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著者	Yasukata, Toshimasa
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Lessing as a Proponent of Modern Dialectical Theism¹

Toshimasa Yasukata

There can be no doubt of Lessing's life-long occupation with religion and Christianity. Through serious confrontation with the Christian tradition, Lessing formed his own personality and developed his sophisticated philosophy of religion. It is aptly said that "Lessing became a philosopher in debating with Christianity."²

The question that remains is what characterizes "Lessing's Christianity."³ This question is notoriously intractable. True, a number of in-depth studies have tried to unravel the "riddle" of Lessing. Nevertheless, as a theologian or philosopher of religion, Lessing is still an enigma. As Karl Guthke reported, "the irreconcilable contradictions of Lessing interpretation can be observed in the interpretations of his theological writings."⁴ Thus, no consensus has been attained to date as to the real core of Lessing's theological and religious-philosophical thought.

To resolve this mystifying problem, I myself have sought to penetrate into the systematic core of Lessing's thought in my book *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment*.⁵ I would like to take this opportunity to recapitulate my findings on Lessing's views on Christianity and reason.

As I see it, Lessing is a thinker who stood at the turning point from the theological culture of “the Confessional Age”⁶ to the secular culture of modern times. Unlike Voltaire and other *philosophes*, he never turned his back on Christian tradition in favor of the emergent modern secular culture. His relationship with Christianity was dialectical. He was himself a child of the Enlightenment and deemed it the supreme end of his literary activity to make everyone think rationally about everything, including Christianity and religion.⁷ But he never sided either with the Enlightenment in its debunking of Christianity or with neology in its easy amalgamation of Christianity and modernity. While critical of both “the old religious system” and “the new-fashioned theology,”⁸ he continued to hold the intellectual and cultural heritage of Christianity in the greatest respect. Having discerned the weaknesses of Christianity and its difficult situation in modern times, he sought to diagnose the main causes of the trouble so as to rehabilitate it for the modern age. Though not a theologian by profession, he engaged in theology throughout his life with the utmost love and admiration for its subject matter.

Thus Christianity stood at the forefront of Lessing’s concerns throughout his life. The Christianity he wished to preserve, however, was not institutional Christianity as such but its quintessence, or essential Christianity. He placed special importance on genuine Christian love. “Love thine enemy” is for him “one of the most important commandments of Christianity,”⁹ the touchstone for whether one is truly Christian. What he calls the message of *The Testament of John*, “Little children, love one another” (*Kinderchen, liebt euch!*),¹⁰ is for him the *unum necessarium* of the Christian religion. “This alone, this alone, if it is done, is enough, is sufficient and adequate.”¹¹ Lessing’s

espousal of the idea of toleration as expressed in his early comedy *The Jews*, or in the dramatic masterpiece of his later years *Nathan the Wise*, is essentially the practical application of this genuine Christian love.

The reason Lessing is included among the founders of modern Protestantism is that he interpreted Luther's spirit, or the Reformation principle, in an utterly new, modern direction. He had recourse to Luther, especially to his spirit, in his theological battle with the Lutheran orthodox pastor Goeze. Lessing argued:

The true Lutheran does not wish to be defended by Luther's writings but by Luther's spirit; and Luther's spirit absolutely requires that no man may be prevented from advancing in knowledge of the truth according to his own judgment.¹²

This is a completely modern interpretation of Luther's doctrine of "justification by faith alone," a unique adaptation of this doctrine to the field of epistemology. One-sided as it may be in its subjectification of the Reformation principle, it is certain that Lessing hereby ushered in "a new concept of Protestantism."¹³ Protestantism appears here as "the religion of conscience and conviction, without dogmatic compulsion."¹⁴ The dogmatic, institutional religion of early Protestantism has thus been transformed into the subjective, individualistic religion of modern Protestantism.

The role Lessing played in the transformation of Protestantism is immensely significant. Yet his service to Protestant Christianity also involves a touch of irony. The *Fragmentenstreit* (fragments controversy), a fierce theological dispute Lessing ignited by his publication of

parts of Hermann Samuel Reimarus's posthumous manuscripts under the title *Fragments from an Unnamed Author*, put an end to the period of Protestant Orthodoxy and brought about the final end of the lingering "Age of Religion."¹⁵ To this extent, he gave impetus, however indirectly and unconsciously, to the arrival of a secular age.

To be sure, he did not endorse the French Enlightenment's out-and-out denial of religion. Instead, he held fast to religious piety despite his overwhelmingly positive view of life in this world. He also severely criticized the "Berlin freedom" under Frederick the Great as "the freedom to put so many silly and malicious remarks against religion on the market" (*die Freiheit, gegen die Religion so viel Sottisen zu Markte zu bringen*).¹⁶ But the positive attitude toward this world that Lessing fostered turned, in later generations when the religious dimension was lost, into mere secularism. To this extent, his contribution to the history of Protestantism is actually Janus-faced.

Lessing's relationship with the Enlightenment offers a similar ambivalence. His attitude toward the eighteenth-century movement is indeed dialectical. He is correctly regarded as the cutting edge of the German Enlightenment. But at the same time he far exceeded the Enlightenment. He attained a sublime position that transcended all the main trends of his age, trends that embraced not only orthodoxy and neology, but the overly rationalistic worldview of the Enlightenment as well.

The ideal of Lessingian reason expressed in *Nathan the Wise* and *The Education of the Human Race* is not the same as the ideal held by the rationalists of his time. Nathan, contrary to the generally held

view, is not an autonomous person of the modern type. For Nathan, the beginning of wisdom consists in what I, borrowing the concept from Ernst Troeltsch,¹⁷ call the “autotheonomous” structure of volition, a structure implied in his words, “I will!/If Thou wilt, then I will!”¹⁸ This is a two-fold structure of volition in which the human volition conforms to the divine volition that precedes and underlies it. Thus Nathan’s reason is, first and foremost, “hearkening reason” (*eine vernehmende Vernunft*).¹⁹ It is not a self-centered reason within itself. Nathan’s reason signifies an ability to listen to what God commands. Accordingly, it can be designated as “boundary reason” (*Grenzvernunft*)²⁰ that is fully aware of its own limitations, or more positively, as “believing reason” (*glaubende Vernunft*) that opens itself to the transcendent. This is precisely what Strohschneider-Kohrs calls “reason as wisdom” (*Vernunft als Weisheit*).²¹

This insight into Lessingian reason can help us to understand Lessing’s dialectical conception of the relationship between revelation and reason. A careful reading of *The Education of the Human Race* makes it clear that Lessing’s thought by no means rules out the concept of transcendent revelation. On the contrary, Lessing conceives of the human race as finding fulfillment in a developmental process induced and propelled by divine revelation, and in this context he introduces the novel concept of the development of human reason as a gradual appropriation of divine revelation. The notion that human reason can self-develop free of divine assistance (or revelation) is simply not to be found in Lessing. Thus, Lessing also does not understand human history as the self-development of the human spirit, although one can easily conceive of it as such, if only the concept of revelation is dissolved from his conceptual scheme.

But if such is the case, then we are compelled to reconsider Lessing's view of the goal of enlightenment. Lessing's contemporary, Kant, saw the goal of enlightenment in the attaining of moral autonomy.²² For Lessing, however, the goal is to attain the highest stage of "perfect illumination" and "purity of heart," the stage at which a person is "capable of loving virtue for its own sake alone" and "will do the right because it is right."²³ But the attainment of autonomy alone would be insufficient for the ideal of autonomy that Lessing envisions is a mature autonomy capable of confessing that absolute truth is for God alone.

The so-called *Lessingwort*,²⁴ or its concise version, "Let everyone tell what seems to him to be truth; and let the truth itself be entrusted to God!"²⁵ attests the cogency of this view. If my interpretation is correct, then Lessing's ideal of enlightenment can be designated as the attainment of an "autotheonomy" in which "autonomy is at the same time theonomy."²⁶ In order to attain such a goal, however, revealed truths must not remain unintelligible truths that are only to be believed. Instead, they must become truths of reason that are intrinsic to human reason. In this sense, "the development of revealed truths into truths of reason is absolutely necessary."²⁷ And only when revealed truths thus become truths of reason can human reason find certitude and repose in God.

But here emerges an important question as to Lessing's concept of God. Can his conception of God be classified as Christian theism? If not, how does it stand in relation to Christian theism? More specifically, how does he conceive of the relationship of God and the world? These questions lead to the topic of Lessing's "Spinozism." Was Lessing a secret pantheist as Jacobi claimed? What on earth does his

ἐν καὶ πᾶν [One and All] imply?

In my view, Lessing's ἐν καὶ πᾶν cannot be taken as implying allegiance to Spinozism. He introduced this epigram as a concept that stands in antithesis to "the orthodox concepts of the divinity."²⁸ This fact, combined with his all-out assent to Goethe's "Prometheus," suggests that what Lessing denied is not Christian theism as such but a heteronomous deity that remains above the world and tyrannically rules over it. In fact, Lessing had difficulty with the idea of a "personal, extramundane divinity"²⁹ such as Jacobi espoused. Lessing was discontent with the traditional Christian view of the divinity. His words, "The orthodox concepts of the divinity are no longer for me; I cannot stand them. Hen kai Pan! I know naught else," should be taken as expressing his own immanent view of God and the world. This immanent view of God and the world, however, must be clearly distinguished from that of Spinozism. For Lessing's God is not a substance possessing the two attributes of "thought" and "extension," as in Spinoza. Lessing's God is conceived, rather, as "a higher energy" (*eine höhere Kraft*)³⁰ in which the attributes of extension, movement, and idea are grounded. Lessing does agree with Spinoza, however, in his criticism of anthropomorphism. He finds fault with Jacobi's conception of God for the reason that it makes God conform to "our wretched way of acting in accordance with intentions" (*unsere elende Art, nach Absichten zu handeln*).³¹ In his eyes, such a conception of God is mere anthropomorphism.

How, then, does Lessing understand God? One of the keys to answering this question is Jacobi's remark: "When Lessing wanted to imagine a personal divinity, he thought of it as the soul of the universe

(*die Seele des Alls*), and he thought of the Whole as being analogous to an organic body.”³² Jacobi takes Lessing’s words in the Spinozistic sense and concludes that “Lessing is a Spinozist.” This interpretation is strained.

The previous quote from Lessing suggests that his *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* should rather be understood in terms of a stream of thought which, though headed in “a direction that eventually leads to Spinoza,”³³ is clearly distinct from Spinozism. What I have in mind is Protestant spiritualism. This is “the stream of tradition which, since the sixteenth century, runs independently alongside Protestant ecclesiasticism and which is stamped more by individual thinkers than by the organization of sectarian groups.”³⁴ To name but a few, thinkers such as Sebastian Franck, Valentin Weigel, and Jakob Boehme belong to this tradition.

But to interpret Lessing’s *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* against the background of the spiritualistic tradition is to interpret it as a “panentheism,”³⁵ the doctrine that God includes all things in his own being as part, not the whole, of his being. Wilhelm Dilthey refers to Lessing’s fragment “On the Reality of Things outside God” and affirms that Lessing’s basic position is panentheism, because it asserts that nothing is outside God but that “all things are real in God.”³⁶ He holds that “this panentheism of Lessing’s is completely different from the doctrine that Jacobi ascribed to Spinoza.”³⁷ It is worth noting here that Dilthey suggests an affinity between the thought and destiny of Sebastian Franck and Lessing.³⁸ Such being the case, it might be possible that the “religious, universalistic theism” (*der religiös universalistische Theismus*) or “refined panentheism” (*der geläuterte Panentheismus*), which Dilthey identifies as

Franck's position, or something akin to it, is also Lessing's own worldview.

Be that as it may, Lessing calls for some radical rethinking of the traditional concept of God. More than his *ἐν καὶ πᾶν*, the phrase *ἐν ἐγὼ καὶ πάντα* [I am One and All], which I take to be his most authentic formula,³⁹ suggests that he seeks to rethink classical theism in a direction toward panentheism. The idea of panentheism is not alien to Christianity. For example, Paul's words in Acts 17:28, "In him [God] we live and move and have our being," have often been cited as one of the scriptural grounds for panentheism. *Christian* panentheism can therefore be no *contradictio in adjecto*. Yet Lessing's *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* or *ἐν ἐγὼ καὶ πάντα* certainly oversteps the bounds of traditional Christian doctrine. Whereas traditional Christian belief has one-sidedly stressed God's transcendence at the expense of his immanence, the idea of God, external to and transcendent of the world but nevertheless intervening in it, is foreign to Lessing. In distinction from classical theism, he asserts both God's transcendence over the world and the immanence of God in the world. Instead of a distinctively monarchial view of God, namely, God as one-sidedly transcendent, separate from and over or above the world, and yet intervening from time to time, he brings forward what can be called the metaphysics of *immanent transcendence*. God is transcendent, more than and not to be identified with the world; yet the divine presence is to be found within the world. God is thus both beyond and within the world. This paradoxical affirmation of transcendence and immanence is only possible within panentheism, or what John Macquarrie newly calls "dialectical theism."⁴⁰

According to this distinguished English theologian, “dialectical theism” is roughly synonymous with ‘panentheism,’ but has the advantage of not sounding similar to ‘pantheism’ and thus causing confusion. Macquarrie recommends the term ‘dialectical theism,’ thereby stressing that this position is essentially a species of theism and closer to theism than to pantheism. The adjective ‘dialectical’ denotes a departure from classical theism in its dynamic mediation between transcendent attributes and immanent qualities in the deity. In dialectical theism, the relationship between God and the world is more intimate than is the case in classical theism. God is both transcendent and immanent, both impassible and passible, both eternal and temporal. God’s being will be enriched through world processes. Macquarrie enumerates Plotinus, Dionysius, Eriugena, Cusanus, Leibniz, Hegel, Whitehead, and Heidegger among the leading representatives of dialectical theism. In my judgment, Lessing is fully qualified to be included in this list. Hence I find it quite appropriate to apply the term ‘dialectical theism’ for Lessing’s overall position on religion.

In conclusion, Lessing is by nature “a genuinely *dialectical thinker* of strict logic.”⁴¹ As we have seen, he conceives of the relationship of God and the world in an eminently modern and dialectical manner. It is my contention, therefore, that Lessing is a proponent of modern dialectical theism. His mind, however modern, is at the same time essentially co-determined by the Christian heritage. A self-described “beloved bastard of a noble, gracious lord” (*lieber Bastard eines großen, gnädigen Herrn*)⁴², Lessing is a creative modern mind, who is both shaped by and gives shape to the Christian heritage.

In the notes, the following abbreviations are used for Lessing's works:

- B *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*. Herausgegeben von Wilfried Barner zusammen mit Klaus Bohnen, Gunter E. Grimm, Helmuth Kiesel, Arno Schilson, Jürgen Stenzel und Conrad Wiedemann. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985- .
- G *Werke*. In Zusammenarbeit mit Karl Eibl, Helmut Göbel, Karl S. Guthke, Gerd Hillen, Albert von Schirnding und Jörg Schönert. Herausgegeben von Herbert G. Göpfert. 8 Bde. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1970-79.
- LM *Sämtliche Schriften*. Herausgegeben von Karl Lachmann, dritte, aufs neue durchgesehene und vermehrte Aufl., besorgt durch Franz Muncker. 23 Bde. Stuttgart (Bd. 12ff.), Leipzig (Bd. 22f.), Berlin und Leipzig 1886-1924. Nachdruck, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968.

- ¹ This paper is based on the address delivered at the meeting of the Modern Language Association's 122nd Annual Convention held in Philadelphia on December 30, 2006. In commemoration of the 225th anniversary of Lessing's death, I delivered my address for the session entitled "Religion in Lessing's Life and Thought: A Session in the Lessingjahr 1781/2006." I seized this occasion to reformulate my thesis as to Lessing the theologian or the philosopher of religion.
- ² Christopher Schrempf, *Lessing als Philosoph*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1921), 18.
- ³ Arno Schilson, *Lessings Christentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).
- ⁴ Karl S. Guthke, *Der Stand der Lessing-Forschung: Ein Bericht über die Literatur von 1932-1962* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), 88.
- ⁵ Toshimasa Yasukata, *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment: Lessing on Christianity and Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

- ⁶ Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1911; reprint, Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1963), 46.
- ⁷ See LM 18, 101-102 (Letter to Karl Lessing of 2 February 1774); B 11/2, 614-15 (no. 957).
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ LM 17, 18 (Letter to Johann Gottfried Lessing of 30 May 1749); B 11/1, 26 (no. 21).
- ¹⁰ LM 13, 12; G 8, 15 (*Das Testament Johannis*).
- ¹¹ This anecdote is taken from Jerome's *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Galatas*, 3, 6, which has to do with Gal. 6:10. See Eusebius Hieronymus, *Opera Omnia*, in the *Patrologia cursus completus. Series Latina*, edited by J.-P. Migne (Paris: Vrayet, 1845. 46), vol. 26, 433. In order to support his own assertion, Lessing appended to his tract an excerpt from the Latin text. Cf. LM 13, 17; G 8, 20 (*Das Testament Johannis*).
- ¹² LM 13, 143; G 8, 162 (Anti-Goeze, 1).
- ¹³ Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantisches Christentum und Kirche in der Neuzeit*, in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, edited by Paul Hinneberg, part 1/4, vol. 1, *Geschichte der christlichen Religion*, Mit Einleitung: Die israelitisch-jüdischen Religion, 2d ed. (Berlin and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1909), 516.
- ¹⁴ Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt*, 97.
- ¹⁵ For the concept of the "Age of Religion" and its meaning, see Franklin L. Baumer, *Main Currents of Western Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).
- ¹⁶ LM 17, 298 (Letter to Friedrich Nicolai of 25 August 1769); B 11/1, 622 (no. 501).
- ¹⁷ "Autotheonomy" (*Autotheonomie*) is a term borrowed from Ernst Troeltsch. As he puts it, "*Christian autonomy is at the same time theonomy*" (italics in original). He coined the term "autotheonomy" to make this point clear. See Ernst Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*, edited by Gertrud von le Fort (Munich and Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1925), 201-202.

In this connection, Troeltsch elsewhere expresses the remarkable

view that “autonomy and theonomy are not opposites if the divine origin of moral law is traced back not to externally revealed, statutory law, but to the compulsion of moral reason itself”; “theonomy is only an emphasizing of the religious presuppositions contained in the idea of autonomy itself.” See his “Praktische christliche Ethik: Diktate zur Vorlesung im Wintersemester 1911/12. Aus dem Nachlaß Gertrude le Forts herausgegeben von Elenore von la Chevallerie und Friedrich Wilhelm Graf,” in *Mitteilungen der Ernst-Troeltsch-Gesellschaft*, vol. 6 (Augsburg, 1991), 143.

¹⁸ In these words one may discern the idea of *Deus operans operari*, an idea traceable to Philippians 2:13: “θεός γάρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοχίας” (RSV: “for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”). For more discussion of this idea, see Wataru Mizugaki, *Shu-kyoteki Tankyu-no Mondai* (The problem of religious quest) (Tokyo: So-bunsha, 1984), chapter 10.

At any rate, the words “I will!/If Thou wilt, then I will!” (*Ich will!/Willst du nur, das ich will!*) strike me as highly significant. Günter Rohrmoser likewise calls attention to this point. He says:

The organ with which Nathan carries out his hearkening to God is reason, and no appeal is made to the historical figure of Founder, Redeemer, or Savior. What is heard is, in a word, acceptance of one's fate as divine providence. This occurs in the remarkable statement, “I will!/If Thou wilt, then I will!” His turning to God bears, therefore, the character of personal address. But God is not addressed on behalf of anyone or anything. Instead, Nathan subjects himself to God with the humble request that his sacrifice may be found acceptable. Nathan's self-negation as unconditional yielding of the self to God may be taken as Lessing's real opinion as to what constitutes the problem of religions.

See Günter Rohrmoser, “Aufklärung und Offenbarungsglaube (Lessing-Kant),” in *Emanzipation und Freiheit* (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1970), 50; cf. Arno Schilson, *Lessings Christentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 100.

hoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 39-40.

- ¹⁹ Johannes von Lüpke, *Wege der Weisheit: Studien zu Lessings Theologiekritik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 123.
- ²⁰ See Hans Michael Baumgartner, "Wandlungen des Vernunftbegriffs in der Geschichte des europäischen Denkens," in *Grenzfragen*, vol. 16, *Rationalität: Ihre Entwicklung und ihre Grenzen* (Freiburg & Munich, 1989), 167-203.
- ²¹ See Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Vernunft als Weisheit: Studien zum späten Lessing* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1991).
- ²² Kant's goal of enlightenment is best illustrated by the following famous statement:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. This tutelage is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! "Have courage to use your own reason!"—that is the motto of enlightenment.

Immanuel Kant, *Kants Werke*, Akademie Textausgabe, vol. 8, *Abhandlungen nach 1781* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), 35. The English is borrowed from Lewis White Beck's translation of Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, and What is Enlightenment?* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), 85.

- ²³ LM 13, 432-433; G 8, 507 (*Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* § 80).
- ²⁴ LM 13, 23-24; G 8, 32-33 (*Eine Duplik*): "If God held all truth in his right hand and in his left everlasting striving after truth, so that I should always and everlastingly be mistaken, and said to me, 'Choose,' with humility I would pick the left hand and say, 'Father, grant me that. Absolute truth is for thee alone.'"
- ²⁵ LM 18, 269 (Letter to Johann Albert Reimarus of 6 April 1778); B 12, 144 (no. 1358).
- ²⁶ Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*, 201.
- ²⁷ LM 13, 432; G 8, 506 (*Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* § 76).

- ²⁸ *Die Hauptschriften zum Pantheismusstreit zwischen Jacobi und Mendelssohn*, edited by Heinrich Scholz (Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1916), 77; *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi Werke*, herausgegeben von Klaus Hammacher und Walter Jaeschke, Band 1, 1, *Schriften zum Spinozastreit*, herausgegeben von Klaus Hammacher und Ingrid-Maria Piske (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag; Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1998), 16.
- ²⁹ *Hauptschriften* 83-84; *Schriften zum Spinozastreit*, 23.
- ³⁰ *Hauptschriften*, 82; *Schriften zum Spinozastreit*, 22.
- ³¹ *Hauptschriften*, 83; *Schriften zum Spinozastreit*, 22.
- ³² *Hauptschriften*, 92-93; *Schriften zum Spinozastreit*, 31.
- ³³ Siegfried Wollgast, *Der deutsche Pantheismus im 16. Jahrhundert: Sebastian Franck und seine Wirkungen auf die Entwicklung der pantheistischen Philosophie in Deutschland* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972), 158.
- ³⁴ Harald Schultze, *Lessings Toleranzbegriff: Eine theologische Studie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 111. Schultze's definition of spiritualism is not improper, to be sure. (Cf. "Spiritualisten, religiöse," *RGG*, 3d ed., vol. 6, cols. 255-57). But it should also be observed, as George H. Williams indicates, that spiritualism in general can further be divided into three prominent types: "revolutionary spiritualists" (such as the *Schwärmer* Luther castigated, and Thomas Müntzer), "evangelical spiritualists" (such as Caspar Schwenckfeld and Gabriel Ascherham), and "rational spiritualists" (such as Paracelsus, Valentin Weigel, and Sebastian Franck). See George H. Williams, "Introduction," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, edited by G. H. Williams and A. M. Mergal (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), esp. 31-35.
- ³⁵ In the *Vorlesungen über das System der Philosophie* of 1828, Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781-1832) coined the term *Panentheismus* in order to correct the fundamental errors of *Pantheismus*. The primary object of this term is to maintain simultaneously both "the immanence of the world in God" and "the transcendence of God over the world." See Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, *Vorlesungen über das System der Philosophie*, Erster Band, *Intuitiv-Analytischer Haupttheil*, 2., aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlasse des Verfassers vermehrte Aufl. (Leipzig: Otto Schulze,

1889), 313; cf. John Macquarrie, "Panentheismus," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*; U. Dierse and W. Schröder, "Panentheismus," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*.

³⁶ LM 14, 292; G 8, 515 (*Über die Wirklichkeit der Dinge*).

³⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung: Lessing-Goethe-Novalis-Hölderlin*, 16th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 116.

³⁸ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1957), 89.

³⁹ For Lessing's *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* there are three different Greek formulas: *ἐν καὶ πᾶν*, as Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi reports in his letter to Moses Mendelssohn; *ἐν ἐγὼ καὶ πάντα*, as Lessing's own 1780 handwritten epigram suggests; and *ἐν ἐγὼ καὶ πᾶν*, as introduced in recent years by Alexander Altmann ("Lessing und Jacobi: Das Gespräch über den Spinozismus," in *Lessing Yearbook* 3: 25-70) and Erwin Quapp (*Lessings Theologie statt Jacobis Spinozismus* [Bern: Peter Lang, 1992]). Religious-philosophical as well as linguistic observation recommends taking the phrase *ἐν ἐγὼ καὶ πάντα* [I am One and All] as Lessing's most authentic formula. For the detail of my arguments, see my *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 137-139.

⁴⁰ For the concept of "dialectical theism," see John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), esp. 43-56, 171-184. Macquarrie's arguments in this book are splendid through and through. I owe a great deal to his sharp and deep insights.

⁴¹ Walter Jens and Hans Küng, *Dichtung und Religion: Pascal, Gryphius, Lessing, Hölderlin, Novalis, Kierkegaard, Dostojewski, Kafka* (Munich and Zurich: Piper, 1988), 90; cf. Carl Schwarz, *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing als Theologe* (Halle: C. E. Pfeffer, 1854), 15.

⁴² LM 18, 358 (Letter to Elise Reimarus of 28 November 1780); B 12, 360-61 (no. 1602).