TITLE: Baumgarten's Steps Towards Spinozism

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ABSTRACT: I argue that Baumgarten's rich and once influential *Metaphysica* contains an ontology that pushes him towards a Spinozistic conclusion, one that he fiercely sought to avoid. After examining Baumgarten's distinctive account of the core of Spinozism, I present his path as a series of independently motivated steps, focusing on his general ontology and his accounts of the world and God. Baumgarten himself would not be happy with these results, and I concede that some of his efforts to thwart Spinozism look promising. But there is one route to Spinozism that he fails to block, and at a key juncture, he inadvertently aids the Spinozist's cause. I conclude with an epilogue on how Baumgarten's path also foreshadows the next Spinozism flare-up heading into the German pantheism controversy.

KEYWORDS: Baumgarten, Spinoza, Spinozism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Grounding, Perfection, God, Kant, Wolff

Alexander Baumgarten is best known today for his connections to Kant, primarily in aesthetics but increasingly in metaphysics as well. After all, Baumgarten basically wrote the book on metaphysics for Kant. Kant used Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* for several lecture courses due to "the richness of its contents and the precision of its methods" (*TP* 295), and Kant hails Baumgarten as "chief of the metaphysicians" (*TP* 34) and "the excellent analyst" (*KrV* A21/B35). Kant was hardly alone in his admiration. Baumgarten's tightly constructed *Metaphysica* went through seven Latin and two German editions, each Latin edition containing exactly 1,000 numbered and cross-referenced paragraphs. More than four decades after the book's initial publication, Eberhart praised it as "an unmatched model of conceptual

thoroughness, method, and determinacy."[1] Baumgarten's rich *Metaphysica* still rewards study today, especially for those interested in 17th and 18th century rationalism or its contemporary counterparts. I hope this paper serves as partial proof of this.

Although Kant's shadow now looms over Baumgarten,[2] Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* contains a shadow of its own, one that he works hard to shake: Spinoza. This comes as no surprise. Baumgarten attended and then taught at Halle in the wake of the Wolff-Pietist fiasco, so he knew well the power of invoking Spinoza's name and the importance of making one's opposition to "the most dangerous man of the century" beyond reproach.[3] When Baumgarten revised his *Metaphysica* between the first (1739) and second (1743) editions, he added new material that explicitly highlighted some of his disagreements with Spinoza, perhaps in an effort to make his anti-Spinozism bona fides even clearer.[4]

Alas, Spinoza's conclusions prove easier to denounce than to avoid. I will argue that Baumgarten's own ontology pushes him towards a Spinozistic view that he repeatedly tries to thwart. To show this, I will present Baumgarten's path towards Spinozism as a series of independently motivated steps. Although the main focus will be on Baumgarten's accounts of the world (part three) and God (part four), I will also consider key pieces of his general ontology (part two). After pulling these steps together (part five), I conclude with how Baumgarten's path anticipates the next battleground over Spinozism during the buildup to the pantheism controversy (epilogue).

Baumgarten himself would be unhappy with these results, and we will see that some of his efforts to defeat Spinozism look promising. But there is one route to Spinozism that he fails to block, and I will argue that this failure is not one of neglect. He cannot fully block it without changing something in the steps he has already taken. That is, Baumgarten can fully avoid Spinozism only by backtracking.

Before exploring Baumgarten's path, we need to get a grip on exactly what constitutes Spinozism, as this was something of a moving target among eighteenth-century philosophers (part one). There was widespread agreement that Spinozism was false and dangerous, but also widespread disagreement about what constituted Spinozism. Baumgarten provides a distinctive way of framing Spinozism, one that turns out to be his first step towards it.

1. Step One: Defining Spinozism

Philosophical *-isms* are notoriously difficult to pin down. In the case of Spinoz*ism*, there were competing accounts of the "soul and proper form" (*L* 153) of Spinozism during the late 17th and 18th centuries. The main motivation for discussing Spinoza's views was to refute them, but it seemed insufficient to nibble around the edges, raising objections to this or that definition or demonstration (though there was plenty of that too). The hope was that by properly defining Spinozism, one could isolate and then undercut the core commitments on which Spinoza's other controversial views depended, bringing down the entire edifice with a decisive blow.

Giving an essence-specifying account of Spinozism also provided a framework for evaluating other philosophical views. In theory, it could establish innocence, since merely agreeing with Spinoza on a periphery matter would not suffice for being a committed Spinozist. Far more often, it was used to demonstrate guilt, since someone could use a different philosophical framework and even loudly denounce Spinoza while still being committed to Spinozism. By knowing the true essence of Spinozism, one could rightly distinguish accidental overlappers from unwitting or secret adherents.

While there were disagreements about what constituted the true "foundations of Spinozism" (*D* 302), this wasn't an interpretative dispute about Spinoza's actual views. Unlike today, pretty much everyone agreed that Spinoza affirmed, say, necessitarianism and substance monism. The debate focused on which of those views (if either) was the animating commitment

that motivated and led to the rest of his dastardly metaphysics. Importantly, the true core of Spinozism need not be what Spinoza himself begins with, most frequently claims, or explicitly invokes when presenting his own views. Defining Spinozism was a retrospective project that granted privileged access to later readers. Although debates about properly defining Spinozism continue today, my focus will be on the eighteenth-century disputes to which Baumgarten contributed.[5]

Christian Wolff provides a clear and illuminating example—adjectives not typically ascribed to Wolff by contemporary readers. In the second volume of his *Theologia naturalis* (1737), Wolff begins his lengthy "Refutation of Spinoza's *Ethics*" with an account of "what Spinozism is" (*TN* 671). He defines Spinozism exclusively in terms of Spinoza's brand of substance monism, according to which there exists "a single substance endowed with infinite attributes, two of which are infinite thought and extension…[and] finite beings arise from necessary modifications of the attributes of this substance" (*TN* 671). These components are not mutually entailing, and Wolff sometimes shrinks the definition of Spinozism to an even narrower base, claiming that "the one-ness of substance" is "the cornerstone of Spinozism" (*TN* 704). This narrower characterization closely echoes Bayle's seventeenth-century account of "the foundations of Spinozism" (*D* 302), namely "that God is the only substance that there is in the universe and that all other beings are only modifications of that substance" (*D* 303–4).

However, Wolff often includes Spinoza's claim that God is extended (*E*2p2) in his account of Spinozism, which helps make sense of Wolff's lengthy attack on it and delineates Wolff's brand of Spinozism from nearby alternatives. In fact, one of the most interesting shifts in accounts of Spinozism during the eighteenth century is that God's extension became increasingly seen as nonessential to Spinozism proper, giving rise to *idealist* forms of Spinozism.[6]

Wolff also criticizes the most common rival accounts of Spinozism, such as pantheism, atheism, and fatalism. He notes that "Spinozism is commonly said to consist in the confusion of God and nature" (*TN* 671), but he objects that such pantheism "is imputed to Spinoza only by consequence." Wolff distinguishes Spinozism from atheism on the grounds that Spinozism is actually more morally pernicious than atheism (*TN* 716). And although Wolff thinks Spinoza affirms necessitarianism and fatalism, he claims that these are not part of Spinozism proper (*TN* 678), since "this error [of fatalism and necessitarianism] is hardly proper to Spinoza but can be observed in many others who are not of Spinoza's opinion concerning God and the nature of things." However, that admission undercuts some of Wolff's motivation for defining Spinozism, since insofar as accepting Spinozism is merely a *sufficient* condition for accepting views like necessitarianism, refuting Spinozism could leave necessitarianism itself unchallenged.

Wolff's nemesis, the Halle pietist Christian Lange, targets exactly this concern in his alternative account of Spinozism. Lange defines "the soul and proper form of Spinozism" as the commitment to necessitarianism and fatalism, a view that "renders everything necessary in the world and among the human race" (*L* 153). Lange deploys his account of Spinozism as a litmus test, since someone could be a Spinozist "even if one departs from Spinoza through distinguishing God from the universe or from the world, or even by taking the soul to be a particular substance distinct from the body" (*L* 153). Lange argues, for example, that doctrines like causal determinism and universal spontaneity collapse into fatalistic necessitarianism and hence Spinozism (*L* 152), a charge that became increasingly popular during the second half of the eighteenth century (such as *J* 234). If Lange is right, then Leibnizians are committed Spinozists, even if they reject pantheism, atheism, and substance monism. From Lange's (admittedly jaded) perspective, it is quite telling that Wolff excludes necessitarianism from Spinozism proper; perhaps Wolff just doesn't want to advertise his Spinozism so openly.

Baumgarten offers another account of Spinozism. Starting in the second edition of his *Metaphysica,* Baumgarten defines "Theological Spinozism" as "the doctrine denying that God is an extramundane being" (855).[7] On this account, Spinozism is essentially a thesis about the relationship between God and the world, namely that God is not, in some robust ontic sense, beyond or wholly distinct from the world. Depending on one's ontology, Theological Spinozism might imply substance monism, but, as stated, this version of Spinozism is not dependent on a seventeenth-century substance/mode schema, and it allows Spinozism to be reached using alternative ontologies, such as the more popular eighteenth-century categories of determinations, subjects, and grounding. Baumgarten's definition also omits any claims about extension, and it subtly deemphasizes the relationship between each individual and God by focusing on the relation between the world as a whole and God.

In arguing that Baumgarten inadvertently takes steps towards Spinozism, I mean that he tends towards Spinozism as he himself characterizes the view here: God is not extramundane. But there are different ways in which God could fail to be extramundane, depending on how "extra" God needs to be, which implies that Spinozism can take different forms for Baumgarten. According to what I will call "Simple Pantheism," God and the world are outright identical. According to what I will call "Simple Panentheism," the world is contained in God as an accident (or collection of accidents) of God, even though the divine substance is not identical with the world.

Baumgarten explicitly rejects both Simple Pantheism and Simple Panentheism. "God is not the world, and neither this nor any world is God" (853). "The world is not an essential determination, essence, attribute, mode, modification, or accident of God" (855). Nevertheless, we will see how Baumgarten's own ontology pushes him towards these forms of Spinozism, and we will consider his main ways of blocking them.

This will set the stage for a third form of Spinozism, which I will call "Representational Panentheism" (RP). According to Representational Panentheism, the world is contained in God as a merely intentional object of God's ideas. We will see that there are again pressures from Baumgarten's own ontology to accept RP. Worse for Baumgarten, his main arguments against the simpler forms of Spinozism will not apply to RP. And if that weren't bad enough, the Spinozist's key move for defending RP will be one that Baumgarten himself provides in his account of God's intellect. That is, Baumgarten doesn't just fail to block this form of Spinozism; he inadvertently aids the Spinozist's cause.

2. Step Two: Properties and Grounding

Before diving further into Spinozism, we need to unpack a few background pieces of Baumgarten's metaphysics, as they play significant roles in what is to come. Baumgarten defines ontology as "the science of the more general predicates of a being" (4), and he carves up the ontological terrain in a variety of ways. For instance, he sometimes invokes the traditional categories of substances and accidents to mark the basic thing/property divide, claiming that "there is nothing else apart from substances and accidents" (194). For our purposes, the most important side of Baumgarten's ontic ledger will be properties, which Baumgarten indiscriminately refers to as the *predicates* or the *determinations* of beings.[8]

Baumgarten draws various distinctions among properties, some of which will become important for us only later. For example, Baumgarten distinguishes *realities* from *negations* as positive vs. negative determinations that have the predicate form *being A* and *being not-A*, respectively (36). This distinction will play a role in section five, in which we consider Baumgarten's objection to Spinozism from the fact that God has only realities or purely positive properties.

Baumgarten also refers to *notes* when discussing properties, sometimes casually as just another property-term. For example, he writes, "That which (notes and predicates) are posited in something by determining [it] are DETERMINATIONS" (36; see also 3Pref, 80 and 2Pref, 84). But more often, notes for Baumgarten correspond to the properties of things insofar as those properties are mentally represented (for example, 525–31). This will become important in section five when we consider a form of Spinozism that, in effect, identifies the world's properties with notes contained in God's representations.

Baumgarten's primary division of properties, which is largely orthogonal to these others, consists of three familiar classes: (a) essential properties (*essentialia*, 39–40); (b) affections (41), which he further subdivides into attributes and modes (50); and (c) external relations (37). He labels the essential properties and affections of a being its "internal determinations" (37), and these internal determinations will be the most important class of properties for Baumgarten's engagement with Spinozism. As we will see, Baumgarten distinguishes internal determinations in terms of *grounding* relations, which he labels with the wonderfully vague '*ratio*.' So in order to understand the internal determination structure of beings for Baumgarten, we first need to examine his account of grounding.

2.1 Grounding Unpacked

Grounding does a lot of philosophical work for Baumgarten, as his primary definition makes clear:

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> A GROUND [*ratio*] is that from which it is knowable why something is. What has a ground, or that of which something is a ground, is said to be its CONSEQUENCE and DEPENDENT on it. The predicate by virtue of which something is either ground or consequence or both is the NEXUS (14).

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Although Baumgarten treats grounding as a single kind of relation, it will be helpful to tease three core aspects apart, at least conceptually: (a) metaphysical, (b) explanatory, and (c) representational.[9]

(A) Grounding as Metaphysical Dependence

First and foremost for Baumgarten, grounding is a relation of *metaphysical dependence*. Grounding is transitive (25), though Baumgarten sometimes marks a distinction between mediate and immediate grounds (27, 318, 523). His main discussion of grounding (20–33) presupposes that grounding is nonsymmetrical, but it is unclear whether it is antisymmetrical, which would allow for cases of *self*-grounding, or asymmetrical and irreflexive, which would not.

I favor the antisymmetric reading because it is difficult to understand the universal scope of claims like "every determination has a ground" (80) without allowing for cases of reflexive grounding, unless we insert Dasgupta-style qualifiers ("every determination *that is apt for being grounded* has a ground") or accept non-terminating grounding chains, neither of which Baumgarten does.[10] Baumgarten does define "unqualified grounds" as grounds that themselves lack any further grounds (28), which fits better with the asymmetry reading, according to which at least some grounding chains end with an ungrounded ground. However, as we will see shortly, the main properties that Baumgarten classifies as unqualified grounds turn out to have further grounds. The further grounds are just not among the thing's own internal determinations, which implies that "unqualified" in §28 is restricted.

Like many contemporary grounding theorists, Baumgarten distinguishes between full ("sufficient") and partial ("insufficient") grounds (21). He also allows for cases of both singular and plural grounds (51, 94). Unlike some contemporary accounts of grounding, Baumgarten writes as though the primary relata of grounding are things or properties, rather than facts or

states of affairs. Nevertheless, many of Baumgarten's cases are fine-grained enough to sound like a version of fact-grounding. For example, he sometimes unpacks grounding in terms of the truth-making of a predicate: if *x* grounds *y* with respect to a predicate *F*, then *x* makes it the case that *y is F* (34). Even when he refers to one property grounding another (35), it is tempting to rephrase this as the *instantiation* of one property grounding the instantiation of another, especially in light of the explanatory element of grounding discussed below. However, to avoid constant paraphrasing, I will mostly follow Baumgarten's looser formulations.

Because grounding plays such a foundational role in his ontology, Baumgarten does not define it in terms of some further relation of dependence. But he provides familiar glosses, such as metaphysically *determines* (36), *posits* or *makes it the case that* (34), or *is in virtue of* (14). Although metaphysical dependence is not a purely modal notion for Baumgarten, full grounding does establish modal covariation between grounds and grounded (31–32, 43–46, 64, 107). Using Baumgarten's language, if *x* "sufficiently grounds" *y*, then, necessarily, *x* exists or is the case iff *y* exists or is the case.

(B) Grounding as Explanatory

As the very word *ratio* suggests, grounding traditionally has an explanatory component, according to which things are explained through their grounds. This explanatory dimension is captured by the opening sentence of Baumgarten's definition, according to which grounds make it "knowable why something is" (8; see also 23, 400). In addition to this general explanatory role, Baumgarten posits a tight epistemic connection between grounds and grounded. Baumgarten claims that grounding establishes or at least tracks two-way deductive inferences. "When a consequence [*rationatum*] is posited, some ground of it is posited…or, it is valid to deduce a ground…from the consequence" (29) and "when a ground is posited…it is valid to deduce the consequence from the ground" (30). To take a stock example, if the essential

properties of a triangle ground its three interior angles summing to 180 degrees, then the latter can be inferred from the former and vice versa. (Although the inferences and necessitations between grounds and grounded are bidirectional, grounding explanations will be as nonsymmetrical as metaphysical dependence itself (19).)

Baumgarten later claims that our world contains an immense grounding structure that connects every being, via chains of grounding relations, with every one of its worldmates, either as a mediate ground or as a mediate consequence (400, 279). Given this link between grounding and two-way deducibility, it follows that the world also exhibits an inferential structure that allows for a priori deductions between the property structures of any two worldmates, at least in principle (24, 643). Not for nothing is Baumgarten classified a rationalist! And while Baumgarten might not have studied his Kripke closely enough, he is hardly unique in holding that the world's thickly interconnected metaphysical and explanatory structure allows one, at least in principle, to make a priori, deductive inferences tracing those structures.

(C) Grounding and Representation

The tight epistemic connection between grounds and grounded points to a third feature of grounding, *representability*. To unpack this, notice the last clause of Baumgarten's definition of grounds: "The predicate by virtue of which something is either ground or consequence or both is the NEXUS" (14). That is, whenever *x* grounds *y*, there is a kind of metaphysical locus at which *x* and *y* are connected to each other. We can see this appeal to a grounding locus in §19: "Whatever is possible in a nexus, i.e., that in which there is a nexus, or that to which a nexus belongs, is CONNECTED (rational) and whatever is impossible in a nexus is IRRATIONAL (unconnected, incoherent)."

Baumgarten regularly ties these interconnected dependence structures to mental representations, making it clear that the grounding structures of each and every thing are

representable by a mind (8, 15, 20, 108, 279, 400, 640, 642, 882). At a minimum, God's mind represents all grounding structures and all possible worlds. "God represents every nexus most distinctly to himself" (872); "God, representing all things, represents all possible worlds to himself" (867).

Baumgarten sometimes goes further, claiming that at least some things are grounded in God by being represented by God's ideas. "Therefore, insofar as the essences of things are represented in the intellect of God, they depend (14) on it" (868). Notice how Baumgarten cites the definition of grounds in §14 to show why essences metaphysically depend on God's ideas. I think the best way to understand this is that the grounding loci of at least some things—here, essences—are wholly within God's mind. Baumgarten's view that essences metaphysically depend on God's mind in virtue of God's structured mental representations of them was part of Leibnizian orthodoxy.[11]

This representational grounding also helps make sense of Baumgarten's frequent references to merely possible entities and properties standing in grounding relations to each other (20–4, 37–49). Merely possible entities are among the contents of God's representations, and the dependencies among them is a *representational* dependence among the objects of God's ideas. I take this to be the sense of Baumgarten's "positing" language in this context. What it is for one possible thing or property to ground another is for the representation of the first to "posit," or contain, the representation of the second.

By the end, we will return to the representational grounding of possibilities and essences in God's mind and wonder whether such divine mental structuring could also suffice for the actual world's full metaphysical structure. The biggest takeaway so far is just that the grounding structure of all things is at least coextensive with a representational structuring in God's mind.

2.2 Grounding Applied: Essential Properties, Attributes, and Modes

We can now explicate the internal property structure of each thing in terms of grounding. Baumgarten thinks that each of a thing's internal determinations are linked in a single, all-encompassing grounding network. "All internal determinations of a possible thing are connected to each other—every determination with every other determination" (47).

More specifically, a thing's essential properties are the "unqualified grounds" of its affections (39, 41). Given the nonsymmetry of grounding, this entails that a thing's essential properties are not grounded in any of its nonessential properties. Are essential properties themselves grounded? As mentioned above, Baumgarten defines an "unqualified ground" as a ground that is itself ungrounded (28), and he implies that the essential properties of finite things are not even partially grounded in any of their own properties (90). Nevertheless, Baumgarten claims that the essential properties of finite things do have full *external* grounds in the intellect of God. "If [essential properties] do not have their own internal sufficient ground in that of which they are the essential determinations, nevertheless they certainly have a sufficient ground outside of the being in question—and certainly ultimately in the supreme intellect" (3Pref, 81; see also 868).

Baumgarten suggests in the next sentence that God's own essential properties internally ground each other, which would violate even antisymmetry. However, Baumgarten is most committed to the thesis that God's perfections are mutually inferential, "insofar as every supreme perfection can be conceived of as coming from every other supreme perfection" (3Pref 81; see also 816, 817, 844). But even by his own lights, Baumgarten need not endorse grounding circles or ungrounded divine properties to establish this. For example, each of God's essential properties could be self-grounded and, taken together, be the plural grounds of every divine affection.

Baumgarten's account of grounding also allows him to subdivide the category of affections into *attributes* and *modes*, where attributes are fully grounded in a thing's essential

properties and modes are only partially grounded in its essential properties (50). As Baumgarten emphasizes, it follows that a thing's essential properties and attributes modally covary (64, 73, 107, 277).

If modes are only partially grounded in a thing's essential properties, what else are they grounded in? One option would again be nothing; modes are partially ungrounded. But this would violate at least the spirit of Baumgarten's claim that "each and every thing [that is, property] in every possible thing [*singula in omni possibili*] has a ground" (22).[12]

Baumgarten later offers a cosmological argument that treats on §22 as demanding a full ground for every mode. "The existence of a contingent and hence finite being is a mode. Hence existence is sufficiently determined neither through [its] essence . . . nor, therefore, through its attributes . . . But nevertheless a sufficient ground is necessary for the contingent and finite being to exist (22, 101)" (308). In the case of an actual finite thing's existence, the rest of its full grounds reside in its external causes. "Those things that contain [the sufficient ground for existence] are causes" (308).[13] More generally, every mode is fully grounded in a thing's own essence plus properties of other things.

The fact that a thing's modes are partially ungrounded in, and hence undetermined by, its own essence (65) is supposed to establish the contingency and alterability of modes (108), at least relative to their bearer's essence.[14] However, the demand for full grounds for every mode, combined with the transitivity of grounding and the rejection of infinite chains of dependence (381), requires Baumgarten to include in every mode's grounds something that is not itself a mode of anything. This is especially clear in his cosmological argument (854, 926), according to which there must exist something whose existence and causal activity is not even partly grounded in the existence and causal activity of anything else, a kind of *ultimate* mediate ground.

Thankfully, according to Baumgarten, there necessarily exists a being who lacks modes altogether (825) and whose essential properties and attributes play this ultimate grounding role, namely God. I have already quoted Baumgarten's claim that God's intellect grounds all the essential properties of things, which in turn fully ground all the attributes and partly ground all the modes of things. According to the conclusion of Baumgarten's cosmological argument, God is also the ultimate causal source, and thus the ultimate ground (307) of the existence and activities of every actual thing. Hence God is the most mediate (27) and most ultimate (28) ground of every property of every actually existing thing, including the actual world itself.

We will see later that Baumgarten thinks God's ultimate grounding of everything actual is a perfect-making feature of God. But we will wonder whether this grounding role implies that the actual world is metaphysically contained in God in a way that renders God insufficiently extramundane, as in Spinozism. To evaluate this, we need to consider the ontic structures of the world and God in more detail.

3. Step Three: The Nature of the World

Baumgarten characterizes worlds in mereological terms. Most possible worlds are wholes whose most fundamental proper parts are distinct, interdependent, finite substances (357, 400).[15] He formally defines a whole as "the one that is entirely identical [*prorsus idem*] with many taken together [*simul sumptis*]" (155), adding that "the whole is entirely identical with its actual parts" (157). Depending on what "taken together" implies, this can sound pretty deflationary about wholes and, by extension, possible worlds, perhaps a version of the contemporary "composition as identity" view.

Nevertheless, Baumgarten is clear that each possible world counts as a being (359, 367, 372, 945), one that has a nature (466, 468) and an internal structure of essential properties, attributes, and modes (357, 361, 362, 370, 430, 468). Baumgarten also clearly believes that at

least some composite entities actually exist and have their own properties, despite the tight asymmetrical dependence of such a whole on its proper parts (224, 226, 233). And although he sometimes uses the language of strict identity, he also explains mereological dependence in terms of grounding. “Composite beings can exist only as determinations of others” (245). I think the best way to understand this less deflationary account of wholes, parts, and worlds is in terms of plural grounding. Possible worlds are wholes whose natures are grounded in the nature of their parts “taken together,” that is, plurally (361).

Baumgarten’s account of the most fundamental parts of possible worlds is thoroughly Leibnizian. “Hence every composite world, and this world, consists of monads” (394). Baumgarten takes monads to be simple (230) and immaterial (422) substances with representational capacities (401), some more distinct than others (402). Baumgarten even identifies substances with representational powers (198–99, 506, 744). Although every possible finite substance is immaterial and unextended, Baumgarten thinks monads give rise to spatially extended, motive bodies and physics more generally. “A monad is not extended, nor does it fill up space. But a whole of monads is extended” (242).

There is a lot of mystery in that “but.” Some collections of monads, suitably related, give rise to material, impenetrable, and divisible bodies moving through space and time (238–41, 415–27). In grounding terms, Baumgarten is claiming that the existence and activities of bodies are grounded in the representational activities of simple, mind-like substances, taken together. But for simplicity, I will define “Baumgarten’s idealism” as the more minimal thesis that, necessarily, every finite substance is a representational power (405).

Baumgarten argues for idealism using his account of grounding:

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> Hence, each and every monad is either the ground or consequence, or other, of every other single monad…therefore, from any given monad of every composite world, and hence of this composite world, one can know the parts of the world to which this monad belongs; i.e., every monad of every composite world, and hence of this composite world, is a power for representing its own universe (400).
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However, this argument requires an even stronger grounding-representation connection than I noted above. Baumgarten moves from the weaker claim that grounds and grounded can be inferred from one another by a mind to the much stronger claim that every grounding or grounded substance *itself* represents this relationship. In §400, this amounts to arguing for idealism via the "i.e.", which will probably not convert many non-idealists. However, Baumgarten's idealism will later play a mostly reinforcing role in his path towards Spinozism.

While every possible world consists in a collection of possible monads (a *monadatum* (406)), our world is "the most perfect of all possible worlds" (935). Most importantly for our purposes, a world's perfection is a function of its internal structure, according to Baumgarten. "The most perfect world is that in which the greatest of the most parts and the most of the greatest parts that are compossible in a world agree in as great a single [*unum*] being as is possible in a world" (436; see also 936). The perfection of a world is not simply a function of the perfection of its parts, whether taken individually or in the aggregate. Perfection includes a containment condition. The most perfect world contains the most and greatest *that it is possible to contain within a single being*. This metaphysical measurement of perfection, the containing of a Many within a One, was a hallmark of seventeenth-century accounts of perfection.[16]

The main takeaway is that most worlds for Baumgarten are derivative, composite beings whose most fundamental parts are compossible mental substances or, equivalently,

representational powers, and the relative perfection of a possible world is a function of how many representing powers it contains. As we will see in the next section, Baumgarten extends this containment account of perfection to God as well, an isomorphism that moves him towards Spinozism.

4. Step Four: The Nature of God

Baumgarten devotes 200 paragraphs—20 percent of the entire *Metaphysica*—to "the science of God" (800). In general, Baumgarten does not make metaphysical exceptions for God. Baumgarten applies the same ontological schema to all beings, even though there are obviously differences between God and everything else. For our purposes, two of these shared features will be the most important: God's internal property structure and God's representational capacity.

4.1 God's internal structure

The core concept of God for Baumgarten is the *ens perfectissmum*, which he immediately unpacks in terms of a maximized internal structure that echoes his account of the world's perfection. "The most perfect being is…that being in which as many and as great things [*in quo tot, tanta, tantum in tot et tanta consentiunt*] agree as greatly with as many and as great things as can agree with the most and the greatest of the things possible in any one being. Therefore, some plurality is absolutely necessary in the most perfect being" (803).[17] That is, God's internal determinations constitute a rich, perfect-making plurality within a single being. "It is so far from the case that all plurality in God is impossible that, rather, it is absolutely necessary that some plurality be posited in and through his very essence" (817).

As with worlds, God's perfection is a function of what all God contains, and Baumgarten's basic line is *the more and the better, the merrier*. "The most perfect being is…the being in which there are the most and greatest realities" (806). Baumgarten explicitly describes this in terms of many-in-one: "All the things [that is, properties] that God possesses in himself

are real. Hence the agreement in him of many in one [*plurium ad unum*] is the agreement of all of his predicates or determinations in one being, which is supreme" (2Pref, 88; see also 94–95).

Given this account of perfection, it is unsurprising that God contains quite a lot, according to Baumgarten. "All realities are in God" (863). Even so, there are some constraints on divine containment, two of which will be important for Baumgarten's efforts to avoid Spinozism. First, God's properties must be compossible. They must be such that a single divine substance could consistently exemplify all of them together (822).

<EXT>

Compossibility Constraint: God's properties must be compossible.

</EXT>

Secondly, each of God's internal properties must be purely positive, since exemplifying limited or negative properties like being evil (813) or divisible (840) is a mark of a thing's imperfection, no matter how numerous those imperfections are. "Now, all realities must be posited in the most perfect being. Therefore, all negations must be denied" (808; see also 814).

<EXT>

Positivity Constraint: God's properties must be purely positive.

</EXT>

Because he emphasizes that God contains an internal plurality of realities, Baumgarten must say something about divine simplicity. He doubles down on his pluralism by restricting simplicity to not being composed of substances in the way that composite bodies are composed of substances. "When the supreme simplicity of God is posited, it is indeed denied that God is composed in any fashion from parts outside of parts. And yet, the most real difference of the many [realities] in God is not denied" (838). However, as Baumgarten himself points out, this kind of simplicity is true of God and finite substances alike.

But the more Baumgarten emphasizes the plurality and diversity of God's internal properties, the more ontologically robust they begin to sound. Each divine perfection or property is itself maximally real. "All the perfections of God have the greatest degree of their own reality that they can have in a being" (844). Each is also maximally distinct from every other. "The supreme uniqueness of God does not deny the plurality of the greatest [realities] within God, nor the supremely infinite respective difference of these very same realities" (846). Each is highly also generative, both internally and externally. "The most fecund and laden [*gravissimae*] grounds in him have the most fecund and laden consequences in every nexus of all the possible worlds that there can be outside of God" (812; see also 169).

Baumgarten even describes God's internal realities as a collection or totality (*omnitudo*). "The totality of the greatest realities that there can be is the greatest degree of the reality. This belongs to God, the most real being" (843; see also 846). In what may be the most directly pantheistic sounding passage in the whole book, Baumgarten suggests that God is composed of or just *is* this totality of individual internal realities. "Now, the God whom we have been contemplating up to this point is thus supremely one, composed of all the greatest and absolutely inseparable realities [*Deus…sit summe unum omnium realitatum maximarum absolute inseparabilium*]" (846). In light of Baumgarten's non-deflationary account of composition from step two, it would follow that is God is a composite whole, grounded in and dependent on God's internal realities, taken together. But even if we take this passage to be just poor phrasing by Baumgarten (as I think we should), we will see that his general commitment to the rich diversity and intermingled internal structure of God threatens to make God more like a mere collection or container of more basic, distinct, individual realities.

4.2 God's Intellect

Before considering whether this leads to a form of Spinozism, we need one other piece of Baumgarten's account of God. Baumgarten argues that God has representations since having representations is a reality and God contains "all realities" (863).

We saw in step two that God's representations include all of modal space. "God, representing all things, represents all possible worlds to himself. This is an internal perfection of God and his essence" (867). According to Baumgarten's idealism and account of possible worlds in step three, this consists in God representing all the representing activities of all possible collections of compossible finite substances. God's representations of possible worlds is a *perfection* because, as we have just seen, perfection is a function of containing many within one. God's ideas of possibilities enable God to contain an even vaster plurality within a single being. "God's intellect is supreme since it represents the most and clearest notes of the most and greatest beings within the strongest and most different associated thoughts" (865).

This hints at Baumgarten's broader, object-oriented account of representational content. Ideas contain representational objects, even in cases of representations of merely possible substances and worlds (509, 522, 632, 742, 878, 894, 899). I mentioned in section two that Baumgarten frequently refers to the properties of represented objects as *notes*, and he implies that the notes of represented objects correspond to the ontic structures of possible things, at least in the case of clear and distinct representations. "Now, in every possible thing, there are essences and affections…Therefore, there are notes in every possible thing that can be understood clearly" (632; see also 36, 260, 510, 524–26, 814). Said differently, possible worlds and possible substances are grounded in God by being the internally structured, intentional objects of God's ideas (867–69, 872), a view that Baumgarten again shares with Leibniz.[18]

An important feature of God's representations is that they include imperfect objects. However, the fact that God's ideas contain imperfect objects does not render God imperfect. God

can perfectly represent imperfections. "God's knowledge . . . lacks all ignorance and errors . . . containing nothing of the obscure, confused, inadequate, incomplete, impure, superficial . . . God understands most distinctly all the ignorance of souls and all their errors, all the triviality and narrowness of their knowledge; he understands whatever in such knowledge is cross, tumultuous, dark, confusion, inadequate, incomplete, impure" (863). Hence, God can think about limitations without being limited. God can represent imperfections without becoming imperfect.

In this way, God's intellect provides a kind of *representational firewall*.

<EXT>

Representational Firewall (RF): S can represent F without being F.

</EXT>

The basis for RF turns on the dual nature of representations, at least for those in this broadly Cartesian tradition. While representations directly inhere in representers as ideas inhere in a mental substance, representational objects and their features do not directly inhere in representers, even though they are contained in and depend on a mind in virtue of being represented. This is what makes representations so special (and puzzling!) in this internalist tradition. A mind can *represent* a feature without *having* or exemplifying that feature, something that is not true of other properties. I cannot have fur without being furry, but I can represent fur without being furry. And this is true—skeptical worries be damned—even in cases in which the represented object or feature does not exist apart from its being represented.

One might want to challenge this underlying account of mental content, but our focus will be on a parity move that accepts Baumgarten's Representational Firewall and tries to turn it against him. So let us grant that RF allows God to ground, via representation, every possible imperfect creaturely property without implying that God's own non-representational properties include imperfections. This preserves both God's ultimate grounding of all possibilities and

God's own perfection. But it comes with a big cost. As we will now see, this same representational firewall undercuts Baumgarten's best defenses against Spinozism.

5. Step Five: Baumgarten's Paths to Spinozism

By combining the first four steps, we can see several paths to Spinozism. According to step one, Spinozism is the thesis that God is not extramundane. I'll present three different versions of this thesis, each of which can be motivated from Baumgarten's other three steps. I'll argue that Baumgarten has resources to block the first two paths, but that he cannot fully block the third without giving something up.

5.1 Spinozism as Simple Pantheism

One straightforward way in which God could fail to be extramundane is if God is outright identical to the world itself, which is how I defined "Simple Pantheism" in step one. We could also construe this as the referential thesis that 'God' and 'the actual world' necessarily co-refer to the same being.

We can warm up to Simple Pantheism by noticing an important isomorphism between God and the world for Baumgarten, as outlined in steps three and four. God and the world are beings with an internal ontic structure or universal nexus consisting of essences grounding attributes. In step four, Baumgarten emphasized the reality and independence of each of the plurality of elements in God's internal structure. Each internal determination of God is maximally real and maximally distinct from every other, which is very much like his account of how the elements comprising the world's internal structure are each real and distinct from each other (354, 356). Perhaps this internal isomorphism of God and the world is best explained by their identity.

As with any form of pantheism, this version of Spinozism requires either an ontological downgrading of God or an upgrading of the world. If we hold fixed Baumgarten's claim in step

three that our world is a *monadatum*, a non-substantial entity that is composed of substances, then Simple Pantheism would imply that God too is a non-substantial collection of substances. Baumgarten certainly wants to avoid this conclusion (838), though we saw in step four that he sometimes slips into describing God as composed of or identical to a plurality of independent realities (846).

If instead, the simple pantheist holds fixed God's substantial nature, she will need to elevate the world's status to that of a substance. I noted in step three that Baumgarten admits that some worlds are substances, but only insofar as a world consists of a single substance (392). Therefore, if God and the actual world are one and the same substance, the actual world must not consist in a plurality of finite *substances*, but must instead consist in a single substance containing a plurality of non-substantial things, which again sounds very much like how Baumgarten describes the rich plurality of internal realities of God in step four.

Nevertheless, Baumgarten thinks he can show that Simple Pantheism is false, and he touts the many ways he can prove it. "The world is a totality of finite actualities (354). God is not a totality of finite actualities (844). Therefore, God is not the world, and neither this nor any world is God. The same is clear from 361, 823, from 365, 839, from 370, 837, and from 388, 843" (853). These refutations all take the same basic form: (a) the world is F; (b) God is not F; therefore, by Leibniz's law, the world is not identical to God. His instances of F include *being composed of finite substances* and *existing contingently*.

The simple pantheist could argue directly that the actual world and God do not, in fact, differ with respect to these Fs. But rather than hash out those more familiar disputes, I want to draw a general lesson from Baumgarten's case against Simple Pantheism. The general lesson is that God and the actual world each have properties that are not compossible properties of one and the same thing. Simple Pantheism, in other words, violates the Compossibility Constraint

from step four. But instead of treating this as a decisive blow against all forms of Spinozism, I will present it as a containment challenge that the Spinozist needs to meet.

<EXT>

Incompossibility Challenge: God must internally contain incompossible properties.

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Before considering whether any forms of Spinozism can meet this challenge, let us consider a different version of Spinozism that Baumgarten also thinks he can successfully block.

5.2 Spinozism as Simple Panentheism

Perhaps Simple Pantheism's identification of God and the world is too simple. A different way in which God could fail to be extramundane is if God fully contained the world without being identical to it. According to what I defined in step one as "Simple Panentheism," the world inheres in God, but God remains a distinct substance. On this form of Spinozism, the world is wholly *in* God without being identical to God. An advantage that this has over Simple Pantheism is that it does not deny that God is a substance nor does it affirm that the world itself is a substance, both of which Baumgarten explicitly challenges.

According to Baumgarten's exhaustive and exclusive substance/accident categorization mentioned in step two, whatever inheres in a substance is an accident of that substance (191–92). So understood, Simple Panentheism is the thesis that the world is an accident of God. That sounds pretty blunt, and it raises questions about whether it is even coherent to treat the world as a property, as if a list of God's properties could include omnipotence, omniscience, and *the world*.

Baumgarten's earlier steps point to a less jarring formulation, according to which the actual world's internal determinations are a proper subset of God's internal determinations. On this formulation, the world and all its internal structure is not a single divine property; rather,

every element in the world's structure is identical to an element in God's own internal structure, though not vice versa.

Baumgarten's account of God's perfection from step four provides a motivation for Simple Panentheism. Recall that Baumgarten treats God's perfection as a kind of structural measurement of many being contained in one. "The most perfect being is…the being in which there are the most and greatest realities" (806). This suggests that a being, *S*, which lacked some of the world's properties, would be less perfect than a being, S^{+}, which contained all of *S*'s properties as well as all of the world's properties. As Baumgarten puts it, "the more and greater the inherent accidents of which [a being] is the ground, the greater it is, up through the greatest ground, which would be the ground of the most and greatest inherent accidents" (203). S^{+} has more "inherent accidents" than *S*, so it seems to follow that S^{+} is more perfect than *S*. But if God is extramundane (contra Simple Panentheism), then there are properties that the world has but which God lacks, suggesting that the panentheistic God has a better claim to being the *ens perfectissimum* than its more traditional theistic counterpart.

Baumgarten devotes even more resources to arguing against Simple Panentheism, and he tries to be thorough. "God is an extramundane being, and the world is not an essential determination, essence, attribute, mode, modification, or accident of God" (855). Still, some of his arguments rule out only Simple Pantheism, not Simple Panentheism. For example, he argues that God is "a supermundane being insofar as he has greater perfection than any whole world, even if it is the best (361, 843)" (925). But this could still be true on Simple Panentheism as long as God has additional perfection-enhancing properties beyond the subset of properties that comprises the world. Other arguments appeal to incompossible property pairings that just mirror his arguments against Simple Pantheism. For example, Baumgarten argues that (a) the world is "internally alterable" (365) and (b) "an infinite being is not internally alterable" (252), in order to

show “it is once again obvious that the world cannot be a modification of God” (836; see also 388 and 443).

Baumgarten also offers distinct arguments that target the perfection-based motivation for Simple Panentheism. Recall from step four that God contains not only the greatest *number* of compossible properties. Each of those individual properties is itself maximally infinite, unlimited, and excellent (807). Recall from step three that the world’s properties include finite, limited, and deficient properties (248, 354). But according to Simple Panentheism, those finite properties are among God’s properties, and Baumgarten argues that this would conflict with the Positivity Constraint. “In God, there is no imperfection. Therefore, there is no essential, no accidental, no internal, and no external imperfection” (829).

As with the Incompossibility Challenge, the simple panentheist could try to respond directly. But I will treat this as another general containment challenge for the Spinozist. If the world has imperfect properties, and if those properties are somehow in God, those properties need to be contained in God in a way that does not reduce God’s own perfection.

<EXT>

Imperfection Challenge: God must internally contain imperfect properties.

</EXT>

5.3 Spinozism as Representational Panentheism

Baumgarten’s challenges highlight a general flaw in the simple forms of Spinozism: the God-world relationship is leaky. If the world is identical to God or some of God’s properties, the world’s imperfections seep into God’s own nature and sully it. The Spinozist needs a leak-proof form of containment that allows God to internally ground and contain the world without directly taking on its tainted properties. Happily for the Spinozist, Baumgarten has already provided such a form of containment, namely divine representation.

In step one, I presented "Representational Panentheism" (RP) as the view that our world is wholly contained in God as the contents of a divine representation. As such, the world's structure is just the structure of an intentional object in God's mind. This qualifies as a form of Spinozism in light of Baumgarten's account of representation, discussed in step four. While Baumgarten denies that the world is an accident or internal determination of God (855) and that the world's imperfect properties are accidents or internal determinations of God (828), he thinks that representational objects do not directly inhere in representers in the way that a thing's essential properties and attributes do. But by his account of grounding and worlds from steps two and three, representational objects like possible worlds still metaphysically depend on being represented, and so they are not as ontologically separate from representers and representations as, say, finite substances are supposed to be distinct from God according to traditional theism. According to RP, our world is *merely* the object of a divine representation, and so the worrisome bite of Spinozism remains.

While Representational Panentheism qualifies as Spinozism, it might sound rather removed from Spinoza's own views. Spinoza denies that physical things are merely the objects of ideas, even though every body is represented by some idea (*E*2p6c). But this gap between Spinozism and Spinoza highlights the momentous consequence of Baumgarten's first step. Idealists like Baumgarten and Wolff sensed the threat of Spinozism, even if Spinoza would have rejected their idealism. The kicker is that by detaching Spinozism from Spinoza's own views on extension, Baumgarten ends up being more vulnerable to charges of Spinozism.[19]

To see this, let us first consider how Representational Panentheism avoids the pitfalls of the simpler forms of Spinozism by Baumgarten's own lights. Recall from step four that Baumgarten's account of the relationship between possible worlds and God is representational. God grounds possible worlds and their constituents by representing them as the internal objects

of divine ideas. Nevertheless, Baumgarten denied that God becomes imperfect by representing imperfect worlds and substances. This was the role of the Representational Firewall. God can internally ground all possible deficiencies and imperfections via representation without thereby becoming deficient and imperfect.

But if so, then Representational Panentheism can meet Baumgarten's two challenges in a way that Baumgarten already accepts. God can internally contain incompossible properties not by exemplifying incompossible properties but by merely *representing* at least one of the pairs of incompossible properties. This meets the Incompossibility Challenge. Similarly, God can internally contain imperfect properties like being finite or evil not by being finite or evil but by merely representing such imperfections, which meets the Imperfection Challenge.

In short, the advantage of the Representational Firewall for Baumgarten's theism likewise accrues to the representational form of Spinozism. If God can internally represent and thereby ground creaturely properties without compromising the divine nature, then insofar as all creaturely properties can be identified as the internal notes of divine representations, Baumgarten cannot reject Representational Panentheism as leaky without indicting his own account of God.

If Baumgarten cannot rule out Representational Panentheism on grounds of leakiness, is there any reason he should accept it? Herein lies the deep allure of Representational Panentheism, for it inherits the motivations of the simpler forms of Spinozism while avoiding their costs. For example, representational panentheists could appeal to Baumgarten's containment account of perfection from step four and argue that on RP, God would contain both "the greatest realities" as well as every lesser degree of every scalar property, all without rendering God limited. Since God is defined as the *ens perfectissimum* (803), Representational Panentheism seems to provide a more perfection-enhancing account of the God-world relation. Admittedly, Baumgarten sometimes restricts perfection to the number of "inhering accidents" in

a single thing (203), whereas God's enhanced perfection under RP requires counting both accidents and non-inhering representational objects. But since, as we saw in step four, Baumgarten himself motivates the vast range of God's representational objects by appealing to God's perfection (864), he too must accept this more inclusive counting as perfect-making.

There is a further reinforcement of Representational Panentheism from Baumgarten's idealism in step three. According to his idealism, all finite substances are merely representational powers. According to RP, all finite substances are merely representational objects. While those claims are obviously distinct, the vague sense that something "thicker" would be left off by identifying our world with merely representational objects is diminished. At the very least, representational activities seem well-suited to being the basic contents of divine representations. On the combination of Representational Panentheism and idealism, all finite substances are the represented powers in God's mind for representing their worldmates. What *more* does this account of us leave off that Baumgarten's idealism does not already leave off?

One tempting answer that Baumgarten might give is in terms of actuality. What our world and representational powers would lack under Representational Panentheism is *being actual*. Our world would be among the merely possible worlds in God's representations. But in giving this answer, Baumgarten would need to be careful. It would be unsatisfying to treat *being actual* as a primitive property that gets added to a merely possible world, like icing on the ontological cake, a final property that alone makes it the case that our world exists apart from God's representation of it. For then the case against RP would rest on the brute insistence that RP is false because, well, our world just isn't merely an object of God's ideas.

Baumgarten offers a more informative account of actuality (54), once again in terms of grounding. For our purposes, the relevant claim is that our world is actual partly in virtue of a divine volition to create it (926, 933). Since Baumgarten understands causation as an instance of

grounding (307), his basic idea is that our world's being actual is partly grounded in God's *will*, whereas its being possible is fully grounded in God's mental representation of it. This preserves God's universal and ultimate grounding of all actual things and properties, even if some of those divine grounds are not in God's intellect.

Still, there remain pesky questions about the ground of God's volition to create. Given his demand for universal grounding from step two, Baumgarten needs to either (a) allow God's creative volition to be self-grounded or (b) find pre-volitional grounds among God's other properties that ground God's volition to create our world. Contra (a), Baumgarten denies that explanations and grounding chains in God terminate with a brute act of will. "All the actions of God can and do depend on an internal sufficient principle for acting, which is in God" (895; see also 933). He also claims that God's volition has "supreme proportionality" to God's intellect, since God desires in perfect proportion with the represented goodness of the desired object (894).

Instead, Baumgarten claims with (b) that God's volition to create is grounded in God's pre-volitional recognition and approval of the best possible world (893, 895, 898, 934). But at least *this* distinction in grounding sources could be endorsed by Representational Panentheism, since God's intellectual recognition and approval of our world's bestness could distinguish it from all other possible worlds without requiring it to be a non-representational entity or to be partially grounded in God's will. As Leibniz once put this (in a fit of youthful exuberance), "So for things to exist is the same as for them to be understood by God to be the best, i.e., the most harmonious" (*DSR* 113; see also *CP* 49).

Regardless of whether Baumgarten can fully resist the allure of Representational Panentheism, the pressures towards RP from his accounts of God, the world, and grounding are significant, and his ways of blocking simpler forms of Spinozism will not work against it. But I described this only as a path *towards* Spinozism, as I have not shown that Baumgarten's

additional appeal to a distinct ground of actuality in a divine volition, one that is itself at least partly grounded in something other than God's intellect, is completely unworkable. The open challenge for Baumgarten is to provide a non-intellectual, pre-volitional ground in God that sufficiently explains God's putative volition to create something non-representational.[20]

Notice, however, that we have now shifted our focus from Baumgarten's own efforts to block Spinozism to the role and ground of God's will in grounding the extra-representational status of our world. This conceptual shift mirrors a historical shift in the next Spinozism flare-up, one that turned into a raging wildfire in Germany, all as new editions of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* continued to appear. I conclude with this final dénouement of Baumgarten's battle with Spinozism.

6. Epilogue: Stepping Past Baumgarten Toward the Pantheism Controversy

As with Baumgarten's first step, subsequent battles over Spinozism included fresh attempts to pin down its true essence. In 1755, Mendelssohn anonymously floated yet another account of Spinozism, one for which Baumgarten had unwittingly cleared the path. On Mendelssohn's proposal, Spinozism is just the first half of a Leibnizian account of the world.

<EXT>

> You know, the Leibnizians attribute to the world a twofold existence, as it were. It existed, to use their language, among possible worlds in the divine intellect prior to the divine decree. Because it is the best, God preferred it over all possible worlds and allowed it actually to exist outside him. Now Spinoza remained at that first stage of existence. He believed that a world never became actual outside God . . . but instead [was] still and always to be found in the divine intellect alone (*PW* 108).

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As a strategy for showing how "many of Spinoza's views can coexist with true philosophy and religion" (*PW* 103), Mendelssohn's early reconciliation effort tainted Leibnizians more than it exonerated Spinozists.[21] But notice that Mendelssohn's account of Spinozism is just a particular form of Baumgarten's account of Spinozism, namely Representational Panentheism.

Mendelssohn's account prompted his friend and editor Lessing to go on the offensive, staking out a new battleground over Spinozism. In his 1763 fragment, "On the reality of things outside God," Lessing offers a direct argument for Representational Panentheism.

<EXT>

> But it will be said, the concept which God has of the reality of a thing does not preclude the reality of this thing [actually existing] outside him. Does it not? Then the reality outside him must have something which distinguishes it from the reality in his concept of it…but if there is nothing of this kind, if, in the concept which God has of the reality of a thing, everything is present that is to be found in its reality outside him, then the two realities are one and everything which is supposed to exist outside God exists in God (*PTW* 30).[22]

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Expressed in Baumgarten's terminology, Lessing first claims that God's omniscience implies that God's representation of our world contains every note of the world. He then argues that unless there is some ground in virtue of which those notes differ from our world's actual properties, then our world's properties should be identified with those notes and our world identified with the contents of a divine representation.

Crucially, Lessing asserts that any such differentiating ground must itself be contained in God's perfect representation of our world (again by God's omniscience), in which case the world as represented by God and the putative world "outside" of God's mind must be duplicates of one

another. He then argues against such a duplication. “Consequently this original image [in God’s mind] is the thing itself, and to say that the thing also exists outside this original image means duplicating the latter in a way that is as unnecessary as it is absurd” (*PTW* 30).

If we focus on Lessing’s appeal to absurdity, it will be tempting to respond that *satisfying* a concept is not itself a conceptual containment relation, even if a concept contains predicates about its satisfaction. Hence an existing thing that satisfies a concept is not a duplicate of that concept, no matter what predicates the concept contains. This, of course, is just a version of Kant’s claim that “the difference between a real thing and a merely possible thing never lies in the connection of the thing with all the predicates which can be thought in it” (*TP* 121). Although this is part of Kant’s broader case against the ontological argument, here it also provides a barrier against this path to Spinozism.

But there is another form of Lessing’s argument for Representational Panentheism that is not as easily thwarted by a quick dose of Kant. Lessing also claimed that it would be “unnecessary” for God to create something distinct from God’s representational objects. As stated, Baumgarten and other Leibnizians would agree, even if they struggled to show how God’s decision to create the best possible world was contingent, given its grounding in and hence necessitation by other non-contingent features of God.

But the real bite of Lessing’s argument is not about divine contingency; it’s about divine *motivation*. Given what Lessing thinks Spinozists and Leibnizians all accept concerning God’s perfection and relation to our world prior to its actualization or creation, what would motivate God to create something in addition to whatever is contained in God’s representations? Why would a perfect being bother creating at all? In Baumgarten’s terminology, what would ground and thereby explain such a volition? In Mendelssohn’s framing, why would God not just stop with Spinoza’s half of the story?

This is a difficult and longstanding question for theists, one that received plenty of attention in the seventeenth century and that drew fresh scrutiny during the later pantheism controversy in Germany.[23] One background belief shared by Baumgarten, Leibniz, Mendelssohn, and (at least here) Lessing is that God's actions are grounded and hence intelligible, which implies that God never acts without a sufficient reason. In Baumgarten's framework, God's volitions have metaphysical and explanatory grounds elsewhere in the divine nature (894–900). These philosophers would all accept the conditional that *if* God lacked a sufficient motivation to create a world distinct from God's representations, then the Representational Panentheist would be correct—perhaps if she can also deploy Baumgarten's own Representational Firewall to overcome his containment challenges to Spinozism.

That shared expectation of divine intelligibility might be responsible for this final pressure towards Spinozism. That was Jacobi's eventual diagnosis and the main upshot of his own anti-Spinozism project. Jacobi warns that "a specter of [Spinoza's] system has been making the rounds in Germany for quite some time under all sorts of shapes" (*J* 234). Such shape-shifting might explain why Jacobi characterizes "the soul" of Spinozism (*J* 205) in so many different ways, including Baumgarten's version of denying "a cause of things distinct from the world" (*J* 200).[24] But Jacobi concludes that Spinozism, in all its guises, can be fully avoided only by rejecting an unlimited demand for explanation and grounding. "I love Spinoza, because he, more than any other philosopher, has led me to the perfect conviction that certain things admit of no explication" (*J* 193).

For Baumgarten, rejecting the intelligibility and internal grounding of God's actions would be going a step—a leap?—too far. Unfortunately for Baumgarten, without taking that further step or providing an alternative defense, he will have wandered quite far along the Spinozistic path, despite his best efforts to avoid it altogether.[25]

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[1] Preface to the second German edition of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, F/H 71. All Baumgarten quotations in English are from the Fugate/Hymers translation, sometimes with slight modification. All Latin is from the Gawlick/Kreimendahl edition. I cite using Baumgarten's own numbered propositions or, when quoting from a Latin edition Preface, using EditionPref, Fugate/Hymers page (e.g. 2Pref, 74). I often omit Baumgarten's own internal references to earlier propositions for readability.

[2] See, for example, most of the papers in Fugate and Hymers, *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics*. In their editor's introduction, Fugate and Hymers predict that "we will soon reach the point where a thorough knowledge of Baumgarten's work will finally be considered indispensable for research into just about any part of Kant's philosophy" (3). In a similar vein, the recent French translation of the *Metaphysica* opens with the heading "La *Métaphysique* de Baumgarten: L'ouvrage de Référence de Kant" (L/P 7). The other major topic of scholarship on Baumgarten's metaphysics concerns his relationship to Wolff and questions of Baumgarten's originality and position in Wolff's battles with Lutheran pietists. See, for example, Schwaiger, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten*: *ein intellektuelles Porträt*.

[3] This description of Spinoza from the seventeenth century is from Arnauld, as cited by Leibniz (A 2.1.844).

[4] In the first edition, Baumgarten explicitly refers only once to Spinoza, and this is only to a generic concept of "Spinosistic fate" (382). In the second edition Preface and in response to a 1742 review that slightly misreported Baumgarten's definition of substance in passing (G/K 590), Baumgarten launches into an extended discussion of various definitions of substance. He

notes that on some seventeenth-century definitions, "everything that Spinoza had deduced from his own definition [of substance] can be deduced…more inevitably than a river flowing downhill," while on others, "the entire construction of Spinoza would fall apart" (2Pref, 85). Baumgarten even directly quotes Spinoza's own definition of substance from "his rare *Posthumous Works*" (2Pref, 85), which Baumgarten characterizes as "based upon an error that is supposed to be almost infinitely small, [but] was nevertheless able to fabricate a fatal scheme for subverting religion itself" (2Pref, 84). Baumgarten also introduces two new definitions starting in the second edition—"metaphysical Spinozism" (2Pref, 89) and "theological Spinozism" (added to §855) —and claims that he "refutes" the former (2Pref, 89) and that the latter "is an error" (855). Starting in the third edition, Baumgarten adds an additional repudiation of "Spinosistic fate" as something that is "extensively, intensively, and protensively" (447) absent from our world. (For further references and variants, readers can consult the extensive three-volume *Stellenindex und Konkordanz zu Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's* Metaphysica, though as will become clear in section five, Baumgarten engages with Spinozism more frequently and thoroughly than just consulting the *Index* would suggest.)

[5] For contemporary examples, see Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza*, 2-7; for other historical examples, see Bell, *Spinoza in Germany*. For a recent debate about the methodology of this sort of project, see Garber, "Superheroes in the History of Philosophy" and Della Rocca, "Spinoza: The Real is the Rational."

[6] Wolff himself may have contributed to this shift, since his primary diagnosis of Spinoza's mistake about extension is not Spinoza's claim that *God* is spatially extended. Rather, Spinoza goes wrong by claiming that extension is the fundamental nature of anything at all. "Spinoza's error concerning the notion of extension: Spinoza wrongly takes extension for something real…but extension is a phenomenon and not something real" (*TN* 689). This echoes Leibniz's

earlier idealist broadside against Spinoza (*PE* 274). For more on idealist readings of Spinoza, see Newlands, "Hegel's Idealist Reading of Spinoza" and Newlands, "More Recent Idealist Readings of Spinoza."

[7] As noted previously (fn 4), Baumgarten also engages other forms of Spinozism, such as "metaphysical Spinozism, which asserts that infinite substance, or God, is the unique substance" (2Pref, 89) and "Spinosistic fate," which is "fate based on the absolute necessity of the world" (382).

[8] In the main text of the *Metaphysica,* Baumgarten first uses 'predicates' in §4, a term he never formally defines but which he later uses to define *determinations*, which are the predicates of a being that have a ground (36). But as we will see shortly, Baumgarten thinks that every predicate of every being has a ground, in which case 'predicates' and 'determinations' co-refer, which is reinforced by his casual references to "predicates or determinations" (2Pref, 85 and 88).

[9] Crusius and Kant object to Baumgarten's reliance on a univocal and promiscuous grounding relation (e.g. *W* 255–64 and *TP* 13, 34–35, and 239–40), a debate that presages contemporary disputes between grounding unifiers like Jonathan Schaffer and pluralistic critics like Jessica Wilson (Schaffer, "On What Grounds What" and Wilson, "No Work for a Theory of Grounding"). Jacobi claims that Spinoza himself committed a "serious mistake" (*J* 371) in conflating logical ground and real cause, presumably referring to Spinoza's *ratio seu causa* (*E*Ip11d).

[10] Dasgupta, "Metaphysical Rationalism," 383–387

[11] For a canonical statement from Leibniz, see *PE* 218, §43; for discussion, see Newlands, "Leibniz and the Ground of Possibility."

[12] Baumgarten does not explicitly name the domains of *singula* and *possibili* here. F/H opt for "things" in both cases, but "every thing in every possible thing" is awkward and potentially blurs

the point I think Baumgarten is making, namely that every *property* of every possible being has a ground. Though the translation is a bit freer, L/P aptly captures this intent: "Dans tout possible, chacun de ses éléments a une raison." By contrast, G/K treats *singula* as a non-distributive term: "Das Einzelne in jedem Möglichen hat einen Grund" (for a critical discussion of this widespread choice in G/K, see F/H 57-8).

[13] Baumgarten's treatment of existence as a mode of finite things raises a tangle of additional issues that need not detain us here; for orientation, see Fugate, "Baumgarten and Kant on Existence" and Stang, *Kant's Modal Metaphysics,* 57–65.

[14] Given the necessitation between grounds and grounded, the fact that all modes have full grounds raises the threat of necessitarianism. Baumgarten follows Leibniz in distinguishing absolute from hypothetical necessity (102–108), though whether this distinction in grounding *source*—necessitated by one's own essence vs. necessitated by the properties of another—provides a sufficient basis for contingency is a hard question for another day.

[15] Baumgarten allows for possible worlds that contain just a single substance, and he claims that such a world is identical with its sole substance (392, 389). But the worlds he is most interested in, including ours, are composite. It also follows from his account of worlds that God is not a part of any possible world (945), which means that possible worlds are not maximal for Baumgarten, contrary to many contemporary accounts of possible worlds.

[16] Baumgarten admits he borrowed this definition of perfection from "the illustrious Wolff" (Pref 2, 87); Wolff in turn received it from Leibniz (*PE* 230–34). For more on the seventeenth-century version and a contemporary counterpart, see Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza*, 33–41.

[17] Whereas F/H represent Baumgarten as referring to the containment of many "things" in the most perfect being, I take his primary referent to again be the containment of *properties*, or, as

Baumgarten treats as equivalent in subsequent paragraphs, the *perfections* (804), *realities* (806), or *predicates* of a perfect being (812).

[18] Newlands, "Leibniz and the Ground of Possibility."

[19] On the flip side, if Spinoza must meet Baumgarten's challenges without accepting Representational Panentheism, he needs a different containment strategy. See Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza*, 42–56 for what I take to be Spinoza's own strategy.

[20] There are other, familiar constraints and challenges here, three of which Baumgarten's earlier steps highlight. First, the ground of God's volition to create must *explain* that volition (step two), which implies that merely pointing to other divine attributes, like divine goodness or desire, would not suffice. Second, if Baumgarten is right that grounds necessitate what they ground (step two), it becomes exceedingly difficult to preserve the contingency of God's grounded volition to create (902). Third, the proposed grounds of God's volition cannot imply that God lacks a perfect-making feature apart from creating, lest God's own internal perfection be diminished (945, 896, 851). Perhaps it is in light of all these challenges that Baumgarten sometimes appeals to the inscrutability of the specific grounds of God's will (900).

[21] For discussion of this early Mendelssohnian line, see Dyck, "The Spinozan-Wolffian Philosophy?"

[22] Lessing also offers a version of this Spinozistic framework in his early "The Christianity of Reason" (*PTW* 25-27; see especially the identifications in §3 and §13–14).

[23] For discussion of a seventeenth-century version, see Newlands, "From Theism to Idealism to Monism: A Leibnizian Path Not Taken." For a contemporary discussion, see Johnston, "Why Did the One Not Remain Within Itself?"

[24] Jacobi invokes classics like atheism (*J* 233) and fatalism (*J* 234), but he also offers more original accounts, such as Spinozism as the commitment to *ex nihilo nihil fit* (*J* 205). Really the

only definition of Spinozism that Jacobi sets aside is Bayle's substance monism account on grounds that Bayle "did not go far enough back, [and so] failed to penetrate to the system's foundations" (*J* 201).

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