

With Luther in the Present

by OSWALD BAYER

The Present: Delivered from the Past and the Future

Not everyone truly lives in the present. The ability to be “present,” to be in the present, to be “entirely there,” is a gift of grace. Christians are human beings who live in the present because they have been delivered from the guilt of the past and the fear of the future. In the end they *themselves* are not responsible for the past or for the future: they are therefore now, in the present, free and “without care” (1 Cor. 7:31f.).

In precisely what sense is the Christian person free? The deliverance of which we have spoken, and which Luther again brought to light, occurs within the horizon of our care about our existence—that anxiety that wills to take life, and indeed the very history of the world, into its own hands in order to secure it totally and radically.

This deliverance from worry concerning the past and future admittedly does not obtain in the sphere of *iustitia civilis*, the earthly justice which applies to family, society and state. Here in fact it is necessary, by the use of our reason in the varying responsibilities given to us to take care upon ourselves, “as if there were no God,” as Luther writes to the Christians in Riga—in an extraordinarily provocative way for his time—in his exposition of Psalm 127.¹ Yet this “care”—Luther calls it “the care of office”²—has its place within determined boundaries. Reason, when it operates within the boundaries of a mere *iustitia civilis*, is conscious of its capacities and of the possibility of self-endangerment. This is so precisely because it is conscious of its limits. It is unburdened from absolutisms and in this way set free for a sober perception of possibilities and predetermined realities within the world and within history. This applies to the daily life of every individual just as it does with respect to history as a whole.

That, in brief, is what one can learn from Luther for the present. From him alone? Why from him in a special way? For this

reason: since Paul, hardly anyone has so precisely, so revealingly and enlighteningly put into language the categorical difference between God and the human being, their deadly dissociation—a dissociation which has been overcome for the good of the human being by God in his unfathomable goodness and mercy.

Is the freedom of awareness of the present necessarily bound to refer to the theology of Luther? A present that is delivered from the burdens of the past and of the future, a present that is a true freedom—is there no other means through which this present may be perceived, learned, received, and handed on? And Luther, who lived in the sixteenth century with its fear of hell and belief in witches, does he not need at least a bit of rejuvenation in order to appeal to moderns and post-moderns? Many theologians are of this opinion and therefore reduce Luther's theology to a few structures of supposedly timeless human conditions, such as a diffuse feeling of absolute dependence or a will to biographical self-interpretation.³ For those of this perspective, Luther's distinctive theology appears too earthly, too time-bound and offensive for it to be compatible with an individualistic and pluralistic present: the torrential downpour of such a theology is to be nicely drained away in a controlled manner.

Which "Present"?

The variety of plans for human life, interpretations of God, understandings of theology, and not least of all, portraits of Luther compel us to consider this question more closely. When we do so it becomes clear that the *one* present, which grammatically suggests a singular, falls apart in our hands into a multiplicity of perspectives. I myself don't even know precisely what constitutes my own personal "present." I much more experience myself as driven by contradictory wishes and demands, threatened and tempted by images, today recognized and tomorrow rejected by the world around me. What perspective can theology give us whereby we can obtain a requisite orientation amidst and in spite of this nearly polytheistic variety of perspectives?

In my judgment, in the confusing situation of the "present" clarity is best won from the perspective of the Lutheran distinction

between law and gospel. Everything which I shall say is nothing other than a development of this thesis. I shall test it in a diagnosis of the times.

Modernity

Our time continues to belong to modernity. It is the coherent, self-mastering subject who is representative of this epoch and its intellectual stance, which had its precursors already in the Renaissance but established itself in the general consciousness only since the Enlightenment. The modern human being wills to be lord of the house⁴ and out of this bastion to form the world as *homo faber*, bringing it into the human grasp through technology and socio-physical enterprise. As *res cogitans* the human being objectivizes all other things into *res extensa*; the soul is reduced to the interior phenomenon of thinking subjectivity, the body is made into something merely external. In striving after the unity and entirety of the subject a monarchical will expresses itself, which has determined European thinking since its beginnings⁵ and has maintained itself beyond the end of the ancient metaphysics of substance—in the modern metaphysics of the subject. With all the philosophical, socio-political and technical progress which modernity has brought, including enormous social accomplishments, the threat of a totalitarianism lurks in modernity's increasing control of the world—whether it is a political-ideological totalitarianism⁶ as in the twentieth century, or as it presently appears, a surrender to the logic of an autonomous, unceasingly consuming economy.

The passion of the modern human being for individuality and omnipotence, the obsession with a supposedly all-powerful self often leads to the overtaking of oneself and of others. Admittedly, it must be made clear over against undifferentiated suspicion that modern-autonomous subjectivity does not in every instance entail a claim to final power over the self: from Descartes to Kant claim was laid to autonomy and freedom in self-certification, but not in self-enablement and the grounding of the self. With Fichte, Marx and Sartre, however, a human being appears, who more radically than the human being of the Middle Ages with whom Luther had

to do, views himself or herself as a “maker”—according to Marx in “self-generation” through “work”⁷ and consumption. In this essential respect triumphant capitalism does not distinguish itself at all from Marxism: you are what you achieve and can acquire for yourself.

Wherever giving and taking between human beings is reduced to the pattern of economic exchange and wherever totalitarian expectations exist, the human being may land finally in loneliness and isolation. In Ingmar Bergman’s “Scenes from a Marriage” one finds the line: “Never believe that you can do away with loneliness. It is absolute.” A true “being together” can only be “written as poetry.” It is an “illusion.”⁸

Postmodernity

Over against the meta-concepts of modernity—Lyotard’s meta-narratives—which continue to exert their power, there has stood for some time now the conception and sense of life which has been characterized as “postmodernity.” The sense of a fragmented individuality has spread, for some as the consequence of a radical modernity,⁹ for others as a conscious reaction to it. This sense bears tangible results. Here, too, the most varied nuances may be observed: if some celebrate “patchwork-identity” as an opportunity to constantly re-invent oneself,¹⁰ others look on with concern as the human being—a “bundle of perceptions,” as Hume says¹¹—dissolves away and now scarcely asks about a fundamental conviction and orientation for politics, ethics and world-view. There is the threat of the diffusion of the self and finally of surrender and failure to recognize accountability and responsibility. The threat exists of the refusal to perceive the continuity of personal being.

Now it would be simplistic merely to certify the generally relativistic arbitrariness of postmodernity and to seek to discredit it philosophically, ethically and theologically in this way. There is a series of highly respectable conceptions (such as those which Lévinas, Derrida, Lyotard and others offer), which attempt to take up postmodern consciousness for aesthetics, for the fragmentary realities of life, and for different regional discussions in favor of the

marginalized, in short, which attempt to take up the concerns of the “other” positively. Admittedly, these representatives of an ethically serious postmodernity bring as well into ideological suspicion the “meta-concepts” of the West such as “truth,” “being,” “essence,” “word” and “spirit” and thereby contribute to the demolition of the tradition which they reject as “logocentric,” or “ontotheological,” and “metaphysical.” Yet they also make a great effort to step into the gap with a new kind of ultimate grounding which before all else is suitable for conducting everyday life in its narrower confines—life that has become considerably confused through emigrations and fractures: through altruism, sympathy, curiosity about the other in his or her otherness (*altérité*). It is especially Emmanuel Lévinas for whom a new categorical imperative speaks out of the countenance of the other, out of the encounter with the needy fellow human being, who in his or her defenselessness and vulnerability is delivered over to my care. Lévinas can thus pointedly formulate the matter: “the obligations over against the other human being come before obligations over against God”; “the only way to respect God is to look after one’s neighbor.”¹² The unconditionality of such an understanding of the law, which according to its intention is comparable to Kant’s atheistic¹³ grounding of the moral law, cannot be raised to any higher level.

In diagnosing postmodernity, it clearly is valid to distinguish between an *actual* postmodernity, which (for the majority of individuals, in any case) is experienced as the flight of the “I” from itself, and an *ethical-philosophical* postmodernity, which aims at overcoming this condition through the evocation of a fundamental solidarity between human beings. We shall see shortly how this is to be evaluated theologically. First, however, we must note a final distinction in reference to the phenomena under consideration.

Postmodern Modernity?

Postmodernity not only dismisses modernity, it also is permeated with it. Precisely this contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous may be diagnosed as postmodern, because it strengthens the inner contradictions in which subjects find themselves: to demonstrate

against the construction of runways, but then to take off from a runway on a flight to Bali; to earn money in alienated-technologized work in order to finance a return-to-nature trip; to preach austerity and renunciation, but to live indirectly from the profits of globalization. The Internet is a symbol of the short-circuit between the private sphere and the entire world, between intimacy and exhibitionism.¹⁴ The increasing interwovenness of the various regions of the world, politically, economically and through the media, makes it difficult to maintain a consistent, internally-localized ethic. Many of our contemporaries therefore still live bodily in modernity, but intellectually and psychologically in postmodernity.

If these observations and reflections are valid, we must ask if we can discern a basic current of thought which is characteristic not only of modernity but also of so-called postmodernity.

The Time of the Law

“The heart is a defiant and despairing thing”—with this translation of Jeremiah 17:9, which over against the original text is remarkably free, yet exceptionally full of substance, Luther describes what the theological tradition especially since Augustine named *presumptio* and *desperatio*: the two sides of sin as “pride” and “despair.” Both may be discerned in modernity and postmodernity.

The destruction of the world (*annihilatio mundi*), which remained only a thought-experiment with Descartes,¹⁵ has gained existential and global force in the psychic, cultural and bloody military experiences of destruction in late modernity. In the face of this force, the pride of the modern individual and, at the same time, its despair display themselves in final, consequential form in existentialism, with its—in the words of Kierkegaard—*despairingly willing to be oneself*.¹⁶ A substitutionary place-taking which liberates from the care of existence from its very roots is in this case not possible. Each one is responsible for one’s self and one’s doing; each one maintains or destroys himself or herself.

With his complementary formulation, that I likewise *despairingly will not to be myself*,¹⁷ Kierkegaard provided, as if in anticipation, the basic key for understanding postmodernity. The individual—

according to the meaning of the word, the “in-divisible”—disintegrates into roles, functions and processes of social conformation. Indeed, the “I” flees from itself, it seeks itself ever again, loses itself and yet cannot be free of itself.

Everything which we have considered in relation to modernity and postmodernity leads to that which may be considered and described as experience of the “law.” Certainly there are processes of change which must be taken into account here, which at first glance have brought a wide distance between the law of the present and the explicit Decalogue or Jewish cultic law, as well as between it and late-medieval mirrors of sins or Luther’s condemning use of the law (*usus elenchticus legis*). Nevertheless, many cases of stress and the syndrome of overwork, the breaking-up of relationships, the imperative of having fun and economic insecurity brought about by the heightening of expectations through the media may be understood revealingly as experiences of *nomos* in the theological sense. The fear of hell which arises from the next life has disappeared. Nevertheless, one cannot easily maintain that therewith the experiences of hell which take place in our everyday world and also within us have decreased.

But are not modernity and postmodernity programmatically antinomian, because they are individualistic and pluralistic? How can one attempt to interpret them from the perspective of *nomos*, the law?

But in fact one can! Precisely the individualistic antinomianism of modernity and postmodernity ends up being legalistic. Individuals want to think of themselves as different, but they act in masses. They want to follow the ideals of freedom and diversity of options, but the anticipation of new experiences, the anxiety of missing something and the imperative of incessantly having to choose and decide drives them afresh to competition and to being overburdened¹⁸—even when it only has to do with comparatively banal things such as constant availability through a cell-phone, the television as the background medium, or the jungle of rates and charges for access to the new media. The modern-postmodern individual strives after happiness and spontaneity by means of a demonstratively relaxed manner and continual ironic air, but experiences nevertheless that

neither happiness nor spontaneity may be planned or achieved.¹⁹ For this reason, on the negative side, the ideal brings with it the fear of failure and of attachment to others. Relationships within marriage and family can succeed only where there is a recognition of the need for forgiveness and freely-given love.

In their programmatic antinomianism, both modernity and postmodernity also appear with an “evangelical” claim. Each of them understands itself to be an unsurpassable new age, which stands under the sign of freedom. The concrete christological definition of the gospel is thereby quietly generalized, but it is made abstract in this unrestrained and excessive generalization. The christological “It is finished!” (John 19:30) changes into an “ever-already-effected” freedom which is granted to the human being by nature itself; by virtue of nature all human beings are “acquitted” and “responsible” (Kant: *naturaliter maiorenes*²⁰)—or at least capable of becoming so in engagement with the alien (Lévinas). The fulfillment of the law is thereby presupposed to have occurred already in principle: the human being is free, good and spontaneous. In this sense, modernity and postmodernity are antinomian.

The new human beings of modernity and postmodernity, however, always must yet become, under the compulsion of realizing it by themselves, what they already are. The generally asserted gospel of freedom places human beings simultaneously under the compulsion of realizing themselves and fulfilling their potential, since from birth itself it is theirs already. If, however, freedom is not announced and communicated from without, but rather belongs to me from the very start, then I as both an individual and collective subjectivity am burdened with the fulfillment of the promise given to me by myself—not liberated for freedom, but “damned to be free” (Sartre²¹); I am not *allowed* to be free, I rather *must* free myself. Lévinas’ language concerning being placed under obligation, indeed being taken hostage through the other establishes in its final effect an even more rigorous law than Kant’s categorical imperative. For who does not daily owe something decisive to the neighbor one encounters?

The human being is addressed through the law: “Adam, where are you?” (Gen 3:9); and, “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). Through the law the human being is localized and individualized. Even if this human being—precisely according to modern and postmod-

ern transformations—no longer directly recognizes the one who speaks in the law, perhaps, indeed, does not even hear a voice, he or she nevertheless experiences more or less anonymously the inescapable demand: “Here you and no other are addressed. Here you are responsible. If you evade it, you are guilty.” The human being is ultimately responsible: that is the element of truth of Kantian anthropology and ethics, in which it—against postmodern diffusion and covering of tracks—is the ally of theology. The unconditionality of the demand, which proceeds not merely from the fellow human being, but simultaneously arises within my conscience as the “interior court of judgment,”²² is a reminder of the theological doctrine of the last judgment. There, at last, evasion will have its end: our thoughts, words and deeds will become manifest before God (2 Cor. 5:10) and others.

The Time of Grace

Happy is the person, who at the end of all things encounters God not merely as lawgiver and judge, but who amid the confusion of accusing and excusing voices hears God as the one, clear word which acquits and therewith sets free!

The human being is addressed in judgment as well as in grace, in the law as well as in the gospel. We are the sort of created beings, says Luther, “with whom God shall speak eternally and undyingly,” “whether it is in wrath, or in grace.”²³ Our continuing existence, our duration in earthly life and through death and beyond, rests not in ourselves, but rather in this “being-addressed-by-God.” For this reason, the human being gains afresh his or her own present, and can be truly “present” only from God’s “present,” given as promise in the “bodily Word” (AC 5). Only from God’s *one* time and in relation to it, is it possible for the human being to *believe*—although not seeing and perceiving—that the fragmentary times of their life that lie in conflict with one another constitute *one* time. “I am the Lord, your God—your one time. You shall not and you need not seek the unity of time, the saving present, the gospel anywhere else!”

God’s presence and “present”—understood as the saving present—is, however, anything other than obvious. Anyone who proceeds from

an unquestioned religious grounding of the world, who proceeds from a principal openness of the human being to the question of God and an interest in horizons of transcendence, not only misses—precisely here in the new federal states of Germany—the situation of God’s hiddenness, but also the weight of sin and the power of redemption. The thoroughly general question of “meaning”²⁴ which as late as the 1960s and 70s—as for example at the 1963 General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Helsinki²⁵—was felt to be more plausible and relevant than the question of answering for guilt before the universal forum of the last judgment. Now this question has proved to be too diffuse. Hardly anyone today asks about “meaning” in that vague, general manner. It is much more the massive experiences of guilt and sorrow, of responsibility and irresponsibility in the aporias of politics, economics and scientific ethics, which oppress us and confront us daily with the reality of evil.

The phenomena stand unavoidably before our eyes. To recognize them we often need only a single word, another human being, an impetus, that tells us to our face—as once Nathan did to King David, who had murdered and had committed adultery (2 Sam. 12)—“you are the one!” David, who as king was the supreme judge, had already pronounced judgment on himself in his own answer to Nathan’s parable. Nathan’s word merely drew back a thin veil that lay over David’s eyes and his heart. In this respect, the knowledge of the law is not heteronomous. We ourselves sense and can know, if we in fact are willing to do so, that we do what is wrong. The law is in this sense evident and understandable. “He has told you, O Adam, what is good and what the Lord requires of you!” (Micah 6:8). This address directed to Israel is in its substance simultaneously that which is written in the heart of every human being (Rom. 1:18–20; 2:14–16). The law is directly given as a “fact” of “reason”²⁶ and therefore recognized and known.

The gospel is entirely different: it comes to me from without. One of the essential insights of Luther, with which he sets himself at odds not only with Roman Catholic theology, but also in an anticipatory way in terms of content, with the prevailing aims of the present time, consists in his insight that the gospel is gospel only if it is strictly distinguished from the law. There is no human prepa-

ration for the gospel. It cannot be earned, not even if the earning of it is “only” in a divine-human cooperation, in which the performance of the human being consists merely in agreeing with the gospel, as Erasmus imagined.²⁷ When I hear the gospel, that I have been accepted and adopted by God for the sake of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, I am radically passive. I receive that which is given to me in as a “categorical gift.” Here no attempt to achieve my salvation or that of the world, to promise and guarantee myself happiness, or to meditate my way to enlightenment in mystical absorption has any validity any longer. It is the tangible, bodily Word of preaching and of the sacrament, in which God encounters us in a human and earthly manner, unpredictably and ever afresh, and yet in a distinct, concrete form. “Behold, in many a place/ Oh, blessed consolation!/ You find Him, your Salvation, / Within His means of grace,” as it says in the Advent hymn of Johann Rist.²⁸ The precise locality, individuality, and personality of the gospel, understood in its precise sense as a word with which God himself steps out in front of me, takes me under his protection against his accusing law, speaks in my favor, and intercedes on my behalf, cannot be quietly generalized.

The gospel may be defined as follows: God speaks on my behalf in the fragmentation of the times and the shattering of identities; he speaks on my behalf in the face of all my sins of omission and my failures with respect to my fellow creatures, which accuse me. God speaks on my behalf in a two-fold sense. He speaks through the Holy Spirit *in my place*; he speaks where words fail me (Rom. 8:26). He also speaks for me against the accusation which comes through the *one* law, which, although it has many forms and transformations, remains finally inescapable even in modernity and postmodernity: he speaks as an advocate *in my favor* (Rom. 8:31–34).

Only where the gospel asserts itself against the law can we gauge how very little the human and creaturely presence of God is to be taken for granted and how tremendously comforting it is—especially in the Lord’s Supper, where God gives himself to be heard, to be seen, to be felt and to be tasted. Here he communicates himself to me in his sheer goodness in a concentrated and unconditionally trustworthy manner.

This promise takes place by virtue of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, on the basis of which a new identity is given to me. I need neither round out the fragments of my biography, nor lose myself in them. I have my identity in one who remains alien to me: in the one who in a “blessed substitution” and wonderful exchange has taken my place.²⁹ With the representative, atoning death of Jesus Christ the criterion has been given by which theology must critically distance itself from both premodern metaphysics of substance as well as a modern metaphysics of the subject: these forms of thinking do not allow one to think of an eccentric existence. The modern and postmodern premise of identity are thereby decisively called into question.

The decisive point of contention in the conflict between Reformation theology and modern and postmodern thought is thereby marked out—and at the same time, the reason why many of our contemporaries, even if they are favorably disposed, have difficulty with talk of the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. More than ever before, the individual—even though fragmentary—seems to be a windowless monad, which remains alone with himself or herself and encounters the other only at particular points. Over against this “metaphysics of the subject,” theology must insist that the righteousness given to me as a gift, the righteousness of Christ which has been made my own, is and remains an “alien righteousness,” the gift of another, by virtue of whose life I live (Gal. 2:19–20). That the sinful human being can be brought into a right relation with the righteous God by being torn free from sin and transposed into God’s righteousness—God’s kingdom—has as its presupposition and abiding implication that God and the human being are bound together in one “person,” that is, that they come together in a communicative event that reaches the sinful human being in a human manner, but which does not leave human beings with themselves and those like them, but rearranges, transposes and radically transports them (Col. 1:13), and in this way determines and defines the human being anew.

Only because Jesus Christ is simultaneously God, only because God is this human being, can one speak of Jesus Christ as a “space,” into which I am baptized, into which I enter in faith, in which I gain a share. In Christ, then, “God and human being do not stand as closed entities over against one another. They communicate with

one another without restriction.”³⁰ This transposition of human existence into Jesus Christ takes place, “through the God who always speaks and promises concretely, who draws the trust unto himself which formerly was based on the self, and thus awakens faith as the consummation of absolute eccentricity.”³¹

For the modern individual and his or her self-referential concern—despairingly willing to be oneself; despairingly willing not to be oneself—this eccentricity and openness is objectionable. The truth of faith, which unlocks and opens closed doors, stands in contradiction to self-concern and being closed up in oneself. In the light of this faith, Christian existence is determined by a twofold eccentricity, which Luther impressively articulates at the conclusion of his tractate “On the Freedom of a Christian”:

We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor. Yet he always remains in God and in his love. . . .³²

To a modern conception of identity, this sounds in the best case romantic and ultimately illusionary: “Never believe that you can do away with loneliness. It is absolute.” A true “being together” can only be “written as poetry.” It is an “illusion.”³³ Against this thought, the course of our reflections forces us to ask if the modern conception of identity remains so unchangeable as the prevailing consciousness suggests. We have seen that the apparent monadic identity of the human being—not for the first time in postmodernism, but in a particular manner with its epoch-specific experience of the law—can collapse and vanish. Only in faith, which bases itself on the reliable word of the gospel is a new identity received—over against accusation and overburdening, over against break-down and diffusion. And therewith a “saving present” is ours as well.

Final Remark

I changed the title originally planned for this essay, “With Luther into Modernity” to “With Luther in the Present.” We thereby free ourselves first from fixation upon the title of an epoch, and secondly

from the idea that we must bring Luther to us. It should be clear that Luther hardly needs our hermeneutical effort of application. By virtue of his language and the distinction between law and gospel, which proves itself valid again and again in the diagnosis of the times, Luther makes himself present with us beyond the changes of the epochs. The themes of sin and grace, evil and salvation, in brief, law and gospel are so fundamental that they cannot be superseded—at least not before Judgment Day.

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NOTES

1. Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 57 vols. Eds. J.F.K. Knaake et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff) 15:373, 3. (Psalm 127, expounded for the Christians in Riga; 1524). (Hereafter cited as WA). See *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols. Eds. Pelikan and Lehmann. (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1955ff.) 45:331. (Hereafter cited as LW).
2. WA 32:472, 2–6 (on Mt 6:34; week-day sermons on Mt 5–7; 1530/32); LW 21:211.
3. See the trenchant critique by Michael Welker, "Subjektivischer Glaube als religiöse Falle," *Evangelische Theologie* 64 (2004): 239–248.
4. One thus reads in Kant, despite his doctrine of radical evil: "For inner freedom, two elements are required: to be master of oneself (*animus sui compos*) in a given occasion (therefore, actively) and (habitually) to be lord over oneself (*imperium in semetipsum*)" in Immanuel Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten. Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre, Einleitung*, AA VI, 407. See *Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
5. Classically, Aristoteles, *Metaphysik* XII/10, 1075a, 3–5. See *The Metaphysics*, Vol. II Trans. Hugh Tredennick, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 166–169.
6. See especially, Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein. Studien über marxistische Dialektik* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1923), particularly the first study, "Was ist orthodoxer Marxismus?" (1919) 13–38: "The concrete totality is . . . the actual category of reality" (p. 23). On the category of "totality" cf. pp. 21, 31, 38, 46f., 51, 61f. See Georg Lukács, *History and Class-consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Trans. Robert Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971).
7. Karl Marx, "Nationalökonomie und Philosophie," in *Die Frühschriften*, ed. Siegfried Landshut (Stuttgart: Kröner: 1968), 225–236, here 269. See *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Trans. Richard Dixon, et al. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2004).
8. Ingmar Bergman, *Szene einer Ehe*, (Hamburg: n.p., 1975), 115. See Ingmar Bergman, *Scenes from a Marriage*. Translated by Alan Blair. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

9. See Wolfgang Iser, *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).

10. See Heiner Keupp, "Auf dem Weg zur Patchwork-Identität?" in *Verhaltenstherapie und psychosoziale Praxis* 4 (1988): 425–438.

11. David Hume, *Ein Traktat über die menschliche Natur*, Ed. Reinhard Brandt (Hamburg: Meiner, 1978), 327: "Thus I can dare to assert concerning all other human beings, that they are nothing other than a bundle or conjunction of various perceptions, which follow one another with incredible speed, and are constantly in flow and movement." See *On Human Nature and Understanding*, Ed. Anthony Flew. (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

12. Salomon Malka, *Emmanuel Lévinas. Eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 2003), 124f. This orally transmitted citation has parallels in published works, for example, in Emmanuel Lévinas, *Wenn Gott ins Denken einfällt. Diskurse über die Betroffenheit von Transzendenz* (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 1988), 169: "The question of the other turns into the question of responsibility for the other, and the fear of God—which has to do with trembling before the Holy One as well as with fear of oblivion—becomes fear for the neighbor and the neighbor's death." Compare, Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalität und Endlichkeit. Versuch über die Exteriorität* (Freiburg/Munich: Breisgau, 1987), 106ff. See *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969). I thank Dr. Stephan Heuser for the helpful reference.

13. See Oswald Bayer, "Gesetz und Freiheit. Zur Metakritik Kants," in *Freiheit als Antwort. Zur theologischen Ethik*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 164–182, here 170f.

14. See Richard Sennett, *Verfall und Ende des öffentlichen Lebens. Die Tyrannei der Intimität*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1986). See *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

15. See Oswald Bayer, "Descartes und die Freiheit," in *Leibliches Wort. Reformation und Neuzeit im Konflikt* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 176–204, here 187, 19 (n. 99).

16. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1849). Trans. Emanuel Hirsch, *Gesammelte Werke*, vols 24f., Eds. Emanuel Hirsch and Hayo Gerdes (Gütersloh: Diederichs, 1954), 67–74. See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*. Ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1987).

17. See Kierkegaard, *Krankheit* (as in n. 16) 47–67, esp. 54. Marius Mjaaland, "Alterität und Textur in Kierkegaards "Krankheit zum Tode",*"* *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 47 (2005): 58–80.

18. "The modern culture of risk displays the peculiarity of regarding the mere neglect of the opportunity to change as a mark of failure, stability almost appears to be paralysis. The goal is less important than the act of departing. Tremendous social and economic forces have contributed to this insistence upon constant change: the de-structuralizing of institutions, the system of flexible production—likewise stabile real estate properties seem to have come into flux. No one wants to be left behind. The one who doesn't move is left out," Richard Sennett, *Der flexible Mensch. Die Kultur des Kapitalismus*, (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag, 1998), 115.

19. In exaggeration it might be said: Nowhere is a matter so seriously debated as in the introduction and removal of entertainers in the private television channels, which are supposedly responsible for comedy and entertainment.

20. Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (1784), AA VIII, 33–42, here 33. See "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Practical Philosophy*, Ed. Mary J. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

21. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme* (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1946), 37: "l'homme est condamné à être libre." See *Existentialism*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947).

22. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* (as in n. 4), AA VI, 437-440; cf. esp. the definitional sentence: "The consciousness of an *interior court of judgment* within the human being ("before which his thoughts condemn or excuse one another" [cf. Rom 2:15]) is the *conscience*," p. 438. See also p. 400f.

23. WA 43:481, 21-43, here 34f. 33 (on Gen 26:24f.); LW 5:76f.

24. On this matter, critically, see Gerhard Sauter, *Was heißt: Nach Sinn fragen? Eine theologisch-philosophische Orientierung* (Munich: Kaiser, 1982).

25. See esp. "Botschaft der Vierten Vollversammlung des Lutherischen Weltbundes in Helsinki," in *Helsinki 1963. Beiträge zum theologischen Gespräch des Lutherischen Weltbundes*, Ed. Erwin Wilkens (Berlin/Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1964): 456f.

26. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1787), AA V, 31; cf. *ibid.*, 55. See *Critique of Practical Reason*. Ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

27. Erasmus von Rotterdam, *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (1524), I b 10. See *Discourse on Free Will* (New York: Continuum, 2002). Luther contradicted Erasmus passionately on this point: "you do not consider how much you ascribe to it (the free will) with this reflexive pronoun "ONESELF" or "ONE'S OWN SELF" In that you say, it can turn ITSELF (to the good, to salvation), you exclude the Holy Spirit with all his power, as if he were superfluous and unnecessary" (WA 18:665, 13-16, *De servo arbitrio*; 1525; LW 33:108).

28. Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1858: "Seht, wie so mancher Ort/ Hochtröstlich ist zu nennen, /Da wir ihn finden können / Im Nachtmahl, Tauf" und Wort." EKG 8 (Auf, auf, ihr Reichsgenossen, Str. 2). Cf. Michael Müller: Auf Seele, auf und säume nicht (EKG 73): "Hier ist das Ziel, hier ist der Ort wo man zum Leben geht" (Str. 8). See "Arise, Sons of the Kingdom" in *The Lutheran Handbook to the Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 52.

29. WA 7:25, 34 (*Tractatus de libertate christiana*; 1520); LW 31:347.

30. See Jörg Baur, *Das reformatorische Christentum in der Krise*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), 17.

31. *Ibid.*, 18.

32. WA 7:69, 12-16 (*Tractatus de libertate christiana*; 1520); LW 31:371.

33. Bergman, *Szenen einer Ehe* (as in n. 8).



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