle Ages. The world of Gothic windows and arches marks another kind of monastic inculturation, just as the shift to Renaissance human measure redesigned Christian spirituality.

Pre-Vatican II eucharist focused upon the priest as cipher, offering a sacrifice to which the laity joined themselves in silence and private prayer. The example used at the beginning of the paper about a regular redistribution of the pre-sanctified hosts was, in one sense, an inculturation of the sacrament into western fast-food culture! The eucharist became a coffee break, to be consumed along the way as an antidote to the ordinary routine of work. The shift in dramatic metaphors after the Council has tended toward a demotic interchange ('Good morning!' 'Good morning, father'). This was often thought to develop a more domestic, informal, meal-like environment in which to pray.

The shift to the meal-metaphors, especially the more domestic motifs, contains several problems. The first is *historical anachronism*, in which communities presume that they are recovering ancient traditions. 'Sitting or reclining around a table' (as in one's own home) had very little to do with the style of Christian assemblies after the mid-

second century, if not earlier. The weekly friendship-meal or the annual Jewish Seder had largely given way to more elaborate ceremonies. Public banquets in the Hellenistic world might have been a better analogy, with their structured serving of dishes and drink. With the appearance of basilicas (both before and after Constantine) as an appropriate venue for worship, the style of Christian eucharist, both in the Eastern and Western Empires, gained in solemnity and imperial ceremony, so that 'domestic meal' would hardly describe the interaction of clergy and congregations.

Secondly, the presumption that the eucharist is about a transformed version of domestic eating and drinking creates a problem in *a society in which people rarely eat at a table together*, except at the most festive occasions. Not only does almost half of the population eat out every day, but they do not eat in common. They use a 'domestically precooked' food (or 'fresh' frozen foods, cooked in a microwave), often decided by the independent whims of individual family members. Going to a fast-food restaurant allows each family member to choose her or his own food. The advertising that surrounds the food makes it appear individualized, festive and spontaneous. It creates community where there was little or none. Our domestic eating has changed so much that the eucharist is no longer easily linked to the ordinary food patterns of the western world.

Fast food standardizes the substances we eat, the processes for creating them and the interactions that define our consumption. Eucharist can be modelled after the same patterns. The standardization of the bread and wine at eucharist is 'normal'. To offer non-routinized bread encounters ecclesiastical censure. But the rubrics that structure sacramental behaviour also can collapse into the current culture. Ritual interactions can share the same suspicion as the 'have a nice day' of the McDonald's window-worker. Knowing that we are being manipulated by advertising before we enter the restaurant and that the workers are attempting to control our behaviour as consumers when we arrive makes us suspicious of *all* human interactions, a state that Anthony Giddens calls 'cynical pessimism'.[17]

Replacing the culture. For about two hundred years Catholic Christianity responded to the developments of modernity by replacing it with the construction of 'Roman Catholic Christianity'.[18] Among other institutional adaptations, this strategy created a style of worship that appeared timeless, transcendent and sacrificial, to substitute for the transience, the immanence and self-serving world of modernity.[19] Fast-food culture is the ultimate product of transience: throw-away plates

and cups, quickly prepared food eaten 'on the run'. Fast-food culture is about its own self-glorifying patterns and about serving oneself 'whatever one wants'. McDonald's recent slogan has been: 'We do it all for you'!

Worship could replace this. Some of the nostalgia for pre-Vatican II worship in the current *Zeitgeist* of the Catholic Church hopes that a more transcendental, mysterious style for the eucharist and the other sacraments would rectify the errors of the recent capitulation to modernity. In the current climate, if a more demotic worship will not do, a more solemn, spectacular one can replace it. Replacing 'On eagle's wings' with Thomas Tallis' anthems may seem appropriate, but it may also simply be the cannibalization of the past for the sake of a newly valued commodity. This commodification of a petrified past marks the revolving style of the current fashion industry or the revolving order of national theme restaurants. Instead of worship based upon the bourgeois drama of the banal bureaucratization of food, we get liturgy that uses the model of *Cats* or *Phantom of the opera*. Spectacle (historical or otherwise) wraps the meal and its sacrificial cost in a glittering foil of masque-like delicacies.

Resisting the culture. The prior strategy for dealing with modernity can, of course, arrive on the scene from stage-left or stage-right. Ideologies are always ready to manipulate the characters of worship in the hope that they will replace the old ideas with new behaviour. However, both resist modernity not from within, but by trying to impose an answer from without. They replicate the strengths and weaknesses of modernized cultures within the Christian churches. The resistance to the culture of modernity that I wish to describe, however, requires a more stringent spirituality – one that claims modernity for itself and transforms it from within. The goal is to engage the Christian imagination *within* western European culture, structured as it now is by advertisers, bureaucracies and carefully targeted consumer delivery services.

It is important that the bread Christians share once a week is not hamburger beef! Or better stated: cereal grains are flesh and blood. This metaphor should appear strange to us; it should startle us by its underlying fear of cannibalism, its subterranean connection of culture (bread) and nature (a living body). The linguistic behaviour ought to awaken some new imaginative world in which food, kneaded and warmed at a hearth, baked in an oven, recalls stories of the past and dreams for the future. Eating this food, digesting the grains, change it into our flesh and blood, literally making the culture of stories the iron

in our blood and the shaping cells that cover our skeletons. Cereal protein becomes the substance of our skin and bones.

The imaginative world of the weekly Christian food, however, should initiate a new line of stories, not alongside of, but within the eating and drinking that occurs at fast-food restaurants. The consumption of Christian bread and wine links the transformed body, changed behaviour, and a prognosis for the future in a resistance to a culture by subverting it from within. Religious inculturation only raises credible questions if it knows the world of modernity more intimately than modernity knows itself.

The world of McDonald's contradicts itself internally when it not only standardizes hamburger patties and pickles, but also routinizes the human interactions. It creates an ambiguity that works only so long as both server and consumer grant its usefulness. On the one hand, the server's tasks involve 'selling' customers as much food as they can carry away; the consumer responds by negotiating his or her own needs. The overarching 'ritual pattern' is 'friendship' – a highly scripted performance by the server. It works only so long as customers do not operate suspiciously. But both server and client know that the smiles exchanged are a cover story for a much more hard-nosed transaction.

Nonetheless, the patterns of yearning that appear *within* the fast-food culture are for authenticity, friendship and community. They hope for a world in which interpersonal interaction shows up as spontaneous and free, personal values that become the basis for all infrastructures of order and the delivery of human goods. The utopian thirst that underlies the rituals of fast food requires comment since they are structured within an entire cultural matrix that the Christian eucharist must address with its basic metaphor of 'bread become meat'. Here it seems appropriate to raise two issues: the dependence of the fast-food industry upon beef and the ambiguous role of women in the system.

The fast-food business uses 40 per cent of the meat produced in the United States. The cheapest beef, however, is range-fed; and after the exhaustion of cattle resources in the US, the food industry began importing beef from Latin America in the 1960s. The international infrastructure necessary to produce this beef changes ecologies, redesigns local workforces, and confiscates land from natives to feed the American and European markets. To eat a hamburger links the body of the consumer with the bodies of underpaid labourers in Argentina and to burned rain forests that once housed indigenous

peoples. Grasslands for cattle have replaced them. The abstract delivery system of the fast-food restaurant covers its infrastructure by selling itself as local, friendly folk who are only 'serving you'.

The eucharistic bread resists the dependence upon beef, without refusing to be meat. It challenges an infrastructure by asking the subversive question: how did this substance get to the table? – whether the table at McDonald's or the table of the Lord. It demands to know what hands moulded the forms. Indeed, it even wants to know what future will be promoted by extending the production of cattle over cereal grains. Does it encourage the literal replacement of cereal grains for food instead of slaughtered meat? Does it command a vegetarian life just as it demands the replacement of all other human violence by this one sacrifice of blood?

Fast food was supposed to free women for leisure. Now, it uses many women, especially younger women, but increasingly seniors, to complete its workforce. Women are the dominant workers in the fast-food industry; but they work without the cost of health-care benefits, with rotating schedules over which they have little control, and for minimum pay. Mature women are classed with adolescents and seniors without significant work skills. In this way, the fast-food system reinforces gender stereotypes that have their origins in popular simplifications of the hunter-gatherer societies of pre-historic life.[20] The association of roasting meat with power, privilege and celebration and boiling with the feminine hearth gave dominance to men in the myths about gender differentiation. Men needed meat to fight, to survive and to continue to hunt; women denied themselves portions of meat in deference to their mates.[21] In fact, in many societies, they still do. In effect, the gender hierarchy was reinforced by who ate what in the social system. Feminine hospitality advised light lunches with vegetables and salads; food for men required meat!

> Authorities report that many men use 'the absence of meat as a pretext for violence against women' . . . Said one battered wife, 'It would start off with him being angry over a trivial little thing like cheese instead of meat on a sandwich'.[22]

Cereal grains become meat, flesh indeed! The Christian symbols give to all equally the body and flesh of the one who died and rose. No one is denied access who fulfils the minimum requirements of worth – a hunger of the spirit. Since no one is perfect, all are welcome at the table. There is at once a confrontation with the gendered structures of the hamburger culture and a question raised to it about its ability to deliver any new kind of gendered roles in society.

Within the structure of the eucharistic food is a resistance to the routinization, feminization and infantilization of work, service and love. Work is seen as the common task of all. Service is not only for caretaking women, but for all; and love is a matter of mutual affection and responsibility. The flesh of the Lord provides an adult sustenance for everyone. The sacrifice rendered is imagined in the passage of bread that becomes flesh of our flesh. And this process is identical for women as well as men. According to Jean Soler, the blood that once separated and united two poles in Judaism now becomes the 'conductor' – a fusion of divinity and humanity made possible through food.[23]

Ordinarily, liturgical studies as an academic discipline has examined the genesis of rites, the history of texts, and the tradition of rubrics and performance. But it has done so in the context of an historical-critical framework that presumes that its analysis is value-neutral. To be able to understand the data from the past and to make any suggestions for the future, the spirituality of worship must place the symbolic structure of food in Christian ritual traditions into dialogue with the table manners of contemporary society. If it does not, it risks losing any relevance as a critique of the culture of modernity (or postmodernity); it also will be unable to distinguish what is good in the culture from what is pernicious. At the same time, it neglects the very background from which it asks its academic questions.

Fast food remains one of the most important contemporary shifts in table manners; it promises to grow rather than to diminish. Without *thinking* about the relationship of our worship to this cultural phenomenon, we will become either an anachronism of aristocratic or bourgeois table manners or the 'ultimate in religious fast food'. If we do not exercise our imaginations, no matter how difficult and uncomfortable, we will never genuinely inculturate the spirit of our eucharist into contemporary cultures.

NOTES

[1] See Roland Barthes, 'Toward the psychosociology of contemporary food consumption' in *Food and drink in history*, ed Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, trans Elborg Forster and Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp 166–173.

[2] See Ronald L. Grimes, 'Sitting and eating' in *Beginnings in ritual studies* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1982), pp 87–100.

[3] See Fernand Braudel, *The structures of everyday life: the limits of the possible*, trans and revised by Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), pp 104–265.

[4] See Jeremy Rifkin, *Beyond beef: the rise and fall of the cattle culture* (New York: Dutton, 1992), p 245; see also Marion Kerr and Nicola Charles, 'Servers and providers: the distribution of food within the family', *The Sociological Review* 34:1 (February 1986), pp 115–157.

[5] E. F. Williams, 'The development of the meat industry' in *The making of the modern British diet*, ed Derek Oddy and Derek Miller (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p 51.
[6] Rifkin, *Beyond beef*, p 260.
[7] See the reflections of Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The origin of table manners*, trans John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), esp pp 478–489.
[8] For the information that follows, see John A. Jakle, 'Roadside restaurants and place-product-packaging' in *Fast food, stock cars, and rock 'n' roll: place and space in American pop culture*, ed George O. Carney (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), pp 97–117.
[9] Rifkin, *Beyond beef*, p 269.
[10] Robin Leidner, *Fast food, fast talk: service work and the routinization of everyday life* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1993), p 49.
[11] See Laurence W. Carstensen, 'The burger kingdom: growth and diffusion of McDonald's restaurants in the United States, 1955–1978' in *Fast food, stock cars*, p 119.
[12] See Leidner, *Fast food, fast talk*, pp 44–85.
[13] *Ibid.*, p 214.
[14] See Joanne Finkelstein, *Dining out: a sociology of modern manners* (Washington Square NY: New York University Press, 1989), esp pp 162–185.
[15] As quoted in Rifkin, *Beyond beef*, p 268.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] See his comments on trust and modernity in Anthony Giddens, *The consequences of modernity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), esp pp 79–137.
[18] See Joseph Komonchak, 'Modernity and the construction of Roman Catholicism' in *Modernism as a social construct*, ed George Gilmore, Hans Hollman and Gary Lease (Mobile AL: Spring Hill College, 1991), pp 11–41.
[19] See Mary Collins, 'The form of liturgical prayer: the challenges of embodiment, aesthetics, ambiguity' in *Teach us to pray: proceedings of the Theology Institute of Villanova University*, ed Francis A. Eigo, vol xxviii, pp 82–95.
[20] See Sally Slocum, 'Woman the gatherer: male bias in anthropology' in *Toward an anthropology of women*, ed Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp 36–50.
[21] Kerr and Charles, 'Servers and providers', *The Sociological Review*, pp 139–153.
[22] Rifkin, *Beyond beef*, p 244.
[23] Jean Soler, 'The semiotics of food in the Bible' in *Food and drink in history*, p 137.